

## 1780: FURS SAVED AT PRAIRIE DU CHIEN

[Before the return of the expedition against St. Louis, Sinclair sent out a supplementary force to assist in bringing off the traders' effects from Prairie du Chien, and to protect the retreat.<sup>14</sup> They secured a large amount of peltry, and retired not long before the appearance of an American force.<sup>15</sup>]

news of that event reached Galvez, he gathered his forces and captured the neighboring English forts of Manchac, Baton Rouge, and Natchez. The following spring (March 14, 1780) he secured the surrender of Mobile, and in 1781 that of Pensacola. He was liberally rewarded by the government for his brilliant exploits, and upon the death of his father (1785) was made viceroy of Mexico, where he remained until his own death in August, 1794.—ED.

<sup>14</sup> This expedition seems to have been in charge of Sergeant Phillips of the 8th infantry, and to have been composed chiefly of Indians and a few Canadian militia. Our chief source of information concerning this supplementary campaign is from the "Voyages of John Long," a northern trader then sojourning at Mackinac; see Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, ii, pp. 185-190. Long represents himself as in command of the forces; but Sinclair's letters (*Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xi, pp. 153, 155) show that Phillips of the regulars was the authorized leader. They found Langlade guarding Prairie du Chien, and brought off about three hundred packs of furs, burning the rest, lest the Americans should secure them.—ED.

<sup>15</sup> The American expedition following the retreating British was commanded by Col. John Montgomery, and under Clark's orders advanced for some distance up the Illinois. The rumor of their approach led to the retreat of the Chicago division of the British expedition. Montgomery thereupon left his boats and marched overland to the Rock and Mississippi rivers. On the former stream he burned a large Sauk town, with its cornfields. Long says (*opus* cited in preceding note) that a party of Americans reached Prairie du Chien five days after he had retired therefrom. We have discovered no contemporary account of Montgomery's expedition, save a brief report in *Va. State Papers*, iii, p. 443. Dr. Draper collected several pension statements of participants. From these sources, in the Draper MSS., it would appear that the main body went no farther than the mouth of Rock River; but a detachment may, as stated by Long, have been sent to secure plunder at Prairie du Chien. If so, this would apparently be the first American expedition into what is now the state of Wisconsin.—ED.