Fort St. Joseph Under French Control: 1693-1760

Cornelius Eringaard

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FORT ST. JOSEPH UNDER FRENCH CONTROL: 1693-1760

By

Cornelius Eringaard

A Thesis present to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Western Michigan University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in History

Western Michigan University
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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to trace the history of Fort St. Joseph. In the process, I shall try to show Fort St. Joseph's historical setting in international and regional economics and politics. Regional and international events are included when necessary for this understanding.

Certain difficulties confront the researcher when he undertakes a study of this type. (A language barrier prevents me from reading many French documents which may have contained pertinent information.) Much source material is probably buried in the Paris archives, or in the archives of Quebec, two places I was unable to visit. I have tried, however, to get translations of French source materials which might contain appropriate information. I have used secondary sources whenever they fitted the historical context, so as to weave a comprehensive and continuous story of the fort.

From my earliest recollections the French and English conflict in North America has aroused my special interest. It contained the charm and adventure today sought by many who view television westerns. I selected Fort St. Joseph as my thesis topic because it was a Michigan establishment which participated in the French-English conflict.
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INTRODUCTION

Prior to the advent of the white man on the North American continent the Indians were self-sufficient. Contact with civilization, in the seventeenth century, provided them with desires which they themselves were unable to fulfill. As the European intruders greatly prized the furs which were to be found so abundantly in the dark forests of the new continent, the French promoted a system of trade intended to stimulate Indian desires, while satisfying the European appetite for furs. This system of barter became the sustenance of the Canadian economy.

More favorable trading developed for the Iroquois-Algonquin tribes with the coming of the Dutch and later the English in the early seventeenth century. The resulting competition between the French and the English over the fur resources of the New World caused conflict in colonial America for about a century.

Before the death of Champlain, and largely because of his determination, the French had extended their explorations, missionary activity, and trading excursions to the Great Lakes. Searching for a water route to the Pacific, Etienne Brulé and a companion named Grenoble reached the upper peninsula, probably in 1622. In 1634 Nicolet passed through the Straits of Mackinac to Lake Michigan, traversed Green Bay, and visited the heart of Wisconsin. Within a generation, from the

Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes, ambitious Frenchmen were trading with the savages while zealous Jesuit missionaries taught them.

The outstanding problem of New France after the death of Champlain was the ferocious enmity of the Five Nations - the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas who lived in what is now New York. Their confederation, commonly called the Iroquois, had established friendly relations with the Dutch traders and merchants of Albany, who provided them with guns and ammunition. Since the French did not at first supply their Algonquin and Huron allies with ammunition, the Iroquois preyed upon the French allies and the exploration of New France was halted.

Too much significance cannot be given to the marauding incursions of the Iroquois; they affected all facets of French colonial trade, religion, culture, travel and foreign policy. The Indian migration out of the Eastern Lakes region to an area west of Lake Michigan in the seventeenth century was caused by these invasions of the Iroquois. The lower peninsula of Michigan became void of Indians, save for a lone hunter, wanderer, or an Iroquois war party. The Huron nation around the south end of Georgian Bay was first to feel the wrath of the Iroquois in 1643, and again in 1649. They were badly defeated, became demoralized, and fled in every direction, homeless wanderers, living in apprehension of attack. Further Iroquois incursions quickly spread fear and consternation among the rest of the Great Lakes tribes. Lesser tribal enmities were forgotten as hundreds of Indians found their way to Manitoulin Island and the shores of Wisconsin. By 1660 there

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were few Indians on the shores of Lake Huron or on any of the islands. Lower Michigan was a solitude. A voyager from Montreal, paddling his canoe up the Ottawa and descending through Lake Nipissing and the French River, the accustomed thoroughfare to Lake Huron, would not meet a single Algonquin hunter on the entire route. He would see no Indians until he came to the Menominee River or went beyond Keweenaw Bay.

The expansion of New France resumed after a lapse of about two decades, but the hostility of the Iroquois and the migrations of the tribes determined its course. The easiest avenue to the lake region, through Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, was long closed to the French by the Iroquois. Before about 1670, the French therefore could travel to the interior only by the treacherous Ottawa and French River route to Lake Huron. But the alliance of the French with the Algonquins begun in Champlain's day was maintained, and the result was a steady expansion of the French fur trade.

The Dutch were succeeded by the English in New York in 1664. The English carried on their trade through continued friendship with the Iroquois. The maintenance and expansion of the up-country peltry trade was the principal motive for fermenting war between the French allies and the Iroquois. Protection of their Indian allies against the Iroquois, in order to foster their own fur trade, was the policy of the French forces in the Northwest. Complicating this policy were the coureurs de bois.

It can be assumed that with the renewed trading and exploration

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2Paré, op. cit., p. 28.
of the French, many **coureurs de bois** (unlicensed fur traders) visited the St. Joseph River before and after Marquette visited the region.\(^1\) These men were intractable, undisciplined, and licentious. They demoralized and corrupted the Indians. Because of their illegal activities and illiteracy they never kept records of their voyages; consequently, for information pertaining to the history of Fort St. Joseph we must rely on the writings of the Jesuit missionaries of the region and on the records of French officers.\(^2\)

The St. Joseph was probably seen by Marquette returning from his second visit to the Illinois. Having fallen ill among them, he sought to get to Mackinac by the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. It has been suggested that the Illinois surely knew of the Kankakee-St. Joseph route and would have taken it, because of its ease of travel out of Illinois country and its sure access to food.\(^3\) But Quaife asserts that the thirty leagues in which the Indians accompanied Marquette would end at the portage between the Desplains and the Chicago Rivers. To take the Kankakee route Marquette would have had to travel one hundred and fifty miles beyond where the Indians left him; yet in his narrative he arrived at the Lake shortly thereafter.\(^4\) Probably the nearest he got to the St. Joseph River was in the spring of 1675, when he passed by the mouth of the river prostrate in his canoe, paddled by two Indians.

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1. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
The next adventurer to leave any record of his activities in the St. Joseph region was La Salle. Having received permission to explore and trade around the lakes of the west for the King of France, he made three visits to the St. Joseph region between 1679 and 1682. During this period La Salle constructed Fort Miami at the mouth of the St. Joseph River. But this little stockade was vacated and fell into oblivion shortly after.¹

CHAPTER I

THE MISSION ESTABLISHED, 1686

It was the Jesuits' concern for the souls of the demoralized western tribes which brought the first missionaries to the region of the St. Joseph. The Jesuits followed the migratory movement of the Indians, undergoing great hardships to promote Christianity among the tribes. They moved about in a hostile land, in spite of sufferings from cold, hunger, danger and mockery.  

Father Allouez was the missionary who contributed most to the mission on the St. Joseph. He first came to Wisconsin in 1665 to establish the mission of the Holy Spirit near the western end of Lake Superior. By 1670, the alienation of the Sioux had caused the exodus of these mission Indians to St. Ignace. Father Marquette, who had assisted Allouez since 1669, accompanied them; Allouez went south to the Green Bay region of Lake Michigan, where he came in contact with varied tribes of Algonquin stock.

Meanwhile, in 1667, the Carignan-Salières Regiment, led by General de Tracy, had decisively defeated the Iroquois in upstate New York. This defeat fostered in the minds of the Indians confidence in their French allies, culminating in the gradual return of the Algonquin

1 Bald, op. cit., pp. 30-1.
2 Fare, op. cit., p. 79.
tribes to their homeland. The Miami had scattered as far as Iowa before settling in Wisconsin for the duration of the Iroquois scourge; after the Iroquois defeat, some returned to the St. Joseph region as early as 1679. In 1679, while in Wisconsin, Allouez met some of the Miami who had not yet returned to Michigan. By this time the Miami movement into northern Indiana and southern Michigan was well under way.

The Potawatomi had lived in the St. Joseph region for a time before the Iroquois attack. Their wanderings cannot be accurately reconstructed because of their intermingling with the Winnebagoe and the Foxes, but it is known that during their flight from the Iroquois they reached an island at the entrance of Green Bay, where they came in contact with missionaries. Upon their return to Michigan, these Potawatomi settled near the Miami on the St. Joseph River.

In an effort to keep in touch with the migrating tribes, missionaries journeyed to the St. Joseph River. Apparently no permanent mission was established there until sometime in 1686, for a concession granted to the Jesuits on October 1, 1686, reads:

The concession made to Father Dablon, and the other missionaries of the Society of Jesus established in the said region on October 1, 1686, by the Sieur Marquis de Denonville and of Champigny, of a stretch of land twenty arpents fronting on the River St. Joseph, heretofore called the Miami, which falls into the south of the lake of the Illinois and of the Otagamis, by twenty arpents in depth at the place they shall find the most suitable for the erection of a chapel and residence, and for the planting of grain and vegetables, to be held by Father Dablon and other missionaries above mentioned, their successors and assigns in perpetuity as their own

2Ibid., p. 79.
3Ibid.
4Kellogg, op. cit., p. 95.
5Ibid., p. 79.
property as it is stated in the said concession.

Versailles, May 24, 1689.

Father Allouez, having worked with both the Pottawatomies and Miamis in Wisconsin, followed them to the mission on the St. Joseph. There he served until death took him on August 27, 1689. He had worked as a missionary in the Great Lakes region for twenty-four years. He had instructed and baptized countless Indians. He is also credited with naming the St. Joseph River.

