

account be obtained by any traditions among them touching this point. The remains of what is commonly called the *old French fort*, are yet very distinguishable. Though capacious and apparently strong, it was probably calculated for defence against musketry and small arms only. None can recollect the time of the erection of this fort—it was far beyond the memory of the oldest; nor can the time of its erection be determined by any evidence to be obtained. Some difference of opinion seems to exist there as to the question, whether it was originally built by the French or by the Spanish government. *It is evidently very ancient.*”

Among “the most aged” of the Prairie du Chien people whom Col. Lee most likely consulted, was Michael Brisbois, who settled there, as he states, in 1781; Dennis Curtois, in 1791; Joseph Crélié as early or earlier, and the venerable widow of Jean Marie Cardinal, at this time, apparently, the widow of her former Indian servant, Nicholas Colas, who had accompanied Cardinal and wife when they first settled at Prairie du Chien, at a very uncertain date, but clearly sometime anterior to the advent of Capt. Long, in 1780, and of Michael Brisbois the following year. Had Madame Cardinal, with her husband and servant, been the very first white settlers there, Col. Lee, who was instituting inquiries on this very point, would have readily learned the fact from her and her long-time neighbors; but as Col. Lee asserts, none could tell when the French first settled there—“*it was,*” he adds, “*far beyond the memory of the oldest,*” and Mrs. Cardinal had the undoubted reputation of being the oldest surviving settler. This would imply an earlier settlement than the Cardinal’s, and an earlier one than Brisbois’ in 1781; and it would, too, seem to suggest, that there must have been, in addition to traders, at least some scattered settlers there at the time of Carver’s visit in 1766, and Capt. Long’s in 1780, though not of sufficient numbers to have elicited any special notice. According to the tradition of Joseph Rolette and Charles Ménard, Mrs. Cardinal at least witnessed the affair of Capt. Long, which fact was derived from Mrs. Cardinal herself.

We should bear in mind that Col. Lee’s object was not