lands when they were cheap and afterwards sold them at handsome profits.

**MAJOR WOOD'S AND CAPTAIN JOHN POPE'S EXPEDITION TO PEMBINA IN 1849.**

In the summer of 1849 an expedition, half military and half investigatory, went from Fort Snelling to Pembina, made a thorough examination and a report thereon upon the intervening country, and gave to the world much information. The expedition was composed of about 50 men, nearly all in the military service. The commander was Major Samuel Woods, of the Sixth U. S. Infantry (from Fort Snelling), and under him were Second Lieut. A. D. Nelson, who was the expedition’s quartermaster and commissary; Brevet-Capt. John Pope, of the U. S. Topographical Engineers, who had been directed to make a thorough survey of the country, and Lieutenants J. W. T. Gardiner and T. F. Castor, who were in direct command of 40 men of Company D of the First Regiment of the U. S. Dragoons, acting as escort. There were also Dr. Craig, a surgeon, and Basil Beaulieu, the guide, with some other civilians connected with the expedition.

The chief object of the expedition was to select the site for two or more forts, to be built so as best to protect the country from the Hudson’s Bay Company’s traders (who were coming upon Minnesota Territory and appropriating the fur trade, mainly by selling and giving whiskey to the Indians), and to put a stop to the bad practices of Hudson’s Bay employees, who were wont to raid upon northern Minnesota and North Dakota soil and kill off the buffalo by thousands.

The expedition took what was called “the middle route to Red River,” and which left the Mississippi at Sauk Rapids, 76 miles above the mouth of the Minnesota, and intersected the Red River near its most southern point, at the mouth of the Bois des Sioux, or Sioux Wood River. It crossed the Red about ten miles north of the Sioux Wood and then pursued a route down and parallel with the river, on the Dakota or west side, to Pembina. Returning Capt. Pope and a small party came in canoes up the Red River from Pembina to the Otter Tail River, thence up that river to Otter Tail Lake, then through that and other lakes and streams and by a portage to the Crow Wing River, down it to the Mississippi, and thence to St. Anthony’s Falls and Fort Snelling.

Going up, the party left Sauk Rapids June 16 and arrived at Pembina August 1. The trip was without special incident save that the mosquitoes were extraordinarily voracious and annoying, that numerous severe electrical storms were encountered, especially at Lightning Lake, and that travel was toilsome. At the Rabbit River the party met 25 Red River carts from Pembina, in charge of a member of the Selkirk Colony, laden with furs and pemmican, and on the way to the market at “St. Paul’s,” as the place was then called. Ten miles further north they met 65 more carts, similarly laden and with the same destination and in charge of Norman W. Kittson, the trader at Pembina, and to whom all the furs mentioned belonged.

On the return trip Maj. Woods and Lieut. Castor, with the dragoons, passed through what is now Polk County from north to south. In his report Maj. Woods describes the country north and south of the Red Lake River as “naturally fine and fertile” and adapted to agricultural purposes, although perhaps “too far north for corn of the present varieties.” Capt. Pope stopped at the mouth of the Red Lake River and computed the latitude to be 47 degrees, 48 minutes, and 8 seconds north. He too was of opinion, “that the climate of the Valley of the Red River would be too severe and the seasons too short for the successful cultivation of corn, but all other grains would be produced most abundantly.” The Captain further said that the only valid objection to the Valley as a wheat country was its distance from market; but, to remove this obstacle, he recommended that Congress make grants of land in aid of the construction of railroads from the head of navigation on the Red River eastward to Lake Superior and