

# *Marin versus La Vérendrye*

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A RECENTLY DISCOVERED DIARY kept by Joseph Marin for the trading year 1753-54 opens the curtain long drawn on the last decade of the French regime in the Minnesota country. Now the historian sees the upper Mississippi Valley dotted with French posts hitherto unknown. Two main protagonists occupy the stage—men already renowned in the annals of New France, but whose residence on the upper Mississippi has not been suspected earlier. La Vérendrye was the family name of one; Marin that of the other. Both were sons of great pathfinders, as well as explorers in their own right. Marin's diary of some seventy-five pages of French script has come to light in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery in San Marino, California. It supplies new chapters in the biographies of both men, as well as on the French regime in the upper Northwest.

Joseph Gaultier, sieur de la Vérendrye, had accompanied his empire-building father, Pierre, on explorations and had gone far beyond him into the plains of the Far West before the elder La Vérendrye died in 1749. Up to that time Joseph's story has been fairly well known. It was he, for example, who kept a diary on the western trip of the La Vérendryes in 1742-43. A lead plate recovered in 1913 near Pierre, South Dakota, is another record of that journey. For the years after 1750 his biography has been a virtual blank. Almost nothing has been known of him except the fact that after his father's death he and his brothers were allowed to return to the family's western posts, which stretched from Rainy Lake and the Lake of the Woods on to the Canadian plains. It was believed, however, that they were forbidden to trade or explore and permitted merely to wind up their business affairs. But from Marin's diary it is obvious that the youngest of the three La Vérendrye sons, Joseph, became commandant of the La Pointe post on Chequamegon Bay of Lake Superior's southern shore in the early 1750's, succeeding Joseph Marin himself; and that the Chevalier de la Vérendrye, as Joseph was universally known, made use of his new position to return almost at once to the scenes of his early life in the northern Minnesota country.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Joseph de la Margue, sieur Marin, had been a companion in the expeditions of his father, Paul de la Margue, sieur Marin; and after

<sup>1</sup>The basic biographical data for the La Vérendrye family are the diaries and letters of the great explorer and his sons. See Lawrence J. Burpee, ed., *Journals and Letters of Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de La Vérendrye and His Sons* (Toronto, 1927).

1752 his career, like Joseph la Vérendrye's, became obscure, except for his activities in the Seven Years' War. The elder Marin had been interested in western trade as early as 1719. In 1729 Governor Beauharnois had sent him to the upper Mississippi to complete the subjugation of the western tribes at the close of the second Fox War. His son, Joseph, was sent in 1749 to La Pointe to make peace among the Indians of that region. In 1751 Joseph was in Quebec, but in 1752, according to a short autobiographical sketch, he was detailed by the Marquis de la Jonquière, governor general of Canada, to relieve his father at the latter's post on the upper Mississippi, in order "to make discoveries among the nations yet unknown." These discoveries, he writes, he made "during two years, covering on foot more than two thousand leagues sometimes in snow." Among the tribes listed by him as "conquered" are the Foxes, Sauk, Winnebagoes, Sioux of the Lakes, Sioux of the Prairies, Menominee, and Illinois.<sup>2</sup>

The elder Marin built his fort among the Sioux on the upper Mississippi late in 1750. Hitherto its site and name have been unknown, though some historians have surmised that it was located on the west side of Lake Pepin, near the site of Frontenac and the former Fort Beauharnois. One writer refers to it as the last French post on the upper Mississippi. Marin's diary, however, makes clear that it was what he calls Fort La Jonquière, which was only one of three great French forts in that region during the years between 1750 and the end of French occupation. Marin called the other two, heretofore unknown, Fort Vaudreuil and Fort Duquesne. Other trading posts are mentioned in his diary, but not by name. Probably they were merely wintering houses or lesser posts.<sup>3</sup>

For the period from 1750 to 1754 Marin's diary brings into close focus the life of Indians and traders on the Mississippi above the mouth of the Des Moines River, as well as in some other parts of the Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin areas. The building of the elder Marin's fort in 1750 was a last attempt to control the great Sioux tribe and to increase the returns from the entrepôt at Green Bay, which derived its chief profits and best furs from the Sioux. Paul Marin had been the originator, about 1749, of a scheme for restoring the license system, which had been supplanted in recent years by the leasing of posts. Governor La Jonquière, who became one of Marin's rather nefarious ring for controlling trade on the Mississippi by means of licenses, granted Marin eight licenses and a

<sup>2</sup> On the careers of Paul and Joseph Marin, see Louise P. Kellogg, *The French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest*, 323-340, 379-385, 423-425 (Madison, 1925). Joseph summarizes his own career in a document printed in Pierre Margry, *Découvertes et Établissements des Français dans l'Ouest et dans le Sud de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, 6:653-655 (Paris, 1876-88).

