

that there was such a fort on the "prairie." But it is very plain to be seen *how* this tradition became rife among the settlers at Prairie du Chien.

Origin of the Tradition as to the French Fort of 1755

At the beginning of the year 1780, there were on the "Prairie des Chiens" what were subsequently called "the remains of ancient works, constructed probably for military purposes," very numerous and of great extent. The parapets and mounds were connected in one series of works. "Wherever there was an angle in the principal lines, a mound of the largest size was erected at the angle; the parapets were terminated by mounds at each extremity, and also at the gateways. No ditch was observed on either side of the parapet. In many places, the lines were composed of parapets and mounds in conjunction, the mounds being arranged along the parapets at their usual distance from each other, and operating as flank defences to the lines."¹ These were prehistoric earthworks of the same character as others now known to be scattered all over the West and Northwest; but when first seen by the Canadian French, who settled upon the "prairie" in 1781, they supposed them to be the remains of an ancient French or Spanish fort. And an event happened just before their arrival to help on their belief.

Early in the summer of 1780, a log-house, capable of holding three hundred and sixty packs of furs, is positively known to have been in existence upon the "prairie." That log-house was built on one of those prehistoric earthworks, just described as having parapets and other peculiarities of an ordinary fort. In June of the year last mentioned, about three hundred of the packs were taken out of this log-house and transported to "Fort Michilimackinac," for the reason that there was danger of their falling into the hands of the enemy—the Americans. The sixty remaining packs were burned as of little value. Reason and tradition both say

¹ S. H. Long's *Narrative*, by W. H. Keating, vol. 1, pp. 240, 241.