

showing that the lead mines were twenty-one leagues, according to Charlevoix, above the Moingona, or Des Moines River, and nothing whatever is said by La Potherie or Charlevoix as to the distance of Fort St. Nicholas above the lead mines—La Potherie referring to this fort, if at all, only by vague reference, and Charlevoix making no mention of it.

Even had La Potherie stated, as Mr. Butterfield erroneously supposes, that Fort St. Nicholas was twenty leagues above the Dubuque lead mines, it would have been approximately the correct distance to Prairie du Chien. By government survey, as Maj. A. Mackenzie, the U. S. engineer at Rock Island, informs me, it is fifty-seven and a half miles from Dubuque to Prairie du Chien. Webster, Worcester, Chambers, and the *Revised Imperial Dictionary* agree, that in France the common league is about two miles and three-quarters, or literally 2.76, and the legal league, 2.42 statute miles; Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* adding that the league of 25 to a degree is 2.76 statute English miles, and this, Dr. Butler informs me, is the common reckoning of the French—or a little over two and three-fourths English miles to a league. According to this reckoning, twenty French leagues would be nearly fifty-six miles.

No man living has paid so much attention to the early French explorations of the Northwest, by long and faithful investigations into original sources, as has Dr. Neill. Mr. Butterfield professes not to be certain that he understands Dr. Neill's meaning when he states, that Fort St. Nicholas was, in his opinion located "*at Prairie du Chien.*" If this plain and emphatic language is not sufficiently comprehensible, a mere look at Franquelin's map cannot fail to explain the idea Dr. Neill intended to convey.

It is not clear when Fort St. Nicholas was established. It might have been when Perrot first visited the Wisconsin and Upper Mississippi country, in 1685. Certain it is, that Perrot and Bois-Guillot were "trading near the Mississippi" in 1687;¹ and on Franquelin's map of 1688, we find our first

¹ Shea's *Charlevoix*, iii, p. 280; Neill's *Minnesota*, fourth edition, 1882, p. 141.