

ernment of France established a military post near the mouth of the Wisconsin."

The report to Congress was based on information given by a government agent who had visited Prairie du Chien, and gathered up testimony on the spot. 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.

It is argued by our skeptical annalist that this fort was an ordinary log-house. It seems to me more properly named a fort. It was so named by almost everybody known to have been acquainted with those who had seen it. Among its stores were no less than three hundred and sixty bales of fur, and as a rule every fur factory was fortified. It was defended by a body of armed men, as forts are wont to be.

But, says our skeptic, it was built on the site of a prehistoric fort, and the works of mound-builders passed for those of the French. Such a site was fitly preferred, and such works became French when used as foundations by the French, and incorporated into works of their own. Baptize an old Jupiter, and he becomes Jew Peter straight-way.

Early tradition at Prairie du Chien reported a French fort burned there. Skeptics concerning the existence of such a fort hold that this tradition grew out of the burning of a certain log-house there. But there is no evidence that the house in question was burned at all. Their only witness in the matter simply says that certain bales of fur which had been stored there were burned. The store-house was occupied by friends of those who are supposed to have set it on fire. Such an incendiary supposition is unreasonable. Or the log-house may have been fortified, and so styled a fort.

J. Long, traveling in 1778, north of Lake Superior, says: "The house of Shaw, a trader on Lake Manontoye, might very properly be styled a fort, being secured by high pickets."¹

But evidence is at hand of French forts near Prairie du Chien before 1755.

¹ Long's *Travels*, p. 65.