Collections of the State Hist. Soc.
Bismark N dak. 1906.
Vol. 1

Page 345

1863

On december 25, #iye, Fort Berthold was attacked by 600 Yankton Sioux belonging to Two Bear's band. The Sioux had come up the Missouri river to attack the Grosventres, Arikara and Mandans who had gone into winter camp on the L'eau Qui Monte creek (Luck Mountain). This camp had been recently strengthened by the arrival of a large number of Assiniboines who were camped in their tents near by. When the Sioux descovered the arrival of these allies they hesitated to attack the combined force, and just then a heavy fall of snow drove them to seek shelter near Fort Berthold. The next mor morning they decided to take the fort, believingit would be an easy task in the absence of the three tribes. The attack was kept up from 9 until 4, and was pushed with a recklessness quite foreign to the usual Indian methods. Repeatedly a number of Indians dashed upon the block house and thrust lighted torches in at the loopholes in a vain effort to set the place on fire. They set fire to a number of out buildings, and part of the Indians villge wa c consumed. Fom inside tha fort and stockade Gerard a d the sventeen other whites who were with him maintained a murderous fire upon their assailants, killing about forty of them and wounding some hundred, many of whom later died on their retreat. Sometime in the afternoon the Indians at L'eau Qui Monte cre creek discovered by the smoke from the burning buildings what was going on, and they descended in full force upon their foes, driving them back and pursueing them for nearly 20 miles down the river. The retreating Sioux were so ho hotly pressed that many of the desperately wounded who were being carried off on travois were abandoned to the fury of their pursuers. After the fight the whites wth Gerard were so fearful of another attack that theyabandone d the fort and sought refuge with the three tribes at their winter camp. For ten days Gerard held the place alone, and made ready in case of emergency to blow the fort up with gun powder should the Sioux return to attack. At the end of this time the Indians broke camp and returned in a body to defend their one trading post from possible destruction and they remained in that vicinity for the rest of the winter. Among the whites who were with Gerard in this fight were Pierre Garreau, Chas. Malnouri, Alfred McCamley and Z. Jeaneau. The Arikara gave Gerard, on this occassion, the name of "Seven Yanktons" in honor of his well attested prowess in thus beating off the attack of their old enemies the Yankton Sioux. On several occassions, years later, different members of this band who had att attacked the fort visited Gerard and attempted to take his life in revenge for the loss he had inflicted on their tribe, but he was never caught ooff his guard and their attempts were always fruitless.

Page 362.
De Smet, Father Peter John

The noted Belgian Jesuitpriest who visited at Fort Union in 1842 on his way back from the Columbia mission field where he spent the larger part of his life. He passed through Fort Berthold in 1863, and was persuaded by the Indians to say mass to break the drouth of that season.

F. F. GERARD.