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FILE NO.

STARVED ROCK

in the

HISTORY OF ILLINOIS

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Charles W. Paape

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ARNO B. CAMMERER,

*Director.*

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HISTORY OF ILLINOIS

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## AN EXPLANATION

The task of writing a monograph on the history of Starved Rock was assigned to me on June 14, 1937, when I began to work for the National Park Service. The subject appeared to be without the usual difficulties that beset work in a new field, for much had been already written on Starved Rock and its history. Likewise I found a wealth of source material available, most of which was originally in the French language but had since been translated and reprinted in several places.

However, I soon found that while several persons had been studying the history of the French in the Illinois Valley for the greater part of their lives, they had not yet solved all the problems raised by the subject. Yet the need of completing the monograph in three months forced me to do as much as possible in the allotted time. The paper is herewith submitted.

The plan underlying the work has been to use the best available source material for all incidents concerning the Rock itself. For other information - to complete the story and give it a proper setting - secondary material was used. In relatively few instances has this rule been broken.

A second principle has been to call the center of interest - Starved Rock - by the name with which it is known to the most people. All through the French period the rock was known as "le Rocher". It was not until the middle of the Nineteenth Century that "le Rocher" became known as Starved Rock. Under the new name it has become known to millions of people in the Middle West. Although a seventeenth or eighteenth century inhabitant of the valley would not know of Starved Rock under that name, twentieth

century readers might benefit by the use of the modern name.

I am indebted to Mr. Stanley Ray of Aurora, Illinois, and Mr. Thomas Pitkin, Park Service Technician, (Historian), for much help in the preparation of this monograph.

September, 1937

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## STARVED ROCK AND THE ILLINOIS VALLEY

"The cliff called 'Starved Rock', now pointed out to travellers as the chief natural curiosity of the region, rises, steep on three sides as a castle wall, to the height of a hundred and twenty-five feet above the river. In front, it overhangs the water that washes its base; its western brow looks down on the tops of the forest trees below; and on the east lies a wide gorge or ravine, choked with the mingled foliage of oaks, walnuts, and elms; which in its rocky depths a little brook sweeps down to mingle with the river. From the trunk of the stunted cedar that leans forward from the brink, you may drop a plummet into the river below, where the cat-fish and the turtles may plainly be seen gliding over the wrinkled sands of the clear and shallow current. The cliff is accessible only from behind, where a man may climb up, not without difficulty, by a steep and narrow passage. The toy is about as sure in intent." (1)

The classic description <sup>by</sup> of the eminent historian of France in America is known wherever the history of America is studied. This passage is quoted as much, perhaps, as any other excerpts from books that abound in quotable passages. Parkman, master of the adorned rhetoric of the late Victorian age, penned a romantic description to fit a romantic subject. For Starved Rock, Illinois, has long lost its strategic importance in the development of the Middle West. The race of men that once dwelt at its foot are no longer seen there; the French nation, having discovered it and appropriated it, relinquished it. Three nations of white men have held the rock within their political bounds. To the first it was the heart of a country--the second had little time to hold

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(1) Francis Parkman, *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West*, Boston, Little, Brown, and Co., 1899 (15th edition--revised and enlarged), p. 238.

it--to the third it became an important recreational center and famed as an historical site and geological curiosity.

Where once a small company of soldiers used the rock as their defense in the exploitation of the country hundreds of miles around it, now thousands climb its summit every week and only to view the beautiful valley in which it stands. Thousands of visitors come daily in a few hours from places once several weeks travelling distance away. Plains and rivers no longer hold terrors and difficulties for travellers--no longer, even, does the great rock, once accessible with considerable difficulty, prevent anyone from scaling it, for stairs and guard rails make it as easy and safe to climb as the stairs in a home. During the summer months as many as twenty thousand people visit the park on each week-end; one-half of these climb the rock. The once feverish activities in the hostile environment gave way to the stillness and decay of abandonment which in turn slowly gave way to the improvements of a civilization that sought it out only as a natural curiosity. Its traditions having been told afar off, its history studied and appreciated, its geological curiosities interpreted, Starved Rock has become one of the most interesting localities in the Middle West.

In the earliest times the area was undoubtedly the site of great mountains of igneous masses. Evidence that it was so in the Starved Rock region is found in the various layers that are penetrated by man in his search for water from the deep recesses of the earth. Then, after periods of time that cannot be measured in terms of hours, days, or



years, changes took place. Sometimes cataclysmic--more often imperceptible but none the less sure--the changes made plains of the mountains. Pictures of this primal landscape are hard to conceive and even more difficult to describe. The information and records of that age are so scanty, their interpretation so difficult that nothing other than an isolated fact and a vague generality would be in order.

After an untold period of time the sea crept in the great midland valley. Creeping in and receding with the undulations of the continental floor, the seas left a deposit of sand which is in modern times a source of wealth to the residents of the area. Pressure changed the sand into sandstone and the other minerals of the valley were formed during these long periods by the play of great forces. At times it must have been swampy, covered by the luxuriant plant life that in succeeding ages turned into coal. Then the seas continued their play.

At length a cataclysmic disturbance took place in the internal structure of the earth. The midland valley was heaved upward; the mountains now called the Ozarks were formed; and the sea receded, never to enter the valley again. Rivers that drained the valley were formed and life appeared on the land. Most probably the rivers were forerunners of the present great rivers, the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Missouri, and the Illinois. It must have been that that Starved Rock was beginning to take form and the Illinois River began to carve out its valley. The life that evolved on the great plains of the midland valley was undoubtedly more luxuriant than that which we know today. Reptiles and saurians grew to gigantic proportions; great flying species flapped wings that extended to as many as twenty feet; smaller animals, out of which the present

species evolved, gradually predominated over the larger ones by their superior ability to withstand the more sudden changes of nature, the lean years and the inclement weather.

After the centuries of warmth and luxuriant life came the cold years of the ice caps. Great glaciers, formed in the northland and drifting southward, swept all before them. The glacier scraped the surface of the earth, carrying with it the accumulation that was taken from high places, depositing it in the low places. Several of them reached Starved Rock.

When the ice receded for the last time many changes in the topography had taken place. A great lake occupied the site of present Lake Michigan—a great lake which poured its torrential overflow down the Illinois River. This lake, called Lake Chicago by geologists, was a predecessor of at least one of the great chain of lakes now in the center of the continent.

It was this lake, sending its volumes of overflow down the Illinois valley, that carved out the bed in which the present Illinois River flows. Working its way through the glacial deposits, then speeding its eroding process when it cut through the underlying deposits of sand, the river deepened its bed. At the present time the walls of the bluffs give mute testimony to the force and volume of the waters that once surged from that great lake. After an indeterminate time the latest change took place: the waters of the lake were diverted to an eastern outlet, the St. Lawrence River, the present outlet of the Great Lakes. From that time on the Illinois River ran to the Mississippi and the Gulf in its present form. The present era in the history of Starved Rock had dawned.

After the recession of the last great ice cap, the forms of life made their appearance again. Spruce and pine forests covered the land. Gradually the oaks and the nut-bearing trees made their appearance. Many of the species of bushes and plants now growing crept in during the ensuing centuries.

After the vegetable forms of life had established themselves, the animals again took possession of the land. Bears, buffaloes, deer, wolves, and others roamed the forests and prairies. Occasionally a saber-toothed tiger and a mastodon <sup>were</sup> ~~might be~~ seen.

Last of the species to return, perhaps, was man. There is no unimpeachable evidence of his time of coming, nor is there any evidence to indicate that man "returned" to the land, but it is a safe assertion that man was late in entering. Of the life that returned, man is probably the most recent form to make its appearance in the newly bared land.

Ordinary and common time measuring devices do not tell us when all this occurred. The latest phase, the post-glacial, is estimated to have begun from ten thousand to sixty thousand years ago. The beginning of the glacial phase may have been over a hundred and fifty thousand years ago. Other dates would have little meaning; errors of a hundred thousand years would not be improbable. Measurement of time in this era of the history of Starved Rock is unnecessary. If there were events of the nature that makes history, it would still be impossible to reconstruct



then, for time has obliterated all but its own records. (2)

Starved Rock and the area included in its immediate environs, the object of our interest, is located in the north central part of the state of Illinois. It is easily accessible to the traveller--great highways from every part of the state intersect within a few miles, a trans-continental rail route passes within two miles, and one of the nation's greatest waterways passes at its base. In the days when rivers afforded the best natural highways Starved Rock was almost as easily visited as today, for it was by the Illinois River highway that the site first became known. It was seen by all explorers, voyageurs, and immigrants who used Illinois' greatest overland route prior to the advent of the railroads; it was seen by the users of the canal which skirts the northern bluff and which diverted the traffic from the river. The railroad traveller who rides alongside the historic canal catches occasional glimpses of the great rock silent and immutable beside the now swiftly moving river.

The rock itself is detached from the cliff of which it once was a part. The walls of the bluff lie almost a quarter of a mile behind it on its southern exposure. The Illinois River, now a great inland water-

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(2) In this account of the Illinois geological history the first chapter of Alford, The Illinois Country, "The Land in the Making", formed the outline of the description. Carl O. Sauer, Gilbert H. Gady, and Henry C. Cowles, Starved Rock State Park and its Environs (the Geographic Society of Chicago, Bulletin No. 6), Chicago, University of Chicago Press, (c. 1915), is the best single work. Other special works that were consulted were Carl Ortwin Sauer, Geography of the Upper Illinois Valley and History of Development, (State Geological Survey, Bulletin No. 27), Urbana, 1916; and J. E. Lamer, Geology and Economic Resources of the St. Peter Sandstone of Illinois, (ibid., No. 28), Urbana, 1928. Other bulletins of the State Geological Survey are also of interest but are less concerned with the Starved Rock area.

way, rushes past the perpendicular cliff that is the rock's northern side. On its western exposure it is equally steep; below it is a plain, partly tree covered and partly bare, that slopes upward at its base. To the east and southeast it loses its steepness, but not so much that it can be easily scaled. The easiest approach to the surface of the rock is located at the southeast where the presence of a similar rock has caused the approach to be gradual for the first half of the ascent; the latter half of the ascent was once difficult but has been made easy by the construction of a great staircase. Its summit is almost flat; trees grow upon it although the soil is not more than three feet deep. For a long time the rains and winds were washing away this soil, the trees were dying, but a policy of conservation has induced the custodians of the rock to transport soil to preserve the vegetable life that inhabits the pinnacle. Although thousands of people have left their initials or other marks upon it, the rock remains much as it was in the previous centuries.

The rock, called an outlier by geologists, is of the same geological formation as the bluffs of which it once was a part. It is built up of St. Peter Sandstone, a form of sand which is practically pure silicon dioxide and white in color; the brownish color of the rock is caused by the presence of an oxide of iron which is present in minute quantities. The sandstone is stratified in layers varying from an inch to a foot in thickness, some of which having been partially removed by the elements give the appearance of great rings encircling the rock.

The present day visitor, looking down from the pinnacle, views a valley of cultivated fields interspersed with commercial projects. The

Illinois River still flows at its base but the waters have been harnessed to aid the modern use of the Lakes to Gulf Waterway. The valley is a mile wide or more. Sandstone bluffs, roughly a hundred and twenty feet high, line the valley with their almost bare walls. Trees hide most of the jaggedness of the cliffs, but here and there splotches of the brown sand are visible. In recent years commercial sand companies have cut into the cliffs, exposing the clean sand which stands out in relief against the darker walls and the green forest hues. To the northwest, nestled at the foot of the northern bluff, a mile from the river, lies the modern village of Utica. Closer towards the river, below Utica, lie Indian mounds which give hints of the life that once flourished there. Far to the west, almost lost in the haze, lies the city of La Salle, named in honor of a seventeenth century first citizen of these parts. But from the rock to La Salle innumerable columns of smoke arise from the valley bottom, indicating the many commercial sand companies that are taking advantage of the natural heritage that has made this region famous. Although the pits are of great size, the luxuriant foliage of the many trees almost hides most of them from view.

To the eastward lies another rock with its base also washed by the river. This rock is part of the bluff; tradition has given it the name "Lovers Leap", a common name for cliffs with Indian tradition. Eastward of this rock, which is separated from Starved Rock by a ravine, the bluffs are almost at the water's edge for several miles. Innumerable canyons and caves mark the bluff walls; as one walks the trails each turn in the trail brings new surprises in caves, canyons and sheer walls. Only several miles eastward, almost opposite a promontory on the northern side of the

river called Buffalo Rock, is the slope from the river's edge gradual-- the bluffs are again a quarter of a mile back from the river. To the northeast the bluffs are almost uniformly a half-mile to a mile from the river's northern bank. The better land is almost level, and, at a distance of three miles slopes upward to a height of a hundred and twenty feet at Buffalo Rock. The plain on the river bank below Buffalo Rock is well drained and apparently always has been. At the foot of the bluff there now run a railroad and a canal, but once marshes lined the base, drained by creeks that were diverted when the canal was constructed. Buffalo Rock is very steep on three sides, steeper than Starved Rock, but on the western side the plain gradually rises to its summit. Men now tell of great hunts for buffalo that once took place on Buffalo Rock, the Indians driving them up the gradual slopes and to destruction over the cliffs on the other sides. Buffalo Rock, like Starved Rock, is made of sandstone. Its surfaces, however, appear to have been made harder by the processes of cementation. Buffalo Rock and Starved Rock cannot be confused; one is on the north bank of the river, the other on the south. Buffalo Rock has an area of as much as a hundred acres; Starved Rock has less than an acre area. The summit of the first is easily accessible; the latter, difficult.

The Illinois River, the great natural highway connecting the Great Lakes region with the Mississippi River, is formed by the junction of the Des Plaines and Kankakee Rivers near Dresden Heights, Illinois, two hundred and seventy-three miles above its mouth at Grafton, Illinois. The river lies wholly within the bounds of the state. It flows nearly westward for sixty-two miles; then, near Hennepin, it pursues a southward course. Its course

is unusually direct for streams that run through the plains. The watershed it drains is estimated at 27,814 square miles, principally within the state. Two of its important tributaries, the Fox and Des Plaines Rivers, drain about 1,000 square miles in Wisconsin, and the third, the Kankakee River, drains about 3,807 square miles in Indiana.

Above Starved Rock the fall of the stream is rapid, falling more than a foot per mile. At Joliet, Marseilles, and Starved Rock there were rapids that impeded navigation during the dry season. The greatest of these, at Marseilles, was several miles long. The rapid decline of the river above Starved Rock prevented any serious danger from floods, but it was a hindrance to navigation. Numerous islands dotted the river below Ottawa, particularly in the immediate vicinity of Starved Rock, at one time; many of these have now lately been submerged by the impounding of waters behind the sixteen foot dam at the foot of Lover's Leap.

Rapidly as flows the river above Starved Rock, below it the water is sluggish. For the first eighty miles below the rock the river falls only six feet, increasing its fall only slightly in the rest of its distance to the Mississippi. Thus Starved Rock marks the upper limits of unhindered navigation, a point of importance.

Throughout its course the low water banks of the stream are covered with trees and brush. In the lower portions of the river, particularly, the bottoms are comparable to jungles with trees and bushes overgrown with vines almost impenetrable. In its natural state all ground within a few feet of the low water line was thus covered. The numerous ponds and lakes that were formed by the water's spreading out over the low places were over-



grown with swamp grass and rushes. These lakes are confined to the lower reaches of the river. At Starved Rock and above it there were no broad portions of the river known as lakes until the recent improvements impounded "pools" or lakes to improve its navigability.

For the greater part of its course the Illinois River runs between low hills. Starved Rock and its vicinity are in the heart of the river's bluff country—above it the bluffs are not high, below it the bluffs soon give way to hills. The bluffs line the river as it flows westward, paralleling its shores about a mile from the river's edge. At a few places the river winds itself to a place alongside the bluff—just above Starved Rock the river flows at the base of the south bluff for a distance of several miles; immediately below the rock it is again in the middle of the valley; then, several miles downstream, it again flows at the foot of the southern bluff.

The Illinois River runs on bed-rock in the Starved Rock vicinity as it does through the greater part of its westward course. Boulders and frequently deep holes marked its bed, making it difficult to guide vessels through the rapid current. However, in recent years the water level has been raised and the bottom improved. With the improvement came attendant destruction, too, for when the water level was raised sixteen feet, many of the islands that dotted the river were submerged and new swamps were formed. Thus the Illinois River that is seen today is vastly changed from the river that Joliet and Marquette traversed. Where once it was only a trickling stream in dry seasons, it is now a swiftly moving and deep river all the season round. In the winter time it freezes for rela-

tively short times, usually between January and March. (3)

Trees, flowers, and grasses grew in profusion in the Illinois Valley. The flat prairies above the bluffs were covered with grasses interspersed with flowering plants that raised their blossoms above the grass. Groves of trees broke the monotony of the extending prairies--oaks, cottonwoods, nut and fruit-bearing trees. Vines extended themselves over the trees. Edible species of roots and plants grew in abundance both on the prairies and in the swamps. Blessed with a diversity of species of vegetable life, the land was the richest seen by the Frenchmen in their penetration of the interior of America. The literature of their explorations and developments in the Illinois Country generally commented upon the natural heritage of the region. (4)

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(3) This description of the Illinois River is drawn from John W. Alverd and Charles B. Burdick, Report of the Rivers and Lakes Commission on the Illinois River and Its Bottom Lands, (Springfield, 1915), particularly pp. 19 et passim and from Carl Oetwin Sauer, Geography of the Upper Illinois Valley and History of Development, previously cited.

(4) "The Illinois country is undeniably the most beautiful that is known anywhere between the mouth of the St. Lawrence River and that of the Mississippi, which are thousand leagues apart."--The De Gennes Memoir, in Pease and Warner, The French Foundations, 1680-1699, (Illinois Historical Collections, XXIII), p. 372. Father Claude Allouez found the Indians using fourteen kinds of roots and forty-two kinds of fruits.--In Thomites, Jesuit Relations, IX:161. "We have seen nothing like this river that we enter, as regards its fertility of soil, its prairies and woods; its cattle, elk, deer, wildcats, bustards, swans, ducks, paroquets, and even beavers."--Marquette's account of his voyage with Jolliet, Jes. Rel., LIX:161. "I cannot give an account of the latitude it stands in, for want of the proper instruments to take an observation, but nothing can be pleasanter; and it may be truly affirmed, that the country of the Illinois enjoys all that can make it accomplished, not only as to ornament, but also for its plentiful production of all things requisite for the support of human life."--Joutel, on his overland trip to Quebec after the ill-fated La Salle expedition to Louisiana (1687), in the Carlton Club's reprint of the 1713 English edition, Joutel's Journal of La Salle's Last Voyages, Chicago, 1896.

Animal life abounded in proportion to the vegetable life. Great herds of buffaloes roamed the prairies, and deer, elk, bears, wolves, foxes were there in great numbers. Smaller game, such as rabbit, squirrel, opossums, and raccoons were plentiful until the nineteenth century. Wild turkeys, geese, ducks, pigeons, and other edible fowl tempted the hunter who killed them according to his need rather than the ease with which he could take them. One writer describes a lake near Peoria in the seventeenth century:

"I am now going to tell something which will perhaps not be believed, though I am not the only one who has witnessed it. The waters are sometimes low in autumn so that all the sorts of birds that I have just mentioned [mustards, swans, French ducks, musk ducks, teal, and cranes] leave the marshes which are dry, and there is such a vast number of them in the river, and especially in the lake (at the end of which the Illinois are settled on the north shore, on account of the abundance of roots in it), when, if this game remained on the water, one could not get through in a canoe without pushing them aside with the paddle, and yet the lake is seven leagues long and more than a quarter of a league wide in the broadest part." (5)

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(5) The De Gannes Memoir, Pease and Warner, pp. 349, 350. Allouez (1678) numbers forty varieties of small game and fowl, twenty-two kinds of large game, and twenty-five kinds of fish.--Jes. Rel., LV:161, 163. See also Shea, A Description of Louisiana, by Father Louis Hennepin, etc., (New York, 1880), p. 149; and Letter of Sebastian Rale, S.J., to his Brother, Oct. 22, 1723, in Jes. Rel., LXVII:169.



### THE INDIANS OF THE ILLINOIS VALLEY (1)

The race of men that dwelt in the valley of the Illinois River were the copper-colored aboriginals commonly called "Indians". Now more properly called "Amerinds" or "Amerindians" by anthropologists, they were first called "Indians" by the early Spanish explorers, who, seeking the Orient, named them with a great Asiatic people in mind. This race of red people, the Indians, were the only human inhabitants of the North American continent prior to the advent of the white and black races of Europe and Africa. They alone enjoyed the hunting and fishing of the prairies, woods and lakes for the multitude of edible species that abounded on this continent. Without the aid of European tutelage they learned to domesticate plants and animals--to use them to human advantage.

The Indian was not utterly depraved as some persons have supposed--he was already on the road of a developing civilization. Already the end of the nomadic "stage" was discernable and semi-permanent settlements were the rule rather than the exception. The unit of organization had been extended beyond the family and tribe to include the confederacy or nation, using the latter term in a looser sense than its modern usage.

The coming of the Indian to this continent is shrouded in obscurity. Likewise the first habitation of the Illinois Valley remains a secret of the past. The period of exclusively Indian occupation of the Illinois River Valley properly belongs to that general classification called "pre-

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(1) The commonly accepted term "Indian" will be used to designate the native race.

history". It is impossible to present any form of historical movement of a people who left no records of events, whose traditions were little understood even if recorded by men who were interested, whose legends were modified by European influences, and who have themselves become extinct. (2) Those records that we possess came from the late seventeenth and eighteenth century intruders in the great valley.

The discovery of numerous man-made mounds in the Illinois and Mississippi Valley and other places once led men to believe that a race of men quite different from the Indians once dwelt in the river valleys of the middle West. Most of the mounds have been probed by relic hunters in search of Indian objects for collections, and many have been removed by commercial excavators for the easily accessible dirt. Only in recent years have the mounds been investigated in a systematic manner by those who have had archaeological training. The findings of these skilled investigators have proved

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(2) The remains found in the many village sites in the Illinois River Valley are insufficient to allow the reconstruction of events. It is possible only to reconstruct the general characteristics of the civilization probably immediately preceding the coming of the Europeans. Many of the remains contain objects of European origin, indicating their relative "lateness". The traditions, legends, and customs that were recorded by Europeans, notably the Jesuits, show clearly that the seventeenth century European mind could not wholly comprehend the novel situation presented by the Indian civilization. The Jesuits, in close daily contact with Indian life, thought of the Indians largely in terms of converts and consequently failed to record the incidents now considered as desirable source material. The secular authorities likewise failed to appreciate the social customs of the native tribes. A notable exception, however, is the writer of the *De Canees Memoir*. Attributed to Sieur Deliette, cousin (?) of Henry de Tonti, it is written "very much from the point of view of the modern anthropologist".--Pease and Warner, *The French Foundations, 1680-1693*, Introduction, p. x. Then, if that were not enough, the surmounting difficulty lies in the extinction of the Illinois Indians as a cultural group!--Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin No. 30, *Handbook of American Indians*, Article entitled "Illinois". See Alford, p. 53, Note.

that the mound-builders were more probably early members of the same red race that were the sole human occupants when the French first visited the valley. (3)

Several kinds of mounds are found in the state of Illinois. Truncated pyramids in the south and west, effigy mounds in the north and northwest, and numerous small tumuli are found in the central portions of the state. Near Starved Rock and in the Illinois River Valley the mounds are of the latter class--small tumuli which are generally placed on hillocks or other elevations of the ground level. Some of these mounds are visible from the summit of Starved Rock, being between the river and the town of Utica and on the farther side of the road leading to Utica. Plum Island, immediately below the rock, has also been the site of investigations which have yielded information of Illinois' distant past.

The investigations conducted by the University of Illinois in 1929-1931 on Plum Island resulted in the finding of a great many fire-pits and fragments of pots and arrowheads. A great number of the pits were found in close proximity, indicating the use of the village site over long periods of time. These were found at a depth of 24 inches to 60 inches below the present ground level. They were relatively uniform in size, averaging 30 inches to 36 inches in diameter. It seems probable that the Indians used coal in conjunction with wood in these pits. The presence of grain in the fire-pits seems to offer additional proof that the natives in the Illinois

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(3) Notably Lucian Carr, "The Mounds of the Mississippi Valley, Historically Considered", in Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution...for 1891, (Washington, 1893), pp. 535-593.

Valley were accomplished agriculturalists as well as hunters.

Nine feet below the surface, twice the depth of the fire-pits, other fire-places were found. These were open fires on the surface of the ground which probably were enclosed by a single row of stones. These fire-places indicate human occupation of the area approximately four thousand years ago! (4)

The mounds southwest of Utica were opened and artifacts of two cultural groups were found in them. The mounds are either circular or oval in shape and of heights varying from several feet to fifteen feet, the naturally hilly terrain adding to the height in some cases. In most of them burials were found. Soil analyses of the various layers have indicated the age of the oldest of these to be two thousand years. Some of these are of more recent origin, for in one French rosary beads and a cross were found. (5) Some of the burials were unusual in that the bodies were encased in a very black, sticky muck called "black burial mould", which speeded the decomposition of the bodies. Some of the burials were placed in orderly fashion, and others in disorderly confusion. Other remains found were platform pipes of the Hopewell culture and fragments of pots and arrow-heads. (6)

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(4) See Arthur R. Kelley and Fay-Cooper Cole, "Rediscovering Illinois", Blue Book of the State of Illinois, 1931-1932, edited by W. J. Stratton, Secretary of State, pp. 318-328. This is merely a preliminary report. I have been informed that the official report will appear this winter (1937).

(5) The author visited these sites on June 25, 1937, with Messrs. Newell of Utica, who found this burial, and Latimer and Walkey of the National Park Service. The Newells aided the University of Illinois at the time of the investigation.

(6) Kelley and Cole, op. cit., pp. 326-329.

As elsewhere in the Illinois River Valley, the predominating pre-historic remains are primarily the Hopewell culture and the Illinois or Bluff culture. The work of classification and study of the actual contents is just beginning--perhaps after additional effort the pre-history of the Illinois River Valley may take form and be reduced to the written page. (?)

Critics of the "earlier race" myth examined the numerous theories put forward and were led to write:

"In view of these results [proof that the Indians built mounds], and of the additional fact that these same Indians are the only people, except the whites, who, so far as we know, have ever held the region over which these works are scattered, it is believed that we are fully justified in abandoning the seemingly negative position occupied at the outset of this argument, and in claiming that the mounds and inclosures of Ohio, like those in New York and the Gulf States, were the work of the red Indians of historic times, or of their immediate ancestors. To deny this conclusion, and to accept its alternative, ascribing these remains to a mythical people of a different civilization, is to reject a simple and satisfactory explanation of a fact in favor of one that is farfetched and incomplete; and this is neither science nor logic." (8)

(7) A good general work on moundbuilding and moundbuilders is Henry Clyde Shrestone, The Mound Builders. A Reconstruction of the Life of a Prehistoric American Race, New York, Appleton Co., 1930. It contains a good bibliography. Cyrus Thomas, "Report on the Mound Explorations of the Bureau of Ethnology", in Twelfth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1890-1891, J. W. Powell, Editor, (Washington, 1894), pp. 17-730, particularly p. 695 et passim. Much investigation has taken place since that time, however. The archaeological explorations in a neighboring county are ably described and illustrated in Fay-Cooper Cole and Thomas Dawel, Rediscovering Illinois. Archeological Explorations In and Around Fulton County, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, (c. 1937); and also W. Hector Gale, "Antiquities of the Fox River Valley, La Salle County, Illinois", and J. D. Moody, "Explorations in Mounds in Whitesides and La Salle Counties, Illinois", Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution...for 1881, (Washington, 1883), pp. 549-562 and pp. 544-549.

(8) Lucien Carr, op. cit., p. 592.



"...Studies made it clear that the term 'Mound Builders' meant little more than an Indian who built mounds. It soon became evident that these mounds were of various kinds, while the people who built them differed in culture and physical type. It even appeared that considerable periods of time often separated the cultures from each other.

Some mounds give evidence of slow growth, as bodies were laid on the surface and were covered with earth. In other cases two or three small mounds, each with a burial, were covered with a huge mound. Again soil was heaped up and graves sunk into it." (9)

Thus the myth of an earlier race is now definitely exploded. The mounds are the product of various groups of Indians that settled in semi-permanent dwellings in the Illinois River Valley and other places.

Just when these mound-building Indians left the valley, or were forced out by the pressure of more war-like groups, or possibly merged with the Indian inhabitants of historic times, is not known. It is possible, even probable, that these earlier people were displaced by the Algonquian Indians, the largest Indian cultural group known in historic times. This great family once were concentrated in the eastern regions of the present United States. They were primarily land Indians, travelling overland rather than on the great watercourses of the continent. For their livelihood their chief dependence was upon maize, the Indian corn, which they cultivated in great fields.

Some of the Algonquian tribes took part in a great migration to the West. One of the earliest of these were the Shawnee who followed the Cumberland River into Tennessee and Kentucky, ultimately settling along its banks. Thus when the white men came into the Middle West, their river was known as the "River of the Shawanones". The Shawnee were influenced by the earlier civilizations they found settled in their newly discovered homelands.

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(9) Cole and Drexel, op. cit., p. 3. (1937)



tribes developed. These, the Kaskaskia, Peoria, Cahokia, Tamaroa, Moingwena, and the Michigamee, were loosely banded together into a confederation known as the Illinois Nation. The confederation indicated a family relationship rather than a deliberate and formal political alliance; in this respect it was different from the other famous confederation--the Iroquois Nation. Besides the six main tribes there were further subdivisions which maintained a degree of independence at times. Known as the Kaurakouilleaux, Raparouas, Marones, Albivi or Anoukous, Chaponas, the Chinko or Coira-coonatanon, the Kapaninkia, the Tapouara, and Kousenze, these groups were usually portions of the six greater tribes and their independence does not seem to have been sustained for any great length of time. (12)

Their places of residence seem to have varied from time to time, for within historic times they were reported in many locations. An early Jesuit Relation reported them once having ten villages but now only two, and these beyond the great river. Another reported them to have five villages, one of which extended three leagues and contained 2,000 persons. When Father Marquette and Jolliet visited the Peoria, one of the tribes, they lived on the Mississippi; in La Salle's time they lived at the Great Village, Kaskaskia, and later they were living at the site of present day Peoria, Illinois. The tribes of the Illinois joined each other at times, and at others, separated under the pressure of savage incursions of the Sioux and Iroquois, their chief enemies.