There has been some controversy as to the site of Allouez' burial. Charlevoix positively states that he was buried at the site of the St. Joseph Mission. Charlevoix spent a month in the vicinity of the mission in a period most nearly contemporary with that of Father Allouez and possibly had sources unavailable to later historians. Supporting Charlevoix's statement is an old Indian legend about the grave of a white father near the St. Joseph. The grave was marked by a wooden cross, which, when fallen in decay, was solemnly replaced by the tribes. This cross stood on a bluff near the river.

Father Claude Aveneau followed Allouez in 1690. He did not

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1Ibid. The arpent is the same today as it was in the seventeenth century: the arpent equals 191.65 English foot, 34 arpents equal a league and 2.42 English miles equal a league. Baker, op. cit., p. 12.

2Ibid.


4Ibid., op. cit., p. 84.


6Ibid., op. cit., p. 85.
work in the St. Joseph region only, but traversed the Michigan-Illinois-
Indiana area, spending much time and effort in the Illinois field.
Aveneau was in the St. Joseph region when Courtemanche was dispatched
to establish Fort St. Joseph; he was still there when the evacuation of
1696 closed the territory to French exploration. Aveneau is said to
have had a great deal of influence over the Indians along the St.
Joseph. 1

There were several reasons for the importance of this region.
It was part of the route from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi. Indian
settlements there were under the influence of the missionaries, which
implied amiable Indians for the French fur trade. The implications of
King William's War suggest more profound reasons for the establishment
of Fort St. Joseph.

1Ibid.
CHAPTER II

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FORT ST. JOSEPH, 1693

By 1689, only England remained a major threat to the predominance of France in Europe. The French-English conflict over commercial and political activities in the old and new world was enlivened by the exile of James II from England to the court of Louis XIV. His successor, William of Orange, was an implacable foe of the French king. It was natural, then, that William should bring England into a Grand Alliance in 1689 in opposition to Louis’ aggression in the direction of the Rhine.

The war which followed was known in Europe as the War of the League of Augsburg. In America it was called King William’s War. Both the French and English in the New World used Indians; and Indians, uninhibited by European moral standards, made life perilous for any isolated outpost of civilization along the French-English colonial borders. The complete ruin of the French possessions in Canada during this war was prevented by the heroic efforts of Governor Frontenac.¹

It was a French and Indian campaign in January, 1693, which led to the establishment of Fort St. Joseph. On Count Frontenac’s orders, de Courtemanche and de Montet, with Indian allies, attacked an Iroquois town on the lower Mohawk. They achieved only part of their purpose,

and fell back to Canada, cold, half-starved and bedraggled. But
Frontenac, nevertheless, proclaimed a great victory because of the 500
Mohawks taken prisoner and the twenty or thirty killed. He immediately
dispatched Courtemanche to Mackinac, where the Indians were wavering in
their loyalty to the French because they were fearful of the outcome of
the war, and because the Iroquois had been harassing the Ottawa River
route, preventing their usual trade with the French. The French had been
unable to check the Iroquois harassments, and the Algonquin tribes were
unwilling to attempt it alone. Meanwhile, beaver skins had piled up at
Mackinac as Canada, with its principal source of income all but cut off,
drifted toward bankruptcy. 1

The response to Courtemanche's news came on August 17, 1693,
when Frontenac received word that two hundred canoes were coming along
the northern trade route, bearing large quantities of fur. Accompanying
this flotilla were representatives of all the leading Indian nations of
the upper country. Frontenac met them in council at Three Rivers where
there were many speeches and promises of allegiance. Frontenac charmed
his visitors and loaded them with presents. 2

But a French chronicler records some unfavorable news from the
far country. The Miamis had received presents from the English through
the Mohegans, and the Miamis had not sent a representative to Three
Rivers. 3 The French feared that the English might thus undercut them

1Joseph Lester Rutledge, Century of Conflict, (Garden City, New

2Ibid.

3E. B. O'Callaghan (ed.), Documents Relative to the Colonial History
and cause the western Indians to sever their French connections, and that eventually they might lose the whole upper country to the English.\(^1\)

It is difficult today to appreciate the threat of the Miami-Mohican rapprochement to the French. The very life of Canada depended on continual enmity between the Algonquin and Iroquois.

Hence, in 1693, even before the Three Rivers Indian conference ended, Frontenac sent Courtemanche with twenty men to the Miami village on the St. Joseph River, with orders to build a fort there to insure Miami allegiance.\(^2\)

Some writers believe that Courtemanche\(^3\) founded the fort at St. Joseph in 1691 rather than in 1693. They cite a letter written by Frontenac to the French minister of the colonies on October 20, 1691. The letter stated that Gardeur de Courtemanche had been sent to Michilimackinac and to the Miami to announce the French victory over the English at Quebec in 1690.\(^4\) The same letter proposed that agents should be sent among the tribes to promote French interests. Thus, in 1691, Courtemanche was sent only as a messenger, with no authorization to construct a fort. Frontenac was then just contemplating sending agents into the interior. Moreover, no imperative need existed for the

\(^1\)Charlevoix, op. cit., IV, 342.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Courtemanche served with distinction through the entire rule of Frontenac. He had courage and stamina, as shown by his participation in the winter raid of 1693 which was followed by the trip to Mackinac and later to the St. Joseph. In 1706 he was sent to Boston by Galeries and in 1714 he was made commander of the New Labrador. He died in 1717. Charles A. Weisert, Southwestern Michigan, (Kalamazoo: n.p., n.d.) p. 96.

establishment of a fort on the St. Joseph River until the 1693 council at Three Rivers.

In the fall of 1693 then, Courtemanche established Fort St. Joseph. The site of the fort cannot be determined from available sources. Documents giving details of armament, construction, and personnel, if still in existence, are probably buried in the Archives of Paris. Originally, the fort was built near Father Aveneau’s mission on the west side of the St. Joseph. The site visited by Charlevoix in 1721 was probably that of 1693. He describes the site as being three miles from the portage and 60 miles from the mouth of the river. Any dispatches sent by Courtemanche to Frontenac have been lost, but Courtemanche is mentioned in other places: for example, a letter from Champigny to the minister of the colonies in 1693 mentions him as the commander of the post at St. Joseph.

In the spring of 1694, three Indian women and four young children, one the son of a chief, were surprised and captured by Iroquois warriors while working in the gardens near the Miami village at St. Joseph. The Iroquois then advanced toward the newly constructed fort. Surprised at the presence of the French and the caliber of the resistance, the attackers withdrew, leaving their dead at the foot of the palisades. Out of range of musket fire, the Iroquois yelled to the

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1Paré, op. cit., p. 86.

2A map of the site was made by Charlevoix in 1721 and published in 1744. Pierre François Charlevoix, Journal d’un Voyage Fait par Ordre du Roi dans l’Amérique Septentrionale, (Paris: Didot, 1744), VI, 275.

3Baker, op. cit., p. 10.

4O’Callaghan, op. cit., p. 516.

5Ibid., p. 603.
defenders that peace had been made between the Iroquois and Frontenac, and invited them in peace to the Iroquois camp for an exchange of prisoners.

Courtemanche, wise to the tricks of the Iroquois, countered that they come to talk in the fort. This suggestion was met by "high words and swaggering airs productive only of insults". The Iroquois withdrew. Courtemanche sent out scouts to determine the direction of the retreat. These scouts found fifteen litters at the lower end of the river; from these Courtemanche inferred that the wounded might number thirty. In addition, seven or eight bloody places were observed in the bush, indicating that the Iroquois had removed dead bodies so that their fatalities should not be known. The chronicle reporting this incident praises the commander:

Sieur Courtemanche, certainly, acted on this occasion with all the prudence, activity, and valor that could be expected from a brave and courageous man, whilst the Iroquois, to the number of three or four hundred, were exerting themselves to carry off the Miamis.

Charlevoix, in his History of New France, says that the reason for this Iroquois raid was Cadillac's incitement from Mackinac of continuous incursions against the Iroquois. These raids brought many Iroquois prisoners to the Mackinac post. The Iroquois came in force to compel the Miamis to help avenge them, and, if the Miamis refused, to drive them from the St. Joseph River. They hoped to capture Miami women and children to convince the Miamis that they should aid the Iroquois at Michimilimackinac. The French garrison at the Miami village was a surprise to the Iroquois.