<sup>3</sup> Kellogg, *French Régime*, 379-381.



garrison of soldiers for his new post. With these he set out for the upper Mississippi in June, 1750. His son, at La Pointe, could be counted upon to keep the Chippewa quiet.

Probably the ruins of a large stockaded French fort of nine buildings, found in 1885 by Theodore Lewis near Red Wing, were those of Marin's Fort La Jonquière.<sup>4</sup> The Marins frequently named their posts after the current governor, and La Jonquière was governor for only three years, dying suddenly in 1752. So a post named for him probably would have been founded in the years from 1749 to 1752. The elder Marin died in 1753. His plans and activities had enriched many, including himself and his son.

The younger Marin immediately succeeded his father on the Mississippi. His diary opens thus, in translation: "1753 and 1754. Diary of Monsieur Marin, Junior, commanding for the King at Green Bay and in its dependencies, charged with making or causing to be made on the Upper Mississippi discoveries of mines, placers, and minerals, which may exist there, and of establishing commercial ties there with the nations that may inhabit those countries." A little later in the document Marin recorded that his order also included the discovery of the "Sea of the West" if possible, and the best way to get to it.

The diary entries begin on August 17, 1753, at Mackinac. Marin had gone there from his Green Bay post to get supplies and men, and while there he had written a report to go down at once to Governor General Duquesne. According to his diary, the report related "what had passed in my post" the preceding season.

After stopping twice among the Menominee, whom he termed the "Folles Avoines," Marin reached Green Bay and started up over the Fox-Wisconsin waterway to the Mississippi. On September 15 he was among the Sauk and learned of the killing of four persons by the Illinois—a Sauk man and two women, and one Frenchman, "Amiot forgeron." This news determined Marin to spend the winter close to these warring tribes, in order to prevent more hostilities between the old enemies.

The following day, therefore, he despatched some of his men to execute his orders for the upper river. Paul Lacroix, his partner, was sent with two canoes to hurry up to the source of the Mississippi in order to make the discoveries with which, according to the diarist, "I am charged and to ally with us in commerce those nations that live there, and to get information from those nations whether they have any knowledge of the Sea of the West and the means of getting there." Marin recommended that Lacroix should protect himself well both en route and while winter-

<sup>4</sup> Grace Lee Nute, "Posts in the Minnesota Fur-trading Area, 1660-1855," in *Minnesota History*, 11:382 (December, 1930).

ing at his post, and that he should "build a good fort in order to be protected from insults from the savages."

Marin also told his partner what to do in case he met any of the Cree. These Indians, so he told Lacroix, were supposed to come to a conference with the Sioux, according to their promise made to Marin "last spring," when he returned to them two captives that had been among the Sioux. Lacroix was to be "sure" to send someone back with these Cree, "in order that they may have the courage to come and make the peace with the Sioux that the latter accepted when I commanded them to do so on the order of M. le Général."

Marin also sent off a man named Houll with three canoes to go among the Sioux with a considerable number of presents.<sup>5</sup> "If the Sioux should not want to go high on the Mississippi," Marin wrote in his diary, then Houll was "to leave some Frenchmen with them and go on with a canoe-ful of goods to the entry of Crow Wing River, which the Sioux call Pine River, in order to see the Yankton Sioux." The Yankton were to be there when Marin passed, "in order that they might make peace with the Cree, as they had promised to do." As nothing was said about building a post at the mouth of the Crow Wing River, presumably one was already located there.

