

# Early French Forts in Western Wisconsin

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By Lyman C. Draper

From a sense of duty, rather than in any spirit of controversy, I will proceed to submit a few notes on some of the statements made by Mr. Butterfield, in his preceding paper. While investigating and studying the few points in which I think Mr. Butterfield errs, and which, it seems to me, are important to a proper understanding of the primitive history of Wisconsin, I have ventured to add other matters that struck me as worthy, in this connection, of permanent preservation.

A just elucidation of our true history, so far as we can ascertain it from recorded facts, and reach reasonable deductions, is all I seek. I, too, may err, as even the most faithful investigators are liable to do, for want of full knowledge, or misled by partial, distorted, or erroneous statements. Further historical discoveries by Margry, Parkman, Neill, or others, may yet throw a flood of light on all our doubtful and disputed points; and when they do, we should all readily acknowledge their force.

## The First Probable Establishment at Prairie du Chien

Before entering upon the question of the locality of Fort St. Nicholas, it is proper to notice what was apparently a prior establishment at Prairie du Chien, a few years earlier than Perrot's post at that point. In La Salle's letter of August 22, 1682, he complains of the encroachment of Du Luth on the territory expressly assigned him for the purposes of trade. "But the king," he says, "having granted us the trade in buffalo hides, this would be ruined in going to, or coming from, the Nadouesieux, by any other route than by Lake Superior, by which Count Frontenac has