

## PRAIRIE DU CHIEN IN 1827.

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LETTERS OF JOSEPH M. STREET TO GOV. NINIAN EDWARDS, OF ILLINOIS.<sup>1</sup>

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, Nov., 1827.

MY DEAR SIR:—I have been here two or 3 weeks and I can assure you I have not been idle, as my official communications would shew. By the same conveyance that takes this letter, a communication *directed to the Secretary of War*, as close written as this, on 3 whole sheets of paper, is sent off. And altho' so newly introduced into the Indian relations, I think you, who are by your knowledge of them and their affairs and countries, so able to judge, would give me some credit for my *tact*, and the easy manner in which

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph M. Street was born in Virginia, about 1780, and in the winter of 1805-6 emigrated from Richmond, in that state, to Frankfort, Ky., where he published *The Western World* newspaper, "and for several years took a conspicuous part in the gladiatorial field of Kentucky politics." In the summer of 1812, he became one of the first settlers in Shawneetown, Ill., and formed a wide circle of political and personal friends among the leading pioneers of southern Illinois. He appears to have always been an uncompromising Whig, in office or out, and conducted an active political correspondence for many years with Gov. Ninian Edwards and others; many of his letters may be found in Washburne's *Edwards Papers*, from which volume the two here given are extracted, as casting interesting side-lights on the condition of affairs in Prairie du Chien and the lead region, in 1827. March 30, 1827, we find him writing from Shawneetown to Governor Edwards, complaining that he has a family of "12 white persons besides myself," dependent on him for a support which he is "at an entire loss" to know how to provide. It appears that he had been conducting a vigorous correspondence with influential men of his party in Washington, begging for office, but he says that those having influence are "sweet in compliments and but give us hopes," while those who do exhibit "warmth and feeling" are without influence. His correspondence with Edwards throughout the summer is in the same melancholy strain. He had, after persistent labors, obtained the county clerkship at Peoria, in March, 1827, but the appointment cost him \$40 in traveling expenses from Shawnee-