They, too, like the Shawnee and Miami, were probably early <sup>in</sup> migrants

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(12) Kousenze was a chief of Kaskaskia, part of the time living on the Fox River (Peotibiouy). Wisconsin Historical Collections, IV:515, and Alvord, op. cit., p. 32.



from the east. Their traditions include an account of the joint migration westward with the Miami--perhaps this accounts for the similarity between these groups. (13) The Miami and Illinois were friendly in their relations with each other; often villages were formed by a conjunction of two bands from each of the nations. When the Iroquois raids began, both the Illinois and Miami were pushed to the farther side of the Mississippi River, and apparently both came back to their former village sites at the same time.

The home of the Illinois Indians was in the Illinois River Valley bottom lands. Temporarily driven west of the Mississippi River by the Iroquois incursions of the latter half of the seventeenth century, they soon returned to their former home sites. When Marquette and Joliet passed down the Mississippi River, they found a village of the Peoria tribe located on the river, and on their return up the Illinois River, another--this one the home of the Kaskaskia. The village of the Kaskaskia then, in September, 1673, numbered seventy-four cabins. In April, 1675, the time of Father Marquette's second and last visit to the Illinois Indians, the same Kaskaskia village numbered five hundred or six hundred fires and 2,000 men, apparently not counting the women and children. (14) Two years later, in 1677, Father Alloues described it as no longer the home of a single tribe but of eight, the new residents having been summoned from

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(13) The De Gennes Memoir writer found the Miami and Illinois the same in their customs and manners, even a marked similarity in the dialect spoken, after residing among the Illinois for eleven years and four among the Miami with the Wea tribe at Chicago. Pease and Werner, op. cit., p. 382.

(14) Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LIX:101, 189.

their houses on the Mississippi. It then had 361 cabins, most of them situated along the river. On one extreme it was bounded by marshes and on the other by a great prairie. (15) A letter of La Salle, dated August 22, 1680, describes the location as follows:

"The village of the Illinois was on the bank of the river on the north side. On the south side there is a very high cliff quite narrow and almost everywhere steep except for a place more than a league in length situated across from the village where the land, quite covered over with fine oaks, extends by a gentle slope up to the river's edge. Beyond this high land is a vast plain which extends very far to the south and which is traversed by the River Aramoni, the banks of which are covered with a narrow fringe of wood." (16)

The exact site of the village has been the subject of much conjecture. It has generally been accepted that Francis Parkman, most famed of the historians of the French in America, believed the village to have been located below Utica, a town now nestling at the foot of the northern bluff, a mile from the river and about a mile below Starved Rock. (17) Historians, however, were not wholly satisfied with that location, for Parkman's announcement was not accepted as closing the controversy. Much of the evidence was marshalled in an article by Father Gilbert J. Carraghan entitled "The Great Village of the Illinois: A Topographical Problem", appearing in Mid-America, XIV:141-151 (October, 1931). Father Marion A. Mahig, in a life of Father Zenobe Membre, sets forth the definite location of the Illinois village as:

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(15) Ibid., IX:189, 191.

(16) Pierre Margry, Ed., Decouvertes et Etablissements des Français en 1680, II:122. The French league equals 2.42 English miles.

(17) Parkman, op. cit., pp. 223-224.

"as the old Kaskaskia village constituted the Eastern extremity of the Great Village, and that the Great Village accordingly extended from the Twin Bluffs for three and one-eighths miles on the northern bank of the Illinois River to a point one and one-fourth miles east of Starved Rock." (18)

The extent of the village, as described in Habig's book, is perhaps too great. It is possible that at its height, at the time of the concentration of tribes at Fort St. Louis, that it may have been spread out over the greater part of the north bank of the river above Starved Rock and below the Fox River, but the population must have been relatively scattered. A more readily supportable thesis is that the village was two leagues, approximately five miles, below the Fox River mouth and the largest part of it below Buffalo Rock. Since it was a little more than two leagues above the Vermillion River--Starved Rock was two leagues above the same river--it must have extended between Starved Rock and Buffalo Rock on the north bank. (19) Charlevoix, passing down the river in 1721, called Buffalo Rock the "Fort of the Miami's", referring to a village that once stood on its summit. The Miami were on the east end of the Great Village during La Salle's time. Following this line of reasoning the village was almost wholly west of Buffalo Rock, with the possible exception of small groups that may have

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(18) Marion A. Habig, The Franciscan Pere Marquette, A Critical Biography of Father Zenobe Membre, O.F.M., (Franciscan Studies, No. 13), New York, Wagner Co., (1934). The first line of the title is misleading.

(19) Margry, op. cit., II:122, 175.

lived apart from the village. (20)

The village, stretching for three or more miles along the river bank, did not extend more than a half mile from its banks. (21) There were neither earthworks nor palisades to fortify it. The bluffs and the marshes below protected the village on one side and the <sup>ro</sup> broad river on the other. With nature affording such an advantageous location so easily defensible, the need for fortifications was not apparent.

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(20) The blueprint appended to this paper shows the topography and general character of the area. Two sites present themselves as desirable for concentrations of great numbers of Indians--the area west of Buffalo Rock and the area just east of the county poor farm. Had both sites been occupied, the village would have given the appearance of having two parts, which was not the case. Only at the Buffalo Rock site could the village have been bounded by the river and swamps, confining it to a depth of one-half mile.--Timmites, J. J. M., M.S., 181.

A local authority, Mr. Foster, La Salle County Superintendent of Schools, informed me that he had long been interested in the probable location of the village. His studies of the nature of the land along the Illinois River led him to believe that the village was west of Buffalo Rock--where the land had the best natural drainage of any place within miles, the best defense for a large number of people, and good water.

The description of distances in Margry, op. cit., II:175, 180, 182, is not altogether reconcilable. It is possible that the distances represent estimations from different parts of the village. Mr. Stanley Faye of Aurora, Illinois, has furnished me with a great deal of guidance and assistance. His careful critical examination of the literature has led him to a similar conclusion.

Secondary authorities have been divided, some favoring the Utica site and some the Buffalo Rock site, the latter ones favoring the Buffalo Rock location. An exception is the recent work of Sister Mary Borgias Paim, The Jesuit Missions of the Illinois Country, 1673-1765, (M.S.), 1931, pp. 98-100, who, devoting an appendix to discussion of the site, provisionally accepts the Utica site.

(21) Margry, op. cit., II:180.



The houses of the Illinois Indians were much like those of the other tribes which spring from the Algonquian stem. Living in different houses while on the winter and summer hunts, the Illinois none the less spent much of their time in semi-permanent dwellings at the village near Starved Rock. These houses were constructed by placing mats of woven reeds over a framework of <sup>sp</sup>plings. The structures gave the general appearance of arbors, being oblong in shape and arched. Awnings were added to make a rude porch. Against the porch the Indians placed foliage to shield themselves from the sun. The houses were large, each containing several fires in pits. Thus the house would shelter several families or a total of about twenty persons. A shelf was built in one end of the cabin, affording additional sleeping space. The floor was covered with mats to provide insulation from the ground. (22)

The village had no regular plan. Houses were placed along irregular avenues leaving vacant areas where most of the out-of-door work was done. Opposite each cabin was a smaller shelter used by the women during the menstrual periods and when giving birth to children. (23) Away from the village were the garden plots where the women cultivated maize and squash and perhaps some melons and edible roots.

The names which the Indians used to designate themselves were taken from commonplace objects. There was apparently no distinction made in the gender of the name as it was applied to men or women, for some men were known as

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(22) Pease and Warner, op. cit., pp. 340, 341, 351; Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LIX:129, LXVI:231, LXVII:163, LXXX:147. There is no full description of an Illinois house to be found in any one place.

(23) Pease and Warner, op. cit., pp. 353, 354.

"the Girl" and "Woman's Breast". More common, however, were "the Buck", "Buffalo", "Wolf", "Bear's Hand", and "Eclipsed Moon". Their signatures were made by drawing a head, above which a line was drawn and the symbol of their name above the line. (24)

Each tribe had a totem that was used as a signature. As in the case of individual names, the object chosen to represent the tribe might be any common object. The Kaskaskia's, one of the Illinois tribes, used the notched feather as their totem. (25)

#### Description of the Illinois Indians

The Indian men were considered the most handsome specimens of their race. They were neither tall nor short, according to their ablest observer, Belletto, and beautifully formed. They were good hunters, excellent runners and graceful dancers. (26). In the earlier days of French occupancy of the Illinois Valley the Indian men wore no clothing other than a small loincloth. An elaborate tattooing, "many panels with all sorts of figures, which they mark upon the body in an inaffaceable manner", covered their ~~covered~~ backs from shoulders to heels, and, after becoming warriors at about twenty-five years of age, their whole bodies. On festive occasions and when on the war-path, they also painted their faces with vermilion and other colors. The vermilion was obtained from rocks along the river and could readily be rubbed from its natural source. After the French came

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(24) Ibid., p. 379.

(25) New York Colonial Documents, IX:1085.

(26) The De Caves Memoir, Pease and Warner, op. cit., pp. 327 and 337. The memoir is attributed to Belletto. See bibliography for comment.

into the valley, vermilion was an article of the Indian trade. Wraps of skins--dressed beaver, otter, and deer--clothed them when they made public appearances such as formal visits, and attendance at the missions, and in the winter time. Necklaces and pendants of bear and elk teeth and beads of shell and minerals, "cut like precious stones", added to their vain ornamentation. Of their hairdress we have only one account, that of Father Allouez, who described some Illinois who visited him in 1669. These whom he described had the greater part of their head shaven, leaving four locks, one on each side of the ears, which were bound up in such a manner as prevented inconvenience. (27) On occasions they decorated themselves with many-colored feathers, "of which they make garlands and crowns which they arrange very becomingly". In such garish dress and ornamentation the Illinois Indian men were well pleased; they believed it added to their natural manly beauty. Social approval and allowable personal pride were the reward of the man who was well groomed. (28)

In addition to presenting a fine physical appearance, the Illinois Indian had a dominating psychological demon. Lord of the earth in a rich valley well suited to agriculture, with an abundance of edible wild fruits, berries and vegetables, with all the game that could be desired, it was possible to gain that ascendancy over the elements and nature which gives man confidence in himself. Independent, proud, even haughty, the Indian had no master but the customs of his tribe. He was the equal of any member of his

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(27) Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LV:219.

(28) Primarily from Sebastian Gale, S.J., to his brother, Oct. 12, 1723, in Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LVII:105, 107 (quotations, p. 105); and the De Gennes Memoir, Pease and Warner, op. cit., pp. 319, 326.

community, even the chiefs or elders whom he called "Father" or "Uncle". He lived as one of a great family in that intimacy and respect that characterizes the blood relationship rather than that of neighbors in a modern city. Even though there might be no blood ties, he used the common designations of "Father", "Brother", "Uncle", "Mother", "Sister", and "Daughter" to indicate personages, a custom that is found among most Indian tribes. The admitted equality of men in the village did not lead to disrespect, however. When another member of the tribe was speaking there were no interruptions; each spoke in turn and respectfully. Nor did they fear any men; although unsuccessful in their defenses against the Iroquois invaders, they were always ready to undertake punitive expeditions against their marauding enemies. Likewise in their address were they conscious of their freedom. A missionary was led to write: "An Illinois would speak as boldly to the King of France as to the lowest of his subjects." (28)

It is true that widely divergent descriptions of the Illinois Indians were penned. The earliest accounts held them to be gentle, very polite and "least of all like barbarians". It must have been in a moment of despair that Father Gabriel Marest wrote to a Father in Rome this description of them:

"They are indolent, traitorous, fickle, and inconstant; deceitful, and naturally thievish, -- so much so, as to boast of their skill in stealing; brutal, and without honor; taciturn; capable of doing everything when you are liberal toward them, but at the same time thankless and ungrateful. To do them any good gratuitously is only to uphold them in their natural pride; they become thereby the more insolent; they say, 'I am feared; I am sought.' ... 'Gluttony and love of pleasure are, above all, the vices most dominant among our Savages; they are habituated to the most indecent acts before they are even old enough to

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(28) Letter of Louis Vivier, S.J., June 8, 1750, in Thwaites, *Jes. Rel.*, LXIX:147.



know all the shame that is connected with them. If you add to this the wandering life that they lead in the forests in pursuit of wild beasts, you will easily admit that reason must be greatly brutalized in these people; and that it is very little inclined to submit itself to the yoke of the Gospel." (30)

Perhaps the Gospel was a yoke to those early people, something which this Jesuit could not understand!

Another description written in the middle of the Eighteenth Century when the Kaskaskia were at their new home at the mouth of the Illinois River is more favorable:

"Nothing but erroneous ideas are conceived of them in Europe; they are hardly believed to be men. This is a gross error. The Savages, and especially the Illinois, are of a very gentle and sociable nature. They have wit, and seem to have more than our peasants, --as much, at least as most Frenchmen. .... Most of them are capable of sustaining a conversation with any person, providing no question be treated of that which is beyond their sphere of knowledge. They submit to railery very well; they know not what it is to dispute and get angry while conversing." (31)

The Sieur de Tonti described them: "The Savages there are active and brave, but extremely lazy, except in war, when they think nothing of seeking their enemies at a distance of 500 or 800 leagues from their own country." (32)

Liquor, a force that often led to the psychological instability of the American Indian in other places, was introduced among the Illinois at a relatively late date. A Jesuit letter of 1723 considers the good fortune of the Illinois to be sufficiently far from Quebec to prevent the use of liquor in trade, as was the custom elsewhere. By 1750, however, brandy was

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(30) Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LXVI:221.

(31) Vivier, in Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LXIX:147.

(32) Tonti's Memoir, in French, Ed., Historical Collection of Louisiana, ...., New York, 1846, I:64.

among them and was causing all the dislocations of equilibrium it usually does among those who drink to become fully intoxicated. (33) The sources do not indicate the use of intoxicants prepared from native fruits and herbs; it may be presumed that the Illinois were relatively free, at least in the earlier times, from the evils arising from the ill-use of alcoholic liquors.

The chief occupations of the men were to hunt game for food and to make war on the enemies of the tribe. As among all primitive groups, the division of labor among the Illinois Indians was sharply drawn. The men, after catching the game, carried it back to camp; but from the point of its distribution, they no longer exercised any control over their catch. It is evident that customs regulated their activities while on the hunt. (34)

The great hunt was normally in the fall, beginning late in September after the harvest, the whole tribe, men and women, taking part. A summer hunt, begun after the planting of the crops, was only slightly less important. Both hunts were conducted in similar fashion. Taking the mats of rusher which were used to construct their dwellings with them, the Indians set out for the places where the game was more plentiful. These hunts were usually in search of buffalo; hunting other game did not require the full participation of as many persons as did the buffalo hunt. Having gone as far as two hundred miles on their winter hunts, perhaps half that distance on their summer hunts, and game making its appearance, the older men of the tribe would harangue the younger men about going out and showing skill in hunting.

Dividing themselves into two bands, the hunters would trot to positions behind the game so that any game escaping the cross-fire of arrows would be driven toward the camp, where the older men and younger boys

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(33) Thwaites, *Jes. Rel.*, LXVII:177; LXIX:149.

(34) De Gannes Memoir, Pease and Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 308, 310.

were prepared to kill any animals that came that far. Such a hunt gave the young Indian an opportunity to distinguish himself. He would show his daring by running alongside the herd, sending his shafts into the great beasts as he ran, or by laying his hands on them as he ran closely beside them. (35) Another method, popular when hunting on the great prairies, was to build fires in the grass to drive the animals through passes at which hunters were stationed. Seeking to escape the flames, the great herds were delivered into the hands of the hunters. (36) The great fires that swept the prairies and killed so much small game were often begun by the smaller fires of the hunt. A third method employed by the Illinois Indians, according to tradition, was to drive the herds up the gentle slopes of the western portion of Buffalo Rock, a point several miles to the east of Starved Rock, to the precipitous cliffs on the other three sides, where the animals were either driven over the edge or easily killed as they stood trembling at the edge of cliffs over a hundred feet high. If this method was employed, as tradition has it, it is apparent that a supply of meat was readily available to the Great Village at the foot of the same rock.

Having killed the buffalo or other large game by one of these methods, the hunters and the older men butchered the carcasses of the fallen animals. The sides, the humps, the tongue, and the belly skin were taken from the buffalo. Then the meat was packed back to the camp, each man carrying as much as several hundred pounds of meat. The first hunter to return with

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(35) The De Gannes Memoir describes a young brave's running down a doe in this manner after a chase of half an hour. *Ibid.*, pp.310, 319, and also p.394. See also John Gilmary Shea's *A Description of Louisiana*, by Father Louis Hennepin, . . . , New York, 1880, p.232.

(36) Shea, *Hennepin*, p.143.

meat from the hunt was a momentary hero--social position was partly won by being a good hunter. After the first hunter had returned to camp, the women of the camp went out to meet the returning hunters, helping them bear their burdens.

Part of the meat was carried to the waiting kettles and prepared for immediate consumption. A greater part of it, however, was spread on a rack and dried. Called a "gris", the rack consisted of a framework of green wood about ten feet by three feet in length and width, and about four feet off the ground. Under this framework a fire was kindled, drying the meat as it was placed on the rack. (37)

When a young man killed his first game, his family gave a feast to which the whole tribe came. One of the older men of the family made an oration before the villagers and the feast was to thank the lord of life for permitting the young man to begin killing game. (38) As at all other Indian feasts, the hosts did not partake of the food but left it all to the guests, who had to finish every morsel. Even though the game killed may have been only a calf, the feast was customary and one could not risk absence because absence was an insult to the family giving the feast.

Though the great hunts supplied large quantities of meat, the hunters spent much of their time hunting smaller game while the women were drying the sides of buffalo on the "gris". Usually going out alone, the hunters returned with deer, bear, or turkeys. With this catch the Indian family gave a banquet, inviting in friends and visitors from other tribes that might be visiting from time to time. These feasts

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(37) De Gannes Memoir. Pease and Werner, op. cit., pp.311, 312; also Binneteau's letter, January, 1899, in Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LXV:73, 75.

(38) Ibid., pp.313, 314.

could likewise not be refused. (39)

Going to war or making depredations upon tribal enemies constituted the second major occupation of the men. The usual age at which young Indians became warriors was about twenty-five years. Ordinarily in February after returning from the winter hunt the Indians undertook a war party. War-parties might be made up at any time, however; if an enemy band was suspected (as was frequently the case around harvest time) a party was assembled and the enemy sought out. Such events as would lead to the call of war might happen at any time. February was highly suitable because the rivers were frozen, aiding the tribe that did not depend on rivers for canoe highways.

The chiefs of the village were responsible for the general war call. The first call to war was accompanied by a feast. The warriors were told to make ready for war--to consult their birds (manitous). To these the Indian warriors intoned a chant, accompanied only by their "chishicoyas" (gourd rattles). They then spent the whole night chanting to their birds on small mats of vari-colored rushes, praying for speed of feet and such qualities as would make the enemy fear them. At daybreak the vigil ceased. Then, when the day of departure was imminent, the chief or chiefs, depending upon the number of parties going out, offered a feast to their party. After an oration which concerned the cause of going to war, the chief passed his hands over each of his men and they announced their intention to follow him to death. Then the feast, usually of dog meat, was served. After the feast and as soon as it was dark, the war party, with about twenty men, went to a camp about five miles out of the village.

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(39) Ibid., pp.312, 313.



The chief of the party carried the birds as a symbol of his command; he also carried the medicaments for the group. Usually the chief was the man of most experience. Lowest in rank in the war-party was the least experienced member whose duty it was to carry the kettle, cook the food, and mend the moccasins. The unlucky fellow to whom this lot fell got little time to rest; his time was spent in the tedious operations that were necessary to maintain the war-party. Food and utensils were cached along the way to aid the returning party or any warriors that might become separated from the group. Scouts performed a function for the party, too, as it neared the enemy country. Travelling ahead of the main contingent, the scouts warned the party of the relative safety of the route chosen. When the Indians to be attacked were within striking distance, a short council was held. The chief then invoked the manitous and dispatched small parties to learn all that they could about the enemy. If, by chance, one of these small groups of scouts came upon an enemy alone in the woods, they would kill him. Having carefully painted themselves to appear hideous, they waited until daybreak to begin the attack.

At daybreak, at a given signal, they swooped down on their enemies' village. As they neared it they emitted the fared war-ory--each cried out in the voice of his bird. Surprised and frightened, the enemy took to flight with Illinois pursuing. Gaining each step because they were superior runners, the pursuers soon overtook some of the enemy--if possible they were captured. If the war-party was victorious, they quickly gathered up their prisoners and trophies and marched for several days' distance toward their homes, stopping only for meals. The prisoners that might impede the hasty retreat were killed on the spot, but the capture of a prisoner was more worthy of honor than deaths caused, so

efforts were made to bring back prisoners.

If one of the Illinois party had been killed, the chief of the party was obliged to besmear himself with mud and wail at intervals. When returned to his home village, he had to make offerings to appease the bereaved family. As part of his atonement he was expected to avenge the death of his warrior by making another raid on the enemy. If he lost men on his subsequent raids, the chief might soon find himself without followers.

As the war-party neared its home on the return from the raid, if no one was killed, advance runners bore trophies to the village. If some had been killed the advance runners bore broken bows and arrows, whereupon the whole village took to wailing. After the deaths became known the wailing was confined to the friends of the deceased. The returning warriors were feasted; their prisoners sang their death chants before the homes of the deceased and before the cabin where the returned warriors were being feasted. (40)

The disposition of prisoners was a function performed by the chiefs of the tribes. While their fate was being determined, the prisoners were subject to sadistic practices. Beaten with clubs, stoned, branded, and terrorized, the prisoners took the events with calm. The greatest virtue, the supreme test of manhood, was to die bravely under such conditions. Much as the monk of the Middle Ages, the Indian accepted mortification of the body as a means of improving his spirit. If his fate were to be to "restore to life" one of the deceased warriors, the

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(40) This description is derived from the De Gannes Memoir, in Pease and Werner, op. cit., pp. 376-382. Hale, S.J., in Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LXVII:171 is also valuable.

prisoner was given his freedom and it would be his duty to assume the position formerly held by the deceased. If, however, the elders of the tribe chose to kill him, the prisoner's fate was far from a pleasant one.

Burned over slow fires, maimed and tortured in the most pain-provoking methods, the victim welcomed death with his death-chant on his lips. Some of the Illinois partook of his flesh after the body had been burned. Then, when evening had come, everyone in the village, big and little, took sticks and beat their cabins to drive away the spirit of the one whom they had killed. The origin of such customs among the Illinois was attributed by them to a spirit of retaliation for similar outrages committed by the Iroquois. (41)

War with the Sioux tribes to the west, the Pawnee or Quapaw and Wichita, was conducted in a different manner. Dancers and drums called the whole village to the war-path, even most of the women and children were taken along. Then a great feast was prepared--any dog that was in sight was liable to become the meat. Then the party went out. If any prisoners were captured on one of these western expeditions the Illinois were less harsh in their treatment of them. A few might be burned to avenge the death of some of the Illinois. (42)

Aside from war and hunting, the occupations of the men were few. More aptly called diversions than occupations, the men chipped arrowheads for themselves in the shade during the day and played straw games at night. Having a large uneven number of straws, one player passed his

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(41) See the sources cited above; Pease and Werner, op. cit., pp. 384-386; and Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LXVII:173, 178.

(42) Pease and Werner, pp. 387, 388.

opponent approximately half of them, the one having the even or odd number as previously determined winning. Or, a variation, each counted his straws by sixes, and by a system of counting the remainder winning or losing quantities of beans which they used to bet or wager. The Illinois men were greatly addicted to this game. (43)

The Illinois women were considered somewhat less than beautiful. They were "tolerably fair" for savages, thought Deliette, but withal rather ugly than beautiful. Inclined to be short and stout, most of the Illinois women failed to come up to Deliette's standards of beauty; the taller and more slender ones were the most beautiful in his eyes.

They were industrious; as among all other Indian tribes, the women bore a heavy share in the labors of the tribe. Usually outnumbering the men of the tribe, four to one in the case of the Illinois, the women were delegated the tasks of maintaining the dwellings, cooking the food, gardening, making and mending the clothing. Each season brought specific occupations. (44)

In March and April, on the return of the tribe from the winter hunt to the Great Village, the women gathered wood--enough to last several months so their other labors might not be interrupted. The cold spells of Spring in the Illinois Valley sometimes extended well into May, corn planting time--the planting of corn could not be interrupted by a forage for wood and still be planted in its proper season. Then, having gathered wood and still too early to plant corn, the women tanned the

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(43) Pease and Werner, op. cit., pp.352; and Shea, Kennepin, p.301.

(44) The De Gannes Memoir, in Pease and Werner, pp.328, 337-338.

hides of the winter's catch. Or, if that had been done on the hunt, now made them up into <sup>9</sup>garments or for whatever use they were intended. Dyeing the pelts in red, black, and yellow, they trimmed the garments and moccasins with shells and beads--for garments used on festive occasions, porcupine quills, gayly colored, were added. If one family wished to sow when it came time to spade the corn-field, a feast of corn and buffalo meat was offered to the other women of the tribe, who, if attending the feast, spaded the field for their busy neighbors. (45)

In early June the women hilped up the corn. When this was done, and the spring games of lacrosse had been played, the tribes disbanded for the summer hunt. A few women were left behind to tend to the corn and to gather rushes from the marshes. From these rushes the mats that were used in the construction of dwellings were woven. It was the duty of the remaining women to take the dugouts and gather the rushes and have them dried by the time the tribe returned.

In late July and August, on the return of the tribe, the women harvested the corn. An early variety that was ready in late July was preserved in the form of kernels. It was either roasted or boiled. The kernels were roasted while on the ears and then shelled and dried, or they were cut off the ears with shells and then boiled and dried. A large part of the winter supply was kept in this form. A later and larger variety of corn was harvested late in August. This kind was used to make flour. The ears were dried on mats for a week and threshed with sticks six or seven feet long. (46)

It was also the duty of the women to gather the roots which were used by the tribe. A great many kinds were to be found in close proximity to the

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(45) Ibid., pp. 339, 340. The porcupine quills were obtained from the Potawatomi, there being no porcupine in the lands of the Illinois, p. 338.

(46) Ibid., pp. 343, 344.



village. These were prepared by the women in many ways; some were cooked, some dried, and others steamed in pits over hot stones on which water was poured. Berry bushes and trees also yielded their fruit to the efforts of the women. In the fall nuts were gathered. Father Alloues, who visited them in 1676-1677, found them eating fourteen kinds of roots and forty-two kinds of fruits from trees and plants. (47) The harvesting of the roots, berries, melons, and fruits--cooking them and preserving them--all was in the province of the Illinois women.

It does not appear that the women enjoyed any special privileges of rank or otherwise. A few of them might be seen playing lacrosse among the men in the games. They were in the chanting choir of the famed oolumet dance. They also took part in many of the other dances, both on the sideline and in the dance itself. After their labors in the field and over the kettles the women still found time to gossip among themselves. The myriad of duties that occupied their time were distributed over great numbers, thus there were many women working for one family. The several wives ("nirimoua") and the dependent older women and younger girls each contributed to the welfare of the family. (48)

Custom practically isolated young marriageable girls from any male companionship. A chaste girl was not expected to hold conversations with men; if she were to do so, her reputation would suffer. If she gave the appearance of interest in any male, it was probable that the male might seek her out when she went to the forest to gather wood and there seduce her. Thus generally the circumspect young Indian woman was seldom seen

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(47) Narrative by Alloues, in Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LX:161; and De Cannes Memoir, Pease and Werner, pp. 345-350.

(48) Pease and Werner, op. cit., p. 341; Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LIX:133.

where men were gathered. (49)

The marriage customs centered around the woman and the master of her household. After the young Indian brave had learned to hunt successfully, he told his father or whoever else was his superior in the family that he wished to marry, naming the girl. He may never have spoken to her in his life, being held apart by custom, but his father, having been shown his preference, attempted the alliance. Usually choosing a time when the young brave was absent on a war-party or hunt, the father offered a gift of a portion of each type of property he owned to the lodge of the young woman sought. The gifts were borne thither by the women of his own lodge, who placed it in the cabin of the girl, and left, not uttering a word all the while. The girl left the cabin as soon as she learned that she was the object of the visit. Then the young man's father asked the girl's father for an alliance and for permission to warm himself at his <sup>fire</sup> father's--a significant question because it was the women who maintained the fires. Likewise he announced that he came for moccasins--for the women made the moccasins. The gifts remained untouched until the cause was either won or lost.

If the young woman's guardian wished to reject the proffered alliance, the gifts were returned. Preference for another suitor may have been the reason, or perhaps additional gifts were sought. Both the girl's or her guardian's objection were sufficient cause for a return of the gifts. If the young man's ardor remained unabated, his family representative may have augmented the gifts, seeking thereby to overcome the difficulties. Should this process have continued several times, each time unsuccessfully, the young man's representative would have directed his efforts elsewhere.

If the young brave's representative had persuaded the girl's guardian by his gifts or representations of the good qualities of the youth, the girl

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(49) De Gannes Memoir, Pease and Werner, op. cit., pp. 330, 331.

led a procession bearing gifts similar to those given her house to the home of the youth. Dressed in her finest, she sat down on a skin in the cabin of her prospective husband, her gift-bearing relatives returning home. In the evening she was borne to her home by her prospective relatives and additional gifts were given. After several days of repetition of this ceremony, the bride stayed in her new home--in some cases the ceremony was repeated until the young husband came home from the hunt or war. Even if he did come home early, he might not have spoken or approached his wife for several days. (50)

After the ceremony had been finished, it might be presumed that all restrictions on inter-sexual relations would have been lifted, but such was not the case. There was a custom that held a woman in reproach if she had children at the ninth month of her marriage--saying that she loved her husband before marriage, a matter subject to traditional disapproval.