1Ibid.  
2Ibid.  
3Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France, IV, 269.
CHAPTER III
WITHDRAWAL, 1696

Events out of the hands of the garrison of Fort St. Joseph soon closed the newly established post. Before King William's War was officially ended, Governor Frontenac, the Intendant Champlain, and the Jesuit Bishop Saint-Vallier began their quarreling afresh; the fate of the newly established fort hung on the outcome. Their dispute centered on the desirability of expanding or restricting New France. The bishop and the intendant desired restriction so as to control better missionary and trading activities; Frontenac and his colonial supporters advocated expansion so as to gain for France all the wealth and prestige that the new world could offer.¹

Meanwhile, the Miamis of the Mermek (Kalamazoo) River attempted to unite with their brothers on the St. Joseph. On the way they were attacked by a Sioux war party. The St. Joseph Miamis pursued the Sioux to Iowa, where they found them entrenched with some sourcure de bois in a makeshift fort. Although the Miamis attacked with a vengeance, they were repelled because of the Frenchmen's weapons. Returning to the St. Joseph, angry that Frenchmen should have caused their defeat, they ran into some legitimate French traders and confiscated their arms, ammunition and goods. These disarmed but unharmed traders apparently met

¹Kellogg, op. cit., p. 259.
some Ottawa Indians who informed Frontenac of the incident.¹

This incident and others convinced Frontenac of the necessity of maintaining the interior posts. In a letter to Paris he rejected the idea of vacating the posts of Michilimackinac and St. Joseph, asserting that twelve to fifteen men and officers must be maintained in each to prevent the English from going to these regions to trade and spread their influence. He proposed to support these posts with twenty-five canoe loads of provisions a year. Soldiers would also protect the missionaries and keep the *couriers de bois* in the service of the king.²

But Frontenac's arguments were futile. Louis accepted the thinking of Champaigny and the bishop because of his notion that governing Canada was like governing a province in France, which could best be done by restraining movement of the population. In May, 1696, King Louis XIV ordered the western forts and posts to be abandoned and destroyed. There were to be no forest trading permits, and the *couriers de bois* were to be restricted. The most disturbing order was that peace was to be made with the Iroquois, "let happen what may to the other allies of France". The entire west, as a result of Louis' decree, was closed to trade from 1693 to 1761.³

The exact date of the abandonment of Fort St. Joseph is difficult to ascertain. Louis XIV's decree of 1696 ordered Fort St. Joseph to be destroyed. Charlevoix does not mention Courtemanche or the fort in his account of the Miami-Sioux conflict of 1696. Champaigny's letter of

¹Charlevoix, *History and General Description of New France*, V, p. 64.
³Ibid.
October 15, 1698, to Paris mentions that Fort St. Joseph was vacated, but gives no date.\(^1\)

After the Peace of Ryswick both nations were committed to peace in the New World. Courtemanche was dispatched in 1701 to the region of his former post to bring representatives to a council at Montreal to end hostilities between the Iroquois and France's Indian allies. Besides the Miami, he found there Pottawatomies, Schokies from New England, Foxes, Hurons, and Mohegans.\(^2\)

The Pottawatomies and the Schokies had sent war parties against the Iroquois, and the Miami were just about to do so. By threats, Courtemanche persuaded the Miami to recall their already departed war party. The Pottawatomies and Schokies were more difficult to bring to terms. They finally agreed to go to Montreal, taking with them their adopted Iroquois prisoners.\(^3\) At Montreal a treaty was arranged which brought about a truce that was advantageous to the trading of the French, English and Iroquois.\(^4\)

Sometime, probably in 1695, Fort St. Joseph had been abandoned, and all legal trading was done at Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec. This meant that the western tribes had to travel to Montreal or do without French goods.\(^5\) The truce which the treaty brought about was short-lived.

A three-fold conflict was developing in North America for Acadia, northern New England, and the Northwest. The conflict for the Northwest

\(^1\) Callaghan, \textit{op. cit.}, IV, 697.
\(^2\) Charlevoix, \textit{History and General Description of New France}, V, 141.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 142.
did not at first take on the aspects of an international struggle, being essentially a conflict derived from French-New York competition for the fur trade. ¹

The French, English, and the five Iroquois nations all had distinct and opposing interests in the "far Indians". The French had tried to get their furs by sending out traders to them, or by inducing them to come to Montreal. The English and Dutch traders of New York wished to divert these furs from Montreal to Albany; the Iroquois, "being sharp politicians and keen traders as well as bold enterprising warriors", desired to act as middlemen, well realizing the profits which could be had. ² The Mohegan experience with the Miamis, related above, is a clear example of this policy. ³ New York goods were of excellent quality and in good supply; consequently, they were inexpensive. French goods, being difficult to obtain, were more costly. Often the goods used by the French interior traders were contraband materials derived from the New York merchants by way of the Iroquois. ⁴

The aim of the French authorities was to keep the western Indians at peace among themselves; at the same time, French policy tried to prevent friendship between the far-country Indians and the Iroquois so as to prevent their carrying potential French wealth to Albany. The aim of the French was "peace and friendship among the Western tribes, peace without friendship between these tribes and with the five nations". ⁵

²Ibid.
³Supra, p. 6.
⁴Parkman, A Half Century of Conflict, I, 263.
⁵Ibid., p. 266.
After the dissipation of the Iroquois menace, tribal enmities returned, upsetting the policies of the French government. The Dutch and English nurtured these enmities for their trade interests. The French encouraged the Indians to attack English and Dutch traders who might venture into French-claimed territory. The cheapness and abundance of English goods made them attractive to the Great Lakes Indians. Because of this, Cadillac was able to convince the king and his ministers of the need of a fort on the Detroit River. Fort Ponchartrain, built at Detroit in July, 1701, was intended to guard passage to the three upper lakes and to neutralize the English trading advantage. Cadillac believed that furs would then go to Detroit rather than to Montreal. The fort angered the Jesuits, because this threatened a renewal of Indian degradation; and it displeased the eastern merchants, who feared the competition of an interior post.

The withdrawal of soldiers and traders in 1696 had stimulated missionary activity in the far country. In 1699 Father Jean Mermet went to the St. Joseph region to assist Father Avenau. In 1702, Mermet and Avenau became involved in a letter-writing controversy with Cadillac as to whether the Indians at St. Joseph should move to the newly established Fort Ponchartrain. Cadillac's interest was trade, and he needed the presence of the Indians to enhance his income. The Jesuits at St. Joseph saw everything they had fought against before the evacuation incarnate in Cadillac. Tonty urged them to consider establishing a trading post on the St. Joseph River. Because of Mermet's loyalty to the

1 Ibid., p. 13.
2 Ibid., op. cit., p. 86.
3 Rutledge, op. cit., p. 217.
French government, nothing came of the scheme other than a meeting at Michilimackinac in July, 1701.

The significance of this period does not lie so much in the conflict between personalities as in the part played by the northwestern Indians in shaping the overall internal policy of the French regime.¹

In a letter to Cadillac dated April 19, 1702, Mermet told him that five Miamis were accepting goods from the English and that the goods were expected to arrive that summer by Iroquois agents. Mermet mentions, too, that the Miamis had never seemed more eager in hunting beaver than since they had received the promises of the English. The Iroquois had asked permission of the Miamis to establish trading posts in the region.²

The French countered through Father Aveneau. The governor of Canada asked Aveneau to invite the Indians of the St. Joseph mission to move to Fort Pontchartrain, promising that Aveneau would go with them. The savages answered that they did not wish to move to an area with so many tribes; they feared shortage of food would reduce them to starvation. Their resolve was shaken somewhat by the promise of cheap goods.³

Aveneau, in a reply to the government, said that if the tribes really wished to go to Detroit they would; if they did not, they would remain where they were.⁴ Cadillac's anxiety to have the tribes move to Detroit can be explained by his personal desire for lucrative trade and by his fear of Iroquois-English competition. The St. Joseph Indians did not move.

²Ibid., p. 125. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.
Aveneau, in his continued work in the St. Joseph region, became known affectionately as the "missionary to the Pottawatomies". Father Jean Mermet left the mission shortly after the Iroquois visit of 1702. He was sent by his superiors to a post on the Ohio River near the present city of Cairo, Illinois.  

Father Jean Francis Chardon was assigned to the mission at St. Joseph in 1705, and continued at the post after the recall of Aveneau. In 1711 he was visited by Father Gabriel Marest, a missionary stationed at Kaskaskia, who was on his way to visit his brother at Mackinac whom he had not seen for fifteen years. When Marest arrived at St. Joseph he was greeted by his brother, Father Joseph Marest, who was visiting the Jesuit missions of the area. From this story, the reader can sense the lonely and devoted life of the Jesuit missionaries. Marest in a tribute to his host at St. Joseph wrote that Chardon was a missionary full of ambition, and familiar with nearly every Indian language spoken on the lakes. The Indians of the St. Joseph region had a great deal of respect for Chardon. In 1712, because of the Fox Wars, the mission was vacated. Chardon again visited the mission after the fort was re-established.  

In 1711, Governor Vaudreuil, alarmed at reports of growing English influence among the French allies, called the Indians of the west country to Montreal, partly to obtain reinforcements for the expected English attack, partly to convince the Iroquois that the Indian allies of the French would attack them should they declare war against

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1. Ibid., op. cit., p. 86.  
2. Ibid., p. 87.  
3. Ibid.  
4. Ibid., p. 88.
the French. The proclamation, issued at Detroit on March 10, 1711, ordered officers and voyagers to bring the Indian tribes to Montreal for a conference. Sieur de Vincennes and two aides were sent to the village of the Miamis with presents, to convince as many chiefs and important men as possible to go to Montreal. He was to act in concert with Father Chardon.

At the council in Montreal, the Marquis de Vaudreuil told the Indians that he had called them there in the interest of peace, "so that forming one and the same body they could be one and the same mind." It was a plea to maintain peace among the western tribes, exhorting them to forget their petty enmities.

The St. Joseph region was often in the minds of the Quebec authorities. The St. Joseph area was becoming a trading center for many of the Algonquin and Iroquois tribes. Vaudreuil, in a letter to France, reported that the Frenchmen he sent to bring the savages to Montreal met two canoes returning from New York laden with English goods and several belts for neighboring tribes.

In 1712, Sieur de Vincennes re-established Fort St. Joseph near the mission on the St. Joseph River. This English-Iroquois competition among the French Indian allies was one of the reasons for the re-establishment of Fort St. Joseph. Other reasons were the declining Jesuit authority in the French court, and the interruption of the fur trade by the revival of the Indian wars.

