

The Natches is defended by Royalists who had been ruined by Willings depredations.¹

The Rebels have had several Councils with the Indians, have nothing to give them and treat them with great contempt. Their policy is to intimidate them since they cannot carress them. No expedition was talked of towards this post, they are right for as sure as they attempt it they will never get back. The country affording nothing for strangers to subsist upon.

One Linctot a Trader I find has entered into their service. He has too much to say amongst the Indians, every method should therefore be used to get him into our hands, for which purpose, and to reconnoitre I send off Gautier with a party of Indians at Les Pee² a small Fort on the Illinois River, where he is at present with some other traders who had better be here. Gautier has orders to Burn the Fort which will shew the Rebels that all the Indians do not intend to remain Neuter, and effectually intimidate them from attempting an Expedition this way. The Pay is about Eighty Leagues from the Kaiskaskias.

Your Excellency refers me to the Ordinances of the Province for '77 respecting the affairs of Mr. Howard.³ I see

¹ During February and March, 1778, Capt. James Willing, of Philadelphia, at the head of about one hundred American rangers, made conquest of the English settlements at and in the neighborhood of Natchez, Miss. The property of non-residents and British officials was destroyed or confiscated and the loyalists driven out. Cf. Bancroft's *Hist. U. S.* (ed. 1885), v., pp. 315, 316; also the very unfavorable view of Willing in Claiborne's *Mississippi*, i., pp. 117-124.—ED.

² De Peyster's method of writing Le Pé, an abbreviation for "The Peoria." He phonetically spells it "The Pay," a few lines further on. The post, probably a mere stockade for the immediate protection of the traders, was "situated on the northwest shore of Lake Peoria, about one mile and a half above the lower extremity or outlet of the lake" (*Amer. State Papers*, iii., p. 421),—within the present city limits of Peoria, Ill. See also Matson's *Pioneers of Illinois*, pp. 216, 217. Peoria was, at this time, indifferently styled Lee Pee, Pay, Pé, Au Pay, or Opa.—ED.

³ May 6, Haldimand notified De Peyster that Joseph Howard had set off to trade, presumably at Michilimackinac and the Grand Portage, without a license; and directing him "as authorized by my ordinance of the Province for that purpose passed in March, 1777" to seize Howard's