If an Indian woman's husband died, she was not allowed to comb her hair, nor attend public functions, and was expected to show sorrow by weeping. If the sister or sisters of the deceased were impressed by her actions, she or they might comb her hair and urge her to marry again. Then she had to remain unmarried a year longer to show gratitude and respect for her deceased husband's relatives. Were she to marry in less than a year, they would have had the right to scalp her like a common enemy, and very probably some member of the family would have exercised that right. (51)

The wailing that occurred when a woman's husband died was considered amusing rather than pathetic by a French observer. The woman would sing a chant, invoking her nearest kin, whether children, sisters, or brothers,

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(50) Ibid., pp. 330-333. It is very interestingly told in this account.

(51) Ibid., pp. 334, 335.

as if she had no one to care for her. The married men of the tribe usually gave gifts to the male relatives of the deceased. On the next day the family returned the compliment with similar gifts, usually giving lesser gifts than they had received. Additional gifts were given to the men who would perform the work of disposing of the body. (52)

If the Indian married woman was unfaithful to her husband, the same scalping might be meted out. The Miami who lived with the Illinois cut the noses of the unfaithful women; it is probable that the Illinois did the same. Another custom was to take out the woman who had been unfaithful and subject her to the attacks of any who might desire her. Her lover might be subject to injury or death, too--his death, however, being subject to vengeance. Such punishment seems not have been a sufficient deterrent, for sexual irregularity was frequent. (53)

A problem arose when the French explorers entered the valley. Being without their wives in the wilderness, it was not long before they took Indian wives. The apparently lax customs of the Indians contributed to encourage the Frenchmen to believe that wives could be had at will and be dropped when no longer wanted. Nor were the Indian women adverse to relations with the French--it was an honor--and in many instances it was encouraged by the Indian men. When, however, a favorite wife or daughter became the object of a Frenchman's attention, the Indian men became aroused.

Relations of this kind soon became the bane of the missionaries' existence. They preached continence and virtue and their French compatriots were the chief forces operating against their success. Chiefs complained to the missionaries but to little avail. The missionaries had no authority over the French traders.

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(52) Ibid., pp. 355-357.

(53) Ibid., pp. 335-337; Jes. Rel., LIX:127.

At times the ill-feeling generated by such an incident appeared as if it might lead to hostilities. (54)

The Illinois Indians had routines regulated by custom in their performance of their daily tasks. Tribal activities were likewise performed in customary ways; some of them were sufficiently complex, and involved the participation of so many members of the tribe that they became elaborate ceremonies. Naturally fond of fine decoration, dancing, oratory, and pomp, the Indian had ceremonies for every type of occasion.

There was no specially constituted group that regulated the occurrence of the ceremony. The medicine-men did not exercise the powers of priest as in many other cultures, but rather confined themselves to the cure of real and fancied ailments. The chiefs were authorities only in delegated activities and the dance was not among them. Any one could lead the dance--any dance in their repertoire. However, as far as is known, women had no right to initiate any activity that included men.

Most distinctive of the Illinois ceremonies was the calumet dance. It had no special significance: it was danced to unite the people in war, to cement a peace, to honor a visitor or visiting delegation, or simply at a time of rejoicing. This dance was peculiar to the Illinois.

The dance was inaugurated by an influential individual. If it was winter time, it was held in one of the larger cabins; otherwise in the summer time, in a clearing where the whole tribe could attend. The calumet, or ceremonial pipe as the name signifies, was made of red pipestone polished to a lustre and had a wooden stem about two feet in length. Heads of birds were hung from the bowl and feathers, dyed in numerous colors, hung from the stem of the pipe. The color of the feathers indicated whether the

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(54) Pease and Berner, op. cit., pp. 330, 336; and Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LXIX:149; Palm, op. cit., p. 84.



calumet was being used for peaceful or war-like purposes--red was the war color and yellow and black predominated among the colors of peace.

The manitou of the patron of the dance and the calumet were placed side by side on a mat in the center of the ceremonial circle. Weapons of all the nations represented in the population of the village were then heaped around the manitou and the calumet. Then the chanting choir and drum beaters took their places and the ceremony began.

The dance itself had two movements; the whole ceremony had three parts. The first movement of the dance was a salute to the manitou. Each participant blew smoke on it, waving the calumet to the rhythm of the singers and passing it on. Last to receive the calumet was the patron of the dance; he moved about the circle, offering the pipe to the sun by an outstretched hand. The second movement of the dance was the combat in which a duel, weapons vs. calumet, was featured. To the beat of the drums and, at intervals, the chant of the singers, the duel moved as a brilliant display of agility and gracefulness. The patron, dueling with the calumet naturally won; when his victory was assured the second movement and the dance were over. The third part of the ceremony was an oration by the holder of the calumet. He recalled to mind the past victories and successes of the tribe, their great heroes, and added a few words about the present occasion. A gift of beaver skins, passed from person to person around the group and finally to the honored visitors, concluded the ceremony. (55)

The use of the calumet was not restricted to the special dance in which it was the center of interest. It was used for several other purposes as well. When ambassadors of foreign tribes approached the Indian village

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(55) Father Marquette described the calumet dance given in his honor by the Peorias in 1673 in *Iroquois*, *Jes. Rel.*, LIX:131-137. This description is drawn from his account. Another form of the dance is described in the *De Sannes Memoir*, Pease and Werner, *op. cit.*, pp.389-391.

the presentation of the calumet to the parties indicated a peaceful reception by whichever side was offering it. If the pipe were accepted and a few puffs of smoke blown in the direction of the sun, personal safety was assured. It had another purpose, too, in that it was used as an offering to the sun. A few puffs were taken by the Indians and then the pipe was offered to the sun. It was expected that rain, fair weather, or some favorable change in the weather would result. The calumet was held in highest esteem. "Less honor is paid to the crowns and scepters of kings than the savages bestow upon this. It seems to be the god of peace and war, the arbiter of life and death," said Father Marquette after he had seen the calumet used in his honor in 1673. (56)

The numerous feasts that were celebrated among the Illinois Indians were not all of significance in tribal history. A good many of the feasts were given because the family hunters had brought home a great supply of the favored foods. A feast was given when the hunter made his first kill. That there were as many as ten feasts a day indicates that many, if not most of them, were given without any special significance. (57) More important were the war feasts which were a rallying point in organizing war-parties. Equally important were the feasts at which the policies of the tribe were determined--whether the tribe would seek a path of peace or of war. Father Sebastian Hale describes a feast to which he was invited:

"One of the days after my arrival, I was invited by the principal chief to a grand repast, which he was giving to the most important men of the tribe. He had ordered several dogs to be killed; such a feast is considered among the Savages a magnificent feast; therefore it is called 'the feast of the captains.' The ceremonies that are observed are the same among

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(56) Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LIX:131.

(57) Pease and Berner, op. cit., pp.312-314.

all these tribes. It is usual at this sort of feast for the Savages to deliberate upon the most important affairs, as, for instance, when there is a question either of undertaking war against their neighbors, or of terminating it by propositions of peace.

When all the guests had arrived they took their places all about the cabin, seating themselves either on the bare ground or on the mats. Then the Chief arose and began his address. I confess to you that I admired his flow of language, the justness and force of the arguments that he presented, the eloquent turn he gave to them, and the choice and nicety of the expressions with which he adorned his speech. I fully believe that, if I had written down what this Savage said to us, offhand and without preparation, you would readily acknowledge that the most able Europeans could scarcely, after much thought and study, compose an address that would be more forcible and better arranged.

When the speech was finished, two Savages, who performed the duty of stewards, distributed dishes to the whole company, and each dish served for two guests; while eating, they conversed together on indifferent matters; and when they had finished their repast they withdrew, --carrying away according to their custom, what remained on their dishes.

The Illinois do not give those feasts that are customary among many other Savage tribes, at which a person is obliged to eat all that has been given him, even should he burst. When anyone is present at such a feast and is unable to observe this ridiculous rule, he applies to one of the guests whom he knows to have a better appetite, and says to him: 'My brother, take pity on me; I am a dead man if thou do not give me life. Eat what I have left, and I will make thee a present of something.' This is their only way out of their perplexity." (58)

Attendance at the feasts was required when one was invited. It was an insult to the persons giving the feast to refuse to come. Though the Illinois appear to have been moved by moderation in applying the Indian custom of requiring a guest to finish the food placed before him, it was the custom, none the less, to finish all that was offered him.

The manitous which played so large a part in most of the Illinois ceremonies were a part of the spirit world that was the Indians' closest approach to a religion. The representations of the spirit world appeared to the Indians in the form of unusual occurrences in the forests. At

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(58) "Writings, Jes. Rel., LXVII:163, 165. Written in 1723; the feast occurred several years earlier.

puberty the Indian boy went into the woods for a process of purification. He remained there without food until some unusual event took place--perhaps the stampeding of a herd of buffalo by a tiny bird, or an animal that stared at him a long time. Though obviously on the lookout for heroic events which should point out a manitou, insignificant occurrences frequently disclosed that any event might be taken to indicate the manitou. The most common manitous were the buffalo, the bear, and the buck.

Besides these animals which were their manitous, there were birds which were similarly venerated in time of war. The skins of birds, all kinds, were special manitous of warriors. The use of these has already been described in the paragraphs dealing with the Indian men and war. (59)

These manitous were agents of the world over which the Indian had no control. They were representatives whose magical powers guided the Indians in all of their undertakings. Without the aid of such a protecting spirit the Indian was helpless: his arrows would not shoot straight or his game would outwit him. In time of war fortune would desert him unless he had satisfied his birds. Thus ever struggling to appease his manitous the Indian undertook little if the omens were unfavorable. Only if the Indian's high regard for his manitous is appreciated can his fickleness and illogical conduct be understood. An enemy war-party might be utterly routed, yet unless the birds were favorable the Indians would not attack or chase it. Unseen disaster lurked even in apparent successes--reason alone was helpless--and the Indians depended upon omens. (60)

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(59) Pease and Werner, op. cit., p.375. See also pages 34 and 35 of this paper.

(60) Discussions of the Indians and the occult are to be found in the Handbook of American Indians, under headings "Algonquin Family," "Mythology," "Orenda," and "Religion." Father Marest writes of manitous in Ikwites, Jes. Rel., LXVI:233, 235.

The governing force of the Indian community was habit and custom. They had no regularly constituted authorities. There <sup>were</sup> many chiefs and old men who voluntarily decided tribal policy. Their position was due to their superior sagacity and valor rather than their descent, for every Indian among the tribes claimed to be the descendant of a great chief. Only a few rose to the status of chief because they were sons of famous men. Because there was no coercive force to demand allegiance other than custom, the chiefs could demand allegiance only by their control over their own family group and the wisdom of their decisions.

There were two kinds of chiefs--chiefs in war and civil chiefs. Any one who displayed valour and skill in war could organize war-parties. If a number of expeditions had been successful, the leader of these would become a respected chief. His functions, however, would be limited to military activities unless he could also qualify as a civil chief. The civil chiefs were those natural leaders among the Indian men who could carry a debate by their persuasive eloquence and wisdom. (61)

The Illinois Indians recognized family allegiance, however. Wrongs done to a member of one family were liable to redress by any male member of that family. Evidence of this is seen in their attitude toward injuries to the women of the family. (62) The marriage customs are also indicative of <sup>the relation of</sup> the individual to his family. Yet the family was not dominated by any single individual or group. In the family group the emphasis was still on individuality. Children were not coerced--coercion would create fear, and

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(61) Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LVII:221; Alford, op. cit., pp.43, 44.

(62) Pease and Verner, op. cit., pp.335-337.



the child must be fearless and self-reliant. It was this apparent freedom that appalled the Jesuit missionaries--children encouraged to self-reliance and the utter absence of a controlling authority--and created their greatest problem in promoting Christian conduct. (63)

Realizing that this is not as full a description of the Illinois that might be penned, it will, however, describe the Indians and their customs in the phases of life under which French and Indians met. Perhaps some of the incidents merely mentioned later in this narrative will be enriched by the suggestion of these customs and habits. Such is the purpose of this chapter. A fuller description would be in the province of the anthropologist and not that of the historian.

(63) *Thwaites, Jes. Rel., LXVI: 221.*

## DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION

Although the western hemisphere unfolded itself before the discoverer in 1492 and the North American continent was known a few years later, it was not until almost two hundred years later that explorers penetrated the interior of the continent to find the Illinois River, one of the connecting links between the east and west. Spaniards ascended the Mississippi Valley and might have found the site had they been more interested or physically able to extend their explorations. Hernando de Soto found four of the Indian tribes that dwell below the Illinois Country but turned back when the minerals sought were not to be found. Vasquez de Coronado entered the great prairies west of the Mississippi but it is improbable that he saw the Illinois River; his explorations were centered several hundred miles to the west. Failing to find the gold and silver they sought, the Spanish explorers turned their efforts to Mexico and South America where the Indian civilization knew more of precious metals.

When the interior of the North American continent knew no more of the white man for a century. (1)

The English settlers along the Atlantic coast had little opportunity to extend themselves beyond the Appalachian barrier.

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1. Francis Bergele Steck, The Joliet-Carquette Expedition, 1673, (Catholic University of America; Studies in American Church History, VI.), Washington, 1927, Introductory Chapter, pp. 1-48, has a good account of the Spanish explorers and their failure to penetrate the interior; also, Alverdi, The Illinois Country, p. 64.

The hostile Indians and the rough mountainous lands that hemmed the British in on the Atlantic coastal plain were effective barriers to exploration. The east and west rivers known to the English were not navigable beyond the Piedmont plateau; in the mountains they became wild streams full of boulders and falls. Only one English colony made an effort to penetrate the land that lay to its west - Virginia, which organized an unofficial expedition in 1670 under the patronage of Governor Berkeley. That expedition, after many difficulties in getting started, reached the Kanawha River in 1671. There the party broke up and the expedition came to naught. (2) English superiority in population, agriculture, industry and trade had no effect on early exploration of the American interior when so effectively checked by the natural difficulties that prevented free access into the interior. The history of exploration is a history of easily travelled water routes. The English colonies had none; consequently the efforts of the English in America were limited. No great rivers lured them into the unknown areas to seek out the mysteries of flowing waters. No strange commerce came to their knowledge. No strange tribes wandered into their settlements. The stimulation to explore was never felt in most of the English colonies - the great natural barriers concentrated English interests in the coastal plains.

The westward movement of the French began at an early day in their occupation of New France. First settled on a great river on which ocean

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2. Steck, op.cit., pp. 115, 116.

going vessels plied with ease, the French found their great river extended far into the interior of the continent. They found great lakes on which the largest vessels could float; they found great rivers that reached far into the forests. The river highways they found were already in use by native peoples - the French and native neighbors who knew of other inland peoples. There had been commerce between near tribes and those located afar. Thus new waters and strange tales ever beckoned the Frenchmen in New France to come and see.

In the first decades of the seventeenth century (Quebec was founded only in 1608) exploration and study of the Indians was aided by the personal interest of the pioneer governor, Samuel de Champlain. He himself had made westward voyages as early as 1615 (when he reached Lake Huron) and continued to favor exploration when he personally was no longer able to conduct expeditions. Of all his acts that aided exploration the most notable was his policy of placing young Frenchmen in Indian villages to learn the languages and practices of the natives. Thus the French learned the ways of the woods during their internship with the natives. The young French men who had the opportunity to borrow experience from the natives were the men on whom France could depend to extend her empire in America.

One of these, Jean Nicot, amply repaid his patron by accomplishing a difficult task at the outermost limits of French influence. His mission to the western tribes properly introduces the entry of the French into the regions immediately west of the Great Lakes, in which

the Illinois Country was the choicest portion. Jean Nicolet had been a French deputy among several of the tribes that spoke the Algonquian language, his abilities soon gaining him the positions of interpreter and Indian agent. In 1634 he was chosen to bring peace among some of the warring western tribes and to learn more of the passageways to the west. The distant wars had interrupted the fur trade and Nicolet was to repair the situation. He voyaged to Green Bay on Lake Michigan unaccompanied except for Indian guides, there accepting the peace offerings of the various tribes. He does not appear to have fulfilled his instructions to explore, because when he returned to Quebec he had only reports given him of western waters, three days away. (3)

Another source of information about "the great body of water to the west" was the information brought in to the French by distant Indians. On the strength of such information Champlain drew a map which indicated a great lake in the west and a river that ran southward from it. The general location given it is that of Lake Michigan, but whether Champlain had that lake and its river highway, the Illinois River, in mind, is impossible to say. A more probable supposition is that the river was the Mississippi and that the distances had been inadequately described. Nevertheless, the conclusion, for our purposes, is the same. The westward country called - soon a hardy adventurer would scour the untravelled rivers and make known the unknown lands and peoples. (4)

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3. Steck, p. 107; and Alford, The Illinois Country, p. 56.

4. Steck, p. 107.



Then, for a third of a century, Indian wars again interrupted travel in the western regions. Iroquois incursions made the Eastern country a shambles. Tribes, once powerful, lost their lands and even their identity; others, more successful in fleeing the scourge, milled about, not settling long in any one place. The Illinois Indians were driven west of the Mississippi River early in the period of the war; most of the other tribes were pressed northward into upper Wisconsin and Minnesota. Then, after twenty years, when the Iroquois lessened their raids and the food problems of the concentrated Indians became more pressing, the tribes began to move back to their older camp sites.

This movement was not wholly completed when the white men made their way into the great midwestern valleys. They, too, had been prevented from the free use of the great inland waterways by the warwarring tribes of Iroquois and their allies. When the pressure was released the French men found their way into the valleys among the moving tribes. Thus a new era in exploration was inaugurated. (5)

News of one of the earliest of the explorations of the west after the Indian wars was reported by the Jesuits. References were made by them to two explorers, probably the expedition of Medard Chabart, Sieur des Groseilliers, and Pierre d'Esprit, sieur de Radisson, who were kindly received by the "Alimiwee" sometime between 1654 and 1663. (6) Whether

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5. Alvord, op.cit., p. 57.

6. Jes. Rel., XLVI:235; and, Alvord, pp. 57, 58.

the "Alimiwee" were the Illinois Indians it is impossible to say; however, the similarity of names suggests the Illinois tribes. Chouart and Harrison were successful fur traders of the type known as *coursur de bois*, and their expedition took them to the Lake Superior country and perhaps down the upper Mississippi valley. It would be difficult to say where they met the "Alimiwee".

The earliest penetrations of any new territory were usually effected by itinerant traders known as "*coursurs de bois*". The *coursurs de bois* were engaged in many kinds of activities and there were many kinds of *coursur de bois* - the term is general and does not denote a specialized activity. In a rough way it includes all Frenchmen, permanent settlers and transients, who traded independently with the Indians. The most numerous type of *coursur de bois* was the trader who went to the places where the beaver, the most desirable fur, was caught. Living with the Indians, often as an Indian - cohabiting with Indian women and adopting Indian dress - the *coursur de bois* would spend two or three years in the wilds. If the season promised to be a good one for furs there were naturally more *coursurs de bois*. Then some of the agriculturalists left their farms to pursue the trade. Wives were left and possessions sold to buy tobacco, beads, knives, axes, kettles, awls, shirts, powder, lead and guns for an expedition. Attaching themselves to a beaver hunting tribe and travelling with the tribe, they were often taken to far lands never before seen by white men.

Another kind of *coureur de bois* met the Indians as they came to trading posts, offering brandy and goods for peltries. Though it was in the face of prohibitory ordinances that the *coureur de bois* traded, yet the reopened trade and the out-lawed brandy were ever a major problem to the government of New France. It was the lure of profits that mounted to sometimes ten times the cost of an expedition that drew men to the trails. Adventure and greater profits drew them farther out into the wilderness, until at last the settlements of New France seemed doomed. The continual desertions from sedentary life to the wild life and quick profits of the forest became one of the greatest problems of New France. (7) Then later, disappointed in their hope for wealth, most of them preferred the life in the wilderness, chose to settle with the Indians and thus often lost their identity as Frenchmen. The story of the *coureur de bois* is one of the most romantic adventure stories that may be derived from history. The hardships, the unexpected incidents, and the novelty of the scenes they visited would weave into a more thrilling account than has yet been written by historians.

Yet it is impossible, for the most part, to compile the story of the *coureurs de bois*. Often untutored and illiterate, they left few or no records of their voyages. Looked upon with disfavor by their contemporaries the missionaries, the authorized traders, and government officials they received little credit for their services to

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7. The kinds of *coureur de bois* are explained in Cheamson's letter to de Seignelay, Nov. 13, 1691, in New York Col. Doc., IX: 152.

those who followed them into the wilds. Yet it was their years in the wilderness that prepared the way for the extension of French rule. The help that they gave in numerous ways to explorers and traders was little appreciated in their day; much less appreciated was the effective effort they made in helping to bring the Indians under French control. It took the historical perspective of two centuries later to permit them their merited honor.

Since the unauthorized expeditions of the *coureurs de bois* were disrupting the French settlement at Quebec by the frequent desertions, efforts were taken to curb them. In 1666 the Indian trade had been opened to all residents of New France and the result had been a serious depopulation of the settled regions around Quebec. Royal regulations proved ineffective in restricting the trade. Still farmers left their land and homes to take part in the trade. In 1673 the governor forbade trading trips without his permission. The effort was still insufficient to check the irregular trade. In 1676 all natives of Canada were prohibited from engaging in the fur trade, leaving the lucrative trade to the monopoly again. When this method failed, the governor was authorized, in 1681, to issue twenty-five annual permits to be distributed by the governor. These permits were called "congés" and were sold by the recipients for a share of the profits, in some cases being used by the original possessors. The effect of this measure and the previous prohibition had been to drive much of the trade to the British at Albany where furs were accepted without question. Further complications arose when the

governor was suspected to be in league with several of the better known illegal traders. For many years the fur trade proved to be a critical problem to the administrations at Quebec and in France. (8)

The Jesuit missionaries often sheltered the *coursurs de bois* in the mission houses in the wilderness. Thus the Jesuits learned of new tribes and of routes of travel. On some occasions the Jesuits accompanied the traders into the wilds, there to seek out some new tribe. In such a way the path to the out-lying tribes was broken; in a few years regular missionary expeditions were sent out.

The lure of the passage to China was also a strong influence working toward the exploration of the country. When the colonists of France and England settled on the North American continent the belief that there was a passage to the western ocean was rife. For almost a hundred years the possibility of such a passage intrigued explorers. The government at Quebec and the Jesuits were still interested in the theory when they were expanding into the west in the late Seventeenth Century. The reports of the great water in the west, later known to be a river, stimulated the search. The Jesuits and the secular authorities were equally anxious to be the first to find it. The search for the westward passage, now to be directed toward the great river, was one of the objects of the exploring expeditions of the decade 1665-1675. (9)

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8. New York Colonial Documents, I: 90, 126, 134; Alford, The Illinois Country, p. 72.

9. Steck, op.cit., has a chapter which discusses the "Northern Mystery" as the theory of the passage has sometimes been described; also Ibid., p.



Much of the story of the expansion of New France in the late Seventeenth Century is bound up in the new colonial policy of the French Government. This policy took form during the early 1680's and found its expression in the administration of Jean Talon, one of New France's greatest civil officers.

This policy grew out of Louis XIV's general policy of paternalism in which he centered all the activities of France about himself. Already successful in France, the policy was extended to New France. The government of New France was completely overhauled in the process.

In addition to changes in the structure of government in the colony, a new attitude was taken toward its aggrandizement. Seeing the breakdown of the principle of monopoly in the fur trade, the citizens of the colony were given the right to trade with the Indians. Further, explorations were encouraged and the colonial government sponsored expeditions to extend the influence of France in the new world. Expeditions were sent to the southwest with the intention of taking possession of the country west of the English colonies. Another motive behind the new interest of the government in extending its secular power to the farthest parts was to effect the curtailment of the Jesuits' power over the Indians. A third was to find the outlet to the southwest.(10)

In 1670 and 1671 the government sent expeditions to take formal possession of the western regions. Simon Francois LeMoyne, Sieur de

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10. Steck, p. 106.

St. Luson, was sent to the Algonquian Indians at Sault Ste. Marie, there to proclaim Louis XIV. Robert Cavelier de La Salle was sent to the southwest with a similar charge. St. Luson was expected to explore the Illinois Country but returned from Sault Ste. Marie without having done so. (11)

La Salle, dispatched to the southwest, left Quebec, but where he went is clouded with doubt. It is improbable that he went as far as he had been sent. For several years he was unreported at Quebec. (12)

It was after Talon had given up hope of hearing of La Salle that he determined to send another explorer to make a claim to the western lands. The Jesuits were rapidly extending their influence over the west and the government was failing to extend its civil authority at an equal pace. With this in mind Talon planned another expedition to extend civil influence to the river that might be the highway to the western ocean.

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11. Steele, p. 125 et passim.

12. It is this period in the life of La Salle that has been the subject of much controversy. Hargry asserts that he found the Mississippi while in the Illinois Country and explored it. A few French historians have followed this theory. Most American historians have remained skeptical. Hargry's theory was subject to immediate attack by John Gilmary Shea, in an article, The Bursting of Pierre Hargry's La Salle Bubble. Since then others have taken part in the controversy. Hargry has since been proved to have built up an unwarranted story and his documents, decovertees et Etablissement des Français dans l'ouest et dans le sud ..., have been proved unworthy as sources. Most recent historians to take part in the controversy is Jean Delangle, S.J., who breaks down the Hargry theory in its entirety. "La Salle, 1680-1673, Mid-America, XIX (New Series, VIII): 197-216, (July, 1937). The second installment of the article will appear in the October issue.

The man he chose to undertake the exploration was Louis Jolliet, a merchant who had considerable experience as an Indian agent and some training in map making.

Louis Jolliet was born in Quebec in 1645, the son of a wagon maker. He had been educated in the Jesuit school and gained some reputation as a student. There he learned surveying and map making in addition to philosophy and theology. First intending to join the order, Jolliet soon gave up the idea and became a voyageur. As a voyageur he transported furs from the Indian country to the warehouses of Quebec, gaining a knowledge of business as well as of the Indians and their customs. In 1671 he was chosen to investigate the source of copper on the shores of Lake Superior; on this government mission he made two trips to Lake Superior. He must have seen the advantages of becoming a trader while on this voyage, for in addition to carrying on a trade on these voyages, he organized a company when he came back from the upper lakes region. (15)

It is possible that the choice of Jolliet was a friendly gesture to the Jesuits at Quebec. Jolliet left Quebec in time to reach Mackinac before the winter closed the waterways. With him he carried trade goods with which he planned to meet the costs of the expedition. At Mackinac he was to pick up Father Marquette who, as prospective missionary, was assigned to go with him to the river on which the Illinois lived, at that time the Mississippi.

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15. Ernest Ingham, Louis Jolliet, Decouvreur de Mississippi et de l'ays Illinois ...., Montreal, 1926. Shorter English biographical sketches are found in Thwaites, Father Marquette, New York, 1902, pp. 122-136, and Jes. Rel., LIX: 89.

A shift in the scene of the story of the discovery of the Illinois Country must now be made.

At a point near the furthestmost western extension of Lake Superior a mission was established by the Jesuits in 1665. The place was a suitable site for a mission house because the Indians habitually inhabited the points of land that jut out into the lake in that vicinity. Good fishing and ample protection from marauding enemies brought the Indians to that point year after year. When the Indian wars of the middle seventeenth century concentrated the Indians in the northland, Chequamegon Bay, for so it was named by both Indians and whites, was a natural rendezvous for the many tribes. The missionary father who founded the mission at Chequamegon Bay was Claude Allouez of the Society of Jesus. (14)

A successor to Father Allouez was needed several years later and Jacques Marquette, a newly arrived Jesuit from France, was sent to take his place.

Jacques Marquette was born on June 1, 1637 in Laon, France. His family background was largely one of politics and soldiery. The Marquettes were the most distinguished family of the town; their coat-of-arms appeared on the town insignia. For five centuries the Marquettes had increased in power and wealth by their steadfast devotion to the kings of France. His mother's family was equally well known. A member of her family had founded the Order of Brothers of the Christian Schools, who

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14. Thwaites, Father Marquette, pp. 67-72.

developed a system of free education for the poorer boys of France.

Jacques was the youngest in a family of six, which, perhaps, in a measure accounts for his forsaking the activities of his ancestors and joining the Jesuit order in his seventeenth year. The Jesuits at this time were the greatest of the missionary societies, sharing great hardships equally with the joys of saving souls. In this they ably publicized their efforts by an annual publication of letters, accounts, journals, and other notices. This annual volume, called a Relation, must have fallen into the hands of Jacques Marquette because we find him wanting to become a missionary at an early date. However, on becoming a full-fledged member of the society, he served his order in the capacity of a teacher in a number of their schools in northern France. (75)

In 1666, when he was twenty-nine years of age, Marquette received orders to sail to New France. On his arrival there in September he spent less than a month in Quebec, being sent to Three Rivers, seventy miles above Quebec, to study the languages at a mission station. In two years he was sent to the Ottawa mission at Sault Ste. Marie. He was not kept there long, for, after learning that his ultimate station would be among the Illinois, a great untouched field of labor to the south, he was sent to relieve Father Allouez at the furthestmost outpost on Lake Superior. There he studiously learned all he could about Indian habits and languages, particularly the Illinois who were to be his special



charges. Learning of their homeland from members of the great tribe, he soon formed the desire to explore their lands. But his mission work and his studies were rudely interrupted by the recurrence of the Sioux wars. His Indians returned to the east whence once they had fled driven by the Iroquois scourge. This time they settled on Mackinac Island. The mission was soon removed to the mainland at the site of the present St. Ignace.

It was there that Jolliet met Marquette and gave him the good news that he was to accompany him to the country of the Illinois and aid in the discovery of the great river that was believed to flow into the western sea. It was on December 8, 1672, that Jolliet arrived - Marquette's special day, because he had chosen the feast of the immaculate conception as his holiday and placed himself under the care of the Virgin. But they did not begin immediately because winter had set in and the waters were no longer navigable. Together they spent the winter at St. Ignace. (16)

After spending the winter in preparation by learning all they could of the country they were to traverse, they set out from St. Ignace on May 17, 1673. (17) Their expedition consisted of five French voyageurs, two birch bark canoes, trade goods and provisions. Following

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16. Thwaites, Father Marquette, chaps. III-XII (pp. 17-150); and Steck, pp. 150-151.

