

1779: SPEECH TO THE WESTERN INDIANS

[Rhymed chronicle of De Peyster's speech at l'Arbre Croche, July 4, 1779.⁷ Reprinted from De Peyster, *Miscellanies*, pp. 5-15.]

Great Chiefs, convened at my desire
 To kindle up this council fire;
 Which, with ascending smoke,⁸ shall burn
 Till you from war⁹ once more return,
 To lay the axe in earth so deep,
 That nothing shall disturb its sleep.¹⁰

Propitious see bright *Kesis*¹¹ shine
 On every warlike son¹² of mine!
 The Lake¹³ is smooth, the roads are even,

⁷ In connection with this expedition of Langlade, detailed in the previous note, De Peyster went in person as far as l'Arbre Croche (see *ante*, p. 375, note 2) to arouse the Indians convened at that place. The speech which he made upon that occasion, he afterwards amused himself by forming into a rhymed chronicle, full of Indian words and technical allusions, most of which he himself explained in accompanying footnotes. The document is a curious medley of terms, but repays study, both for its historical and ethnological value.—Ed.

⁸ When the war calumet (or pipe) is lit and handed round for everyone to take a whif, in case the smoke rises erect, it is a good omen—and so *vice versa*.—A. S. DE P.

⁹ From Fort Charters, under the care of British officers, to assist Governor Hamilton, but before they could join him, he had surrendered by convention to the American General, Clark, near the Islenois.—A. S. DE P.

Comment by Ed. It is needless to say that this expedition did not succeed in reaching Fort Chartres; but it is less clear how De Peyster should have been mistaken in the purpose thereof. Hamilton was captured at Vincennes, Feb. 25, 1779, and the news reached De Peyster at Mackinac by April 24; see *Ill. Hist. Colls.*, i, p. 432. The object of the expedition of the summer of 1779 is outlined *ante*, note 6.

¹⁰ In time of peace the tomahawk is supposed to sleep in the earth.—A. S. DE P.

¹¹ The Sun.—A. S. DE P.

¹² The commandant is called father by every friendly tribe.—A. S. DE P.

¹³ Lake Mitchigan.—A. S. DE P.