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1 Cadillac Papers, op. cit., p. 501.
2 Ibid.
3 Weisert, op. cit., p. 56.
4 Ibid.
There is very little source material available on Vincennes' activities until about 1715, when the garrison followed the missionaries and the Miami to the Maumee River, leaving Fort St. Joseph again uninhabited. 1

In 1718, an unknown French scout, visiting the site of the mission and the fort, noticed there were no Indians in the vicinity because of the wars. He also extolled the beauty of the area:

It (St. Joseph River) is situated at the head of Lake Michigan and leads toward an Illinois village. . . . The Miamis and Pottawatomies formerly resided with some missionaries at the River St. Joseph. It is not long since they were here. . . . Tis a spot the best adapted of any to be seen for the purpose of living and as regards the soul. There are pheasants as in France; quail and parroquets; the finest vines in the world, which produce vast quantities of juice and bunch very long. It is the richest district in all that country. I believe they left it only because of the war between the Foxes, Sacs, and Outaouas (Ottawas) and all other tribes of these parts. 2

On the Miami River, Vincennes was trying to induce the Miami Indians to return to the St. Joseph in order to separate them further from the English-Iroquois influence. The Miamis returned to the St. Joseph River in 1719, shortly after Vincennes' death. 3

Around the turn of the seventeenth century, the Fox Indians of Wisconsin became involved in quarrels with the French over a system of trade carried on by the French, and in particular, over French attempts to trade with the Sioux, the Fox's ancient enemy to the west. The Fox Indians were in a position to prevent the movement of trade along the Fox River. Hence, traders were driven to the southern route (Desplaines and Chicago portages). 4 The Foxes had superior weapons and a superior position; the Sioux wanted to obtain them both. The result was a long

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1 Ibid.  
2 O'Callaghan, op. cit., p. 890.  
3 Weiesert, op. cit., p. 57.  
4 Quaife, op. cit., p. 54.
series of Indian-French wars. No travelers were permitted to journey to the Mississippi and Louisiana except at their own risk. The Foxes logically became friends with the Iroquois, who exploited the situation to their own trading gains.

The Fox-French enmity drew all the French-Indian allies into war with the Foxes, among them the Pottawatomies, Ottawas, Illinois, and Miamis of the St. Joseph vicinity. In 1712 the first of a long series of wars occurred. While moving to the vicinity of Detroit, a band of one thousand Outagamies (Foxes), three hundred of whom were warriors, provoked the French commander, Dubuisson, and the local Indians to a battle. The result was the slaughter of two hundred Fox warriors and most of the women and children.¹

At the same time the Mascoutens wintering on the St. Joseph River had become involved in a battle with the Pottawatomies and the Ottawas of the Grand River Valley. Father Marest asserts that forty Mascouten warriors, sixty women, and one hundred children were destroyed. The two principal chiefs involved were Saquina, a feared Ottawa warrior, and Makisabe, a Pottawatomie. After the battle the Pottawatomies and the Ottawas went to Detroit to be assured that they were right in attacking the Mascoutens before they could be attacked.²

The years 1712 to 1716 were years of few furs. The Algonquins feared the Foxes, and stayed near their villages rather than meet their enemy in the woods. The French were irritated because few furs were harvested, and the merchants of Montreal had gloomy prospects.³

¹Ibid. ²"Cadillac Papers", op. cit., p. 555. ³Quaife, op. cit., p. 59.
In the same year, the Foxes fell upon the Illinois along the Illinois River; they killed or carried off seventy-seven of them. Vaudreuil decided that Louvigny, former commandant of Mackinac, should punish the Foxes. After peace had been established between the Illinois and the Miami, the northwestern tribes would war against the Foxes. But Louvigny became ill, and de Lignery, his successor, devised elaborate plans.

The Miami, Ottapas, Illinois and the Detroit Indians had a rendezvous at the Chicago portage under French leadership in the summer of 1715. Other tribes of the north gathered at Mackinac. The campaign was a fiasco because of a series of misfortunes, such as delays in supplies, a measles epidemic, and desertion. A small battle was fought west of Lake Michigan in November, resulting in more Fox casualties.

In 1716, the delayed project against the Foxes was executed. Louvigny was again given command with two hundred troops. Two hundred more French soldiers joined him at Mackinac, along with four hundred Indians. They proceeded to Green Bay where they were met by five hundred Fox warriors and three thousand women and children. The Fox village was located on the Fox River, protected by three rows of oaken palisades and a ditch. Both the besieged Foxes and the besieging Indians believed that the Foxes would be destroyed, thus ending British influence in this part of the French domain. For reasons unknown, at the end of three days a truce was arranged, a treaty signed, and both Fox and French antagonists marched away.

1Ibid., p. 60.  
2Ibid., p. 61.  
3Ibid., p. 62  
4Ibid.
A lull followed until 1719, when feuding again broke out among the Indians of the region. Charlevoix’s travels to Fort St. Joseph describe the dangers of the journey in 1721. The Miami and Pottawatomies had returned to the St. Joseph Valley after the Fox Wars. Fort St. Joseph was re-garrisoned in 1719, under the command of Jean Baptiste de St. Ours, Sieur Deschaillons. His probable orders were to maintain peace, prevent English-Indian collaboration, and fend off any Fox overtures.

On May 21, 1721, Sieur de Montmidy was ordered to relieve Deschaillons at Fort St. Joseph. He left Montreal June 5th in a canoe, carrying with him all the provisions necessary for the garrison. Shortly afterward, Sieurs Jean Garreau and Nicholas Oatin were ordered by Vaudreuil to carry more stores and provisions to the post. Montmidy reported on October 3 that some Mascouten chiefs and ten warriors had arrived on the St. Joseph and demanded that the Pottawatomies receive them peacefully. Apparently this was a peaceful overture. Vaudreuil ordered Montmidy to send the chiefs to Montreal; he probably wanted to get the good will of the Mascoutens and their allies, the Kickapoos.

On July 15, 1722, a permit sent Saint-Louis Delawriers and four men, possibly licensed traders, to St. Joseph. Sieur Jean d’Saint Ange Bellonve in August of the same year, went by canoe with five men “to the post on the River St. Joseph (with) merchandise stores and

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2Weissert, op. cit., p. 59.
3Ibid.
4Jean Baptiste de St. Ours, Sieur Deschaillons was born in France. He was commandant at Detroit in 1729, Quebec in 1734, and Fort St. Fredrick in 1738. Ibid.
5Weissert, op. cit., p. 59.
6Ibid.
ammunition from the magazines of the king. On the same day a similar permit was issued to Sieur Baume to carry equipment and munitions to Fort St. Joseph. 1

1Ibid.
CHAPTER IV
CHARLEVOIX AT FORT ST. JOSEPH, 1721

Shortly after the arrival of Sieur de Montmidy, the post on the St. Joseph received its most distinguished visitor, the Jesuit Father Charlevoix, commissioned by the King of France to explore the waterways to the west for a route to the western sea, to study existing conditions, and to determine prospects for future settlements. ¹

Charlevoix did not have the temperament of most early Jesuit missionaries of New France. He was not a zealot, nor of a mind to deliver himself to a life of suffering deprivation for the conversion of souls. "He was rather a man of scholarly temper, an interested observer in world affairs; he had a curiosity about life and wasn’t a moulder of destiny". ² He enjoyed the good things of life.

While Charlevoix made no startling new discoveries, he was an excellent observer. No other source of French colonial exploration contains the accuracy or discrimination of Charlevoix.³ Charlevoix includes in his work entertaining descriptions of posts, missions, tribes, conditions of life, and the activities of those laboring in New France. His notes were collected and published in 1744, twenty years

²Ibid., p. xv.
³Ibid., p. xxvi.
after his visit to New France. The book, Journal d'un Voyage Fait par Ordre du Roi dans l'Amerique Septentrionale, was read very widely.

In 1721, Charlevoix traveled from Montreal through the Great Lakes region. On August 8, 1721, he arrived at St. Joseph, where he stayed a little over a month. He left there on September 11. In a letter dated St. Joseph, August 16, 1721, he writes:

It was eight days yesterday since I arrived at this post, where we have a mission, and where there is a commandant with a small garrison. The commandant's house, which is but a very sorry one, is called the fort, from its being surrounded with an indifferent palisado, which is pretty near the case in all the rest, except the forts Chambly and Catarocuy, which are real fortresses. There are however in almost every one of them some few cannons or pateresses, which in case of necessity are sufficient to hinder a surprize and to keep the Indians in respect.

Charlevoix discusses the Indians around the fort, but he makes no mention of the French settlement which, because of the baptismal register, we know was there. Since the Miami and Pottawatomie villages had been so long without a pastor, Charlevoix thought that the recently sent missionary, Reverend Michael Guignas, would have a great deal of difficulty re-asserting Christian practice.