17. May 17 is the date given in the Marquette account as printed in Jos. Nel., LIX; Agnon accepts this date. Steck's monograph suggests May 15, after criticising May 13, given by Thavenot.

the western shore line of Lake Michigan, they came to Green Bay; entering the bay, they paddled to the river that is its source. Not yet were the explorers in strange territory; missionaries and traders knew the Fox River and its rapids. Beyond Lake Winnebago they continued on the little stream, passing the Winnebago village, until they came to the mile and a half portage between the Fox River and the Wisconsin River. From then on they were in strange lands on which they had few accounts. Through the beautiful valley they paddled, avoiding the numerous shallows and sandbars, until they reached the Mississippi exactly one month after their departure from St. Ignace.

Southward they were carried by the broad Mississippi, until they reached the Arkansas River. There they decided to turn back; sure that the great river flowed into the Gulf of Mexico and not to the Virginia shores, they decided not to risk the lower dangers of the river and the Indians living on its shores. Marquette had introduced the gospel to all the tribes that he had met and Joliet had carefully noted the economic possibilities of the regions they had passed through, particularly the nature of the beaver and the information the Indians could give about mines and metals. So on July 17 they turned northward from the Indian village on the Arkansas River.

On their return, the expedition still unharmed by man or nature, they took a short cut. This short cut brought them up the Illinois River through its beautiful valley. They spent three days with the Peoria Indians, now near Peoria Lake, Marquette preaching the gospel

and baptizing a dying child. The Peoria were at that time one of the largest of the Illinois tribes. The explorers had previously met them on the Mississippi River, possibly the site of their summer hunt. Leaving the Peoria the seven Frenchmen continued their upstream voyage. They were everywhere impressed with the beauty of the valley:

"We have seen nothing like this river that we enter, as regards its fertility of soil, its prairies and woods; its cattle, elk, deer, wildcats, bustards, swans, ducks, parrots, and even beaver. There are many small lakes and rivers. That on which we sail is wide, deep, and still, for sixty-five leagues. In the spring and during part of the summer there is only one portage of half a league." (18)

They passed Starved Rock without mentioning it. The Kaskaskia village on the opposite shore received more attention. The explorers were well received in this village of seventy-four cabins. Marquette preached his message of Christianity and was invited to return. With an escort graciously provided, the explorers made their way to Lake Michigan, then called Lake of the Illinois. When they came to the mouths of the Des Plaines and Kankakee Rivers their escorts chose the Des Plaines route. Over the short portage to the north branch of the Chicago River the explorers dragged their canoes and baggage. Safely in the waters of Lake Michigan, they turned northward and their escort of Kaskaskia braves turned homeward. (19)

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18. Marquette's account, Jes. Rel. p. 181.

19. Marquette's account, Jes. Rel., LIX:181. In these earliest times the Des Plaines River was known as the Checagou. It was separated by a short portage which in rainy seasons was made easier by the appearance of a pond known as "Mud Lake" which permitted passage from the Des Plaines to the Chicago River without a portage. The Chicago was then known as the Checagoumoun, meaning "little Checagou". A description of the portage appears in Robert Knight and Lucius H. Benson, The Location of the Chicago Portage Route of the Seventeenth Century, Chicago, 1928.

Most accounts of the expedition have it that Jolliet accompanied Marquette to Green Bay in September, 1673, then returning to make further explorations in the Chicago region, where he spent two months. A recent study indicates that Jolliet probably spent far more time in the Chicago area than was previously supposed. Jolliet probably stayed at Chicago, spending the fall and winter of 1673 searching for beaver swamps and waiting for the winter catch of beaver. It will be remembered that Jolliet was a trader and expected an income from his Mississippi voyage. (20)

In the spring of 1674 Jolliet turned northward to report to Quebec. Probably leaving behind two of his Frenchmen in the hope of an early return, he had visions of developing the fur trade in the Lower Michigan area. At Green Bay his records were copied and he went on to Quebec. The stage was set to report a great discovery but all came to naught when his canoe was upset in the rapids above Montreal. At Quebec he could give only verbal reports of his voyage. (21)

Father Marquette, resting at St. Francis Xavier mission at Green Bay, thought only of returning to the Illinois Indians. At Kaskaskia he had given his promise to return to them as soon as possible. Jolliet, however, in Quebec, told glowing stories of the beauty of the land and of the beaver country. (22) He petitioned the King to grant him trade

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20. Stanley Paye, "Jolliet Goes West", Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, LXVI, 5-29 (April, 1954), pp. 11-13. The article explains Jolliet's activities after he left Marquette in the light of the events that occurred when Jolliet returned to Quebec.

21. Frontenac to Colbert, Nov. 14, 1674, in New York Colonial Documents, IX, 121. Also see Paye, op. cit.

22. Paye, pp. 22, 23.

rights in the lands he discovered but they were refused him. A year later, 1678, La Salle was granted the lands Jolliet had so won. The politics of empire building and trade were too much for Jolliet; he was a successful explorer but the subtle art of politics was not to be found in him<sup>(23)</sup>

Starved Rock had no special importance to Louis Jolliet. He was primarily interested in the beaver country that lay below Lake Michigan. It does not appear that he wanted to establish a colony in the country he found. Jolliet was a tradesman, no more. He had cast off his earlier profession of voyageur and Indian specialist. After several years of seeking the favor of Governor Frontenac he was rewarded, in 1680, with the island of Anticosti, a public office and fishing rights. In 1690 an expedition from New England destroyed his labors of ten years and in 1700 he died in poverty although holding a large tract of land near Quebec. (24)

Father Marquette was to reap the glory due the members of the expedition. When Jolliet's journal was lost, it was believed an accurate copy was available at Green Bay. This copy never found its way into hands that would preserve it. Its disposition or fate has never been known. However, an account in narrative form was written by Father Marquette and it is this narrative on which the historian depends. There have been

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23. See Faye, op.cit.

24. Sagnon, Louis Jolliet, p. 187 et passing and Thwaites, Father Marquette, p. 216; Steck, pp. 239, 240.



found several copies of this document which have transmitted the story.

The original, written by Marquette himself, is apparently not in existence.(25)

Its purpose was to report the activities of the expedition to his Superior-general, Father Rabbon. The reference to dates in the account suggests that a journal was kept, but it too is not to be found. Thus by an anomaly of fate Father Marquette's letter has been the only source in information, and, because of it, Father Marquette long reaped the credit due the civil leader of the expedition.

Father Marquette sought no reward for his services. He thought only of returning to the Illinois. The following year, 1674, he began his trip toward their village. Sickness and winter overtook him but he reached the Kaskaskia village. His health spent, he preached but a short while, and prepared to return to Mackinac. His last earthly voyage begun, death overtook him near present Ludington, Michigan, on the eastern shore of the lake. (26) His companions buried the body there and went on to Mackinac. A year or so later, the remains of Marquette were exhumed and buried in the chapel of the Mission of St. Ignace, at Mackinac.

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25. See Steck's chapter on the Marquette narrative for further discussion.

26. Thwaites, Father Marquette, pp. 217-227.

## LA SALLE • FIRST DEVELOPMENT OF THE ILLINOIS COUNTRY

When Jolliet approached the governmental seat of New France in July, 1674, his thoughts were centered on the wealth he might derive from the beaver in the country he had explored. The great region he had traversed was virgin territory; the rivers still teemed with the fur bearing animals that brought wealth to the trader.

On his arrival at Quebec after a harrowing experience in the rapids at La Chine, Jolliet gave verbal reports of his voyage. Without the benefit of his journal or fellow explorers, his accounts varied. His maps, drawn from memory, showed changes from time to time as he piled new advantages in the politics of procuring the grant that he wanted. He prepared a petition, seeking the trading privileges of the Illinois Country. Frontenac's report, dispatched on the same vessel, denounced Jolliet's pretensions.

In a later year, at about the same time, a close partisan of Frontenac sailed to France with the intention of obtaining the grant of the Illinois Country. This emissary, Robert Cavalier, favored by an introduction to Colbert written by the governor himself, also petitioned for western rights. (1)

Robert Cavalier, mentioned in the previous chapter by the name La Salle, a name which he made famous, was born in 1645 in France.

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1. Foye, "Jolliet Goes West", Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XVII:5-30, (April, 1934), discusses the politics of the Illinois grant on pp. 20-30.

His family was of the burgher class, holding minor official posts in the government. A branch of his family had gained considerable wealth in business and its members were consequently holding high places in their community life.

Robert Cavellier's education was received at the hands of the Jesuits in their schools. He took preliminary steps to enter the order, but obtained a release before taking the full orders. Although as a future Jesuit he had renounced his share of the family wealth when his father died, his relatives settled four hundred livres a year on him when he dropped out of the order. Endowed by nature with a restless spirit, he set out for Canada in the spring of 1666 to make his fortune.

At Montreal he found that the Sulpician order was giving grants of land to men who would settle their seigniorie. There he took steps to build a settlement, giving out small grants to agriculturists. The business of colonizing did not hold his attention long, for he was soon making plans for trips of exploration. It has been impossible to say with any degree of authority just what trips Cavellier took at this time. (2)

The activities of Robert Cavellier are more easily followed after the arrival of the new governor of Canada in 1672. Louis de Buade, Count of Palluau and Frontenac, was middle-aged and unaccustomed to the rough life of the frontier. He found Canada a land of free spirits, each pursuing his own interest. As governor, he found he could exercise but little authority, the only agency he had to enforce his edicts being a small

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2. See Previous chapter, note 13.

personal bodyguard. Nowhere was there any centralized authority or respect for authority as there was in France. It was to such a man that Cavalier attached his allegiance. Frontenac, too, was grateful for the alliance and loyalty of the young seignior from Montreal. Frontenac determined to build a fort at the lower end of Lake Ontario to protect the traders who used the upper St. Lawrence and to control the unruly Iroquois Indians. Quite naturally the spot chosen for the fort was also ideal for trading operations. Seeing the opportunity, Frontenac looked about for some one who would operate it - preferable some one who was close to himself. La Salle was such a man, and in 1674 he went to France to ask that a seigniorship be given him at Fort Frontenac. The interest in the west had been stimulated by the successful navigation to the Mississippi just completed.

La Salle returned to New France the next year with one of the most desirable grants to be had in Canada. He rebuilt the fort so that he might enlarge its operations and he formed a partnership in which the governor was a silent sharer of the profits. From that time on La Salle enjoyed the opposition of the merchants of Canada whose furs he had opportunities to intercept. At the same time that he received the grant, the king made Robert Cavalier one of the un-titled nobles of France under the name Robert Cavalier de la Salle. (5)

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5. The life of La Salle is derived from Parkman's La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West, (Boston, 1889), first chapters; the few short sentences on Frontenac from Parkman, Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV., (Boston, 1889), first three chapters.

Seigniorial grants, such as the one given La Salle, were given by the governor and the intendant of Canada jointly, and became effective on confirmation by the King of France himself. The arrangements were entirely feudal. La Salle had to maintain the fort and its soldiery, who were to number twenty, and to develop the land by clearing it and building houses. In return La Salle could sub-grant about a third of the land, holding the rest in common for all settlers and the king. (4)

Yet the purpose of La Salle's taking the grant was not to build a city but to develop the fur trade and to make a fortune. A secondary motive was his desire to control the regions of the grant west and all the wealth that might someday be found there. That source of wealth lay in the fur trade.

The fur trade was only a side-line occupation in the earlier days of New France. The main occupations had been fishing, lumbering, and farming, but with the middle of the Seventeenth Century there came a demand for beaver skins, used in the making of felt hats. The Indian were sought by the Iroquois and Ottawa were largely for the privilege of being the middlemen in the fur trade. It had been the custom of the

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There have been written many authoritative lives of La Salle and Frontenac, but, feeling the study need not concern itself in biographical effusion, only sketches of the characters are given.

The grant of Fort Frontenac and the grant of nobility are reprinted in Isaac J. Cox, The Journeys of Rene-Robert Cavelier de La Salle..., Two volumes. (New York, 1922), volume II, pp. 238-240.

4. See W. B. Egan, The Seigniorial System in Canada, (New York, 1907)

Indians to bring the furs to the French settlements, there to receive merchandise which they took back to the interior to trade for more furs. After 1680 the Ottawa proved themselves able to maintain their control of the northern routes and so they became the chief tribe trading with the French, although they trapped relatively few furs themselves. (5)

After 1670 the French fur trade changed in character. A part of this was due to the increased competition from English stations established at Hudson Bay in 1670 and the vigorous business methods of the English and Dutch traders at Fort Orange, now Albany, New York. Another part of the change in the trade was caused by the French men going out to meet the Indians to get their furs - before a competitor had a chance to meet the Indians. La Salle's interest in the west was typical of the French minds of Canada in the second half of the Seventeenth Century. (6)

Large profits were made in the fur trade. Some traders made as much as seven hundred percent profit on their trips. The method of conducting the trade was regulated - but regulations meant little when profits were great.

The customary method of conducting a voyage to the hinterland was as follows: A permit allowed six men to go out in two canoes with 1,000 écus of goods, which were purchased at fifteen percent above the regular sale price because they were for trading purposes. They were gone about three or four months or a year and returned - usually - with four canoes of furs, each containing about forty packs of furs, worth about 8,000

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5. Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, An Introduction to Canadian Economic History, (New Haven, 1930), pp. 41-48.

6. Ibid., pp. 44-48.



sons. The costs of the expeditions were taken out of the gross and the profits divided equally between the merchant who furnished the goods and the chief voyageur. The voyageurs shared equally their portion of the profits. (7)

La Salle saw the necessity of keeping pace with the changes in the fur trade. He saw that he could no longer expect to get the furs he wanted at Fort Frontenac. Voyageurs were already reaching out into the great lakes as far as Lake Superior and upper Lake Michigan, there being a tie to pick the best furs from the Indians, leaving the poorer grades to be brought down later.

Both La Salle and Frontenac knew what they would have to do. La Salle thought in terms of the rivers explored by Louis Jolliet. In this he was supported by Frontenac, who was anxious to have a friend of his take over the lands claimed by the Jesuits by right of discovery. He had little intention of going as far west as Lake Michigan, then known as Lake of the Illinois. He set out for France in the spring of 1677 with a project of developing the lower lakes region.

In the autumn of 1677 La Salle was in Paris seeking favors of the king. He presented a memoir to the ministry outlining his plans to colonize the outlet of Lake Erie as an effective means of preventing English expansion and the seignorial privileges at two other projected

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7. Ibid., pp. 61, 82

posts. (8) Additional conferences, undoubtedly in secret, were held between the petitioner and the minister of colonies, Colbert. On May 12, the following year, La Salle received permission to explore the western parts of New France - "Through which it is probable a road may be found to Mexico" - and special privileges not asked for in the petition. La Salle was confirmed in his appointment to the seignioral rights at Fort Frontenac; he was given the right to build and maintain additional forts; moreover, he was given a monopoly in buffalo skins and the right to trade in beaver except with the Ottawa Indians and those Indians that traded at Montreal. This was much more than the written petition had asked. His enterprise was to be forfeited if not completed in five years; the cost of the enterprise was to be borne by La Salle himself. (9)

In the petition presented to the ministry La Salle had emphasized the building of a colony to restrict English activity in the region of Lake Erie; the grant gave him the right to find a highway to Mexico. He asked for permission to build two forts; he was granted the right to build as many as he wanted, provided they be built within five years. A year earlier the petition of Jolliet to establish trading stations in the west had been refused, yet La Salle received trading rights and a monopoly in buffalo hides, although no mention of the development of

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8. Hargry, I:329-336; summarized in Parkman, La Salle, pp. 11,12.

9. Hargry, I:337, 338; Cox, Journeys, II:241-243; Parkman, La Salle pp. 112,113. This grant has been published many times over.

the Mississippi River as a highway was made in the petition, La Salle's actions in Paris confirmed the idea that the object of his explorations would be to develop the western highways as a means of reaching the Spaniards in New Mexico and indulging in the fur trade at the same time.

Perhaps the changes in La Salle's objectives became more explicable when we remember the activities of the self-exiled Count Diego de Penaloza. Penaloza had been the Spanish governor of New Mexico until 1669, when the Inquisition condemned him. Having lost his wealth and in danger of losing his liberty, he fled to England. There he tried to interest Parliament in an expedition against New Spain - he would direct the fleet to the mines of Spanish gold. Unsuccessful in England, he turned to France. There he interested the ministry but they took no immediate action because France and Spain were at peace. However, the plan was kept in mind. In 1672, when Frontenac was sent to New France as Governor, a part of his instructions emphasized the importance of the Passage to the "South Sea". Such emphasis undoubtedly stimulated interest in the route to the southwest. Joliet not having fully accomplished his mission, it was La Salle's duty to go the rest of the way and open the highway to Mexico. Ten years later, when France and Spain were at war, the schemes of La Salle and Penaloza were again brought in alliance by the French ministry. England, by numerous raids upon the high seas, had tapped Spanish wealth at one point; France, by seizing the mines of New

Mexico, would take over the source of Spain's wealth. (10)

While still in Paris in the summer of 1678, La Salle recruited thirty artisans and procured the iron, cordage, and anchors necessary for two ships. A large part of his time was spent in raising money for he no longer had any of his own. He met with difficulties and had to turn to his family for a large part of his support. The rate of interest was not always stipulated - in one case it was forty percent for the five year period. Even Fort Frontenac was mortgaged to raise money. But for the most part the money came from the members of La Salle's own family - to their sorrow, for five years later his ventures had cost his creditors 500,000 livres. (11)

La Salle's cause was not without followers in Paris even though their monetary support was lacking. He had the favor of the great minister, Colbert, his son, Seignelay, and lesser lights in the government. A personal friend was the Prince de Conti, who introduced <sup>to</sup> La Salle a young Italian officer in the French army. La Salle took on this officer, Henri de Conti, as a lieutenant. Henri de Conti had been eight years in the army, operating both on land and on sea. One of his hands had been blown off by a grenade in Sicily and had been replaced with an artificial hand, probably of iron. He came from a distinguished Italian family;

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10. Steck, *op.cit.*, p. 141 et *passim*; Parkman slighte the importance of Frontenac in French politics in his note, LaSalle, p. 328.

11. Hargry, 1:423-432; Parkman, La Salle, pp. 114, 115.

his father had been governor of Laota and had invented a form of life insurance known to this day as "tentine". Another assistant joined the La Salle party when it sailed - La Botte de Lussiera - who went along as a lieutenant with a share in the enterprise. (12)

The party sailed from Rochelle on July 14, 1679, thirty-three in number of which thirty were shipbuilders, carpenters, and blacksmiths. The other three members of the expedition were leaders. On September 15 they arrived in Canada, where La Salle recruited men. This time he chose men familiar with life on the frontier.

Part of the expedition was sent ahead to build a vessel above the great falls at Niagara. By August, 1679, the whole party had been brought to the small river flowing into the Niagara River above the falls where the forty-ton vessel was being constructed. On August 7 the expedition set sail; on the tenth it was at the site of Detroit, where it had to await a favorable wind before entering Lake Huron. On August 27 the explorers arrived at Mackinac. From there Tonti was sent to Sault Ste. Marie to bring up saw men who owed La Salle their services. La Salle went on in his bark, called the "Griffin", leaving Tonti instructions to meet him at the mouth of the River of the Missis on the southeastern shore of Lake Michigan. It was at Green Bay in the early September that La Salle decided to send back the "Griffin" with a load of furs to

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12. Tonti's Memoir of 1693, in Cox, Journeys, I, 1, 2; Parkman, La Salle, pp. 115, 116. The memoir of Tonti has been reprinted in many places.



satisfy the clamoring of his creditors. (13)

La Salle's grant did not permit his trading to those tribes already trading with Montreal, the Ottawa and other tribes that were middlemen in the Canadian fur trade. Yet La Salle, undoubtedly driven to desperation by the rumors circulated by his creditors, gathered furs all along the way to Green Bay. All the regions traversed were Ottawa country, or that belonging to the smaller middlemen tribes. It is apparent that La Salle interpreted his grant in its broadest sense, quite naturally those tribes with whom he came in conflict covered a more narrow interpretation of his trading powers.

The "Griffin", laden with furs, left Green Bay on September 13, never to be heard of again. The vessel had been entrusted to the pilot with orders to return to the foot of Lake Michigan as soon as possible. The disappearance of the "Griffin" has been one of the mysteries of the Great Lakes; no information of her fate beyond mere rumors was ever brought to French authorities or La Salle. The explorer, characteristically, blamed her loss on his enemies, and particularly on his pilot. (14)

The day after the "Griffin" was sent back with the furs La Salle embarked in four canoes, taking with him four French men and the iron

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13. Tonty's Memoir of 1695, in Cox, *op.cit.*, 125,4; Shea's Le Clercq, II, 112-117.

14. Parkman, La Salle, p. 137, 142, 143; in *id.*, op.cit., pp. 33, 34.

15. Parkman, La Salle, p. 169.



for the building of a second ship. On November 1, 1878, they arrived at the appointed rendezvous at the mouth of the River of the Miami. Winter had already arrived, and Tonti, dispatched to bring men from the Sault, was not there. Anticipating the arrival of Tonti, La Salle had his men construct a shelter which was fortified by a palisade. By December 3 Tonti had brought up 15 men and the combined party ascended the River of the Miami, leaving four men at the newly established fort.(16)

The passage at the gorge of the River of the Miami, now called the St. Joseph, was fraught with hardship. The pathway between the St. Joseph and the Kankakee, then called Neokiki, was hard to find in mid-winter. La Salle was lost for over a day while he was looking for the portage. The men labored under most discomforting conditions. Fresh snow obscured trails and made travel difficult. Few pieces of descriptive literature rival Parkman's description of La Salle's passage over the St. Joseph-Kankakee portage in their vivid portrayal of hardship and travail. Two weeks they labored on the portage and in the swamps of the Kankakee. Finally the swamps gave way to the regularly defined Kankakee River, and the Kankakee to the broader Illinois river. (17)

The expedition with its eight canoes laden with men and heavy equipment passed down the now familiar sites of the upper Illinois River valley. Even though it was cold and paddles dipped into near-freezing waters, and food grew scarce, La Salle must have felt relief as he entered

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16. Othen's La Clercq, II:116,117; Official Relations, Library, I:489-492; Parkman, La Salle, p. 138-139.

17. Parkman, La Salle, p. 151-155.

the heart of his domain. On one of the last days of the year 1679 the party rounded one of the bends of the Illinois River below Ottawa and the village of the Kaskaskia and kindred Indians lay before them. The four hundred and sixty cabins stood empty on the bank of the river - the Indians were gone on the winter hunt. It was a serious blow to find the Indians gone, for La Salle had expected to replenish his supplies there. He hesitated to take the things he needed - corn, particularly - for it was a serious breach of etiquette to take food from an Indian cache. Necessity soon overcame prudence and La Salle took thirty or forty minots of the cached corn and, passing Starved Rock on his left, made his way down stream. (18)

Quite suddenly, four days later, on January 5, 1680, the expedition came upon an encampment of a band of the Illinois at Peoria Lake. The explorers had seen the smoke of the village the night before, but, taking the necessary precautions, they camped where they were and made their descent upon the village in the early morning. Lined up, eight abreast, the canoes entered the narrows on the banks of which the village was located. The Indian village, up to that time unaware of the Frenchmen in their midst, saw the war-like guise of the Frenchmen. Each Indian acted for himself - some ran away from the village, the women and children following as fast as they could; others, braver, took up their war daggers and bows, ready to offer resistance. Although still ready to defend

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18. Shea's La Salle, II:118-119; Official Narrative, Barry, I:488; Parkman, La Salle, pp. 186-188; Letter of La Salle, Barry, II:56, 57.

themselves, the Frenchmen accepted the calumet when it was offered them, after the formalities, the exchange of gifts and speeches, had been done with, the day was given over to feasting and entertaining the Frenchmen. (19)

The second day among the Indians at Peoria Lake, which will hereafter be called Pimitoui, its Indian name, brought troubles. During the night a Miami Indian named Monso had told the Illinois chiefs that La Salle was in league with the Iroquois and was secretly planning to bring in the Iroquois on another raid. In the morning La Salle noticed that the Indians were no longer friendly. They took occasion to counsel him about the dangers of his projected trip down the Mississippi. La Salle soon found that his personal safety was not their only concern. One of the Frenchmen with him was familiar with the language of the Illinois and he had learned from their unguarded statements the happenings of the evening before. He told La Salle of the things he had heard, and La Salle allayed their fears. Monso, who had fomented the trouble by his accusations, fled. (20)

La Salle's men had been living in huts among the Indians. The hardships of life among the Indians added to their woes. One evening, six of

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19. Shea's La Cloroc, II:119-120; Margry, I:467-470; ibid., II:37, 38. There are six sources of information concerning the early days at Lake Peoria (Pimitoui): The Official Relation, Margry, I:435-514; letter of La Salle dated September 29, 1680, Margry, II:32-34; La Salle's memoir of 1693, Gen. Journeys, I:1-11 (first part); La Cloroc, which quotes copiously from Father Menard's Journal, First Establishment of the Faith in New France, translated and edited by John Gilmary Shea; Newspaper, A Description of Louisiana, also translated and edited by Shea, and Relation of Henri de Tonti, Margry, I:575-614. All but the letter of La Salle have been reprinted in various collections.

20. Margry, II: 41 et passim. The incident is reported in all accounts.

the Frenchmen escaped, preferring the rigors of winter travel to the life of the explorer's camp. La Salle became convinced that he must segregate his men if he were to keep them in good spirits until spring would bring less arduous conditions. He set about the building of a fort. The spot he chose was about a mile removed from the Indian village, on a slight elevation. Below the hill was a suitable place for the building of the ship in which La Salle planned to descend the Mississippi. The Fort was called "Crevincoeur", a name variously attributed to their suffering or to a battle in which Front had taken part when a soldier for France. The fort contained four houses, two of which were barracks, the others a chapel and a shop for the blacksmith. (21)

While La Salle's men were busy at the cutting of timber for the projected bark, the missionaries spent their time in the village a half league away. Knowing nothing of the language the Indians spoke, the three fathers - Ribourdre, Membre, and Hennepin - spent their days among the Indians in an effort to master their speech. La Salle was busy supervising the efforts of his men. Some had to be taught new trades; others had to be encouraged constantly in order to keep them at their work. By the end of February life at Crevincoeur had almost settled down to routine. When the Indians were ready to return to the site of their semi-permanent homes near Starved Rock, one of the priests had already learned enough of the language to communicate with them. He, Father Membre,

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21. Margry, I: 474-477; II: 42, 43; La Salle's Hennepin, pp. 173-178.



was permitted to accompany his newly chosen parish to their homes.

Father Riboudre remained at the fort, there proceeding to the Frenchmen and helping La Salle. Mennepin, in company with Michael Ake and Antoine Angel, was sent on a trading voyage up the Mississippi River, February 20. (22) Then La Salle, not having heard any news of the "Griffin" or the Frenchmen he had sent to find her, went himself to find his vessel and to procure rigging for his bark under construction. (23)

La Salle set out with five men, one of whom was the Menagan hunter that ever remained faithful to him, and others being Frenchmen. A few miles up the river La Salle came upon ice. At first it was just a thin sheet through which he could easily hack his way. Later a cold spell made it possible to drag their equipage over the smooth ice. The Indian village was still empty when they entered the northern channel of the river just above Starved Rock. (24) The party spent several days in the village, finding there only two persons, one of whom was the chief of the Illinois, Chasagone. La Salle took time to reconnoiter Starved Rock and found it suitable for fortification. He went on to his fort

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22. Trade was the object of this voyage - Then's Mennepin, p. 191, see note.

23. Then's Le Clercq, II:124-130; Then's Mennepin, p. 196 et passim.

24. Father Membre's account states that he was in the village when La Salle arrived there on March 11, spending twenty-four hours in the village - Then's Le Clercq, II:130. None of the other accounts mention his presence there.

at the mouth of the St. Joseph River over the ice and snow. Most of his journey was by foot because he found too much ice to permit extensive use of his two canoes. Through slush and thawing ice he and his five companions made their way toward the lake. They followed its shoreline toward the fort, floating over rivers on improvised rafts. On March 24, late in the evening, they arrived at the fort. (25)

At this fort in the Miami country La Salle met the two men whom he had sent to find the "Griffin". They had left La Salle's expedition to make a circuit of Lake Michigan in the hope of finding the vessel. Having just completed their arduous journey around the lake, they met La Salle and told him that their efforts failed to disclose any news of the "Griffin". Convinced that he must now go on to Lake Erie and Fort Frontenac, La Salle sent the two men on to Fort Crevecoeur, and he and his party continued on their way to Fort Frontenac.

Meanwhile Fort Crevecoeur and the Frenchmen there had been left under the command of Tonti. La Salle had left a supply of ammunition for their defense and furs and trade goods to pay the men for their labors while he was gone. Yet the men chafed at the unrelenting hardship. Tonti kept them at their work for over a month. Most of the Indians had been gone from the winter camp at Lake Pimichon since the end of February; the Frenchmen were relatively alone in the wilderness. Working under difficulties, the French laborers were little fired by the zeal of their commander or his lieutenant. Then when the two scouts who had sought

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25. Margry, I:489 et passim.; Margry, II: 55-59; Parkman, La Salle p. 176.



the "Griffin" returned to Crevecoeur one day in the middle of April with the news that the project was at the point of abandonment, the plight of the workers at the fort became more intense. The loss of the "Griffin", the reported seizure of Fort Frontenac by La Salle's creditors, coupled with their disgust at their life at the fort, led them to make plans of escaping.

The two messengers had brought Tonti the order that he was to remove the men to a site on the bluffs opposite the great village of the Illinois. La Salle had seen the rock cliff we now call Starved Rock on his recent passage up the Illinois River and thought it suitable for fortification. When he got to the fort of the St. Joseph and learned that the "Griffin" was lost, he became convinced that he would have to put his camp on the Illinois on a more permanent basis. His first intention had been to establish a base at the head of the deep-water navigation of the Illinois River from which he might easily extend his operations to the Mississippi River. But now, with his supporters deserting him on every side, he realized that he would have to make the post in the Illinois River valley a permanent one. It would take time before he would be able to use the Mississippi River as the highway to his lands. Alone in the Indian country, his Frenchmen would need supplies of food which the Indians grew near to their great village. If new incidents were to estrange French and Indians his men would need more adequate protection. For reasons such as these La Salle chose Starved Rock to become the site of his headquarters in the Illinois country.

