

by Prof. Butler. Robertson's report was "based on information" derived simply from a petition sent in by some citizens of Prairie du Chien; and every reference to a French fort having been erected in that place in 1755, was made by them from tradition only.

In 1820, two years subsequent to the date of Robertson's Report, Isaac Lee, an agent of the United States, visited Prairie du Chien to report upon land titles; and, to that end, "gathered up testimony on the spot." But, in *his* report, not a word is said about a French fort having been built in Prairie du Chien, in 1755. The report of Robertson is based wholly upon tradition; that of Lee, upon sworn evidence. Prof. Butler then comments on the evidence taken by Lee, just as though it had been the foundation for Robertson's report. He does not say that of all this "testimony gathered up on the spot" as to a French fort, not one word was given by anyone claiming to have ever seen the fort or claiming to have seen any person who had seen the fort; but such was the fact. And Dr. Butler then adds: "According to the oldest inhabitants, some of whom had resided there well-nigh from the close of the Revolutionary War, it was only during that contest that the French fort was burned." This last sentence is well calculated to carry the idea (1) that white settlers were living at Prairie du Chien during the whole continuance of the Revolution; (2) that it was during that contest the fort was burned; and (3) that the oldest inhabitants, some of whom had lived there well-nigh from the close of the war had been told by those who lived there before them, that they had seen the fort and that they saw it when it was burned; and that, therefore, the "testimony" gathered from the "oldest inhabitants" by the government agent must have great weight.

If the reader will take pains to read over just what these oldest inhabitants said (it has all been published<sup>1</sup>), he will quickly reach the conclusion that no such inference as that contained in the first and third propositions can be

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<sup>1</sup> See *American State Papers* (Public Lands), vol. iv, pp. 867-879.