

## GARRIOCH'S VISIT TO LAC QUI PARLE IN 1837

Peter Garrioch of the Red River Settlement, where Winnipeg now is, took a trip from there to Fort Snelling in the summer of 1837. His journal gives an interesting picture of the Lac qui Parle mission station and Dr. T.S. Williamson two years after its establishment, though Garrioch mistakenly recorded that the doctor had been there only a year. He was traveling with several companions. His entries for July 7-10, 1837, are as follows:

"July 7. Friday. We discontinued this day's journey within a mile or so of Fort Ran Vielle.

"July 8. Saturday. Removing this morning we proceeded to Fort Ran Vielle and halted on its adjacent banks or hills. We were here, in a few moments, surrounded by numbers of spectators, the greater part of which were aborigines. I went over to the Missionary Station, having received an invitation from the Doctor, to see him and his family. Nothing could be

more agreeable, and nothing more refreshing to the mind long deprived of social and friendly intercourse, than the kindness and sociability manifested by the Doctor and his family. The consideration that I was an utter stranger, and nothing more to recommend me to them than a few black lines, in a strange land, added much to the weight of that kind feeling and attention which I met with in this family. Both the Fort and Dr. Williamson's premises are situated under the hills; so that, being overtopped by them, both places are quite invisible from the main road. Both the establishments are situated on the East side of the River St. Peter's. The Indians, among whom the Doctor carries on his missionary operations, have their village and farms on the opposite side. The scenery presented to the view from these places is rather indifferent. As little more than high hills on one side and lofty timber on the other can be seen, the prospect thus obstructed on every side necessarily offers but a very limited space for the exercise of the optical organs. This residence here being scarcely yet twelve months, their progress in agriculture, &c, is but little. They have, however, opened a small farm which seems to thrive well. As an evidence of what the Doctor may reasonably expect in the course of his missionary labours, he has, during his short time among the Indians, advanced some young men among them so far, at least in the art of writing, as to excell his own hand. They are thus enabled to correspond with him and other missionaries and with each other, and are likewise, able to sing the praises of their God and Saviour in their own tongue, and that in the midst of the great congregation.

"July 9. Sunday. At half after ten the Doctor, having given notice the day before to our party, commenced his service. His congregation, consisting of Yankies, French, Scotch, Irish, Half-breeds and Sioux Indians, amounted to something about forty persons. That was a mixture! I believe though, we were pretty much all of one blood after all-- according to the Scriptures. This higgledy-piggledy assembly put me strongly in mind of that Scotch dish called, I think, Hotch-Potch. The Doctor's services were conducted throughout, with the exception of the prayers, in the French and Indian languages, for the united benefit of the respective parties. The morning service was concluded with prayer, offered, in the Sioux language, by Ran Vielle, the present Master of Fort Ran Vielle. Nothing could be more interesting than to see the Savage of the wilderness assemble with the sons and daughters of the Lord

in the place appointed for prayer; to hear the wild and rude sons of the forest sing the praises of their Maker and Savior, in their own uncultivated and barbarous language. The Doctor, having notified our party that the evening service should be conducted altogether in English, opened the meeting at 4 o'clock. The subject of the Doctor's discourse was in the following words: 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' The preacher's manner was engaging, his language impressive, and consequently, his whole discourse very interesting.

"July 10. Monday. A general state took place for resuming our journey. Kindly requested by the Doctor, however, to take breakfast with his family, I did so. After breakfast I took leave of my recent friends, not without emotions of some regret, with whom I spent two very pleasant and homely days and nights. I started in pursuit of my companions, who had left some hours before me by a different route. The Doctor, however, fearing that I should not be able to find the direct way, insisted upon accompanying me to the road; and, after tenderly, and in a most friendly manner, giving me a few words of advice, highly necessary to a stranger traveling in a strange country and people, we parted, with an evident reciprocity of respect and emotions of brotherly kindness. The servant of the Lord bid me God-speed and I pushed ahead and went on my way rejoicing.

"I overtook my companions at a creek called the Little Mississippi."  
(Copied from "Extracts from Journal of Peter Garrioch, 1837-1847," an unpublished document, A - G241, in the Minnesota Historical Society.)