Tonti set out with a few of his men to examine the rock which La Salle had described. He was busy at that site when two messengers came up hurriedly from Greveocour with the announcement that all but the Recollet Fathers and a hired man had pillaged the fort and deserted. While still at Starved Rock Tonti dispatched the four men he had with him to La Salle with an account of the matter. To insure finding La Salle, he sent them by different ways. Then he went back to Greveocour to view the desolation. (26)

Tonti found that the deserters had carried off the articles that would be of use to them on their march. The fortifications were little damaged, but there was little left for the maintenance of Tonti and those who had remained faithful. There was nothing to do but to live among the Indians, depending on their generosity for a livelihood. So Tonti salvaged what he could and led his party to the Illinois village above Starved Rock. There the six Frenchmen lived among the Indians, hoping for the early return of their commander.

During the summer the Frenchmen found innumerable little ways in which to repay the Indians for sheltering them. The missionaries, Fathers Ribourdre and Mesure, spent their days in unraveling the Indian language and teaching - as much as an imperfect knowledge of the language permitted them. They received their sustenance at the hands of Indian families into which they had been adopted as sons. Then the supply of

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26. Tonti, 1692, in Cox, I:7; Shea's Le Cleron, II:130 et passim.; Margr., I:584.

sacramental wine was consumed in late spring, masses were postponed until August when the native grapes yielded their juice. Tonti spent his time teaching the Indians European methods of doing things. When the Indians set out for the summer hunt, the Frenchmen went along. In late July or early August the Indians and their French guests reoccupied the great village. When rumors that the Miami would join the Iroquois in the next campaign circulated in the late summer, Tonti showed the Illinois how they might defend themselves with palisades and entrenchments. He even induced them to build a simple fort with trenches. (27)

The deserters, in the mean time, were making their way out of the wilderness. They journeyed together to La Salle's fort on the St. Joseph, where they ransacked the storeroom and made off with the supplies. Their route continued to Mackinac, where, joined by others having grievances against the explorer, they entered the warehouse and took La Salle's furs. After that they travelled down the lakes and pillaged the fort at Niagara. Feeling their conduct no longer justifiable, a part of the deserters made for Albany. Others brazenly made their way to Quebec fired with the intention of killing La Salle should they meet him in the solitary reaches of the wilderness. (28)

La Salle, mindful of the desertion of his men, made his way to Fort Frontenac. Through the untrod paths east of the foot of Lake

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27. Shea's La Clercq, II:136 et passim.

28. Parkman, La Salle, pp. 185-187.

Michigan, through the streams swollen with spring rains, the explorer made a heroic march. He carried his sick men with him, yet he was not hindered. He brought them to the station he had established at the head of the Niagara River after spending almost two months on what has been called "the most arduous journey ever made by a Frenchman in America". (29)

At Niagara he learned that the "Griffon" had never reached the station located there. More discouraging was the information that a ship from France, freighted with his goods and men, had been totally wrecked at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and that men who were to join him as skilled laborers had been detained at Quebec. Nor would his laborers be found in Quebec; they had heard reports of his death and had found means of returning to France - only three or four remaining in Canada. At Fort Frontenac all was in disorder, and moreover, in the hands of his creditors. Thinking of his men in the Illinois, not yet knowing of their desertion, he sent four men under the leadership of Jean Bourdon, Sieur d'Autray, who had just come from the Illinois Country with him, to carry supplies to Tonti. The effort was futile, for the supplies fell into the hands of the deserters. Then La Salle went on to Fort Frontenac unmindful of this latest disaster. (30)

Tonti and the faithful remnant were still living among the Illinois

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29. Ibid. pp. 180-184.

30. Ibid.; La Salle's letter of September 29, 1680, (Margry II:32-33) is the chief source on La Salle's conduct after he left Fort de la Reue on March 2, 1680. It forms the basis of the Official Relation. (Margry, I:435-570).



while their commander was making efforts to succor them. The fathers Riteurde and "ndre, conscientiously performing their duty, had found few Indians sufficiently imbued with Christian principles to give reason for baptism. Consequently they baptised few. Tanti himself found the Illinois poor students of European methods of fighting and hunting. It drew near harvest time and the Indian village gathered the corn in preparation for the lean winter months. A Shawnee group that had spent the summer with the Illinois packed their goods and began their journey over the plains to the southward to spend the winter with their own people.

One of the Shawnee returned to the village the next day with the electrifying news of an Iroquois war party on the plain between the Illinois River and the Vermillion River. The Iroquois were five hundred strong and men in French garb were among them. The Illinois immediately thought the Frenchman in their midst, or their late companions, guilty of treachery. Tanti was seriously embarrassed by their reproaches and hardly knew what to do, being utterly unfamiliar with the rules of conduct in so unexpected turn of events. (31)

He resolved to arrange a peaceful settlement of the differences. The next day the Illinois were surprised to see the Miami joining the Iroquois. All the women and children were rushed to an island far downstream. The young men of the Illinois village could no longer remain in otive. The beating of war drums roused a party of four hundred warriors who crossed the river and ascended to the northern plain to fight the Iroquois. They were no match for the six hundred Iroquois whose strength was augmented

by several hundred Miami warriors, yet they went out bravely. The Illinois village could raise no more warriors at that time - about eight hundred of their men were making war on the other tribes. Tonti thought only of saving the village and its inadequately protected peoples. He enlisted two Frenchmen, the Sieur de Biard and Etienne Renault, and an Indian to accompany him to the Iroquois camp.

The four made their way to the enemy camp by widely encircling their own warrior bands and entering the Iroquois headquarters from the side. When they came within several hundred feet of their objective, they were discovered. Tonti was stabbed near the heart before his assailant learned that he was a Frenchman. Then he was carried into camp and questioned. Boldly Tonti told them that they were warring on the King of France and his governor by attacking the Illinois to whom he had extended his protection. His mission might have succeeded had not some Iroquois warriors reported that Frenchmen were fighting with the Illinois. The Indians grew surly. Tonti boasted of twelve hundred Illinois warriors who were about to enter the fray and of sixty Frenchmen who were ready to aid the Illinois. Although an invention, Tonti's assertions had no little effect. The council of the Seneca chief to burn Tonti at the stake gave way to the more cautious counsel of the Onondaga chief the Kaeu la Salle. The Onondaga won his point. Tonti would be sent back with a peace offer - a ruse to gain time for a more successful attack on the village. Tonti did as he was bid, though he saw through the ruse, and the fighting ceased. The Recollet fathers saw him coming and left their secluded hut to give his wounded body aid. The Illinois Indians retreated from the plain,



clambered down the southern bluffs, crossed the river, and re-entered their village.

Hardly had the Illinois crossed the river when Iroquois were seen on the opposite bluffs; later Iroquois were seen crossing the river; before long they were in the village begging for food. Soon they were there in such numbers that the Illinois fled for safety. Thereupon the Iroquois took possession of the town. Tonti and his companions, however, had not followed the Illinois. The Frenchmen were ordered to establish themselves in the camp that the Iroquois had erected out of the remains of the Illinois' cabins. Now controlling the whole village and the Frenchmen captives in their midst, the Iroquois proceeded to plunder the town.

Only when Illinois were seen concentrating on the high bluffs back of the town did the Iroquois again turn their attention to their opponents. The growing numbers of Illinois seen on the cliffs brought fears of Tonti's twelve hundred warriors. The conquerors proposed that Tonti and others negotiate a peace. Tonti fulfilled his obligations to the Iroquois, but, unknown to them, warned the Illinois of the insincerity of the Iroquois. The Illinois, however, were anxious to make the peace. An emissary to the Iroquois chiefs, eager to close the peace made so many promises and told so much of the true weakness of his people, that the Iroquois required their blood-lust. Tonti and his French companions became the special objects of their wrath for the deceptions to which they had been subjected. The Iroquois chiefs decided to send Tonti away.

With gifts of beaver to illustrate each statement, they gave Tonti notice to be gone. Tonti provisionally accepted the gifts but imposed the further condition that the Iroquois return to their homes. Then the Iroquois announced their true intentions. Infuriated, so much so that they forgot their diplomacy, they swore that they would eat the Illinois flesh. Tonti kicked away their gifts in scorn and was driven out of their sight.

The Frenchmen spent an uneasy night as they huddled in their cabins. They prepared for death but with the assurance that if they were to die, many Iroquois would precede them. Morning came and they were still alive. A friendly chief came to tell them that the Iroquois would not hold back their fury any longer and advised them to flee. Hurriedly the six Frenchmen packed their few possessions into a leaky canoe and paddled up the Illinois River. (32)

Tonti had done all he could for the Illinois. He had shown them how to fortify themselves in a stockade; in the excitement of events the Illinois resorted to their familiar methods of warfare. Failing to cooperate with him, their warfare had been unsuccessful. They had failed to heed his warnings of renewed Iroquois attacks. They had failed him in the peace negotiations. They did not hear him when he told them the Iroquois were building boats to attack the island refuge of their women

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521 Tonti, 1684, in Hargry, I:584-588; Tonti, 1693, in Oct, I:8-13; Memhre, in Annales Le Clercq, II:140-147. The historian is fortunate to have the memoirs of these principals. Hennepin includes an account of the Iroquois war of 1680 but his account was drawn up from Memhre's account and includes interpolations - aspersions - on the conduct of the French principals; then's Hennepin, p. 266, et passim.

and children. He had done his utmost to preserve the assets of his command but there was little more that he could do. Events had come to such a point that he had to think of himself and the few men who remained loyal to him.

In one leaky canoe the six Frenchmen made their way toward the French settlements of Green Bay and Mackinac. After five hours of hurried paddling they stopped to repair their canoe. The elderly Father Ribourdre chose to leave the busy group to pray. He walked into the woods and was never seen again. When he failed to return, Tonti and one of the men followed his steps along the slope of the shore. The footprints told the story. Indians had taken him. A band of Kickapoo captured him and took him, a prisoner, to their camp. The Frenchmen waited a full day for him - even built a great fire to guide him - but he never came. They went on, over the portage at Chicago, and up the lake. They were able to get within fifty miles of the Potawatomi village near Green Bay when their canoe was wrecked. The Potawatomi were moving to winter quarters on the lake and the Frenchmen, with little food, followed their abandoned sites until they at last caught up to the Indians. They spent the winter with some French *coursurs de bois* who were living with the tribe; only Father Meskys chose to go to the Jesuit mission station at the head of Green Bay. Spring brought returning health to Tonti and the four who remained with him, so they went to Mackinac in the hope of meeting La Salle. They arrived at the French settlement at the straits on June 4, 1681. (33)

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33. Tonti, 1684, in Margry, I:589-592; *She n'a le Clereq*, II:147-151.



In the mean time, while Tonti was leading his men out of the Illinois Country, the Iroquois retained their possession of the great village. Their fury had been aroused by the activities of Tonti in behalf of the Illinois and, when Tonti was gone, they wreaked their vengeance on the familiar sight of the Illinois village. Burial mounds were opened, bodies were taken down from the scaffolds and mutilated, and all that belonged to the Illinois was despoiled. The Illinois were soon convinced that the Iroquois meant them no good. They moved down stream, and, as they did so, the Iroquois followed. The two groups moved down to the mouth of the Illinois River at an equal pace. Usually they were within each other's sight. Only when they had reached the mouth of the Illinois River did the Illinois believe themselves safe. Several tribes of the Illinois were even then unaware of the Iroquois' intentions - they went into the villages of tribes west of the Mississippi. Another group went south down the Mississippi. Those that remained at the mouth of the Illinois, in the belief that the Iroquois would not harm them, met a cruel fate. The Iroquois speedily possessed upon them, capturing most of the women and children. The men had fled on the first appearance of the Iroquois, leaving the women and children to shift for themselves. Thus one of the great Illinois tribes was reduced to a mere tenth of its former numbers, for the Iroquois took about eight hundred slaves from that tribe, the Tamaroa, alone. (34)

The recurrence of the Iroquois was indicated for more serious issues

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34. Parkman, La Salle, pp. 217-219.

than the usual quarrels over hunting grounds. The Iroquois, settled in five centers in the northern part of the present state of New York, had developed the fur trade with the English and Dutch at Albany, then called Fort Orange. Iroquois lands in the east were soon exhausted of beaver and so the Iroquois had extended their "empire" as far west as Lake Michigan, southward as far as the Ohio River. In this empire they were to have a monopoly of the beaver hunting. Their rights to the region had been secured by the fierce wars of the middle of the seventeenth century.

With the extension of French interests into the lower lakes region, the Iroquois became alarmed over the encroachment on their beaver reserves. Their English backers took an interest in these affairs on the Iroquois frontier. The English could not claim the land as theirs, but they could encourage the Iroquois by supplying them liberally with weapons and words of encouragement. Thus the Iroquois seized upon the pretext that the Illinois had cut down the tree of peace by hunting the beaver on Iroquois land and by killing the female beaver.

The Iroquois were not primarily hunters of beaver, and the war they waged was not for additional hunting grounds. They had long been middlemen, exchanging English goods for furs, with the tribes that lay farther in the back-country. It was rather to stop the diversion of furs from Illinois to Canada than to save the trapping grounds for themselves that they made war on the Illinois. The Frenchmen at Quebec fully appreciated the motives of the Iroquois. They knew that the Iroquois were fighting for their control of the western fur trade. They knew, too, that the

English governor of New York was a tacit partisan of the Iroquois. (35) La Salle himself was not unaware of the Iroquois attitude, for on his way to the Illinois Country he had by accident come upon a council of Miami and Iroquois at which the discussion centered around the war on the Illinois. He thought he had set their plans at naught but he did not know the deeply seated ill-feeling he had sought to assuage. (36)

Frontenac knew that he must do something to quiet the Iroquois. In his communication to the King of France he showed that he realized the gravity of the situation - he spoke of the necessity of protecting the French Indian allies as incident to the protection of Quebec itself, because the Iroquois would ultimately attack Quebec if not checked in time. (37)

When some Illinois killed an Iroquois chief in upper Wisconsin shortly after the raid on the Illinois River valley, it was feared that a general Indian war would be precipitated. Frontenac, in the midst of a quarrel with the intendant Du Chesneau, should have considered the new problem immediately. Instead he procrastinated; he allowed the Iroquois to draw out the preliminary proceedings. When he was recalled in the spring of 1682 the conference had not yet been held. (38)

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35. Du Chesneau's Memoir, in New York Colonial Documents, IX:161 et passim.

36. Parkman, La Salle, pp. 127, 128.

37. New York Colonial Documents, IX:147.

38. Ibid., 161 et passim; Parkman, Frontenac, pp. 74-75.



La Salle had reached Fort Frontenac and Montreal in early summer, 1680, while Tonti and the five loyal men were establishing themselves among the Indians in the great village of the Illinois. The deserters had already been two months out of the Illinois country and the Indian wars were still months away when La Salle made ready to return to the west to bring additional supplies to his boat-riders at Fort Crevecoeur. When La Salle arrived at Montreal his creditors had taken over many of his assets and, believing him dead, were no little surprised to see him in the flesh. In spite of his damaged credit and the hostility of a merchant clique he raised the money he needed in an incredibly short time. With the money secured he purchased the rigging for his ship building at Crevecoeur and recruited more carpenters - his carpenters had been among the first deserters - and artisans to finish the ship for the Mississippi voyage. He was at Fort Frontenac, preparing for his second trip to the Illinois country, when the messengers from Tonti brought the news of the desertion of his men, (89)

On August 2, La Salle took nine men to intercept the deserters, having learned of their presence in the vicinity of Fort Frontenac. He went out on two occasions and each time he captured some of the men, placing them in custody in the fort.

On August 10 the explorer set out for the second time for the Illinois country. With him he had Francis Juchin de la Forest as his lieutenant and twenty-five artisans and the rigging for the vessel

on the stocks at Crevecoeur. In the middle of September, just when the Iroquois were first seen in the Illinois valley, he was at Mackinac. Anxious to find Tonti, he set out for the Illinois country with twelve men, leaving La Forest at Mackinac with orders to follow with the heavier equipment and the more inexperienced men. Down the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, over the Kankakee-St. Joseph portage, and down the Illinois River they went. La Salle saw the Illinois River valley hospitable for the first time; yet, when he reached the environs of the great village he saw the remains of Iroquois fury. The great village was desolated; there was no sign of Indians or French; but everywhere the wreckage and carnage of bitter war. Starved Rock stood insurmountable - without the fortification La Salle had hoped to see crowning its top. La Salle gave up his six loyal compatriots as dead.

He bivouaced three of his men on an island in the river with instructions to halt La Forest's party there, should they come, while he and a party went on to the site of his fort. At Crevecoeur La Salle found the fort demolished and the nails pulled out of his boat, but much more annoying was the utter absence of news of his men. He followed the path of the Indians down the river until at last he came to the scene of the destruction of the Tamarons, near the mouth of the Illinois River.

He hurriedly re-ascended the stream. When he came to the Les Plaines and Kankakee forks, he chose the northern route. Somewhere along the few miles of the portage La Salle saw a cabin of saw-cut logs,

leading him to believe that Tonti had passed that way. (40) In high hope La Salle made his way to the fort on the St. Joseph. There he expected to find Tonti reunited with the second party. When he got there he found La Forest had set up the expedition in winter quarters, but Tonti was not among them. (41)

Yet La Salle was to learn later that he might have met Tonti and four of his companions. Tonti was making his way over the Chicago Portage on his way to Green Bay when La Salle was using the other route. Had Tonti left a note at the forks of the Des Plaines and Kankakee Rivers, it is possible that La Salle might have overtaken him as he journeyed up the western shore of the Lake. (42)

La Salle found many tribes of Indians living in the vicinity of his fort on the St. Joseph in the winter of 1680-1681. From the region of the English colonies were Abenakis and Schagans; from the north were Shawnees. These tribes promised to aid him in his ventures. Determining to center all the tribes of the region about him in the Illinois valley, he made a hurried trip to the Illinois to gain the consent of their chiefs to his project and a promise to make peace with the Miami, lately in alliance with the Iroquois, but one of the tribes

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40. Perhaps this was the Marquette cabin; Tonti makes no mention of staying at Chicago or of a cabin there.

41. Official Relation, in Margry, I:500-524. The relation also contains facts of the Indian war that La Salle learned from Tonti.

42. Mouche's Journal, in Shea's La Clereq, II:151.

La Salle wanted to control. Having gained permission from the Illinois, La Salle returned to his fort at the St. Joseph, where he called a great council and easily won over the assembled tribes. (43)

La Salle needed more money to begin this new venture. The proposed Indian concentration in the Illinois valley was the first step La Salle had taken to make a permanent base in the Illinois Country. His previous efforts had been less grandiose in their scope - the Mississippi River always appears to have been his object - but this time La Salle planned a wholly new settlement, such as he had at Fort Frontenac. At this new settlement La Salle would reign as seigneur and the Indians would hunt the beaver and other fur-bearing animals. Its great wealth would be shipped down the Mississippi River rather than over the hazardous route of the Great Lakes, beset as they were with seasonal ice and hostile Iroquois. To raise money for the necessary supplies, La Salle set out once more for the settlements of French Canada. At Mackinac, where he arrived on June 8, he met the survivors of his first expedition, Ponti, Meshe, and the three others. Each told the other a tale of hardship and disappointment. (44) Ponti, Meshe, and La Salle went on to Fort Frontenac to make ready for the third attempt to establish the interests of La Salle in his western domain. The second attempt was thus abandoned to make place for the greater plan.

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43. Margry, I:525, et passim.

44. Shea's Le Clercq, II:151, et passim.



Once more La Salle successfully raised money for his venture. Membre, travelling companion to La Salle on this visit to Montreal, was sent back to Pontii, who had remained at Fort Frontenac to assemble the necessary equipment, with the order to proceed to the fort on the St. Joseph and to await the coming of La Salle to that place. On December 8, 1681, La Salle arrived at the St. Joseph from Montreal. (45)

Pontii was sent on ahead, again, to Chicago, there to prepare for the journey down the Illinois River. La Salle remained at the fort to recruit Indian hunters and warriors. He brought his Indian detachment to Chicago on January 4, 1682. United under one commander, the party dragged their baggage down the Des Plaines River on runners made by Pontii at Chicago. The great village was empty when they passed. (46) Thirty leagues lower down, at Pinitoui, the remains of Fort Crevecoeur were seen. There they found the first open water and, embarking in their canoes, continued down the Illinois River until February 6, when they entered the Mississippi River. For two months they floated down its broad waters. On April 9, 1682, La Salle took possession of the lands

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45. Hargry, I:593.

46. Only Membre mentions passing the village on the downward voyage - Shea's *Le Clereq*, II:163, reading: "...we traversed the great Illinois town without finding any one there, the Indians having gone to winter thirty leagues lower down on Lake Pinitoui...." The village was again empty in the middle of July, the time of the upstream voyage - Hargry, I:569. La Salle wrote that "...the old village of the Kaskaskia's, Illinois, who had abandoned it since the route caused three years ago by the Iroquois. The news of the fort which I had built there called them back...." - Hargry, II:175. It is difficult to say what induced Membre to write that they were gone on a hunt when the other sources merely indicate absence or that they had not come back since the raid of 1680.



now, and then for the first time in formal use, called Louisiana. In a picturesque ceremony at the mouth of the river, on the high-water beach of the Gulf of Mexico, Louis XIV was proclaimed and a leaden plate was buried in the sand. On the return voyage up the Mississippi La Salle took sick and was unable to travel. The expedition halted while he recovered. Tonti was sent ahead to gather supplies that had been cached at the fort on the St. Joseph, and when he found no one there, went on to Mackinac to find out what had happened to the men of the fort.(47) Meanwhile La Salle was recuperating on the Mississippi, and, by the end of June was making his way to the Illinois Country. When his party came to Grevesneur they found the fort damaged and partially burned. They went on to the village; it was again empty. La Salle sent back eight of his men to repair the fort on Lake Pimitoui and to await his arrival with supplies and more men - to begin building the fort about which he planned to center the fur trade of the western valleys. (48)

La Salle went on to Mackinac, where he found Tonti. Tonti was sent back to the Illinois Country with all the men available at Mackinac and with orders to gather all he could along the way. La Salle intended to go to Europe to take the news of his explorations to the ministry in person. His illness and the coming winter, coupled with the urgent need of his presence in the Illinois Country, convinced him to postpone his trip. He delegated Father Membres to be his emissary

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47. Shea's Le Clercq. II:165; Margry, II:570, 611.

48. Margry, I:569, 570.

to the court of France. Father Vambre, ready to place the activities of his commander in a favorable light, sailed late in 1682 with the news of the taking of the mouth of the Mississippi. He was also to announce that the explorer himself would come to France the next winter. (49)

Tonti, not knowing his commander intended to follow him, set out for the Illinois country. He found few men along the way. When he came to the site where he was to build the fort he chose to spend the winter there in the hope of recruiting more men in the spring. He had nineteen men, eight of whom had been left by La Salle at Crèvecoeur. (50)

Late in December, 1682, La Salle joined his men at Port Crèvecoeur. With characteristic energy he soon moved them to a point opposite the great village, where they camped while building a fort on Starved Rock. There were no Indians around to supply them with meat and dried vegetables; the Illinois were still living on the Mississippi, the other tribes not yet notified to come to the fort. La Salle provisioned his men by a special hunt, and then all hands turned to the building of the fort.

Through the months of January, February, and March, 1683, La Salle and his men hauled logs up the steep slopes of the rock.

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49. Margry, I:612; Habin, p. 113. The Vambre is a critical examination and biography of the life of the father and the activities of La Salle's projects during that time when the father was with him.

50. According to Nicolas de la Salle - Margry, I:669, 670.

La Salle's own description of the finished fort reads as follows:

"Two leagues farther down [from the Peatikou (Fox)] is the old village of the Mascoutia's, Illinois, who had abandoned it since the route caused three years ago by the Iroquois. The news of the fort which I had built there called them back there with other nations. It is situated six [perhaps a slip of the writer or the editor - two ("deux" in place of "six") would be better] leagues below said village on the left side in going down the river, on the height of a rock steep on almost all sides, which it [the river] bathes by the foot in such a way that one can draw water there from the summit of the rock, which has six hundred feet circumference. It is accessible only on one side where the rise is still quite steep. This side is closed by a palisade of white oak posts from eight to ten inches in diameter and twenty-two feet high, flanked by three rows of squared posts set one upon the other at the same height, placed in such a way that one supports the other. The rest of the enclosure of the rock is surrounded by a similar palisade only fifteen feet high because it is not accessible and flanked by four others, similar behind the palisade. There is a parapet of big trees laid lengthwise, one on the other, to the height of two men, the whole filled in with earth, and at the height of the palisade is a sort of "cheval de frise", the points of which are iron to prevent climbing over. The neighboring rocks are all lower than this one and the nearest one is two hundred steps away, the others more, between which and the Fort St. Louis there lies, on two sides, a large valley, which a stream cuts through the middle and floods when it rains. On the other side is a prairie which borders the river, in which, at the foot of the fort, there is a beautiful island, formerly cleared by the Illinois, where I and my inhabitants have done our sowing within reach of the muskets of the fort in such a way that one can defend the workers from within the fort and prevent the enemies from landing on the island. The edge of the rock which surrounds the fort, as I have just related, is covered with oaks to a depth of three or four arpents, after which there are vast fields of very good soil. The other side of the river is bordered by a great prairie which the Illinois formerly cultivated. This prairie ends in a hill which remains all along, the slope of which is in places covered with weeds and leaves in other places great openings through which one discovers the fields which extend beyond." (51)

Four years later it appeared thus to a party that stopped there on a

trip from the mouth of the Mississippi River to Canada:

"Nature fortified it, being steep all around except on one side, still quite difficult, by which one mounts it. The river passes at the foot and M. Tonti has had four big pieces of wood placed so that one might draw water from on high in case anyone came to attack it. The fortifications consisted only of palisades and in a few houses at the edge which enclose it. The place does not contain much more than an arpent and a half in its circumference. There are several houses built of pieces of wood and others, more temporary ("plus legeres"), which are only stakes. They were constructed for M. Tonti after he had returned (1687), and which he set aside for M. de La Salle at his arrival, not knowing of his misfortune and his death. Outside of the said houses for the French who were at the said place, there were also a number of huts of savages who had come to build the said fort. ...there were at that time several families of savages which lived in the said fort... The houses reached to the edge of the rock and in the places where there weren't any houses there were palisades." (52)

The task of inducing the Indians to come to the fort was divided between La Salle and Tonti. La Salle probably brought or induced the Choquans and Abnaki to follow him as he passed through their villages on his way to the rock. In a similar manner the Shawnees were brought to the vicinity of the rock. It appears that these tribes were already present when the fort was completed in March, 1685, having come to enjoy the protection of the Frenchmen and aid in the construction of the fort. In March, when the fort was almost ready, Tonti was sent to bring the Illinois tribes to the fort. He made a journey of a hundred leagues across the prairie to their villages and there laid before them the advantages of living under the protection of La Salle. They promised to come, although it was difficult to convince them that they would be

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52. Joutel, in Margry, III:494, 495.

safe. (53)

The fort was named St. Louis in honor of the Grand monarch, Louis XIV. The general region became known as "the Illinois" and the fort was most frequently referred to as "Fort St. Louis of the Illinois". The Indians that gathered there in the spring of 1683 numbered about fifteen thousand. They did not live in a single village, but in several villages. Some of the villages appear to have been as much as forty or fifty miles away. (54)

When the fort was complete La Salle built a hut at the portage of the Chicago passage. There he stored ammunition and merchandise for trading until it could be brought to the fort at leisure. The hut at Chicago was also to serve as an outpost against the day when the Iroquois would attack again. (55)

In the spring and summer of 1683 La Salle wrote letters to the new governor of Canada, Antoine le Febvre de la Barre, hoping to gain his favor in the undertakings in the Illinois valley. He had learned that his friend Frontenac had been displaced while visiting Mackinac the previous fall. La Barre arrived in Canada late in September, 1682. He had been a naval officer of high rank in various French stations in the new

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53. Margry, I:613.

54. The 1684 map of Franquelin, so often published, shows the location and numbers of the tribes concentrated around Fort St. Louis. It shows the village of the Illinois with 1,200 warriors as being opposite the fort. The Shawnees with two hundred warriors are shown as being immediately in back of the fort. Other tribes are shown as far away as the Rock River and Chicago. The total number of warriors, from the figures given on the map, equalled 3,880. There is conclusive evidence that La Salle himself supplied Franquelin with the information that appears on the map.

55. Margry, II:317.



world. With Canada, however, and its domestic quarrels, he had no acquaintance. His age, too, was against him, for he was already sixty years old when he came to Canada to grapple with the factions that had impeded the success of the colony by their constant bickering. La Salle did not know the kind of man to whom he was writing for aid. All his efforts to secure aid against the mounting Iroquois hostility fell on the closed mind of the governor. The governor had already convinced himself that La Salle's projects were useless. (56)

La Barre had been sent to Canada in the midst of a crisis in the recurring Iroquois wars. His predecessor, Frontenac, had made plans for a conference to secure the rights of the Frenchmen and the Indians of the western valleys, particularly the Illinois, but the conference had not yet been held when he was recalled. Within a few days of his arrival, La Barre proposed a general war on the Iroquois - forgetting all about the plans of the conference. (57) However, he needed men and money, neither of which were at hand. Then La Barre turned to the merchants and ecclesiastical authorities for aid in the administration of the colonial affairs. He chose the faction that had recently brought about the downfall of the late governor - the party of the Jesuits and a greater part of the merchants. Almost before he could realize it, the party to which he had turned for aid was enrolling him in their quarrels. One of these was the feud with La Salle. La Barre soon shared the views of these merchants and Jesuits who

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56. La Salle's letters appear in Margry, II, 312-317, 317-328.