Charlevoix continues by asserting that the River St. Joseph is so convenient for the trade of all parts of Canada that numerous tribes visited the region. "The river waters a very fertile country, which was little used by the tribes for agriculture." He complains that what little crop planting was done was usually of maize, which he believed made

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1Ibid., p. 86.  
2Ibid., p. 93.  
3Ibid., op. cit., p. 91.  
the crop lands yield poorly. He locates the fort with relation to the
villages:

The Mascoutins had not long since a settlement on this river, but
have returned back to their own country which is said to be still
finer than this. The Potawatomies [sic] have occupied succes-
vively several posts here where they still are; their village is on
the same side with the fort, a little below it and on a very fine
spot of ground; that of the Miamis is on the other side of the
river. 2

A map composed by Bellin in collaboration with Charlevoix, which came
out in 1744 in the first edition, placed the post and the Potawatomies
on the west side of the river and the Miamis on the east. 3

Charlevoix also describes the problem of Indian drinking, por-
traying it in such a manner that the reader can determine what the major
French-Indian problem had been, and giving hints as to where it would
lead. Many of the braves of the Miamis and Potawatomies at the time of
Charlevoix's visit had just returned from New York where they had taken
some of their peltry in trade for rum. Montmady's problem was how to
keep the Indians from going to the British, where they still traded in
spite of the post at St. Joseph. 4 The rum was divided, according to
custom, and each member of the tribe received every day the amount
needed to make him drunk. All the liquor obtained at the time of
Charlevoix's visit was consumed in eight days.

They began to drink in both villages, as soon as the sun was down,
and every night the fields echoed with the most hideous howlings.
One would have thought that a gang of devils had broke loose from
hell, or that the two towns had been cutting one another's throats.
There were two men maimed, one of whom I met, who had broke his
arm with a fall; I told him he would certainly take care to keep
sober another time; he answered, that what had happened was nothing
at all; and that he should very soon be well again, and would fall
to drinking as soon as he could get wherewithal. 5

1Ibid.
2Ibid., p. 92.
3Ibid., p. 275.
4Ibid., p. 98.
5Ibid., p. 99.
Writing as a missionary, he went on:

Your Grace may from thence judge, what a missionary is capable of doing in midst of this disorder, and how disagreeable it must be to a good man, who has in a manner exiled himself, in order to gain souls to God, to be obliged to become a witness of it, without being able to remedy it. These barbarians themselves well know, that drunkenness is their ruin and destruction; but when one goes about to persuade them, that they ought of themselves to request that no more of this destructive beverage should be sold them, they answer you cooly: "It is you who have accustomed us to it, we are now no longer able to dispense with the want of it, and should you refuse to give us any, we should certainly go to the English for it. This liquor kills and destroys us, we confess, but it is to you we owe this mischief which is now past remedy."

Toward the end of the French era, French influence depended on loyalty maintained by liquor. Charlevoix believed that the Indians were wrong in blaming the French alone for the liquor traffic. If it hadn't been for the English, he maintained, the French could have put a stop to this trade or at least have reduced it a great deal. The church was now obliged to sanction the supply for the Indians with small diluted amounts from France. In time, this liquor traffic was instrumental in bringing to an end the sobering effects of missionary activity.2

Charlevoix has a humorous account of the Indian dogs. He says the dogs are bold and skillful hunters. Every Indian needed many dogs because they were often destroyed by the teeth or horns of their prey, which they attacked with undaunted courage. Their masters apparently didn't feed them, because they lived by what they caught. Charlevoix complains that they smuggled up to the fires regardless of who might be sleeping there and would not be chased away. During the day whenever meat appeared, one was overcome by the fuss they made to have their share. A missionary lying on the ground to say his breviary, or to read a book, must bear the persecution of a dozen dogs which did nothing but

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1Ibid.  
2Kellogg, op. cit., p. 175.
run over him, backwards and forwards, after pieces of meat they had dis-
covered. It was hard to find a nook where one was free of that vexation.
If one were given a dish, before he could put a hand into it, it must be
used to fend off the attack of those dogs in front of him. Others came
from behind and from the sides, forcing him to spill the contents to
the ground.¹

Charlevoix was charmed by the friendliness of the Pottawatomies,
saying they were more friendly and treated him better than the Christian
Hurons. He describes the leaders of the Pottawatomie tribes as chiefs
and orators of great merit. Fireman, the chief, a man in his sixties,
was very sober and prudent. Quilamek, somewhat younger and a Christian
who did not practice his religion, was an excellent speaker with a great
deal of common sense, an amiable character, and a sincere attachment to
the French. Both speakers had spoken in council with the commandant;
Charlevoix said that they spoke with a great deal of elegance. These
men and the Miami chief, a tall, handsome man despite the fact that he
had lost his nose in a drunken brawl, were the major Indians with whom
the commandants at Fort St. Joseph must deal.²

²Charlevoix has much material describing the Indian culture of the
St. Joseph region. Within this study can be found Indian habits, dress,
games, hunting methods and gardening. It becomes, in essence, an early
sociological study of an Indian culture. All of this can be read in
Charlevoix' accounts, which have been translated by Shea, Kellogg and
others.
CHAPTER V

MIDDLE YEARS, 1721-1739

The Baptismal Record is the only vestigial remnant of the Fort, save for remains still to be found in the area. It is an interesting record of church activities from which historians can extricate a sense of the past. This water-stained document is housed in the Quebec Archives; photostats can be seen at the Burton Historical Collection.

The preservation of the Baptismal Record is due to Charles Chaboilly, a fur trader at Fort St. Joseph. He was born and brought up at Mackinac, and was prominent in the St. Joseph region for fifty years. He married Marie Anne Chevalier, the daughter of another noted French fur trader, who had lived thirty years in the Fort St. Joseph region. After his first wife's death, Chaboilly married Marquerite L'Archeveque, whose father was a wealthy Montreal trader. One of their daughters married Simon McTavish, said to have been Montreal's most noted trader. So, through marriage, he became intimately associated with the leading families of the Fort St. Joseph region, the Chevaliers and the L'Archeveques.

After the burning of Fort St. Joseph in 1763, Chaboilly discontinued his trading activities in the region and returned to Montreal. The Baptismal Record was found among his wife's possessions fifty years after his

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1George Faré and Milo Milton Quaife, "The St. Joseph Baptismal Record", Mississippi Valley Historical Review (September, 1925), XIII, 201.
Charlevoix does not mention the settlers at Fort St. Joseph other than the commandant. However, from the Baptismal Record we get the impression that there was an established settlement containing some of the best society of New France—priests, officers, and their wives. Throughout the rest of the French period, the Baptismal Record mentions numerous godmothers, godfathers, and parents, suggesting a settlement of about fifty people. The fort was never very large. Soldiers were intermarrying with the Canadian and Indian women and their wives were permitted to live at the fort.

Father Michael Guignas made the first baptismal entry, after the five missing pages; it is that of Magdelena Collet. Claude Collet also had a son, Charles Ange Collet, born August 1, 1721. Charles was fortunate to obtain formal schooling at Montreal, and was ordained to the priesthood on September 23, 1747, and assigned to Sorel as a seminary staff member. Charles Collet retains the distinction of being one of the first priests ordained from the Michigan region. A second son from the same family is also thought to have gone into the priesthood.

Leonard Philbert Collet was born on November 3, 1715, but his birthplace cannot be found in the Catholic Church archives as it would have been if he had been born in France. In 1755, he was a Recollet at Quebec; he was among the French troops at Duquesne, Niagara, Presque Ile, Detroit, the Chio River County, and Kaskaskia. He was probably the first priest to come from Michigan.

Sieur de Villedonne, captain of the infantry, was appointed to

\[1\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 202.\]
\[2\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 206.\]
\[3\text{Paré, op. cit., p. 90.}\]
\[4\text{Ibid.}\]
succeed Monsieur Montmide as commandant of Fort St. Joseph. He left Montreal on June 1, 1723, with three canoes loaded with ammunition, presents, and provisions for himself and the garrison at Fort St. Joseph, which was composed of one senior officer, seven junior officers and nine men. He remained at St. Joseph until May, 1725. Since we have no record of major political disturbances in this region in those years, his tour of duty probably consisted in lodging improvements, conciliation, appeasement of Indian ermites, and promotion of the fur trade. The French policy at that time was to maintain peace and prevent Iroquois-English trade.

Guignas, because of his brilliant college record, was withdrawn in 1722 from the St. Joseph mission field and given a position as professor of hydrography at the College of Quebec. Only four entries were made under his name because of his short stay.

Jean Baptiste Saint-Pé was his immediate successor. He has three entries in the register, only one in 1721, shortly after Charlevoix's visit, and two on September 19, 1734. At least some of the intervening years were spent in other places, because for a period up to 1737, Saint-Pé was found at Mackinac.

