

produce worth sending to market, they could carry it at no great expence. They, however, carry lead, the produce of a mine on the French side of the river, which yields but a small quantity, as they have not hands to work it. These boats, in times of the floods, which happen only in May and June, go down to New Orleans from the Illinois in 14 and 16 days."

In 1769 was made the first application for a concession of lead-mine land in the valley of the Upper Mississippi. The petitioner was Martin Miloney Duralde, who signed his application at St. Louis, July 5, 1769. The day following, the grant was issued, being signed by Louis St. Ange de Bellerive, captain-commandant of the Illinois, and Joseph Labuxière, "attorney of the attorney general, judge, etc., of the royal jurisdiction of the Illinois, for the French." This grant embraced a tract of land "three arpents in front, by the ordinary depth,"¹ on Le Sueur's River of the Mines (Fever River), "160 leagues, more or less, above" St. Louis. From the tone of his petition, Duralde appears to have been a ne'er-do-well, and there is no record extant to show that he ever settled upon his grant or opened any mines, although the Spaniards confirmed all French land grants.

Capt. Philip Pittman, writing in 1770 of Ste. Genevieve,² which had become a notable market for lead, says: "A lead mine about fifteen leagues distant, supplies the whole country with shot." It appears that at this time lead was, next to peltries, the most important and valuable export

¹ French claims in Michigan were usually forty arpents in depth; these claims at Green Bay were merely possessory, and allowed by the government to extend eighty arpents from front to rear. The old Spanish common-field lots, in and around St. Louis, were from one to four arpents wide on the river, by forty in depth. This appears to have been "the usual depth" of grants, during this period, although in special cases they were much more extensive. The Spanish and French grants in Upper Louisiana are fully discussed in Scharf's *St. Louis*, chap. xiii. The arpent is equal to 192 feet, 6 inches, English measure.

² *Present State of European Settlements on the Mississippi* (London, 1770).