57. Parkman, Frontenac, p. 79.

wanted La Salle out of the Illinois Country. Thus when the Indian conference was finally held and the Iroquois were insistent upon the war on the Illinois, giving as their reason that La Salle had armed the Illinois so that they might fight against the Iroquois, La Barre took no steps to protect or even warn La Salle. It is probable that he even gave the Iroquois permission to kill La Salle and his men in the Illinois Country. (58)

La Barre, aided by the insinuations of La Salle's enemies in Quebec, had become convinced that La Salle was the cause of the Iroquois hostilities. He was hardly more than a month in Canada when he wrote the French ministry that La Salle's project was useless, and, moreover, that he doubted Membre's account of the exploration of the Mississippi River. (59) When the letters of La Salle reached him late in 1683, he took time to disparage the enterprises of La Salle, even suggesting that "... you will see that his head is turned..." (60)

Meanwhile, in the Illinois Country, La Salle was for the most part unaware of the activities of the governor. He knew that something was wrong - his supplies had not reached him and he had received no advice from the new governor - so he went about the business of establishing himself more securely.

One of the first steps La Salle took toward the permanent development of the Illinois Valley was to give grants of land to his followers. On

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58. Parkman, La Salle, p. 304.

59. Margry, II:302-304; Parkman, La Salle, pp. 302, 303.

60. Margry, II:329, 336; the castigation, <sup>48</sup> on p. 336.

April 26, 1683, a month after the completion of the fort, he gave Jacques Bourdon, the Sieur d'Autray, a large grant near the fort. The grant extended from the brook beside which they had camped the previous winter to the middle of the long island now at the lower limits of Ottawa, a distance of 128 arpents or four and a half miles. Following the south bank of the river as one of its boundaries, it extended a mile and a half back on the plain. (61)

There D'Autray and four associates were to build a house and till the soil. The system of land tenure was feudal, as were all the holdings of Frenchmen in the new world. The feudal dues were to be paid annually at the fort. The seignior, La Salle, reserved the mineral rights, shared timber and grazing rights, and retained all civil and ecclesiastical authority. If the property were not developed within three years, the seignior had the privilege of taking it back, even if some improvements had been made.

Of importance to the parties concerned were the regulations of the fur trade. Trading, in all kinds of furs, was to be conducted entirely within the confines of the forts. The associates were forbidden to summon the Indians to their houses or to trade among the Indians in their villages. The merchandises used in trading had to be purchased at the fort and all peltries brought there at prices stipulated for two year terms. (62)

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61. Pease and Berner, *op.cit.*, pp. 19-27. The brook mentioned was known as Armstrong's Brook until the raising of the Illinois River level submerged it. Before the rise of the waters there was a flood plain below the Bluffs; it was on that plain that La Salle camped in the winter of 1682-1683. The island at the head of the river, just above Buffalo Rock, was included in the grant. Viewed from the top of Starved Rock, the grant lay on the eastern horizon.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 26.

Several such grants were given to the faithful followers of La Salle. Pierre Prudhomme was the recipient of a grant of land several miles downstream. The records of the other grants, and there are indications that there were others, have either been destroyed or hidden in the obscurity of the archives.

Trading was limited during the summer of 1683 by the small amount of merchandise. La Salle had always been handicapped by a lack of merchandise. The frequent seizures of his stores by his creditors had been not effective in limiting his trading among the Indians. His dream, and his plan, was to free himself of the importunities of Canadian officials and his creditors by developing the Mississippi route to his colony. His letters and papers all show his emphasis on the fact that he was in Louisiana and not in Canada although both were a part of New France. His grants of land and the regulations therein imposed all indicate that he expected to open the Mississippi route within a few years. An express stipulation had been included in the grants that all trading goods were to be purchased at his fort until his warehouses had been established on the Mississippi, which he called "le fleuve Colbert". (63)

Late in August, 1683, La Salle set out to make his promised trip to France. When he had sent Father Tembre the previous fall with the news of the exploration of the Mississippi river, he had, at the same time, promised Tembre that he would be in France to make a personal report the following

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63. Ibid., pp. 24, 33.



year. Tonti was placed in command of Fort St. Louis and the Sieur Belarondel was made the official store-keeper. (64) With him, on the voyage out of the Illinois Country, were three Frenchmen and two Shawnee Indians, who were to travel with La Salle as far as Mackinac to get the merchandise La Salle had stored there. They returned to the Illinois Country the following spring with the goods. The party was only at Chicago when they met the Chevalier de Baugy, a lieutenant in the governor's guard, and a few men with him, who had instructions to take over the command of Fort St. Louis. (65) From him La Salle learned that the governor was taking over his forts and their trade on the theory that La Salle had not complied with the terms of his royal grant. De Baugy brought orders that the explorer was to turn his fort over to him and report immediately at Quebec. There was nothing to do but comply with the governor's orders. La Salle wrote letters to his men, urging them to treat the governor's men well, and encouraged them to continue hunting and trading for furs. (66) A letter to Tonti urged him to live amicably with de Baugy and to guard the La Salle interests well. (67)

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64. Hargry, I:570, 613.

65. Hargry, I:613; Ernest "Oreux, Editor, Journal d'une Expedition contre les Iroquois en 1681 redigé par le Chevalier de Baugy. Lettres et pieces relatives au Fort St. Louis des Illinois. Paris, 1883, pp. 174, 175. The "lettres et pieces" contain a few of the official commissions and orders relative to La Barre and La Salle's Fort but nothing which illustrates the conduct of affairs at the fort when Baugy was there.

66. La Salle to the People of Fort St. Louis, from Chicago, September 1, 1683, in Fennel and Ferner, op.cit., pp. 36-41.

67. Hargry, I:614.



La Salle arrived at his Fort Frontenac seigniory only to learn that La Harre had taken it over because, said the governor, it had been abandoned by La Salle and because illegal operations in the fur trade were condoned there. (68) The conference with the governor at Quebec proved futile, so La Salle went on to France where he arrived early in January, 1684.

In France La Salle again laid bare his scheme of building a colony near the mouth of the Mississippi River. He showed how easily he might use the Indians of the Illinois Country to aid him in an attack on the Spanish mines of New Mexico and how necessary it was for the French colony to expand in the direction of the Mississippi River because of the English expansion in New England <sup>and</sup> in the Hudson Bay country. Although his schemes had opposition in both Canada and France, he was favored with a personal conference with the king, Louis XIV, who proved favorable to the plans.

He brought his grievances as well as his hopes to the attention of the French authorities. He informed them of the seizure of his forts and of the extra-legal conduct of the governor's men in holding the forts. In all instances his petitions were successful. La Salle himself was made commandant of the Illinois country and beyond, the region now known as Louisiana. Tonti was made a Captain of a company of marines and governor of Fort St. Louis under the authority of La Salle. (69) La Harre was

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68. Ibid., II:336.

69. Cox, Journeys, II: 244.

reprimanded for the wrongs done to La Salle and ordered to reinstate La Salle's men in his possessions.(70) La Forest, La Salle's commandant at Fort Frontenac, who was in France with his commander, was sent to Canada with orders to reassume command of the alienated property. The explorer remained in France to make further plans for the proposed colony at the mouth of the Mississippi.

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70. King to La Barre, April 10, 1684, in Pease and Werner, pp. 47-50.

### TONTI AND LA FOREST

When De Laury and La Salle parted at Chicago, De Laury made his way to Fort St. Louis without difficulty. He was well received, in keeping with the injunction of La Salle. Tonti and De Laury spent the winter as peacefully as their diversified interests would permit. By spring, 1684, however, Tonti view De Laury as hostile to the interests of La Salle and believed him to be subverting La Salle's loyal men to his own interests. (1)

No small part of the growing enmity of Tonti and De Laury was due to the trading De Laury was able to do with permission of the governor. La Harre was often accused of permitting his officers to trade where other traders were not allowed to operate. In the Illinois country this appears to have been particularly true, for De Laury was permitted a large number of trade concessions. That the permits had been granted under questionable circumstances is equally true, for they had been signed only by La Harre and without the joint signature of the intendant, a condition that had been imposed on the governor in his instructions from the king. (2)

La Harre's actions did not hide the fact that he was in league with a faction of the fur merchants of Quebec. The seizures of Fort Frontenac and Fort St. Louis, as well as incidents in other places, proved that his intention was to supplant La Salle's interests in the richer fur-bearing regions. His greatest weakness lay in the flimsy grounds on which he based

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1. Margry, I: 614.

2. Pease and Verner, pp. 47, 48.

his seizures. He had written to the king and ministry of France on several occasions about the enterprises of La Salle; each time he bewailed them. Had he waited a little longer he might have had official justification for taking over Fort St. Louis, for the King wrote him on August 5, 1685:

"I am convinced, like you, that the discovery of the Sieur de La Salle is very useless, and that such enterprises ought to be prevented in the future, as they tend only to debauch the inhabitants by the hope of gain, and to diminish the revenue from beaver skins." (3)

Instead he sent De Rauby out too soon, for when La Salle complained to the French court La Salle bore all the blame. (4)

At Fort St. Louis in the Illinois Country the coming of the following spring brought with it an Iroquois war party. A party of fur traders who had been trading in the Illinois Country, particularly in the Chicago region, in behalf of the governor, were set upon and pillaged. The traders escaped with their lives, but their rich furs were taken from them. A short time later, on March 21 according to Senti, the Iroquois party, two hundred strong, appeared at Fort St. Louis. A messenger was dispatched to the governor of Mackinac, Durantaye, and the fort put in order for a siege. On the day of their arrival the Iroquois attacked the fort, only to be repulsed with loss. For six days the Iroquois were at the base of the fort, imprisoning its inhabitants on its height. After the sixth day the Iroquois left, contenting themselves with the capture of a few straying Illinois Indians, most of whom were able to escape when small bands of Illinois warriors harried the retreating

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3. Margry, II: 310; Parkman, La Salle, p. 303.

4. Peace and Verner, pp. 47-50.



Iroquois party. (5)

The inhabitants of the fort had long been freed from fear of the Iroquois when Durantaye arrived with sixty men to aid the fort. Durantaye brought the news that Tonti was to report to Quebec at once. Tonti could do little but comply, so he turned the fort over to the Chevalier de Laugy and went to Quebec, leaving La Salle's men at the fort without a commander. Durantaye soon returned, too, to build a larger post at Chicago at which he left a small garrison. (6)

A missionary, the Jesuit Father Allouez, who had accompanied Durantaye to minister to the French expedition and such Indians as might be met en route, appears to have remained at Fort St. Louis. Allouez had been in the Illinois Country about the time of the Iroquois war of 1680 but had left it again at an unknown date. He had been the object of La Salle's distrust as the instigator of the Indian hostility, and sensing it, he avoided the explorer's presence. In 1684, when it appeared that La Salle had lost the Illinois Country, Allouez again saw the opportunity of working among the Indians in the Illinois Valley. (7)

During the year that followed Tonti's leaving Fort St. Louis, few incidents were recorded in the Illinois Country. Tonti mentions that the Miami quarreled with the Illinois and seriously defeated them in a battle (8);

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5. Tonti, 1693, in Cox, Journeys, I:31,32; Tonti, 1684, in Margry, I:614; and the account of the robbed traders, in Margry, II:358-364.

6. Margry, I:614; Kellogg, The French Regime, p. 228.

7. Margry, II:345; also see next chapter of this paper.

8. Cox, Journeys, I:33.



De Sanguy, in command at the fort, left no records that have been available to modern scholars.

Tonti could not have been long in Quebec when he learned that La Salle had been reaffirmed in his grants and that the king had favored the new project, the planting of a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River. La Salle had dispatched the Sieur de la Forest, his commander at Fort Frontenac, from France with the news that Tonti had been made a captain of a company of soldiery that La Salle would bring over, and, moreover, had been made governor of Fort St. Louis.(9)

Tonti, on learning that he had regained command of the fort, immediately set about the improvement of the fur trade. He hired traders who would go to the Illinois Country with his merchandise and there exchange it for furs. It was already late in September, 1684, when Tonti sent them out - just in time to take part in the trading season of the early spring. His traders received one-half of the profits as their pay, and an apichimo, or bonus, of ten beaver pelts. As an added incentive the trader was permitted to trade his gun, blanket, capot, and two shirts for whatever he could get. (10)

It was too late to attempt to ascend the lakes when Tonti had completed his business at Quebec. He had recruited a company of twenty soldiers to aid him in the protection of Fort St. Louis, but even they were forced to spend the winter at Montreal. There, in the spring of 1685,

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9. Cox, Journeys, I:82, 83, II: 244-246; Leroux, Journal de Henry, p. 184, passim.

10. Pease and Werner, pp. 13, 54; 56-58.

Tonti and La Forest conferred again and each man then left for his post. Tonti formally resumed command of the Fort on June 26, 1685.(11)

His first objective was to restore peace among the Indians. The Miami's having defeated the Illinois, it took many gifts and promises to induce the two to live amicably in the future. In the autumn Tonti expected news from La Salle; to learn of his commander he undertook the journey to Mackinac. It was there that he learned of La Salle's voyage to the Mississippi River by the sea route. Equally important was the news that La Barre had been replaced as governor-general of Canada by Jacques-Rene de Brisay, Marquis de Denonville, and that the new governor wanted to hold a conference with Tonti about Indian affairs. (12)

The dismissal of La Barre was the culmination of the steadily mounting disapproval of his actions by the colonial ministry. Two important reasons for his dismissal were his participation in the trade in an illegal manner and his failure to obey orders, particularly those in relation to La Salle and his projects. The immediate reason for his recall was the critical Indian situation <sup>Following the Iroquois</sup> incursion into the Illinois Country in the spring of 1684, La Barre had led an expedition against the marauders in their homelands in western New York. Inefficiently directed, the expedition was reduced to further ineffectiveness by disease and La Barre was forced to conclude a peace that left the Indian tribes allied to Canada at the mercy of the Iroquois in return for the doubtful safety of the

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11. Cox, Journeys, I:33; Leroux, op.cit. pp. 187-190.

12. Cox, Journeys, I: 33, 34.

French settlements in Canada. When the news of this peace reached France, the home government took the necessary steps to restore adequate leadership for the colony. Denonville's instructions were chiefly concerned with the Indian problem when they were transmitted to him on March 10, 1685.(13) It was in this connection that he called upon Tonti, the recognized authority on the Illinois Country and its Indian problems.

Tonti's thoughts were more concerned with the success of his commander's enterprise on the lower Mississippi. Learning that he might be at the mouth of the river - La Salle had sailed from Rochelle on July 24 - Tonti assembled a band of Canadians and descended Lake Michigan. At Fort St. Louis he increased his band to thirty, five of whom were Indians of the settlements at the forts. He left ~~the~~ fort in the middle of January, 1686, and was at the mouth of the Mississippi early in April. He found no trace of La Salle or his men, - La Salle had missed the mouth of the Mississippi and was floundering in Texas. On the return trip up the Mississippi some of the men settled on Tonti's grant on the Arkansas(14) and others were given corresponding privileges in the Illinois Country. On June 24, 1686, they arrived at Fort St. Louis, their only gain being alliances made with two tribes living on the river banks.

The fur trade thrived after Tonti resumed the leadership of the fort in 1686. While there are no balance sheets available to prove that the profits were great, they were nevertheless of such a nature that Tonti's

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13. Pease and Werner, pp. 63-78.

14. Tonti had been given a seigniorry on the Arkansas River, by La Salle on the first descent of the Mississippi. Var. Journeys, 1:36.

men resented the intrusion of other traders not a part of the organization. The men in the Illinois Country acted on the principle that they held a monopoly on all furs there, refusing other traders free use of the facilities of the region. The complaints of the free-land traders were carried to Denonville, who, not knowing the official interpretation of La Salle's grant, sent the matter to the hands of the home government. Denonville was of the opinion that equal opportunities of trade should prevail. The replies received were a compromise - Denonville was to specify a region around the fort in which monopoly would prevail to assure the maintenance of the fort. He thereupon set aside an area of five leagues deep on all sides of the fort as its monopoly. (15)

Closely allied to Tonti's claim of monopoly of the trade was his pretension that La Salle's grant was not to be construed as being under the government of Canada. When the reports of his conduct under that pretense reached France, Tonti was sent a missive that reprimanded him. (16) The reprimand sent from the King clarified the status of the Illinois Country. La Salle had always hoped to free himself from Canadian domination by doing all his business via the Mississippi River. Liberally interpreted, La Salle's grant of April 14, 1684, was taken, by his friends, to mean that La Salle was proprietor of a new settlement which was not to depend on Canada in any way. The letter from

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15. New York Col. Recs., IX:276; Pease and Werner, pp. 79, 82, 90.

16. Ibid., p. 82.



Versailles clearly stated that Denonville was governor of all New France.

But Tonti had no intention of disobeying the commands of the governor. His trip down the Mississippi was undertaken with the intention of seeing Denonville immediately on his return. At the end of June Tonti took two Indians with him to Montreal, where the conference was held. By the beginning of October the meetings were over and Tonti returned to the Illinois. (17) In November, 1686, Denonville reported that the Iroquois must be humbled and the Illinois shielded and sustained. (18)

He wrote:

"The Iroquois are the most formidable; they are the most powerful by reason of the facility they possess of procuring arms from the English, and in consequence of the number of prisoners they daily take among their neighbors, whose children they carry off at an early age and adopt. This is their only means of increase, for in consequence of their drunken debaucheries which impel them to frightful disorders, the few children their wives bear could not assuagedly sustain them alone did they not make prisoners". (19)

and,

"It (the Iroquois nation) consists of five principal tribes each of which has other small dependencies. The first calls itself Mohawk and can muster two hundred men fit for service; it is ten leagues from Orange (Albany). The second is Oneida, between 15 and 20 leagues of the Mohawks, which can muster 150 men. The third is Montague, a hundred leagues from Montreal; it can muster 500 men. The fourth is

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17. Cox, Journeys, I:86; New York Col. Doc., IX:284.

18. Ibid., IX:271, 272.

19. Ibid., IX:281.



Ojyuga, 12 leagues distant from Lake Ontario, which can furnish 200 men, and the Senecas (French: "Sagontouans") are the fifth. The last consist, it is said, of 1200 fighting men, and are five leagues south of the lake.

The Senecas being the strongest are the most insolent." (20)

Tonti's part in the war was to bring the Indians of the Fort St. Louis settlement to the New York region so that an attack might be made on the Iroquois from an unexpected quarter. With this intention he mustered fifty Shawnee, seven Miami, four Delaware, and sixteen Frenchmen. On the next day three hundred Illinois joined him, but, fearing sudden attack on their own villages, half of them turned back. Leaving twenty men in the Fort on the rock under the command of the Sieur Bellefontaine, Tonti set out with his uncertain band in April, arriving at the site of modern Detroit on May 19, 1687. (21)

At Detroit the Illinois band was met by others from Mackinac and the northwest. The Mackinac detachment had thirty English traders, captured after an expedition to Mackinac. Then the combined French and Indians made their way east from Detroit, they overtook another band of English traders, equal in numbers, under the leadership of Major Mc Gregor. (22) With sixty captives in their midst, the western contingent arrived under the leadership of such frontier notables at Tonti, Du Luth, (Daniel Greysolon Du Lhut, most famous of the northern frontiersmen), La Durantaye, De La Forest, not to mention others only slightly

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20. Ibid., IX, 282.

21. Ibid., IX, 300, 301; Cox, Journeys, I, 36, 37.

22. Cox, Journeys, I, 37, 38.

less well known. They took part in the single advance that was the war and entered whole-heartedly in the despoiling of the Seneca village. (23)

Although Denonville's war was waged to protect the Indians allied to Canada, which meant particularly the Illinois, its results were few. The Iroquois were not chastened - during the following years they made especially vicious attacks on French settlements. The Frenchmen, though they felt they could do little, were well aware of the roots of the wars. They knew that the English prices were so low that the Iroquois could be easily supplied with their necessary guns and powder. A gun could be had at Albany for two beaver skins, of any quality; whereas the same article cost five of the choicest skins at Montreal. Gunpowder was selling at Albany at one-fourth the price demanded at Montreal; lead at one-third. Clothing and woven goods sold at one-half. (24)

Of more importance was the capture of the first English trading expedition to the Great Lakes region. The traders had been invited by French deserters and disgruntled tribes in the vicinity of Mackinac. Had the venture succeeded, and had not the French made such a pretence of strength before their Indian allies, English traders might have found their way into the deep interior of the continent much more quickly. Yet, although the sixty men under McGregor were the only English traders seen

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23. Ibid., I, 39. The campaign is described in Lereux, Journal de Chevalier de Saucy, previously cited. De Saucy was aide-de-camp to Denonville during the campaign.

24. New York Col. Rec., IX, 408

in years by French authorities, the fear of the English continued unabated. (25)

During the years succeeding the war, French authorities in Canada were devising innumerable schemes to preserve themselves from the Iroquois terror. Callieres, the governor of Montreal, was particularly interested. He bombarded the minister of colonies with monthly suggestions of purchase or capture of New York. When Frontenac returned to Canada as governor, his instructions included a planned attack on New York. However, as the years drew on, the king and his ministers lost their interest in the proposal. (26)

When the Indians had taken a few scalps they were ready to quit the war. For the most part, the Indians that Fonti had led to battle had found their ways home. Fonti, with a few of his French followers and a young relative, returned to Fort St. Louis on October 27, 1687, after having travelled the lake route via Mackinac. (27)

Let us recount the experiences of La Salle at this point. La Salle had received a grant to effect a settlement of Frenchmen at the mouth of the Mississippi River. In several memoirs he had listed the needs of such an attempt and had met with success in procuring them. (28)

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25. Kellogg, The French Regime, pp. 230, 231; Parkman, Frontenac, 183, et passim.

26. See New York Col. Docs., I, 369, 404-408, et passim.

27. Fonti's memoir of 1683, in Cox, Journeys, I, 40, reading: "From thence I returned to Fort St. Louis with my cousin, the Sieur Duval, who returned to his post with eighteen soldiers and some savages." If "the Sieur Duval" is considered to be in conjunction rather in apposition, it would be more correct, because the cousin referred to is de Liette, see also Margry, III, 406; and, Pease and Werner, pp. 306, 307.

28. Cox, Journeys, I, 171-204.



He gathered skilled workers and women to settle on his lands. A company of soldiers, too, to protect them and to form the nucleus of the band that was to invade Mexico and missionaries to minister to Frenchmen and the heathen - threeulpicians and three Recollets, among whom were his own brother and Father Membre. He had asked for the sole command, but the ministry had preferred to place another, Captain Beaujeu, in charge of the operations while the expedition should be at sea. On July 24, 1684, the four vessels of the expedition set out from Rochelle.

Chafing under the divided command, La Salle and Beaujeu quarrelled even before they began the voyage. Issues of who was to receive precedence and honor soon drove the men apart. The unworthiness and unequal speed of the ships brought additional hardships. After sailing four days from Rochelle they had to return to repair one of the ships. It took two months sailing to reach the French Islands in the Western Hemisphere - two months filled with heart-break and sickness.

His plan had been to settle near the mouth of the Mississippi River. He had the misfortune, however, of over-shooting his mark and landing on the shores of Texas. In attempting to land his supplies, he wrecked one of his vessels. His men on the shore were attacked by Indians. Illness and death overtook some of the less hardy persons. Yet in spite of all the difficulties La Salle built a fort which he named St. Louis. Relieving his people safely lodged in the fort, he and fifty men set out to find the Mississippi. He made several such trips, each at the expense of the lives of some of his men. His colonists had been reduced to forty-five, less than one-fourth his original number.

La Salle's only hope was to get aid from Canada. He fastened his

mind on this last chance and organized a party of fifteen to accompany him to Canada, leaving about twenty, men and women, at the Texas fort.

The band that made its way to Canada was beset with unusual hardships, as they beat their way through swamps and the jungle-like vegetation. The men conspired amongst each other, forming a plot to kill La Salle and the few men who remained wholly loyal to him. On March 16, 1687, the conspirators killed La Salle.

The band, now further reduced in number, continued on their way amid hardships they little knew how to overcome. The conspirators and men loyal to the memory of the commander journeyed together, each fearing the other. One of the more daring of the latter, determined to avenge the death of La Salle - which he did by killing the two ringleaders a short time later. At last they came to a group of Frenchmen settled on the Arkansas River. Leaving there one of their number, they made their way to Fort St. Louis, where they arrived in the middle of September. (29)

At Fort St. Louis Tonti found the five survivors of his commander's expedition to the mouth of the Mississippi River. One of them was La Salle's own brother, the Abbe Cavalier; the others were the Recollet Anastatius Doney and the Sieur Joutel - a fellow townsman of the Cavaliers and the two other men. They withheld the news of La Salle's murder at the hands of his men and asked Tonti to lend them money, which he did. They told Tonti that La Salle was alive and that they had been



sent to bring aid from France. Winter held them at the fort until the end of February, 1688, there enjoying its protection and favors while carrying on the deception. They departed in the spring - bound for France - agreed not to mention their commander's death until after they should part each other's company in France. (30)

During the summer of 1686 La Forest recruited engagés and voyageurs in Montreal and Quebec in behalf of Tonti. The engagés, hired for a period of several years, were required to spend their time in the interests of the fort, for which they received from two to four hundred livres of beaver as pay for each year's work. Their daily needs were to be supplied by the men who hired them at the expense of the fort. The men hired in this manner were usually skilled artisans - blacksmiths, carpenters, and, if a professional man may be classed among the artisans, surgeons. The voyageurs were hired on a yearly basis, the year for which they were paid beginning on the day on which they set out from Montreal with the trading merchandise. They were allowed one-half of the profits of their trip, profits from a small amount of personal goods they might trade, and an apichino, or bonus, of eight to ten beaver furs. If they lost their goods or furs through their negligence, they could not claim wages from the men who hired them.

The boats used in the Illinois Valley trade were mainly canoes, larger than modern canoes, the trader's canoe carried as much as four tons of goods. The canoes were about thirty-five feet long and a cut

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30. Cox, Journeys, I:41; II:211 et seq.; Margry, III:490 et seq.

six feet wide, constructed of birch-bark, which was sewed over a framework of two-inch thick saplings, and all seams and joints were pitched with balsam. These canoes were large enough to travel safely on the larger lakes. On the Illinois River smaller canoes constructed of elm-bark were seen more frequently than those of birch-bark. There were a few pirogues in use near Fort St. Louis, but the pirogue was primarily a vessel of the Mississippi tribes. (31)

In the autumn of 1688 La Forest brought the new engagés and voyageurs to the Illinois Country. La Forest brought the news of the renewed Iroquois raids on French settlements, reminding Tonti that he had promised to send war parties to harass the Iroquois. During the winter the two commanders roused the Indians to a fighting spirit and sent out small parties from time to time. For the next several years parties of Illinois fought Iroquois with considerable success. (32)

Under the stimulus of Tonti's and La Forest's renewed interest in trading in the Illinois Country, the fort on Starved Rock prospered as never before. During these years they had relatively little trouble in transporting their goods to and from Canada.

After La Forest left Starved Rock in the spring of 1689, Tonti was visited by one of his men who lived on his lands on the Arkansas River. From him Tonti learned of the death of La Salle. The occasion of his

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31. Knight and Leach, The Chicago Portage..., previously cited, p. 29, note 23, describes the boats used in the fur trade. The information is based on Timaitas' testimony in U.S. v. Economy Light and Power Co.; Abstract of proofs, pp. 497-498.

32. Peace and Werner, p. 324.

coming was to induce Tonti to take part in an Indian war against the Spaniards. One of the Arkansas tribes had proposed that the fourteen Frenchmen living on Tonti's grant take part in the campaign. The Frenchmen were unwilling to take the risk, but, lured on by Spanish gold, came to Tonti for his help. Because of the great risks involved, Tonti chose to learn more about the chances of its success, sending the Frenchman back to the Arkansas for more information. The Frenchman set out, but returned shortly, his canoe having been wrecked.

With the relaxation of the Indian warfare against the Iroquois, however, Tonti took an interest in the proposed Spanish campaign. On October 8, 1699, Tonti himself set out down the river to overtake the expedition he had sent ahead. He had remained at the fort in the hope that La Forest would come to take command, but when La Forest failed to arrive, he set out to take personal command of his party. When he caught up with them he sent his cousin De Liette back to the fort to take command.

The expedition to the Spaniards was a total failure. Tonti was soon left without followers, his men deserted him at the first hardship. When he plunged on with two loyal men, he found that La Salle's men - he had been told they were alive - had been killed by hostile Indians. He contracted malaria fever and was in ill-health until he returned to the Illinois fort in September, 1699. (35)

With the death of La Salle an assured fact, the Illinois Country was without a legal owner. Tonti wrote letters begging the aid of higher officials that his abilities might be recognized. His conduct received the recommendation of the highest authorities. La Forest pursued another track - he petitioned the king for the Illinois Country in behalf of himself and Tonti. On July 14, 1690, Louis XIV confirmed the grant on the same terms under which La Salle had held the Illinois Country. (34)

While La Forest was in France seeking the grant, the sieur Boisrondel was the business manager of the enterprise. He went to Quebec and Montreal to hire the season's voyageurs, leaving the young De Liette to command the fort while Tonti travelled. When La Forest returned from France, he recruited the largest number of engagés ever to be brought into the Illinois Country. (35)

It was the coming of this large group of men that induced Tonti to consider the removal of Fort St. Louis from Starved Rock. The Indians concentrated about the rock had been wanting to move because of the depletion of firewood and the difficulty of sustaining themselves, being great in number, on the rock for any length of time. From Mackinac, where he was on a business trip, Tonti sent De Liette the order

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34. Pease and Berner, pp. 223-230.

35. Ibid., p. 234-253, 327.



to permit the Indians to choose a new site. The foot of Lake Pinitoul, the site of the old Fort Revecoeur, was the choice of the Indians. In the fall Tonti came from Mackinac to build the new fort at the chosen spot. When La Forest came with the engagés in the spring of 1692, everyone was put to work and a large fort was completed.(36)

The removal of the fort to the Peoria site marked the end of Starved Rock as the center of the great Illinois enterprise. It was no longer known as Fort St. Louis, but reverted to "le Rocher", or "Rochefort". For about a decade little occurred there. The village, once the foremost center of Indian life within a hundred miles, was deserted by its people. The fort was emptied of its busy trade and most of its inhabitants. It seems probable that a few Frenchmen who held lands in the vicinity remained there during the more favorable seasons. Otherwise, the chief use of Starved Rock was as a camping ground on trips up the Illinois River from the new Fort St. Louis, or, as it was more commonly called, Fort Pinitoul.