Father Michael Messeiger was at the St. Joseph for a period of six years. His first entry in the register is dated September, 1724, and his last, January 26, 1731. Because many entries are found in the winter, he must have spent the greater part of his time at the post. In 1731, he went to Mackinac and accompanied la Verendrye and his son in

1 Weisser, op. cit., p. 63.  
2 Ibid.  
3 Pare, op. cit., p. 92.  
4 Ibid.  
5 Ibid., p. 93.
their search for the Western Sea. ¹

For the next two years, no priest was at the fort to record baptisms. Saint-Pé's visit in 1734 was followed by a lapse of three years. On June 21, 1738, Pierre du Jaunay came to the mission, where he officiated until April 22, 1750. He was in the western mission field for approximately thirty years. He witnessed the decline of the French missionary fervor and laid claim to being the last missionary under the auspices of the French government in Michigan.² Father Jean Baptiste de la Morinie alternated with Jaunay from 1752-1760. They were the only missionaries at St. Joseph during this period.³

In all, there are recorded in the Baptismal Record upwards of one hundred and twenty baptisms; no one knows how many were unrecorded. Father la Morinie acknowledged this neglect when he said, "Since I am here, I have failed to enter in the Register all the Indian children whom I have baptized."⁴

In the summer of 1725, Sieur de Villedonnet, commandant at Fort St. Joseph, was succeeded by Captain Coulon de Villiers. Sieur de Villiers had received orders to leave Montreal for Fort St. Joseph on May 26, 1725. Twelve men accompanied him in three canoes loaded with provisions and merchandise.⁵ On May 21, 1726, Julien le Louette left Montreal carrying supplies for both Maskinonge and Fort St. Joseph. A second permit issued the same day provided for a canoe and fourteen men to carry Madame de Villiers and additional provisions to St. Joseph.⁶

Numerous arrivals from Montreal between 1727 and 1730 kept

¹Ibid. ²Kellogg, op. cit., p. 175.
³Pare, op. cit., p. 90. ⁴Ibid.
⁵Weissert, op. cit., p. 64. ⁶Ibid.
Fort St. Joseph a well-stocked garrison. In 1727, Villiers sent Marie Hurtebise to Montreal for supplies; Reverend Father Dhuë sent supplies to the missionaries on the River St. Joseph on June 10; M. de Beuharnois granted passage on June 11 to Sieurs Duplessis and Villiers, the latter a son of Louis de Villiers, to travel with supplies for Fort St. Joseph; on June 28, Sieur Reaume, interpreter for the king, joined Villiers' command. A permit in 1730 allowed Louis Prod'homme [sic] to carry provisions to Fort St. Joseph.  

Difficulties between the Foxes and the French and their Indian allies continued. In 1725, the French were divided on how to deal with the Foxes, whether to destroy them completely or attempt conciliation. By 1726, it was decided to destroy them. Villiers probably


2The Villiers had thirteen children, seven of whom were boys. The oldest was 17 in 1724. All the boys, it appears from subsequent history, found army careers. One of the boys, Lieutenant Villiers, was slain at Green Bay in 1734 during a Fox Indian rebellion. Louis Villiers and Joseph Villiers, surnamed Jumonville, were in opposition to George Washington at the beginning of the Seven Years War. Washington and his men occupied the present site of Pittsburgh on the Ohio River; across the river, the French were encamped in newly erected Fort Duquesnes. Jumonville, with a small escort, was sent to Washington to prevent the English occupation of French-claimed soil. Washington, in haste and misunderstanding of his interpreter, searched for the French party and brought them into combat; Jumonville and all but one Frenchmen were killed. To avenge his brother's death, Louis Villiers and an army of several hundred men forced the capitulation of Washington and his troops on July 3, 1754. Washington signed documents admitting to the unlawful invasion of the realm of France and assassination of Jumonville against the recognized laws of war. Reuben Gold Thwaites, France in America, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1905), pp. 162-65.

3Weissert, op. cit., p. 64.

turned out the St. Joseph Indians and led his regiment in the battle which followed. This seems logical because of the large number of French involved and the naturalness of drawing upon all French forces in the region. De Ligneris led the expedition of five hundred French and one thousand Indians to Wisconsin. The results of this campaign were negligible. No enemy was encountered except three old women and a man. After the enemy's crops were burned and the old man roasted, the French retreated. ¹

In 1729, the French sent Indian excursions against the Foxes to wear down their resistance. ² Probably it was the duty of Villiers to organize these raids among the Pottawatomies and the Miamis.

In 1730, Captain de Villiers and his son Joseph were instrumental in bringing about a devastating blow to the fortunes of the Foxes. Villiers received word at Fort St. Joseph by two Mascouten runners that the Illinois were in a struggle with the Foxes in the vicinity of the Rock. ³ These runners arrived in haste, begging Monsieur de Villiers for powder, ammunition, provisions and any military support which could be gathered. Villiers went to the Indians' aid with all his people, a combination of voyageurs, the garrison, and the tribes, totaling about fifty Frenchmen and five hundred Indians. ⁴ While the Foxes entrenched themselves, the Illinois sent out a plea for all the western tribes to assist. ⁵

Confirmation had arrived in Detroit that the Foxes had captured some of the Illinois near Starved Rock, and had burned the son of a great

¹Ibid. ²Quaife, op. cit., p. 64.
³Thwaites, op. cit., XVII, 413. ⁴Weissert, op. cit., p. 65.
⁵Quaife, op. cit., p. 66.
chief of the Cahokias. As a result of this impudence, St. Ange, com-
mander of Fort Chartres, and des Noyelles of Detroit went to join the
thirteen hundred French and Indians gathered for a punitive expedition.¹
They surrounded the Foxes, who had entrenchied themselves in a grove on
a bank of a small river, some distance to the southeast of Starved Rock.
The siege was under the direction of the elder Villiers, and was directed
with much determination. Both forces suffered from lack of food. But
the Foxes, though entrenchèd, were in a more critical position. On the
twenty-third day of the siege, under cover of a cold and stormy day, they
attempted to make their escape. The plan was revealed by crying children
in the night, and the attacking forces quickly took up pursuit. As soon
as daylight allowed the pursuers to distinguish friend from enemy, an
indiscriminate slaughter began. The Foxes, as in their past struggles,
fought bravely to the end in spite of weakness, hunger, and impossible
odds. The women, children, and old men walked in front, while the men
remained in the rear between them and the enemy. The line was soon deci-
mated. Two hundred warriors and an equal number of women and children
were killed; five hundred prisoners were distributed among the tribes.
Some of the Foxes succeeded in fleeing by discarding their arms and
ammunition. A year later, the remaining Foxes, who had established a
town on the banks of the Wisconsin, met a second defeat at the hand of
the Hurons and the Christian Iroquois.²

Louis de Villiers left Fort St. Joseph in 1751. His long stay of
six years was contrary to French policy, which usually called for an
approximate two and one-half years tour of duty, as is shown by the

¹Quaife, op. cit., p. 69.
²Thwaites, op. cit., p. 182.
length of stay of the former commanders. Villiers' longer duty may stem from his own satisfaction with the area, probably profit from the Indian trade, or French officialdom's belief that Villiers was valuable for friendly contact with the Indians in that area.

In the same year that the Foxes were defeated at the hands of Villiers, the French re-established the fort at Green Bay. In 1733, Villiers was sent to Beauharnois, the Governor of Canada, who again determined that the Foxes should be exterminated. Villiers rashly attempted to besiege some of the Foxes who had taken refuge with the Saos; in the melee which ensued, Villiers was slain with his son and a number of the French.

The retreating Saos were drawn into battle, and the consequences were far reaching. The Saos, relatives of the Foxes, had kept peace with the French. The Green Bay folly brought about a confederation of the remnants of the Foxes, who then migrated to Iowa. French policy was to avenge the Green Bay incident. The French admitted that the Villiers affair had been foolhardy; therefore, they would pardon the Saos if they would disassociate with the Foxes. If they refused this offer, they would be exterminated. Some of the Saos did unite with the Foxes.

The Fox-French War continued. In August, 1734, Sieur de Noyelles led an attack against the new coalition of Saos and Foxes in Wisconsin. Both the Hurons and Iroquois had heard from a tribe of Ouiatonons on the upper Wabash that there were six cabins of Saos at Fort St. Joseph. These Saos, who had disassociated with the Foxes, had

\[\text{Quaife, op. cit., p. 69.}\]
\[\text{Thwaites, op. cit., p. 182.}\]
\[\text{Quaife, op. cit., p. 70.}\]
\[\text{Thwaites, op. cit., pp. 257, 200.}\]
located on the St. Joseph in a gesture of peace, for this was a region where French influence was very strong. De Noyelles protested against the plan of the Hurons to destroy the St. Joseph Sacs; he explained his instructions to spare the Sacs. Despite what de Noyelles could say, the Hurons departed for the Sac Village. ¹ The Hurons proceeded to Fort St. Joseph, where they were met by the commandant of Fort St. Joseph, Sieur Jacques Pierre Danseau de May. He used all his powers of persuasion and Indian diplomacy to prevent the destruction of the friendly Sacs' village. ² This argument between the French and the Hurons was the first of many among the attacking force, which disbanded at the border of the enemy territory. The de Noyelles' expedition against the Sacs and Foxes of Wisconsin was a failure. ³

De May probably was ordered to take over as commandant about 1731. While at St. Joseph, de May, whose hobby was botany, made a collection of plants; by the use of medicinal herbs, he cured many Indians; thereby increasing French-Indian friendship. ⁴ At Fort St. Joseph he baptized a daughter of Augustine Larche and Marie Reamine in the absence of the missionary. He returned to France in 1736 with his collection of flora, and later commanded at Detroit. ⁵

In 1735, Paul Louis d'Assenard, Lieutenant Sieur de Lusignon, was ordered to Fort St. Joseph, where he stayed until 1739. About his years in Fort St. Joseph, little is known. We do know that on several occasions, as recorded in the Baptismal Record, he baptized infants in the absence of the missionaries. ⁶ Nicholas de Villiers, son of the

¹ Quaife, op. cit., p. 72.
² Weissert, op. cit., p. 66.
³ Quaife, op. cit., p. 72.
⁴ Weissert, op. cit., p. 66.
⁵ Quaife, op. cit., p. 59.
⁶ Pure and Quaife, loc. cit., p. 212.
elder Louis de Villiers, became the Lieutenant in command of the fort in 1740. It cannot be determined from the Baptismal Record or any other known source how long Nicholas de Villiers remained at Fort St. Joseph.\footnote{Ibid., p. 218.}
CHAPTER VI

PEACE AND PROSPERITY AT FORT ST. JOSEPH, 1735-1747

After 1735, Fort St. Joseph enjoyed about 12 years of peace and prosperity. As the period of the French empire in North America drew to a close, Fort St. Joseph played a diminishing part in the overall political contest for New France, and became increasingly important as a trading post. Voyagers from St. Joseph brought their furs to Mackinac, the entrepot for the French, to exchange for food and trading goods. Canoes carried the huge stock of pelts to Montreal during July and the beginning of August.¹ The numerous lakes, ponds, and streams account for southern Michigan's large fur harvest.

