

It is alleged¹ that some French traders stationed in the vicinity of Peoria Lake, on the Illinois River, purchased a quantity of lead in 1690 from certain Indian mines on what afterwards came to be known as Fever or Galena River.

When in the Green Bay region in 1690, after having made an expedition up the Mississippi, Nicholas Perrot, on being presented by a Miami chief with a lump of lead ore, promised that within twenty days he would establish a post below the Wisconsin River. La Potherie says² that the chief gave Perrot information as to the locality of the mines, and the latter accordingly visited them. Perrot, we are told, found "the lead hard to work, because it lay between rocks and required blasting; it had very little dross, and was easily melted." Perrot's post, built at this time, was doubtless on the east side of the river, about opposite the Dubuque mines.

As early as 1693, Le Sueur was commandant at Chequamegon Bay, and appears to have made extended explorations throughout the Upper Mississippi valley, thereby "acquiring renown."³ In 1695 he built a fort on a large island in the Mississippi River between Lake Pepin and the mouth of the St. Croix,⁴ which became for the French, says Charlevoix, "the centre of commerce for the western parts." While occupying this position, it appears that he discovered "mines of lead, copper, blue and green earth," and went to France to solicit the court's permission to work them. After many delays, he set out from France, in 1699, in D'Iberville's second expedition to Louisiana, which arrived at its destination in December. He had been commissioned by the king to explore and work "the mines at the source of the Mississippi," and had thirty miners assigned to him. His reporter and companion,

¹ *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, xviii., p. 285.

² Edition of 1753, ii., p. 251; *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, pp. 301, 331.

³ Shea, *Early Voyages up and down the Mississippi* (Albany, 1861), pp. 89 *et seq.*

⁴ Neill, *History of Minnesota* (1882), p. 148; Thwaites, *Story of Wisconsin* (Boston, 1890), p. 79.