

## SINCLAIR TO HALDIMAND.

SIR,—Your Excellency was informed by my letter of February last, that a Party was to leave this Place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March to engage the Indians to the Westward in an attack on the Spanish & Illinois Country. Seven Hundred & fifty men including Traders, servants and Indians, proceeded with them down the Mississippi for that purpose on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of May.

During the time necessary for assembling the Indians at La Prairie du Chien, detachments were made to watch the River to intercept craft coming up with provisions and to seize upon the people working in the lead mines. Both one and the other were effected without any accident.

Thirty six Minomies (at first intended as an escort) have brought to this place a large armed Boat, loaded at Pencour, in which were twelve men & a Rebel Commissary.<sup>1</sup>

From the mines they have brought seventeen Spanish & Rebel Prisoners, & stopp'd Fifty Tonns of Lead ore and from both they obtained a good supply of Provisions. The Chiefs Machiquawish and Wabasha have kindled this spirit in the Western Indians.

Captain Langlade with a chosen Band of Indians and Canadians will join a party assembled at Chicago to make his attack by the Illinois River, and another party are sent to watch the Plains between the Wabash and the Mississippi.

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<sup>1</sup> Early in March, 1780, Charles Gratiot, then resident at Cahokia, sent a barge-load of goods and provisions to Prairie du Chien, for the purposes of trade. But in April, when off the mouth of Turkey river, thirty miles below its destination, it was seized and plundered by the Indians whom Sinclair had incited. As stated in Sinclair's letter, the crew and boat were sent on to Michilimackinac. In 1781, the boatmen brought suit for their wages, the charge being made that Gratiot was in collusion with the enemy, and that the contents of the barge proved the main supplies for the support of the Indians in their advance upon St. Louis. Gratiot made an elaborate and successful defense, and the suit became *un cause célèbre* in St. Louis. As a matter of fact, he was aiding the Americans with supplies. For biographical sketch of Gratiot, see *Wis. Hist. Coll.*, x., pp. 239-242, 262-264.—ED.