Many permits were issued for trading privileges in the St. Joseph region, showing the importance of Fort St. Joseph as a trading center. During the summer of 1739, forty men, working for an agent, were permitted to trade in the region. The following year St. Joseph was visited by thirty-two traders, besides the five remaining traders who were permitted to stay the winter with the settlement folk. In 1734, twenty-four traders visited Fort St. Joseph.²

In 1745, in addition to the fur traders, two enterprising gentlemen, Sieurs d'Quindre and Harrin, attempted to establish farms in the region while trading in furs. Thirty-three men, on different trips

¹Weissert, op. cit., p. 66.  ²Ibid., p. 67.
carried goods to supply Marrin and d'Quindre. In 1746, Sieur de Marrin returned to Quebec, hired sixteen men, and returned to St. Joseph. This suggests profitable business expectations at Fort St. Joseph.\(^1\)

In 1747, sixteen men went to trade there. Sieur de Longueuil, Governor of New Canada, warned them to carry few supplies to avoid tempting the Indians. This cautionary remark indicates recognition of Indian treachery at that time.\(^2\)

During the spring and summer of 1747, the Detroit Indian tribes, influenced by Iroquois gifts and unconcerned about French interests, planned the destruction of the French post at Detroit. After commandant Longueuil was forewarned of the attack, he called a conference of the local chiefs to stop them.\(^3\) The only violence which occurred was the murder and plundering of some Indians outside the fort. Ensign Dubisson's arrival with some men helped thwart the attack. Longueuil called a conference of the tribes residing near Detroit.\(^4\) Many of these tribes were anxious to go back to their own country, particularly the Pottawatomies of the St. Joseph. One of the tribes to speak at the conference was the Pottawatomies, who attempted to convince the French of their loyalty.\(^5\) The Pottawatomies returned to the St. Joseph.

Sieur la Ferrier Marrin, who succeeded Nicholas Villiers as commandant of Fort St. Joseph, supported himself by trading while acting as an agent for the crown. This indicates that at this period Fort St. Joseph was a peaceful farming and trading community.\(^6\)

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1. Ibid.  
4. Ibid., p. 85.  
5. Ibid.  
In 1747, on July 5 and 30, the French learned through the activities of the Five Nations that the English were intriguing against French interests among the tribes on the St. Joseph. Marson reported that the Iroquois were using every effort to destroy the post. The Pottawatomies remained loyal, he said, and fifty Ottawas came to the fort to offer their services.  

François Marie Piote, Sieur de Belestre, was appointed the next commander at Fort St. Joseph on August 9, 1747. He was to remain at Detroit as long as it was necessary, rather than to await special orders. M. de Longueil must have thought it necessary that Belestre remain at Detroit because it was not until December 15, 1747, shortly after a contingent of nine Frenchmen and nine Indians requested that Ensign Belestre moved to Fort St. Joseph, that Longueil granted the request.  

Beishederbert wrote the following about Ensign Belestre:

He is known and loved by the Indians of Fort St. Joseph, a brave fellow, pleases everyone that is with him, ensign of excellent conduct served through Chisaches campaign and marched to the village under Mr. de Oelaron.  

Intrigue of the Iroquois again antagonized the Indians of the Detroit locality. Belestre was called to Detroit in 1748 to strengthen the garrison. He returned to St. Joseph shortly thereafter, because on April 24, 1749, a permit was granted to allow Madame de Belestre to leave in a canoes manned by seven men to join her husband at the post on the St. Joseph River. There he remained until his relief.

In 1748, the Count de la Glaissionniere instructed the commanders at St. Joseph and other posts to keep accurate accounts of expenses and

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1 Thwaites, op. cit., p. 483.  
2 Weissett, op. cit., p. 70.  
3 O'Callaghan, op. cit., X, 85.  
4 Weissett, op. cit., p. 70.
distribution of gifts to the Indians. The commandants were also charged with keeping accurate lists of coursers de bois and of Indian murders so that the guilty could be arrested and punished by the French authorities.¹

Sieur de Blainville relieved Sieur de Belestre as commander of Fort St. Joseph.² Mr. Roch de St. Ours Deschaillons was at the fort in 1753 as commander.³ Nothing is known of their activities there.

Captain Louis de Verrier, the last known commander and the stepson of the Marquis de Vaudreuil who was a governor-general of New France, took command of the post in 1757.⁴ He remained there until the spring of 1759, when he was promoted and transferred to Quebec. Verrier did some farming while at Fort St. Joseph, though most of his personal profit was derived from the fur trade. The commandant leased Fort St. Joseph and ran it for the profit of himself and his associates. The fort had apparently again declined to a commercial establishment. Green Bay was on a similar footing. The King of France did not support either post from the royal treasury.⁵ There were neither presents, interpreters' wages, or certificates; all expenses were incurred by the lessees. Verrier did receive two thousand francs, and his interpreter, five hundred francs, in spite of the King's policy.⁶ The Indians who traded at Fort St. Joseph in this period were about four hundred Pottawatomies, and a few

¹Ibid.
²O'Callaghan, op. cit., X, 88.
³Pare and Quaife, loc. cit., p. 226.
⁴Weissert, op. cit., p. 71.
⁵Margry, op. cit., V, 38-34.
⁶Weissert, op. cit., p. 71.
Miamis. There came from this region packages of skins of cats, bears, 
lynx, otter, deer, fox, beaver, weasel and mink.

Although Fort St. Joseph plays no significant part in the French 
and Indian War, it of course was greatly affected. It is interesting to 
ote note that Charles Langlade's cohorts included Indians from the Grand 
River, Kalamasoo, and Fort St. Joseph regions; they played an important 
part in Braddock's defeat in 1755, and in later campaigns. The force 
which raided the Mohawk Flats in New York in 1757 was probably gathered 
at Detroit, and included West Michigan Indians. ¹

In 1763, the Treaty of Paris ceded all of Canada and the land 
est of the Mississippi to the English. Robert Rogers, of Rangers 
fame, was under the orders of General Amherst, the British commander, to 
take over the French posts in Michigan. ² Belestre, the French commandant 
at Detroit, surrendered the town and fort to Rogers on November 29, 
1760. ³ Fort St. Joseph was occupied the following spring by Ensign 
Schlositer. ⁴

In 1762, the French government decreed the secularization of the 
Jesuits at home and in its colonies, and the Supreme Council of New 
Orleans put the decree into effect with an order in July, 1763. This 
removed all the Jesuits from the North American continent. ⁵ With the

¹Willis Dunbar, Michigan Through the Centuries, (New York: Lewis 
²Ibid.
³Francis Parkman, Conspiracy of Pontiac, (Boston: Little, Brown and 
Company, 1896), I, 169.
⁴Weissert, op. cit., p. 72.
⁵Park, op. cit., p. 107.
recall of the Jesuits, the life of the mission ended. Occasionally a
wandering priest of some other order may have made a brief stop at Fort
St. Joseph, but a resident priest was a thing of the past.
CHAPTER VII

THE SITE OF FORT ST. JOSEPH

The site of Fort St. Joseph, as marked by the Michigan Historical Association in 1911, is within the residential area of Niles, Michigan, on the east bank of the St. Joseph River. Across the road, up a steep incline, is also a monument marking the burial place of Father Allouez.  

It is interesting to note the terrain of the fort site: a gradual incline from the bank of the river to the road, about three hundred yards or more, and then a steep hill leveling out into a plateau. Across the river and slightly upstream the terrain is marked by a steep incline which also levels off in plateau fashion. North of the fort site is an area which has been used as a village dump. Trash and bulldozers have altered the general lay of the land, but only a fraction of the fort site has been affected. A dam has slightly widened the river.

The area for centuries has been a home of Indians. Both Indian and French artifacts have been frequently found, many of which can be viewed in the Niles Historical Museum or the South Bend Museum. Residents in the vicinity of the fort say it is easy to unearth relics as they turn the soil in their gardens or as children play in the sand. This area is considered to be Michigan's greatest potential for

1McCoy, op. cit., p. 546; Gillam, op. cit., p. 280.
archaeological discovery.

Charlevoix's *Journal of Voyages to North America* gives an accurate account of his visit to the French possessions in the New World. He includes in his work a map prepared from his manuscript by an expert, Charles Bellin of Paris. This map was included in Charlevoix's book when it appeared in 1744. On the map is marked the site of Fort St. Joseph. He places it on the west side of the river, adjacent to a Pottawatomie village. Two Miami villages are marked on the east bank of the river. All later maps until 1760 mark Charlevoix's site as the actual site of the fort, save one; Charlevoix was the only one of these map makers to visit the area. In 1762, shortly after the English occupation of Detroit, Thomas Hutchinson surveyed the territory for the English. He placed Fort St. Joseph on the east side of the river and downstream, approximately where it is marked today. Allouez, Charlevoix and Hutchinson agree that the fort was about 20 leagues from the mouth of the river.

