



Frontier Forts of Iowa: Indians, Traders, and Soldiers, 1682-1862 (Bur Oak Book)

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At least fifty-six frontier forts once stood in, or within view of, what is now the state of Iowa. The earliest date to the 1680s, while the latest date to the Dakota uprising of 1862. Some were vast compounds housing hundreds of soldiers; others consisted of a few sheds built by a trader along a riverbank. Regardless of their size and function—William Whittaker and his contributors include any compound that was historically called a fort, whether stockaded or not, as well as all military installations—all sought to control and manipulate Indians to the advantage of European and American traders, governments, and settlers. *Frontier Forts of Iowa* draws extensively upon the archaeological and historical records to document this era of transformation from the seventeenth-century fur trade until almost all Indians had been removed from the region.

The earliest European-constructed forts along the Mississippi, Des Moines, and Missouri rivers fostered a complex relationship between Indians and early traders. After the Louisiana Purchase of 1804, American military forts emerged in the Upper Midwest, defending the newly claimed territories from foreign armies, foreign traders, and foreign-supported Indians. After the War of 1812, new forts were built to control Indians until they could be moved out of the way of American settlers; forts of this period, which made extensive use of roads and trails, teamed a military presence with an Indian agent who negotiated treaties and regulated trade. The final phase of fort construction in Iowa occurred in response to the Spirit Lake massacre and the Dakota uprising; the complete removal of the Dakota in 1863 marked the end of frontier forts in a state now almost completely settled by Euro-Americans.

By focusing on the archaeological evidence produced by many years of excavations and by supporting their words with a wealth of maps and illustrations, the authors uncover the past and connect it with the real history of real places. In so doing they illuminate the complicated and dramatic history of the Upper Midwest in a time of enormous change. Past is linked to present in the form of a section on visiting original and reconstructed forts today.

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David Russell:

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Isaiah Owen:

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