The partnership of Tonti and La Forest prospered at the foot of Lake Pinitoul. Even though the value of beaver fur was declining each year, they continued to extend their interests. In 1691 the furs Tonti and La Forest sent to Canada were put into a special class, bringing a lower price, because the hides were unusually thick and the fur was thin. (37) Restrictions on the fur trade no longer bothered any Canadians except those who had to enforce the edicts limiting the

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36. Ibid., pp. 324-327.

37. Ibid., The Fur trade in Canada, p. 68.



number of canoes to twenty-five. Even Tonti and La Forest had traders in excess of their permits. When the king abolished all trading west of Montreal in 1696, only Tonti and La Forest were exempt from the rigors of this law, although they were limited to two canoes annually. (38)

The value of the enterprise in 1698 was reckoned at about 24,000 livres, or \$4,800. In that year La Forest sold one-half of his interests to Michael Ake, the trader who had accompanied Hennepin on the voyage up the Mississippi, for 6,000 livres. Until that time neither La Forest nor Tonti had sold any one a share in his enterprise. (39)

The French never became fully established in the region around Starved Rock. Their affairs were bound up with the Indians to such an extent that when the Indians could no longer maintain themselves in the vicinity of the rock the French had to move too. The Frenchmen who had grants failed to develop them. They made no effort to build cities or settlements composed of French families. Very few French women ever came to the French settlements in the Starved Rock region. (40) Most of the Frenchmen either had wives in the French settlements of Canada where they visited once in the course of several years or Indian "wives" whom they took from time to time. The inter-marriage of French

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38. Alvord, The Illinois Country, p. 106 et passim; Lewis op.cit., p. 68 et passim.

39. Pease and Werner, pp. 264-266.

40. The visit of Madame Lesueur is mentioned in the Le Cauxes Memoir, Pease and Werner, p. 236.

and Indians was not conducive to the permanent settlement of the valley. For the usual consequence was that the Indian women retained their customs and the French husbands rapidly adopted Indian ways of life unless there was some check on their conduct. (41)

Henry de Tonti, who had come over from France merely a soldier and assistant to La Salle, was the foremost authority on the Mississippi River and the Illinois Country by the time Starved Rock was abandoned. He had become involved in the fur trade and was a co-proprietor of a rich center in French North America. A few years after he left Starved Rock to build the fort at Cahokia he became interested in the fur trade in the outlying regions of the northwest, even north and west of Lake Superior. After 1709 he took an interest in the colony that Iberville was planning in the Mississippi Delta region. He died of the fever at Mobile Bay in September, 1704, in one of the great epidemics that encouraged the colonists who sought to carry on La Salle's dream. (42)

Francois Dupin de la Forest spent most of his subsequent career as an army officer and commander of various posts in Canada. He had come to America with Tonti and La Salle in 1679 and rendered his services to the explorer chiefly as his commander at Fort Frontenac. He died in Quebec in 1714. (43)

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41. New York Colonial Documents, II, 343, 344.

42. French Historical Collections of Louisiana, III:31.

43. Acene and Warner, p. 51; biographical note.

## MISSIONS AND MISSIONARIES

The ecclesiastical and secular powers of France in the seventeenth Century extended themselves to New France in America almost simultaneously. Side by side they grew, each having a close interest in the other, until at last it appeared that there was a strong spirit of rivalry between them. Yet mutual interests drew them more closely together as the years went on. It would be unnecessary, in this paper, to illustrate the growth of the powers of church and state with incidents to show the parallel nature of their interests. Equally unnecessary would be incidents which would substantiate the rivalry and ill-feeling that has been popularized in historical literature. The previous chapter has shown how the interests of individuals often led to mutual distrust. The close relation between the missionary aims of the Jesuits and the aims of the new colonial policy of Colbert in the project of 1673, the discovery of the Illinois Country and the Mississippi River, has also been described. Here it is necessary to recount only the salient points of the history of missionary effort prior to the discovery of the Illinois Country.

The first resident French missionaries in New France were the four Recollets who came with Champlain in 1615. After ten years of labor among the Indians and pioneering Frenchmen, the Recollets invited, in 1625, the Society of Jesus, commonly called Jesuits, to share the burden of carrying the gospel to the frontier. After four years of

joint effort their labors were seriously limited by the English, who captured New France in 1629. When the land was returned to French authority in 1632 missionary activities were again resumed, this time on a larger scale.

In the same year the Jesuit order began the publication of accounts of their activities in the new world. Beginning with an account of a voyage to New France, the volumes, published at Paris, contained interesting memoirs, letters, and accounts of the Indians, of voyages, and of curious tales brought to the missionaries. The publications were avidly read in France and brought the Jesuits laboring in America to the attention of the French reading world.

After 1632 the Jesuit order dominated missionary enterprises in New France, growing in strength year by year, until their influence was almost equally as powerful as that of the secular authorities of New France. (1)

First preaching to the tribes along the St. Lawrence River near Quebec, it was not long until the Jesuits extended themselves to the tribes who lived eastward, toward the Atlantic Ocean, and to the Huron

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1. In 1674 New France became the seat of the Bishopric of Quebec, being severed from that of Rouen, to which it had been attached for over fifty years. The head of the church in New France had long sat in an honored seat, next to that of the governor at the council table of the government. The church of New France had become so effective that the liquor trade with the Indians was prohibited at its instigation.

Many histories of the Catholic Church in the new world have been written - most notable of these are the works of Jean Milner Shea, History of the Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1613-1800, New York, (1897) and A History of the Catholic Church within the Limits of the United States, (Six volumes), New York, 1908. Parkman's The Jesuits of North America in the Seventeenth Century, has also proved itself to be popular among historians.



tribes who lived along the rivers that run into the St. Lawrence. From the Indians that visited the missions set up among these peoples the Jesuit fathers learned of more distant peoples, the Ottawa and other tribes. Again, when stations had been established among them, news of tribes still farther away was brought to the fathers. Later, when fierce Iroquois warriors scattered the tribes among which the fathers labored, the missionaries faced difficulties. Some of the fathers chose to follow their native parishioners to the newly found havens of safety, the farthest reaches of the Great Lakes. Thus the missionaries reached the great western regions. After 1685 the Iroquois wars lessened - the peak of Iroquois destruction had been 1645-1649, when they almost annihilated the Hurons - the tribes returned to the places they had occupied before the scourge. The Indians once more set up their homes along the great watercourses they had previously occupied. The return of the tribes facilitated missionary effort.

At two missions in particular the Jesuits met Indians from a great confederation toward the Southwest. At Chequamegon Bay on the western tip of Lake Superior the French traders and missionaries had established an important post. It was there that the Indians concentrated during the years of the Iroquois wars; there the Ottawa predominated, but all tribes intermingled there, united by common disaster. To Chequamegon Bay came the Illinois Indians - the handsomest and most kindly disposed of the North American Indians - to trade. With them they brought the news of a great river to the west and the great villages of their tribe



located on the river.(2) At the mission of St. Francis Xavier on the lower extremity of Green Bay, Wisconsin, other members of the Illinois tribes were repeating the same story to the Jesuits stationed there.(3) The stories of the Illinois Indians were well suited to excite the adventurous hearts of the Jesuit missionaries on the frontier - the great river, which might be the long-sought westward passage; a great Indian nation, least war-like of those known, living on its banks; a rich trading country - the story stimulated the three most important motives of French expansion in North America. (4)

The first of the Jesuit missionaries to learn of the Illinois at first hand was Father Claude Allouez, stationed at Point St. Reprit, Chequamegon Bay, on Lake Superior. He met them during the years 1685-1689. The Illinois when he met were probably residing with other tribes, perhaps the Ottawa or Pottawatomi, that were concentrated in the region just below Lake Superior. These Indians that were "least of all like savages" invited the missionary to visit their main villages, situated one hundred leagues to the south.

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2. Jes. Rel. LV: 209 et passim.

3. Jes. Rel., LI: 47, 53.

4. This introductory account of missionary effort in New France follows the first chapter, "Introduction", of Sister Mary Margias Palm, The Jesuit Missions of the Illinois Country, 1673-1763, a doctoral dissertation (St. Louis University, 1961), which is the best account of missionary effort in early Illinois. The Jesuit order discontinued missionary effort in the Upper Illinois Valley except during La Salle's occupation (1680-1686). The interruption during these years was the only one which broke the long years of Jesuit dominion of the Illinois River Valley. Additional accounts consulted were John Gilmary Shea, History of the Catholic Missions previously cited; Parkman, The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century, Boston, 1908.

When the Illinois had thus become known to the Jesuit fathers, it was not long until plans were made to send a missionary to them. Father Jacques Marquette was chosen. But before he had the opportunity of going to the Illinois Country he had to take over the station vacated by Father Allouez at Chequamegon Bay. There he spent his leisure time in learning the language of the Illinois and the great river along the banks of which they lived. When the Ottawa Indians, to whom Marquette was ministering, returned to the Mackinac Straits, his obligations to the tribe ceased. Mackinac Island was already the site of an established mission, shortly moved to the mainland at present-day St. Ignace. Although maintaining the Ottawa mission in cooperation with another priest, Marquette was making ready to go to Illinois. It was at St. Ignace that Jolliet found him. (5)

The first voyage of Marquette to the Illinois Indians was a voyage of discovery. As such it has been treated in the third chapter of this paper. It was probably Marquette's duty to learn more of the Illinois at first hand rather than to set up missions. The passages in his narrative which report his promises to return indicate that he had no intention of staying among them in 1673. (6) He preached at every opportunity, however, and among the Peoria for three days on the returning voyage, he "preached the faith in all their cabins". (7)

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5. Marquette Narrative, in Jes. Rel., LIX:97; Stock p. 113.

6. As at Kaskaskia; Jes. Rel., LIX:161.

7. Ibid., p. 163.

The father was in failing health when he returned to the mission at Green Bay in September. He remained there a year, troubled by illness at least during the summer of 1674 if not throughout the year.

In the late fall of 1674, having received orders to repair to the country of the Illinois, Father Marquette set out for the village of Kaskaskia. On October 26 he and two donnes (8) embarked in a single canoe. Two days later they caught up with a party of Potawatomi and Illinois, also going to Kaskaskia; the parties joined and together they skirted the western shore of the lake on their way to Chicago. On some days the father could keep pace with the canoes by walking along the shore; on others high winds kept the party from travelling. Snow began to fall before they had travelled half the length of the lake, and when they reached Chicago on December 4, the river was frozen to a depth of six inches. The illness that had plagued Father Marquette - dysentery - returned and troubled him anew. At Chicago he decided he could no longer keep pace with the Indians who were escorting him, so he prepared to spend the winter at Chicago. His donnes built a hut, there to tend the father in his illness. In that hut were held the first religious services ever to be observed on the site of Chicago.

Aid came to the missionary expedition from unexpected quarters. The Indians that had gone on to Kaskaskia found two Frenchmen in a village just below the forks of the Illinois River; there they told of

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8. Donnes were lay attendants who helped the fathers in their commonplace tasks, such as gathering wood, preparing food, and hunting.

the plight of the missionary. These Frenchmen, Pierre Moreau, and an unnamed surgeon, *choueurs de bois*, came to help the father. Indians, too, bore him gifts. It was late in March before Marquette was well enough to continue on his way to Kaskaskia.(9)

The activities of Father Marquette at Kaskaskia were reported to Father Lablen, the Superior-General of missions in the west, by the names:

"On at last arriving at the village, he was received as an angel from heaven. After he had assembled at various times the chiefs of the nation, with all the old men, that he might sow in their minds the first seeds of the gospel, and after giving instructions in the cabins, which were always filled with a great crowd of people, he resolved to address all in public, in a general assembly which he called together in the open air, the cabins being too small to contain all the people. It was a beautiful prairie, close to a village, which was selected for the great council; this was adorned, after the fashion of the country, by covering it with mats and bearskins. Then the father having directed them to stretch out on lines several pieces of Chinese taffeta, attached to these four large pictures of the Blessed Virgin, which were visible on all sides. The audience was composed of 500 chiefs and elders, seated in a circle around the father, and all of the young men, who remained standing. They numbered more than 1500 men without counting the women and children, who are always numerous - the village being composed of five or six hundred fires. The father addressed the whole body of people, and conveyed to them ten messages, by means of presents which he gave them. He explained to them the principal mysteries of our religion, and the purpose that had brought him to their country. Above all, he preached to them Jesus Christ, on the very eve (of that great day) on which he had died upon the cross for them, as well as for all the rest of mankind.

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2. Marquette Journal, in *Jes. Rel.*, LIX:168-181, affords a day by day account of Marquette's journey to Kaskaskia. It is the more important of the two documents which are the only records of the expedition. The other source is Father Lablen's "Account of the Second Voyage of Father Marquette to the Illinois Indians", reprinted in the same volume.

Falm, *Opolit.*, pp. 15-17, tells the story of Marquette in a few pages. Quail, *Chesapeake*, pp. 12-14, has an account of the missionary expedition as it centered about Chicago in the winter of 1674-1675.



then he said hold mass. On the third day after, which was Easter Sunday, things being prepared in the same manner as on Thursday, he celebrated the holy mysteries for a second time, and by these two, the only sacrifices ever offered there to God, he took possession of that land in the name of Jesus Christ, and gave to that mission the name of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin." (10)

Marquette's health failed rapidly while he was at Kaskaskia. It became evident to him that his death was near, so he packed his goods for a journey homeward to St. Ignace. His stay in the village was limited to a few weeks; during that time he had hardly become established and now he had to move on.

Father Marquette was seriously ill when he left the Illinois at Kaskaskia. The domes carefully bore the ailing priest homeward to St. Ignace. Up the Illinois River and up the eastern shore of Lake Michigan they proceeded, until the dying father told them that his end was near. There, camped beside a small river, the father died. His domes buried him there and went on to St. Ignace, bearing with them an unfinished journal and the tale of a heroic life. In the following year a Michikakon bark brought his bones to the mission at St. Ignace, where they were reinterred with due honor. (11)

The death of Marquette was a serious handicap to the missionary project in the Illinois Country. He had been the only person acquainted with the requirements of the station and now, since his death, the Jesuits were without that information. In 1678 Father Allouez, Vicar General in

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10. Sablon's account of Marquette's mission, Jes. Rel., LIX:188,191.

11. Jes. Rel., LIX: 191-211; Palm, loc.cit.; Alford, The Illinois Country, pp. 67,68.



the west, was sent to the Kaskaskia Village to make a survey of the needs of the Illinois. Father Claude Jean Allouez was a veteran in the service, having already spent eighteen years among the Indians when he was called to go to the Illinois. He was born on June 6, 1682, at Saint-Dizier-en-Forest, France, entered the Jesuit order when seventeen, and arrived in New France in 1698. His years in the mission fields had ever been spent at the outermost posts. "Unrepealed in danger, indefatigable in labor and travel, a gifted linguist, resourceful in need, able to inspire confidence in the Indians, Allouez seemed the best missionary for the Illinois" (12)

Allouez and two domes attempted a late fall voyage to the Illinois Country. Soon after leaving the mission of St. Francis Xavier (Green Bay) he was forced to shelter himself from the winter cold; it was not until February that he was able to continue his journey. The lake was still frozen, but ingeniously he put runners under his single canoe and called it an ice boat and dragged it when there was no wind. At Chicago he found a village of eighty savages encamped near the portage. It was late in April when he reached Kaskaskia and established himself in the hut that Marquette had built two years previously.

Allouez stayed at Kaskaskia but a short while, having been sent to acquire information rather than establish a mission. He acted quickly - in a short time he was explaining "the mysteries of our holy faith" and baptizing children brought to him. His baptisms numbered thirty-five

children and one adult. In early May he planted a thirty-five foot cross in the village. His hopes of a successful mission were ruined by the considerate treatment he had received - he would return as soon as possible. He had found the village greatly increased in size since Marquette's visit two years earlier - it now numbered 351 cabins. During mid-summer Allouez made his way back to Green Bay with a high heart. (13)

In 1678 Allouez set out again for the Illinois Country, this time with the intention of remaining for two years. He was spending his time with the Peorias in the vicinity of Peoria Lake when La Salle's expedition made a camp there. Shortly after La Salle's arrival Allouez left the Illinois and joined the Miami. Then when the Miami joined the Iroquois in the raid of 1680, La Salle blamed Allouez for the turn of events, as if he might have been responsible for the attack on the French. The explorer also blamed the Jesuit for the defection of his men although it now appears, without cause. During the succeeding years Allouez remained among the Miami. (14)

After 1684 he again returned to the Kaskaskia village, remaining there for several years. In 1687 he was ill, lying abed in Fort St. Louis on the rock. Although ill, he left the fort in 1688 when he believed La Salle would arrive there shortly. Thereafter he spent his time with the Miami until he died in one of their villages in the following

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13. Allouez: Narrative of a Third Voyage to the Illinois, in Jes. Rel., LX: 149-165; Palm, p. 19.

14. Jes. Rel., LX: 167; Hargry, II: 54 et passim, 316 et passim; Parkman, La Salle, p. 162; Alford, The Illinois Country, p. 92.

summer. (15) Little is known of the efforts of Allouez in these later years other than that which has come from sources which were hostile. His on-again quarrel with La Salle has far over-shadowed his accomplishments as a missionary to the Indians. He was not without honor, however, for he was one of the most successful of missionaries. Allouez is said to have baptized at least ten thousand converts and instructed a hundred thousand Indians. (16)

When La Salle made his first voyage to the Illinois Country he brought along three Recollet chaplains as a part of his expedition, Fathers Louis Hennepin, Gabriel Ribourdre and Jeanne Mesre. Of these, Ribourdre was the oldest and the Father Superior. Arriving at Lake Pichitou in the middle of January, 1680, the younger priest erected a cabin in which the priests exercised their functions on alternate days. The younger priests spent much of their time in the Indian village learning the language, and by the end of the second month there had made some progress in acquiring it.

Father Ribourdre remained in the French camp as chaplain to aid La Salle and Tonti in establishing a base. At the end of February Father Hennepin was withdrawn from his missionary duties and sent as an explorer and trader to the upper Mississippi River region. Thus Mesre was the only one of the three Recollets to see active duty as a missionary among

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15. Joutel's account in Jargery, III: 498 et passing Pain, pp. 20, 21; Parlowan, op. cit., p. 435.

16. Alvares, op. cit., p. 105, quoting Kellogg, Early Narratives, p. 97.



the Indians. (17)

Father Zenobe Membre was not a true Frenchman. His ancestors and he himself had always lived in Spanish Netherlands, at Bapaume, which had become French territory within his own lifetime. He arrived in New France in a company that included his cousin, Christian Le Clercq, who was later to gain fame by publishing a narrative taken from the notes of Membre himself. He had been in New France only three years when he set out with La Salle in 1676. (18)

After La Salle left Gravelbourg Father Membre continued to instruct the Indians until the Iroquois incursion of September - just a few short months. He found the Illinois little inclined toward the gospel:

"With regard to conversions, I cannot rely on any. .... We baptised some dying children, and two or three others, dying persons, who manifested some dispositions. As these people are entirely material in their ideas, they would have submitted to baptism, had we liked, but without any knowledge of the sacrament." (19)

Father Ribourdre was less able to live the rough life of the Indian village and was consequently less able to aid Membre. When La Salle's men deserted, the missionaries were two of the four men who remained loyal. Although they might be loyal to their commander, four men could not maintain an independent establishment in the wilderness, so they lived amongst the Indians. The Iroquois beat down upon the Illinois village in September and the Illinois fled, leaving the Fathers to the mercy of the conquerors. By their diplomacy the Frenchmen were able to escape the

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17. Shea's Memorias, p. 136 et passim; Shea's Le Clercq, II:119 et passim, which contains Membre's narrative; Francis Marion Havig, The Franciscan Pere Marquette, A critical Biography of Father Zenobe Membre, New York, 1954.

18. Cox, Journeys, I:166n.; Havig, op.cit., 8 et passim.

19. Shea's Le Clercq, II:137, 138; Havig, op.cit. pp. 47-52, 56-61.

terrors of death at the hands of the Iroquois. But the Illinois became hostile toward the Frenchmen, too. They had to escape; their plan was to go to Green Bay. The second day of their journey Father Riboudre wandered a short distance away from his party and was killed by a roving Kickapoo band following on the heels of the Iroquois. Then amid hardship and privation the reduced party made its way to Green Bay. (20)

Although Father Mesure was in the Illinois Country at later times, he did not engage in missionary activity. He accompanied La Salle on his voyage down the Mississippi and was sent by the explorer to France to divulge the news of the discovery. He remained in France until the explorer again called on him to go to the new world, this time as Superior to the missionaries taken to Texas. He shared the fate of La Salle - a Spanish expedition of 1689 found him dead, probably at the hands of the Indians among whom he sought to establish a mission. (21)

After the departure of Father Allouez and Recollets Henry and Cavalier who returned to Quebec soon afterwards, Fort St. Louis was without a clergyman nor were there missionaries in the village of the Indians. The commanders of the fort notified their superiors of the vacancy, who in turn notified the Jesuit order. Father Alexis Grevier was chosen. He was given the office of Vice-Commander with the powers of missionary to

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20. Shea's La Glorie, II, p. 140 et passim; Tonti's Memoir, in French, Historical Collections of Louisiana, I, 65-66; Haring, Chapter V, "The Iroquois Invasion," pp. 61-76.

21. Cox, Journeys, I, 107, 108; Ra 12, op.cit., p. 78 et seq.



the Illinois and surrounding tribes. (22)

Gravier was only three years in New France when he began his work among the Illinois in 1686 or 1690. The Indians were still at Starved Rock when he arrived and it was there that he began his efforts. Before long his activities kept him busy from early morning to late at night. After sunrise in the morning, he visited the cabins to help the sick; then he said mass, inviting the Indians to attend the service. Mass having been said, he preached and catechized all who would take part; late in the afternoon he tested the memory of his catechumens. Evenings were just as busy; two services, one in French and one in a native language, were held. Often, too, the father worked in the night, aiding a dying man or woman who might call for the white man's medicine. Such treatment at the hands of the Indians did not deter him, nor did the weather. (23)

In 1691 Father Sebastian Fale, also a Jesuit, was sent to aid him. He came to the Illinois country just when the Indians were moving from Starved Rock to Kinkaid. For two years they labored together among the Indians at Pimitou - Father Gravier visiting the outlying tribes and Fale working at the established mission. Then Father Fale was recalled.

In 1696 Gravier was made Superior of the Ottawa Mission, and Julian Bimsteau/<sup>his successor,</sup> was given aid by Father Gabriel Moret.

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22. Fale, p. 22.

23. Peace and Warner, pp. 362, 363.

The years at Piquitoui were the golden years of the mission on the Illinois River. The mission grew until the missionaries had four chapels in which to minister to the needs of their charges. In the French settlement the church grew at an equal speed, the first chapel being replaced with a larger one because it could no longer adequately serve the populace. Only when the Indians again were removed to the lower reaches of the Illinois River was the field abandoned. The church followed the tribes, this time led by Father Maret. While at Piquitoui there was little occasion to return to Starved Rock; the place had been utterly abandoned. But when Piquitoui was about to be abandoned in 1700, the Indians were not all of the same mind. By the conciliatory policy of Father Gravier, again visiting the mission, a peaceful departure was made possible for those who wanted to move. Thereafter Piquitoui was abandoned as a mission site. (24)

Chicago was the site of a mission during the last years of the Seventeenth Century. The site of the present city was in frequent use as a camp site by both French and Indians for some years. Marquette had wintered there; other missionaries had made use of the site in recuperating from the voyage on the lake. The explorers and traders had caches of supplies buried in the vicinity to enable them to move about less impeded by baggage and also as an emergency supply station. The Miami's who lived at the foot of Lake Michigan had a village stationed there for some time. The location was long favored by human habitation

before it became a recognized settlement. (28)

The mission of Father Allouez among the Miami during the years 1680-1684 was probably to the members of the tribe living at Chicago as well as to those that lived on the St. Joseph. But Allouez established no permanent mission of which there is record. The first recorded mission station at Chicago, the head of the Illinois River highway and the foot of the deep-water navigation on Lake Michigan, was begun about 1696. At first it appears to have been only a summer station, the father in charge of it spending his winters with his fellow missionaries at L'Anse-au-Loup.

The missionary who was in charge of Chicago was the Jesuit Pierre Pinet, who, like many of his fellow workers, was a recent arrival from France.

He labored under difficulties caused by the secular authorities as well as the Indians. At one time Pinet had preached a sermon in which he criticized the administration of the trading posts, thereby incurring the censure of the government. Hardly had he been at Chicago for a year when Governor Frontenac ordered his post closed. Fellow missionaries and the Bishop of Quebec aided his efforts to remove the ban on his station; in this they were successful. When the mission at Chicago was resumed in 1698 Pinet again faced difficulties - this time the difficulty of handling the unruly Miami. After three years, in 1700, he was transferred to the Tanarou.

His successor, Father Garnet, inherited his problems. Garnet faced additional problems for he did not know the language, let alone the



temper of the Miami. After two years he must have welcomed the chance to become chaplain to the expedition that planned to build a townery at the Ohio under the plans laid down by Charles Juchereau de St. Denis.

The Chicago mission, abandoned in 1702 and never to be re-opened, proved one of the most difficult to maintain. Its Indian population was always shifting - the Miami never stayed long in one place - and Chicago was a junction of trails rather than a settlement. Indian trails converged near the portage and the tribes that lived at Chicago were subject to attack of any tribe on the warpath using these trails. After 1702 the Chicago region was characterized by the movement of warring tribes, a movement which lasted nearly a century. (26)

After the movement of the Illinois Indians from the great village opposite Starved Rock there was no missionary center there. In the decade of 1692-1702 the site was almost wholly abandoned by the Indians as well as the Frenchmen. It was not until shortly after 1702 that the Indians who had remained behind at Pinckney again chose to return to their former location. No missionary followed them and no missionary mentions his having visited them. As time went on the Illinois of the Rock knew less and less of the faith they had once heard preached in their midst.

Missionary activity was confined to the new settlements in the American Bottom of the Seventeenth Century. There the missionaries found fertile fields among settled French and Indians.

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26. Palm, *op.cit.*, Chapter III, "The Mission of the Guardian Angel at Chicago, c. 1690-1702", pp. 27-30, *Quaife, op.cit.*, pp. 23-27.

### LATER DAYS

The history of Starved Rock in the Eighteenth Century is most unlike its story during the last twenty years of the Seventeenth. There are major threads that may be followed in the study of the eighteenth Century - the Mississippi River, exploration, fur trade, or a single group of Indians. No single person or enterprise unites the history of the Starved Rock region after La Salle and his successors. Instead, the drama introduces new characters, new Indian tribes, and new hopes, all playing a brief scene in the valley and moving on to another stage. Whereas before there had been a beginning and an end, all on the same stage, now only incidents take place at Starved Rock. Out of such incidents may be woven a story, but if the story is told full it becomes the history of the Old Northwest. Yet, if the story be restricted to only a few miles around the center of interest, there is risk of making it an antiquarian's tale.

At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century a new factor had influence on the French residing in the Illinois Valley. Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, established a colony near the mouth of the Mississippi River in 1700 and immediately attempted to draw the interests of the Frenchmen in the Illinois Valley toward it. Tonti responded immediately visiting the colony on the lower Mississippi and there making plans that would draw the Illinois project into closer alliance with that of d'Iberville. It was, in a sense, the project of La Salle, but under the



direction of d'Iberville, more attention was placed on a commercial settlement and less on wealth-producing schemes. One of the results of Tonti's visits to the d'Iberville colony was a proposal to remove the Illinois settlement and the Indians that clustered about it closer to the Mississippi River. When the subject was broached at Pimitoui it created an issue among the inhabitants. The French were willing to move, but a part of the Indians - the Peoria and Moingwena tribes - were unwilling to follow the Frenchmen. It appeared as if the issue might lead to inter-tribal warfare, but the conciliation of Father Gravier made it possible for the French and the Kaskaskia, who favored moving, to go to the Mississippi in peace. (1)

The first decade of the Eighteenth Century was characterized by the increasing bellicosity of the Peorias. They undertook an attack on the Ottawa tribe living near Detroit - for which they were punished. They in turn abused the French authority in the form represented by the missionaries. At length, in 1711, the Canadian authorities were moved to send troops to the Illinois Country to maintain order. (2)

Trade in furs diminished during the early years of the Eighteenth Century. In 1696 Tonti's post had been limited to two canoes of merchandise a year, and, after 1702, no permits were granted and La Forest was called to Canada to a command in the Army. Thereafter, for a period

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1. Margry, IV: 73 et passim; V: 478; Jes.Rel., LXV: 103; LXVI: 89; Alvard The Illinois Country, Chapter VII, "The Foundation of Louisiana."

2. Margry, V: 488; Alvard, op.cit., p. 140.

of about ten years, most of the trade was irregular. (3) Such trade as there was still ascended the Illinois River, relatively little of it being diverted to the M'Henryville colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River. The French at Cahokia, in their settlement on the Mississippi, were at this time establishing themselves as farmers and husbandmen, thriving on the rich soil of the American Bottom. (4) At that time they numbered about fifty persons, probably all men and not including their Indian wives.

The problems raised by frontier settlers had always vexed the French government. As early as 1676 the French government saw that the spreading of Frenchmen throughout the wilderness was not conducive to the establishment of a permanent colony in Canada. Too many settlers of Quebec and Montreal left their farms to seek wealth as fur traders. After 1678 the governors were under orders to limit exploratory expeditions and fur trading. (5) Yet for twenty years the movement toward the frontier could not be stopped. In 1686, when French merchants were no longer clamoring for beaver furs - the market was becoming saturated - the French government decided to close the west to traders and settlers. Cordi and La Forest escaped the full rigors of the law but, being limited to two canoes of merchandise each year, soon saw that the regulations would end their dreams. After 1702, when La Forest was recalled, the Illinois

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3. Wisconsin Historical Collections, XVI: 176, note.

4. Kellogg, The French Regime, p. 276.

5. New York Colonial Documents, IX: 126.

Country was under the nominal command of Pierre De Liette, the cousin of Tonti. He had come to the Illinois in 1687, had learned to know the Indians and become the trusted sub-ordinate commander to Tonti and La Forest. But even he did not remain long in the Illinois Country. (6) Thus the country was turned over to the Indians and such missionaries as worked among the tribes.

It was at some time during these years - 1702-1712 - that a part of the Peorias and Hoingomas returned to settle at Starved Rock.

