

Major Hay ' follows to-morrow with the last of the batteaux, the Pouteouattamies and the Miamis. This carrying place is free from any obstructions, but what the carelessness & ignorance of the French have left, & would leave from Generation to Generation. An intelligent person at a small expense might make it as fine a road as any within 20 miles of London. The Woods are beautiful, Oak, Ash, Beech, Nutwood, very clear & of a great growth. Your Excellency will I hope excuse my mentioning, a trifling tho' curious particular, in a ridge near the road I found a sea fossil, to find Marine productions on this hauteur des terres is to my mind more curious than their being found in the Alps — there are no mountains in view from Detroit to this place so that these appearances cannot readily be accounted for from volcanoes of which there is no trace to be observed. All our people, of all colors are in perfect health, & their disposition such *hitherto* as leaves me no room for complaint.

Lieut^t Du Vernet having taken a sketch of the Miamis

about sixty miles, up river, "near a stream which is the source of the Ouabache" [Illinois], where there is a portage of half a league (*Margry*, v., p. 219). In 1711, Father Chardon had his mission sixty miles above the mouth. By 1712, there appears to have been a French military post at this mission. Charlevoix, in a letter dated "River St. Joseph, Aug. 16, 1721," writes, describing his approach to the fort, from Lake Michigan: "You afterward sail up twenty leagues in it [up the St. Josephs river] before you reach the fort, which navigation requires great precaution." He speaks of the large settlement of Pottawattomies and Miamis on the river, hard by the fort. The evidence is ample, that the fort on the St. Josephs, from about 1712 to its final destruction during the Revolutionary war, guarded the portage between the river of that name and the Kankakee, on the east bank of the St. Josephs, in Indiana, a short distance below the present city of South Bend; while the Pottawattomies were located upon the opposite bank, on the portage trail. In 1879, the St. Josephs river was surveyed by a corps of United States engineers; the distance from the mouth of the river up to Niles, Mich., where most historians have located Fort St. Josephs, was found to be but 42 miles, as the stream winds, while to South Bend it is 56.39, which latter distance very closely fits the sixty miles specified by Mermet, Chardon and Charlevoix. Credit is due to C. W. Butterfield for having been the first historian, so far as I am aware, to have pointed out the fact that this Revolutionary fort was in the neighborhood of South Bend; this he did in an eight-line note in *Mag. West. Hist.*, iii., p. 447.—ED.

¹ John Hay, commissioned major August 29, 1777, but serving as captain in the 28th foot.—ED.