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# On the Frontier in 1845

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## On the Frontier in 1845

The steamer *Independence* reached this port (St. Louis) yesterday from Council Bluffs, situated on the Missouri River, about three hundred miles above Fort Leavenworth. She brought down four hundred and thirty packs of robes, peltries, and furs, the largest proportion of them for the American Fur Company. The *Independence* left here on the fifteenth of May with a cargo of about one hundred and twenty-five tons, principally corn and flour, for the government, which was delivered at the Bluffs for the use of the Pawnee and Ioway tribes of Indians, who were to meet commissioners on the part of the United States at that point on the first of June, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty.

We learn from the officers of the *Independence* that, after a difficult and dangerous passage of about fifteen days, they reached the place of their destination, where they found the Ioways and a large number of Indians belonging to the Oto tribe, in almost a starving condition, having been driven in from the plains by the Pawnees, who are continually committing depredations upon the neighboring tribes, and more particularly upon the defence-

[This item about conditions in the vicinity of Council Bluffs in the spring of 1845 is here reprinted from *Niles' National Register*, Vol. 68, p. 258, June 28, 1845. It appeared originally in the *St. Louis New Era*.—THE EDITOR]

less women and children of the cowardly Ioways and Otoes. These attacks of the Pawnees, together with their own indolence and unfrugal way of living, had compelled the Ioways and Otoes to come in to the Bluffs to avoid starving.

The Pawnees are a daring, reckless set of scoundrels, roving from place to place, having no fixed quarter to live in, and taking good care never to let pass an opportunity to depredate upon their more fortunate and weaker neighbors. With the object of making them occupy a more steady position, and to prevent, if possible, their frequent depredations upon the weaker tribes, a new treaty is to be formed with them.

The Sioux are said to be the only tribe in that quarter that the Pawnees stand in fear of. Recently a party of the former met eight Pawnees on the plains a short distance back of the Iowa point, four of whom they caught, killed, and scalped, flaying them, and stretched their skins over hoops, which they brought into the fort as trophies of victory. It is for the purpose of putting a stop to such scenes of bloodshed that the United States government sent commissioners to the Bluffs to treat with them.

The commissioners are also empowered to hold a treaty with the Pottawattamies for the purpose of purchasing their lands and removing them south of the Missouri. They are said to be a powerful and warlike tribe, much further advanced in civilization than most of the northwestern tribes.

The *Independence* reached the Bluffs on the 29th ultimo, discharged her cargo, took on a large number of robes and furs, and started back on the 2d instant. Up to the time of her departure, but few of the commissioners had arrived at Bellevue, Nebraska, the place of meeting for the Indian council.

The fur companies in that region are fast consolidating into the powerful and extensive associations known as the American Fur Company, who have this last winter purchased, besides the claims of the Union Fur Company, those of John Baptiste Roy and the Coopers, and arrangements are about to be made between them and the companies of Pierson and Ewing, by which it is said they will obtain the whole business in that section. The officers of the *Independence* report having met six boats belonging to them from Fort Pierre, heavily laden with robes and under the charge of Mr. Whiting, their agent, a short distance below St. Joseph, descending the river. They will perhaps reach this city in a few days.