Hutchinson thus contradicts Charlevoix as to the site of the

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3 Ibid.

4 Thomas Hutchinson, edited by Frederick Charles Hicks, *Topographical Descriptions of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina* (Cleveland: Burrans Brothers Company, 1904), map insert. The original map is now in the possession of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
fort. This contradiction can be explained. The fort on the St. Joseph in its early days was founded as a military establishment, because the area was in turmoil for nearly thirty years between 1693 and 1735.\textsuperscript{1} After 1735 the area fell into an era of peace and prosperity. The fort was no longer oriented toward defense, but toward fostering the fur trade. Siur la Ferriére Mathrin, in command about 1746, was not of the military, acting in that capacity only during periods of emergency. He supported himself through his trade and farming.\textsuperscript{2} Captain Louis de Verrier, 1758, the last commandant of Fort St. Joseph, also supported himself by profits he made from fur trading and farming.\textsuperscript{3}

Thus we can assume that the major concern of Fort St. Joseph during the first thirty years was defense, with the fur trade as second, and that the converse was true in the later years. If this be the case, the position of the fort as denoted by Charlevoix could be considered accurate. The French at that time would have built the fort on a bluff because it was a more strategic location. In Hutchinson's description the fort had been moved to a position more easily accessible to water for the easy conveyance of trade goods.

\textsuperscript{1}Supra, pp. 5-56.  
\textsuperscript{2}Supra, p. 39.  
\textsuperscript{3}Supra, p. 42.
PART OF LAKE MICHIGAN

This Lake is a vast collection of Fresh Water about 280 Computed Miles in Length, & between 60 & 70 Miles in Width; it is Navigable for Ship-pung of any Burthen, & at the North-Eastern Part communicates with Lake Huron by a Strait Six Miles Broad, on the Southern Side of which stands Fort Michilimackinac; So Lake Michigan is great Plenty of Fish, particularly Trout of an excellent Quality, Weighing from 20 to 60 pounds weight, & some have been taken in the Strath of Michilimackinac, which have Weighed upwards of 90 pounds.

HITCHING'S MAP
1762
Marked site of Allouez's grave.

Marked site of Fort St. Joseph, 1762.

Possible site of Fort St. Joseph, 1761.
Carte des Lacs du Canada


Par N. VELLIN Ingénieur et Hydrographiste
De la Marine 1744

Échelles:
Ligne commençant le Peu de la 1st Tombe

Grandes Lignes de Portes de 1850, Troncs

Longitude Occidentale du Méridien de Paris

Ce Canton est entièrement inconnu

Pays des Nipissings

Lac Nipissing

Pays des Anciens

Pays des Outaouais

Lac Superior

Lac Huron

Lac Michigan

Lac Ontario

Lac Érie

Ce Canton est habité par les Érié en Nation du Chat qui a été donnée par les Iroquois
### TABLE 1

**MISSIONARIES IN THE ST. JOSEPH AREA, AUGUST, 1689 to MARCH, 1773**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missionary</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Jean Claude Allouez</td>
<td>1689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Claude Aveneau</td>
<td>1690-1708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Jean Mermet</td>
<td>1699-1702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Jean Francis Chardon</td>
<td>1705-1712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Gabriel Marest</td>
<td>1711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Joseph Marest</td>
<td>1711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Michael Guignae</td>
<td>1720-1721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Francois Charlevoix</td>
<td>1721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Jean Saint-Fé</td>
<td>1721 and 1734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Charles Guymonneau</td>
<td>1722-1723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Michael Mesaiger</td>
<td>1724-1731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Jean Louis de la Pierre</td>
<td>1735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre du Jaunay</td>
<td>1735, 1742, 1745 and 1752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. John Baptististe de la Morinie</td>
<td>1740-1741, 1743-1744, 1750, 1752-1760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Pierre Potier</td>
<td>1761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Pierre Gibault</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Secular Priest Missionary in the Illinois Country between August, 1768 - March, 1773**

### TABLE 2

**MAJOR CONFLICTS AFFECTING FORT ST. JOSEPH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1689 - 1697</td>
<td>King William's War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1702 - 1713</td>
<td>Queen Anne's War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740 - 1748</td>
<td>King George's War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754 - 1763</td>
<td>The French and Indian War</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 3

**COMMANDANTS AT FORT ST. JOSEPH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commander</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sieur Gardeur de Courtemanche</td>
<td>1693 and 1695-1696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sieur Bisgot de Vincennes</td>
<td>1712-1715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Baptiste de St. Ours Deschaillons</td>
<td>1719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin de Montmidy</td>
<td>1720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Stephen de Villadonne</td>
<td>1722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sieur Coulon de Villiers</td>
<td>1725-1731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sieur Jacques Pierre Daneau de May</td>
<td>1731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Louis d'Assnard, Sieur de Lusignon</td>
<td>1735-1739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas Antoine Coulon de Villiers</td>
<td>1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sieur la Ferrien Marrin</td>
<td>1742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francois Marie Piotte, Sieur de Belestre</td>
<td>1747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sieur de Blainville</td>
<td>1752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Roch de St. Ours Deschaillons</td>
<td>1755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Louis de Verrier</td>
<td>1757</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POSTLUDE

After the fall of French Canada to the English, a wave of defection spread among the tribes who had acknowledged the French control of their lands. They were unable to accept the dominance of the English, a nation with whom the tribes had been at war for nearly a hundred years. Their hostility was stimulated by the arrival of English adventurers out for quick profit, and rumors of settlers surmounting the Appalachians.

At this time Pontiac appeared as the champion of the Indians. He fostered a plan through alliance of all the tribes to wipe out the garrisons by simultaneous attacks on all the forts, and restore the land to the French. It was a clever plan. The tribes from Montreal to the Illinois country and from Lake Superior to Fort Pitt were involved. In the summer of 1763 the Indians murdered two thousand frontier settlers; and all the military establishments fell, save Detroit, Niagara, and Fort Pitt.¹

Since Detroit was considered the greatest obstacle, Pontiac undertook the attack himself; he probably would have succeeded had not an Indian squaw weakened and informed the commandant of Pontiac's plan. Major Gladwin took the necessary precautions and after several frontal attacks, tactical movements, and a long siege, Pontiac was thwarted.

Fort St. Joseph had been occupied by Ensign Schlosser and a

garrison of fifteen men who had arrived early in the summer of 1761. Several authors have referred to the commanding officer as being boylike and inept. His appetite for liquor was said to have affected his ability to act decisively.

On May 25, 1763, nearly a hundred Pottawatomies, allied with Pontiac, came to Fort St. Joseph, allegedly to visit their relatives; they wished admittance to the fort to bid the commander good-day. Schlosser hurried to the barracks to order his men under arms and found the building full of savages. Leaving his sergeant to form the men, he went himself to assemble the French, who by now had gathered at his quarters. A few moments later, there was a cry from the barracks as Schlosser's men were massacred. Schlosser was captured. The post was looted and the Indians, with plunder and three prisoners, went to Detroit, which was still under siege. Schlosser had been warned the night before by a French trader, Chevalier, who had lived in the region for many years. Schlosser apparently did not believe the warning because he had done nothing to prepare for the attack.

For two years the Indians had complete possession of the fort. In 1765, it again came under British authority, not as a military post but as a trading center. Fort St. Joseph never reverted to a military establishment, although the region did see some military activity.

Another event occurred toward the end of the American Revolution. In 1781, de la Balme, a French officer, and recruits from the Spanish Mississippi region set out from St. Louis to capture Detroit, which was in the hands of the English. After splitting his forces, de la Balme's detachment was defeated at Fort Miami. The second detachment, of Cahokia men, raided St. Joseph, took prisoners, and plundered supply
depots. Resident Pottawatomies, having returned from a hunting trip, pursued, overtook, and defeated the Cahokians. The surviving Cahokian raiders rallied the inhabitants of St. Louis and Cahokia with promises of revenge and plunder, and Louis Chevalier, on friendly terms with the local Indians, took a Spanish bribe to keep the Pottawatomies neutral. Then the raiders returned; St. Joseph was easily surprised and plundered.\(^1\)

The expedition was conceived by the Cahokians to revenge the defeat of their friends and to plunder the unprotected property at St. Joseph. Some Spanish militia and officers participated in the capture; however, the taking of St. Joseph was not in accordance with any instructions received from either the Spanish government or the governor of Louisiana. It is uncertain as to whether the Spanish flag was raised over the village and the territory taken in the name of Spain. This action on the part of the Spanish did not impair British resources or hamper them from making further military operations in the area.

The raid may have been due in part to Spanish-Indian policy. Because friendly relations were deemed essential for the existence of Spanish settlements in the region, the St. Joseph attack might have been the Spanish way of appeasing the Spanish-Indian allies for their recent defeat at the hands of the Indians allied to the English.

There is an interesting story that old-time residents tell. At periods of low water, a cannon had been seen resting on the bottom of the river. One octogenarian will say he knows the spot; another will say

the cannon is in a different place. Skin divers have made several recent attempts to locate the cannon, but to no avail. The Detroit Free Press, of May 18, 1906, reports that a cannon was found in the river near the site of Fort St. Joseph.

A group of people in the Niles area would like to erect a replica of the fort as a public monument of their historic past. Unfortunately, no accurate description has been found of the fort except that of Charlevoix, which does not fit the popular romantic conception of a fort.
Books


Articles


