

GAUTIER'S JOURNAL OF A VISIT TO THE MISSISSIPPI, 1777-78.¹

[Translated from the French by Grace Clark.]

To His Excellency, de Carletonne, General for his Britannic Majesty in Canada.

Having found myself able and indeed designed to go and induce the Nations of the Mississippi to come and take your orders, I left two mountains² the 28th [October, 1777], to carry out my mission and accidents have so detained me that I

¹ Charles Gautier de Verville was the son of Charles Michel de Langlade's half-sister. Gautier's father, Claude Germain Gautier de Verville, married Marie Louise Therese Villeneuve — daughter of Madam Augustin Langlade by her first marriage — on the 2d of October, 1736. Charles de Langlade was born in 1729, and Charles Gautier not earlier than 1737. The latter's grandmother being a sister of King Nissowagnet, or La Fourche (The Fork), he himself was a quarter-blood Ottawa. In 1755, when not over eighteen years of age, young Gautier served with De Langlade at the defeat of Braddock. Four years later, he "fought like a lion" on the plains of Abraham, but at the close of the war, in common with his fellows, cheerfully rallied under the standard of his old enemies, the British. During the Revolutionary war, we find him constantly employed, usually with De Langlade, in keeping the Northwestern Indians in line with English interests. He appears to have rendered valuable assistance in this service, and in the letters of Major De Peyster and other British officers in the West, he is frequently referred to as being a valuable military agent among the savages west of Lake Michigan. He obtained the commission of captain, as a reward for bravery and successful Indian diplomacy. After the close of the Revolutionary war, he settled at Mackinaw and was occasionally employed by the English government as an Indian interpreter. By a Winnebago wife, he had three children, of whom one became the consort of the elder Michael Brisbois, and the mother of Michael Brisbois, Jr. Gautier regularly married Miss Madelaine Chevalier, "a woman of rare beauty." The elder of their two daughters married Henry Fisher, of Prairie du Chien, and the younger became the legal wife of the senior Brisbois. Gautier, in 1798, retired from Mackinaw and went to live with his son-in-law, Brisbois, at Prairie du Chien, where he died about 1803, aged some sixty-six years. His wife followed him a few years later. Their numerous descendants at Green Bay and Prairie du Chien rank with the best of the old families there. — ED.

² The Lake of the Two Mountains is a widening of the Ottawa river, about twelve miles above its mouth. In the time of Gautier, there was a station there, at which traders and exploring parties fitted for expeditions to the Northwest. — ED.