

would not venture up at all when they were informed that the place had been taken possession of by the British. He, however, assured the inhabitants that they might depend upon him to do all that was in his power to protect the settlement from being attacked by the enemy. It was his intention to form the settlers into a military corps, which he hoped, with the help of the Indians, would be sufficiently strong for that purpose. But he had not sufficient arms or a supply of ammunition to give them. He, however, hoped in a short time to be able to give them a supply of all they wanted, for he had already written to the government for arms and ammunition. Before any reply was received to this request, Dickson was ordered off with a large body of Indians to take part in the operations on the western frontier of the United States. Shortly after his departure, roving bands of disaffected and hostile Indians hovered around Prairie du Chien, plundering and slaughtering the cattle belonging to the settlers, and keeping the poor people in constant fear and alarm of an attack on the settlement. Capt. Dease,¹ who had been appointed by Mr. Dickson to the command of Prairie du Chien militia, collected a body of the settlers, principally hunters, and with these men prepared to defend the place if attacked. But these roving bands were not inclined to come into open conflict with the settlers. They contented themselves with plundering and harassing the poor people, cutting off stragglers, and driving away any cattle which had been left unprotected, and keeping the settlement in a constant state of alarm all summer.

Dickson's long absence was also a cause of much anxiety. He had now been away several months, and no tidings of his movements had reached them. During the winter reports from time to time were circulated throughout the settlement that the Americans would certainly take possession of the place in the spring. Those who circulated these rumors were known to be in open correspondence with the Americans. The people, however, had now be-

¹ Francis Michael Dease, a Prairie du Chien trader.— Ed.