In 1712 the Fox Indians entered the scene. They had been settlers of Michigan before the Iroquois wars, being driven to central Wisconsin by the Iroquois. After the Iroquois power had been shattered, a part of their tribes had returned to Detroit, the site of a new French post. They lived there in a village apart from the villages of other tribes allied to the fort. In a quarrel over the death of a chief that created an issue between the Foxes and another tribe, the French proved definitely unfriendly to the Foxes. The Foxes were besieged in their village and slaughtered when they attempted to escape. The fate of the Foxes at Detroit stirred their Wisconsin relatives to war. In a short time the west was unsafe for Frenchmen and Indians treated by French.

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6. It may be that he returned to Canada with La Forest in 1702. He had been three years at Starved Rock, seven years at Piquet, and four years at a subordinate post at Chicago. His stay at the Chicago post is the latest event observed in the Illinois Country, so he probably was absent from that time - which would have been 1701 or 1702 - until the time he wrote the Memory Concerning the Illinois Nation which is reprinted in Fennell and Werner. His signature, which includes "Montreal, 1721...". is that of the copyist, not De Liette, for he wrote the document in 1706.

authority. The Illinois, in particular, had been both favored by the French and hostile, of their own accord, toward the Foxes and their kinsmen. Quite naturally the Illinois and Foxes engaged in hostilities. (7)

The French policy of checking the Foxes was to use Indians under French leadership in war parties against them. Their northern escape was to be blocked, and the Illinois and Miami would crush them from the south. To accomplish this De Laet was sent to the Illinois. He found the Illinois Valley in a turmoil. The Foxes made a terrifying attack on the Illinois Indians and carried off seventy-seven of them. (8)

In the same year the plans to attack the Foxes were begun. Two officers were sent to recruit the Illinois and Miami warriors. The Miami's were made ineffective by an epidemic of measles and the Illinois who lived at the Rock, bringing four hundred men to have the rendezvous at Chicago, found no one there and returned to their homes. He ended the first organized attack against the Foxes. (9) Two years later the Foxes were decimated in a battle with French and Indians at their village on the Fox River in Wisconsin.

The Fox war convinced the Canadian authorities that they needed posts among the Indians. Fifteen years earlier they had abandoned all wilderness posts in their effort to centralize their inhabitants into

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7. Hellogg, The French Regime, pp. 288-289; Alford, The Illinois Country, pp. 146-147.

8. Parkman, A Half-Century of Conflict, I:330.

9. Wis. Hist. Col., XVI: 302-306, 324.



permanent communities. The Indians failed to bring their furs to the settlements or to come to the settlements, often diverting a part of the trade to the English at Albany. The French could little afford to allow their Indian allies to be seduced toward English interests. Another reason for the re-establishment of Indian posts was a provision in the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713, that gave the English equal right to trade with the natives of North America. (10) For these reasons the French undertook to regain their power in the inland valleys - so that the Indians and the English might be checked.

The post established in Illinois was probably at Peoria. A sergeant and eight soldiers were to garrison it. With the establishment of western posts came the renewal of trading permits. During the years succeeding the establishment of the post in the Illinois under the veteran De Lette trade again flourished under official permission. (11)

The post failed to bring peace to the Illinois valley. The Foxes dropped their hostility toward other tribes but redoubled their warfare against the Illinois. De Lette was ordered to establish peace, but the Illinois convinced him that they were merely defending themselves against unwarranted aggressions.

The warfare centered around Starved Rock and Pinxitoui. In 1722 Starved Rock was the scene of an Indian siege between the two tribes.

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10. Kellom, op.cit., p. 290.

11. Ibid., p. 292, note; Wis. Hist. Col., XVI: 523.



The Fox Indians had come down unexpectedly and had driven the Illinois to the refuge of the Rock. They held them on its top for several days. Then quite suddenly, as if fearing retaliation, the Foxes fled, seeking an asylum among the Ioux in the far north. (12)

There were Frenchmen living among the Peoria and Montagnon Indians at Pimitoul and at Starved Rock during the period of warfare. A report of 1716 mentions Frenchmen, probably traders, as living at the rock among the Indians. At that time the Indians were living at the site of the great village in about a hundred cabins. They numbered four hundred fighting men. (13) Three years later Charlevoix, a Jesuit travelling on a governmental charge, found Frenchmen among the Illinois at the rock but they were living among the Indians on the large island above the rock. At Pimitoul the same traveller found four Frenchmen living among the Indians. (14)

French efforts after 1722 were bent toward establishing peace. In this they were only moderately successful. The allies of the Fox tribes - the Mascoutens and the Sacs - made peace with the French and the Illinois Indians. The Sioux, who had sheltered the Foxes when driven to cover, turned hostile and would not allow the Fox tribes to settle in their country. The Foxes were ready for peace, but not so ready were the Canadian authorities who had come to believe the only solution to the wars would be the extermination

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12. Ibid., XVI: 422, 496; Kellogg, Journal of a Voyage to North America, (Charlevoix), p. 185 et passim.

13. New York Col. Doc., IX: 890.

14. Kellogg, Journal of a Voyage to North America, pp. 185-190.

of the Foxes. Consequently that tribe turned to another quarter for aid. (18)

The Iroquois, seriously weakened after French attacks in the last years of the previous century, invited the Fox tribe to settle with them. In 1730 the Foxes began their journey toward the Iroquois. The news of these plans became known, both Frenchmen and Indians rising up to prevent their safe journey to the Iroquois. About one hundred Frenchmen and four hundred Indians united against the Foxes, forcing them to fortify themselves on the banks of the Vermillion River. The Frenchmen and Indians were augmented until they numbered about fourteen hundred; with such an army they closed in on the Foxes. For twenty-three days the allies besieged the fort. Both besiegers and besieged ran out of food and became exhausted. Two hundred of the allied Indians deserted, yet the allies held their lines, spurning all offers of peace. On the night of September 8, during a violent storm, the Foxes broke from their fort. The crying of their children betrayed their movement, but the allies chose to wait until daylight permitted distinction between friend and enemy. When daylight came, the Foxes were easily overtaken. Three hundred men were slaughtered or taken captive; several times that number of women and children were captured or killed; only fifty or sixty Foxes escaped and they were left weaponless and without food. The few Foxes

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18. Wis. Hist. Col., XVI: 465, 467; V:106., Alford, The Illinois Country, pp. 183-184.

who escaped made their way back into Wisconsin. (16)

The signal defeat of the Foxes did not end their warlike activities. Their former allies who had fought against them in the battle of 1780 began to fear that they might share a similar fate at some time in the future, and, to forestall that day, re-united with the Fox remnant and again made it strong. Thus the crushing defeat accomplished little. For years the Fox and the Sauk, united in a single tribe, remained a hostile power in the upper Illinois Country.

The next event that received the attention of the chronicler indicated that the Illinois Valley was still the seat of unrest. In 1781 the Sauks, a Santee people, killed a Frenchman in the vicinity of Starved Rock. (17)

The lure of metals drew an occasional expedition up and down the Illinois River, some of which found bits of copper that had drifted down from the north under pressure of the glaciers. Coal pits were found, the very pits that had been opened by the Indians perhaps as much as a century before, but no metals were to be found on the Illinois River.

The fur trade declined in the Eighteenth Century. After 1716 official permits to trade were granted by Canadian authorities but fur trading

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16. Stanley Payer, "The Foxes' Fort...1780", Journal of Illinois State Historical Society, XXVIII: 123-125, (October, 1935); and Alford, The Illinois Country, p. 184, citing the studies of J. Y. "Howard, who was long interested in the site of the battle. The indefiniteness of the location as described in the source material has been carried over into secondary accounts, of which Payer's is the most acceptable.

The battle did not take place at Starved Rock, but sufficiently near to warrant its being a part of the history of that site.

17. Wis. Hist. Col., XVIII: 82.



never rose to the hysterical heights witnessed under La Salle and Tonti. The French trade on the Illinois River in the Eighteenth Century still made its way to and from Canada. As the years went on there appears to have been a diminution of merchandise. (18) Most of the upper Illinois River trade was conducted out of the French settlement at the site of Peoria, which became a more or less permanent village of Frenchmen in the middle of the century.

English traders made relatively little ingress until after the middle of the century. There were rumors of English traders on every river, but the first traders mentioned on the Illinois were supposed to be at Starved Rock in 1760, where they called the Illinois to trade with them. (19)

French politics made relatively little difference to the few Frenchmen who resided on the Illinois River. As early as 1684 Starved Rock had been considered the boundary of La Salle's Louisiana. (20) Tonti and La Forest had contended that their project was in Louisiana and therefore independent of Canada in matters of government, yet all their trade was done under the regulation of Canadian authority. When the Illinois Country was included in Louisiana in 1718 to stimulate the enterprises of John Law (21), Starved Rock was on the boundary line, a part of

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18. Wis. Hist. Col., XVIII: 217.

19. Ibid.

20. Margry, II: 383.

21. John Law was a Scots gambler and financial wizard, who, after an unhappy career in England, convinced the French government that a policy of inflation would make it more wealthy. Under the patronage of the regent of Louis XV, he included a western land scheme in his banking system. He planned to send settlers to develop lower Louisiana and the Illinois Country. In 1720 the scheme fell through, much as did the famed South Sea bubble of England.

Louisiana. Thereafter it remained politically under the control of Louisiana but economically tied to Canada. To the settlers of the Illinois valley it was not a matter of consequence. Indian policy, so closely united with economic policy, continued to be determined in Canada.

The Illinois Country played no part in the wars which culminated in its transfer to England in October, 1763. England had been ceded all Canada, the Illinois Country and all the region east of the Mississippi River except Louisiana by the Treaty of Paris, 1763. (22) The transfer of authority made little difference to the Frenchmen living in the Illinois River valley. For over half a century they had been taking care of themselves; they were accustomed to the Illinois Country and knew how to make a livelihood in it.

When Montreal was captured by the British forces on September 8, 1763, there was a detachment from Fort Detroit on their way to Montreal to aid the defenders. Berouté the commander of the detachment, the *Vicomte de La Chapelle*, heard of the fall of Montreal and resolved to prevent his troops from falling into the hands of the victorious British. He returned to his post and received permission to march his two hundred men to New Orleans to save them from surrendering to the British when they marched on Detroit. In the face of the approaching winter La Chapelle led his men across the trackless wilderness toward the Illinois Valley, where he planned to winter in La Salle's Fort St. Louis. His force num-

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22. Kellogg, *The French Regime*, pp. 432, 440; Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Carter, *The New Regime, 1763-1767*. (Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, Volume XI, (British Series, Volume II), C. W. Alvord, Editor), Springfield, 1916, "The Inauguration of the New Regime," pp. xlii-xlviii.



bered about three hundred as they marched from Detroit - he had been joined by a hundred of the Ottawa militia, three-fourths of whom were half-breeds.

He found only remains on Starved Rock where once had been Fort St. Louis. He did not winter there - the rock was unsuitable to his purposes - so his men and a few helpful Indians built a fort on the opposite shore, probably on Buffalo Rock. It was named Fort Ottawa, in honor of the members of the militia. While he was comfortably encamped there, he learned of a French company wintering on the Rock River which was badly in need of shelter and supplies. La Chapelle gladly aided them, but the incompetent and overbearing officer of the Rock River company took advantage of his superior rank and ordered La Chapelle to Fort Chartres. All winter long he endured the abuse of the incompetent officer. At length, in the early spring, La Chapelle marched his men to New Orleans, where he was immediately clapped into prison by the governor of Louisiana. La Chapelle then petitioned his king, who took pity on him and ordered a court of inquiry. Two years later the court exonerated him and commended him for his services to the king. Special note was taken of the fact that he had not lost a single man during the whole journey. (23)

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23. Louise P. Kellogg, Ed., "La Chapelle's Remarkable Retreat Through the Mississippi Valley, 1760-1761", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. I: 63-61, (June, 1915).

The chief problem faced by the British in assuming control of the Illinois Country was to control French traders. On taking over the territory they had issued regulation demanding the licensing of traders. In addition to the corruption of the commanding officer, who pocketed a large part of the fees collected, most of the Frenchmen, long accustomed to circumventing licenses, moved their base of operations to the west bank of the Mississippi River, now Spanish territory, and sent their expeditions out from that shore. Remaining west of the Mississippi until they reached the mouth of the new British valley in which they chose to trade, they crossed the Mississippi and entered the valley. There was no stopping them. British traders petitioned in vain for forts to close the mouths of the major valleys. French traders exerted their influence with the Indians to hinder British traders in every way. Throughout the period of English occupancy of the Illinois Country there was genuine hostility between the traders of the respective countries. (24)

The English firm that enjoyed most, if not all, of the trade that fell to the English traders during the earliest years was that of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, of Philadelphia. Their first goods had been sent west in 1768 and one of the partners, Morgan, went to the Illinois settlements on the Mississippi in the next year. As the years passed few of the merchants who entered into the competition of the fur trade in Illinois

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24. Alford and Carter, *The New Regime*, see index under "traders" (691-694). Also Alford and Carter, *Trade and Politics*, 1767, (same series, volume III), Springfield, 1921, index, "Trade", (pp. 744-752).

made money, most of them finding that they could not compete with French traders who under-sold them by twenty-five percent. The Frenchmen were now using the Mississippi River to bring up their supplies, a route that proved to be less expensively operated than the overland-river route used by the English. (25)

During the years of English occupation the Illinois Valley knew little of English influence. There was a trading center at Peoria, and a few white men residing in other parts of the valley, but in each case the inhabitants were French. French influence in the upper Illinois Valley remained unbroken until the advent of the Americans.

The United States won the territory in the Revolutionary War. The expedition of George Rogers Clark was welcomed by the Frenchmen who were settled there and, with their sympathy, was able to wrest the territory from British control. American control, however, meant very little until settlers came.

The chief handicap to settlement by English colonists was the Indian problem. Early Frenchmen had little need of the protection of their arms - their mode of living in the wilderness was similar to that of the Indians. They shared the fare of the Indians in rude villages; they had no wives or children to shelter from the wilderness. They had nothing to lose if one of the constantly recurring Indian wars should strike the tribe near whom, or with whom, they lived. English settlers,

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25. Alford and Carter, Trade and Politics, p. 302.



on the other hand, brought wives and children with them. If Indian conditions were unsettled and a war party should ravage the Englishman's fields, he and his family were apt to be seriously inconvenienced.

The Indians in the Illinois Country during the last half of the eighteenth century did not fare well. The once powerful Illinois who had as many as 3,800 warriors when living opposite Starved Rock, were more than decimated during the period of English control. Their kinsmen who had migrated to the Mississippi were likewise decreased in number. The English found them a weak people - not the handsome specimens that they once were - and debauched by drink. (28) In 1790 the Governor of the Northwest Territory numbered the Illinois at a little over a hundred families, who moved across the Mississippi River at that time. When they left the Illinois Valley it is impossible to determine at the present time. The legends that have celebrated the demise of the Illinois afford no clue because they date the "last of the Illinois" as taking place about 1765-1770. It is a certainty, however, that the Illinois Indians were no longer a factor in Indian affairs after 1800.

In the middle of the Nineteenth Century there grew up a series of legends which describe events that took place at the rock in the later years of the preceding century. It is from one of these legends that the name "Starved Rock" was applied to the promontory we have been describing by that name.

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28. Alford and Carter, The French Regime, p. 228.

All the while of the French occupation of the Illinois Valley the site was known as "le Rocher", meaning "the Rock". Variations crept in as the years went on; most common was the variation "Roche-fort", derived from "the rock of Fort St. Louis". The English authorities of the Illinois Country referred to it by the commonly accepted name that the Frenchmen had been using for almost a century.

The legend that caused the rock to be called Starved Rock is briefly thus: Pontiac, an Ottawa chief who exercised great control over his own and several other Indian tribes, planned to drive out the white settlers of the Illinois region. Although his movement was waning in the late 1760's, his presence was considered a menace to the inhabitants of the American Bottom. In June, 1769, he was killed at Cahokia by a member of the Peoria tribe of the Illinois. The Illinois were under the protection of the white authorities at that time, and the death of Pontiac did not cause an immediate retaliation. (27) The Indian country had long been disturbed by unharmonious relations of the tribes but there was no great war caused by the death of the Ottawa chief.

However, tradition has it that a severe revenge was meted to the Illinois. The Pottawatomi, one of the tribes over whom Pontiac held sway, and some of his Ottawa followers, attacked the Peoria at Starved Rock. The Illinois hastened to the height of the rock and there prepared themselves to withstand a siege. The Illinois were not numerous, but their enemies were supposed to be of great number. Knowing that the

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27. Alford, The Illinois Country, p. 273.



Illinois could not sustain themselves on the top of the rock for any great length of time, the Pottawatomi encamped about the bottom of the rock, planning to starve out the Illinois. The siege continued for a great number of days, broken only by the fighting occasioned by attempts of small bands of besiegers to scale the rock. Some of these attempts were successful, but the food of the Illinois soon gave out and they were starving. It had been the custom of the besieged, on the top of the rock, to draw water from the river by means of long ropes with buckets, but the wary Pottawatomi prevented the Illinois from drawing water to the top by cutting the ropes as they were lowered. Thus the Illinois were soon reduced to starvation.

At length the Illinois could hold out no longer. They resolved to slip through the lines of the Pottawatomi during the stillness of the night. One night they stealthily descended from the height. The plan was almost on the point of success - they were passing through the Pottawatomi encampment in the little ravine that separated the rock from the surrounding bluffs - when their own Illinois dogs (8) barked and awoke the Pottawatomi warriors. The Pottawatomi raised their weapons and wreaked their vengeance on the fleeing Illinois. The little valleys resounded with the shrieks of the Illinois women and children, all of whom were mercilessly killed. The war-cries of the Illinois warriors were likewise soon silenced. The Pottawatomi, satisfied with the justice they had meted out, moved out of the region the next day. From that fatal day onward the Indians shunned the site of the rock.

Few of the Illinois escaped. Some accounts have held that all the besieged were killed, and, moreover, that the extinction of the Illinois Indians was effected at that time. Other accounts have held that only one brave escaped; he escaped by lowering himself down the steepest portion of the rock when he heard the cries that told him all was lost. One authority identifies the single survivor - according to a version holding that there was only one survivor - as a half-breed Indian named Antonio La Salle. (28)

John Dean Cantau, an honored judge of early Illinois, once gave a lecture on the "Last of the Illinois". He stated that an old Pottawatomie chief named Mencheille told him that the event occurred sometime between 1766, when he believed Pontiac was killed, and 1770. The story was, in its essence, the same as related before, but this telling had it that the night the Illinois chose to descend through the Pottawatomie lines was dark and stormy. The Illinois were met by a solid

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28. Nathaniel Watson, French and Indians of the Illinois River, Princeton, Ill., 1874; same author, Pioneers of Illinois..., Chicago, 1882; both of which are essentially the same. Watson derived his information from traditions gathered from the Pottawatomie at their reservation in Kansas by an army officer. He cites manuscripts by Jacques Luche, S.J., and Felix La Pance, a trader, who are supposed to have seen the remains of the Illinois. These manuscripts were in the possession of Hypolite Pilletay who claimed his ancestors had been residents of the upper Illinois valley since the days of La Salle, and had been in a fort on Buffalo Rock that rivalled that of La Salle. I have found no other use of these manuscripts nor have I been able to locate them.

Watson's story differed from the usual tale, given above, in that he states the Illinois and Pottawatomie fought for several days at the site of the village on the opposite shore, that the death of Pontiac really occurred at Mount Joliet, and that the slaughter took place at the top of the rock after hunger had incapacitated the Illinois.

kill of Pottawatomí warriors. The slaughter was terrific, but eleven of the bravest of the Illinois escaped in canoes and paddled to St. Louis. From that time on the Pottawatomí lived in the Illinois Valley. (29)

The chief sources have been in essential agreement on the following issues: that the affair occurred after, and was occasioned by, the death of Pontiac at the hands of an Illinois; that it occurred at Starved Rock, the Illinois being the besieged and the Pottawatomí the besiegers; and that the Pottawatomí killed most of the Illinois. However, there is little evidence from any source but Indian traditions even though the story was said to be the most persistent of Indian traditions. (30) The manuscripts cited by Eaton have not been available to others than he, so they lost a part of their value. Other contemporary manuscripts, such as the papers of the leading Indian traders or English military officials, make no mention of unusual events in the Illinois Valley. (31)

It is worthy of note that the legend has been embellished with details that add to its romantic nature. The legend has generally been responsible for the belief that the Illinois tribes passed out of history at that time. Such is not the case, for there were other tribes of the Illinois which took no part in the battle. In all

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29. John Dean Eaton, The last of the Illinois and a sketch of the Pottawatomies, (Fergus Historical Series) Chicago, 1876.

30. Baldwin, History of La Salle County, p. 71, an indirect quotation attributed to Gordon Saltonstall Hubbard. Baldwin dates the massacre as taking place in 1770, a year after the death of Pontiac, p. 72.

31. Alvord, The Illinois Country, p. 272.

probability only a remnant of the Peoria and Moingwena tribes were living in the Illinois valley at that time. In the first years of the eighteenth century these two tribes had chosen to remain in the upper valley when the Kaskaskia and other tribes chose to move to the Mississippi River. Subsequently they had become known as the "Illinois of the Narrows", at Peoria, and the "Illinois of the Rock", at Starved Rock. It must have been the latter that made legendary history by dying on the rock.

It is equally important to note that the Illinois were no longer the great peoples they had once been. Each generation saw a decrease in their numbers. Inter-marriage with the French and subsequent loss of identity as Indians may have been a reason. More important was the weakening of the individuals by the abuse of liquor and the sedentary life in the rich lands of the American bottom. Being very much reduced in numbers, they ceded their ancestral lands without being pressed. Stronger tribes resisted the land-grabbing white settlers.

Another type of legend which has become popular makes no pretence of historical accuracy. Ballads without number have been woven about the rock that broods over the waters of the Illinois. The peculiar nature of the immediate region - an oasis of rocky cliffs in the prairie country - has been the inspiration of many a bard. Hardly a year passes in which several nature lovers are not induced to contribute their poetic efforts to the columns of Illinois newspapers. Generally these ballads have admittedly been more poetic than historic. The opening sentences introducing a ballad - it is in book form - read: "The Lost Empire" is a conglomerate, in which traditions, fancies, facts, and tales of Starved



lock and other points related to it during the period of French occupancy are preserved in the form of blank verses". (32) There have been many such poems written. (33) One author of national reputation, Edgar Lee Masters, issued a collection of ballads entitled "Starved Rock" in 1918.

The history of Starved Rock has been used in fiction, too. Henry de Tonti, particularly, has been singled out most often as the hero of works of fiction. Because he had an artificial hand of iron he could do unusual things - he could hold his hand in the fire without injury to himself, or, he could strike blows with greater force than ordinary persons who had only the natural use of their hands. (34)

A set of legends has grown up around the last days of this lieutenant of La Salle's. A tradition tells of Tonti having buried a chest of gold on Starved Rock in 1702. Sixteen years later, - although he died in 1704 - Tonti divulged it as he lay on his deathbed to his confessor. The confessor died soon afterwards, too. A variation of this legend has it that an unrecognizable, bedraggled Tonti visited Starved Rock in 1718

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32. James R.B. Craighead, The Lost Empire, Oswego, Ill., (c. 1930).

33. Some of these examined were: Mary W. Jarvein, "The Legend of Starved Rock", in Peterson's Magazine, XII, No. 6, Philadelphia, December, 1896 - which is a tale of Indian lovers; William A. Jones, "The Last of the Illini - A legend of Starved Rock", in Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society for the year 1913, (Publication No. 15 of the Ill. State Hist. Library), Springfield, 1914.

34. Mary E. Catherwood, The Story of Tonty, McClurg, 1892, The Spirit of an Illinois Town, Houghton Mifflin, 1897; Everett McNeil, Tonti of the Iron Hand, Dutton, 1926; John C. Parish, The Man with the Iron Hand, Houghton Mifflin, 1918.

and told of his treasure just before he died. However, the fort was burned shortly after and the only person who knew of its location died. (35)

The legend took form before 1765, for in that year some of the inhabitants of Arens Fortia undertook an expedition to find the gold but found none after several days digging. In 1805 the legend again drew men to a search for the gold. In more recent times, before the rock became state property, young boys searched for the fabulous treasure. (36)

The settlement of the Illinois Valley was checked by the turbulent Indian conditions of the first decade of the nineteenth century. Pottawatomie, Kickapoo, and Miami dwelt where once the Illinois had been situated. No longer were the tribes settled in villages as large as the great village inhabited by the Illinois. Nor did they cultivate fields of grain as did their predecessors. Instead, their lives were harassed by the decreasing game supply. They, and the Illinois before them, had killed the fur-bearing animals for profit according to the supply rather than their own needs. Hence many of the animals that once furnished food to the inhabitants of the Illinois valley were driven out. In such a manner were the buffaloes, the bears, deer, and smaller game driven out or killed off by the fur-hunter. Most of the species were gone by the time the American settlers arrived.

Although the Indians of the Illinois country had become increasing

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35. Watson, Pioneers of Illinois, p. 168.

36. Ibid., pp. 169, 170.

warlike, it did not mean that they turned against the white men settled among them. Most of the Indians of the Illinois Valley were friendly to the Americans rather than the English who attempted to stir them to action against American settlers and traders. The peace of the inland valleys was disturbed, however, by the schemes of two Shawnee brothers, the Prophet and Tecumseh. The Prophet preached a reform of Indian life - a return to Indian customs - and Tecumseh crusaded for a pan-Indian movement which would resist the intrusion of the white race. (37) The new attitude of the Indians was shown by raids on white settlements and thefts from posts in the Indian country. William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory, was directed to crush the apparent revolt. In late 1811 Harrison struck the Indian encampment on the Tippecanoe Creek, a branch of the Wabash River, gaining a decisive victory but immense fame for himself.

Then the War of 1812 broke upon the western country. The massacre of the garrison of Fort Dearborn at Chicago gave rise to the lust for vengeance on the Indians. The Illinois Valley, with its French settlement at Peoria and the Miami and Kickapoo village near it, was suspected of sheltering the treacherous Indians. Two expeditions were planned; the first came upon the Indian villages at Peoria, and, finding them empty, burned them; the second found the trading post at Peoria empty and pillaged it, and, when they were fired upon by unknown assailants,

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37. Alford, The Illinois Country, p. 436.

returned to raze the town and take forty of its citizens in captivity.(38)

In the following year, 1813, under a new system of organization, a fort was established at Peoria - Fort Clark - and the Indian occupation of the Illinois Valley was practically a thing of the past. The posts were maintained after the war and became important trading stations.

Foremost of the traders during the early period of American occupancy was the firm of John Jacob Astor. His firm was composed of both Americans and Canadians; it hired native French-Canadian voyageurs, and conducted business with a truly international setup. The Illinois Valley was one of the last important fur centers in the area of the present state. Peoria was the chief post at which the trade was conducted, but Starved Rock was usually a post during the trading season because it was an easily located landmark. The American Fur Company, Astor's firm, always did the most trading in the valley. As late as 1818 the fur traders took 23,700 dollars of deer, bear, raccoons, muskrat, otter, beaver, wildcat, fox, and mink furs out of the valley. It was estimated that 18,000 dollars worth of trade goods had been brought into the valley that year. (39)

In 1818 Illinois was admitted to the union as a state.

Early settlers who came near Starved Rock found most of the Indians already gone. A Pennsylvanian named Simon Grosier was one of the first to settle on the Illinois River at the point nearly opposite the rock. He built a store and a warehouse in 1834 near the Utica road - the site is

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38. Ibid., pp. 443-445.

39. Alvord, The Illinois Country, p. 453.



visible from the height of the rock - and there kept supplies for the settlers who were rapidly coming into the region.(40) Homeseekers had come into La Salle County as early as 1823, a few each year until the decade of 1830, when the number increased rapidly. The coming of the canal brought in many settlers. Utica, being at the head of uninterrupted navigation on the Illinois River, was one of the largest settlements on the Illinois River above Peoria and certainly was the most important. After the completion of the canal and the Rock Island railroad a few years later, Utica sank into oblivion. The present village of Utica is a successor to the first village of that name. The present Utica is an example of the influence of railroads in the conflict between railroads and waterways.

Starved Rock was no longer the point of concentration in the Illinois Valley. Farmers cultivated broad fields and had no reason to use the natural fortification in their midst. Roads took the place of rivers as highways, building new cities at their crossings. Starved Rock was just a natural curiosity, reached only by boat or foot-path.

As the years went on men learned of its history. The published writings of Hennepin were read and men saw that the rock in their midst was a historic spot. The almost obliterated ruins on the top of the rock gave it a romantic aspect. Legends grew; legends that told a more complete story of the rock at each telling.

The use of the rock as a pleasure ground began at an early time. An early owner, Colonel Hitt, was well aware of its historic significance and

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40. Elmer Baldwin, History of La Salle County, Illinois..., Chicago, 1877, pp. 355, 356.

he permitted its use as a public park. Citizens from nearby towns had basket picnics on its top, and, if the statement of an early settler may be believed, there was even a dance floor there. (41) In the latter half of the Nineteenth Century a hotel company developed the site as a resort, cutting trails along the bluffs and making the ascent of the rock more easy by means of a staircase.

In the early Twentieth Century historically minded persons agitated the state legislature to set aside the area as a state park. In 1911 this was accomplished. Since that time it has been a popular resort for nature lovers and for those who know of the dramatic scenes that once took place there. In 1932 the Illinois River level was raised sixteen feet to permit use of the river as a highway again. A few sites of historic importance have thus been inundated. (42)

Few objects evidencing the French period remain at the rock today. An occasional arrow-head is found by the lucky searcher. Most of the French and Indian remains are found by archaeological effort - it is necessary to dig about eighteen inches into the earth to uncover remains of the Seventeenth Century. Before the days of the dam it was possible to find French and Indian relics in the low waters of the river, but that opportunity is gone. The mounds of Utica and the earthworks of the old fort at the head of French Canyon alone pay tribute to a day that was once theirs.

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41. Statement of Denis Patrick Murnighan. Mr. Murnighan was the son of an Irish canal laborer, whose recollections carry as far back as the Civil War.

42. Notably the site of La Salle's camp of the winter of 1682-1683 which he used while building the fort.

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