On September 17 Marin reported that he sent a man named La Fantasie, probably the progenitor of a well-known family of that name in Wisconsin, "to betake himself for explorations along the River of the Mascoutens, which takes its rise in the forks of the Missouri and debouches 12 leagues below Rock River." The identity of this river is uncertain. Early French maps mention the Oto Indians as the Mascouten Sioux and call the Minnesota River "the River of the Mascouten Sioux." But the river that empties into the Mississippi at the point indicated by Marin seems to have been the Des Moines. The sources of the Minnesota and the Des Moines are both in the region of the upper Big Sioux River, a principal eastern tributary of the Missouri. The Big Sioux, in turn, has a principal tributary called the Rock River, which rises near the sources of the Minnesota and the Des Moines. Was Marin's reference to the Rock River of the Mississippi or to the Rock River of the Missouri? It is impossible to judge from the context of the diary. In either case, it is clear that explorations were to be made in the Missouri country—explorations that Marin described as those "which I was ordered to make."

It has long been known that these explorations were ordered, but if and how they were accomplished has remained unknown. Marin's diary explains the matter, thus completing a complicated story. In 1752 Legar-

<sup>5</sup> Houll's name is hard to decipher, but it seems to be written as printed.

deur de St. Pierre, who had commanded at La Pointe in 1729 and at Fort Beauharnois as late as 1737, was ordered if possible to find a route to the Sea of the West by way of the Lake of the Woods and the Saskatchewan River, while Joseph Marin was "entrusted with an expedition to reach the Pacific by way of the Missouri."<sup>6</sup> St. Pierre had little success, though he remained in the vicinity of Lake Winnipeg for about two years.

In July, 1752, the Sioux of the Prairies made an attack on the Cree, which not only negated for the moment the efforts of St. Pierre to establish peace, but put the Sioux of the upper Mississippi in a state of fear lest the Cree retaliate against them. From his father's post on the Mississippi, Joseph Marin co-operated with St. Pierre and induced the Mdwananton and their allies of the eastern Sioux to approach the Cree with propositions looking to an alliance against the western Sioux. The Mdwananton also promised to send several chiefs to hold a conference with some Cree chiefs at Mackinac. At the same time they sent back two captive Cree to their homeland. These were the two men already mentioned by Marin in his instructions to Lacroix. The Sioux chiefs reached Mackinac, but by reason of some misunderstanding about the time or place of rendezvous, they missed the appointment. Nevertheless, the treaty of alliance seems to have been made as planned, for St. Pierre in 1753 stated: "I have no doubt that at the present moment these two nations are living in peace and uniting to go to war on the Prairie Sioux." So it is clear from Marin's diary that he did not carry out his projected explorations on the Missouri in 1752 but sent La Fantaisie to make them in 1753.

On October 14, 1753, Marin arrived at the mouth of the Wisconsin River, where he found "Peminan with the Sioux of the Lakes." Who this man was has not been ascertained, but his name occurs more than once in the diary. Marin learned from these Mdwananton Sioux that a party of Prairie, probably Teton, Sioux was on the point of leaving on a war expedition against the Illinois. The Lake Sioux thanked Marin for sending among them traders, whom they said they had already seen and of whom they brought news. They also told how the Chippewa had killed one of the Sioux men, but the Sioux had not "budged because of their promise to me of last spring," to use Marin's expression. Instead, they "had sent ten emissaries with calumets to the Chippewa inquiring why the latter had attacked, since the Sioux had made peace with them and were allowing them to hunt on their lands."

Marin commended these Sioux for not taking vengeance and for com-

<sup>6</sup> N. H. Winchell, *The Aborigines of Minnesota*, 534 (St. Paul, 1911); St. Pierre's memoir, in Margry, *Découverts*, 6:648-650.

ing to him for redress, saying that he was sure La Vérendrye, commandant among the Chippewa, would force the submission of the guilty ones. Next day he assembled all the Indian chiefs—Sauk, Fox, and Sioux—present, and told them that he proposed to winter between the Turkey and Wisconsin rivers. That night he camped four leagues below the Wisconsin at a place where, he confided to his diary, "I made the plan for my fort." After a trip down river as far as "Makoakité" and the mouth of the Wapsipicon River, where the Sioux planned to hunt, he returned upstream. The Maquoketa River enters the Mississippi from the west in eastern Iowa between the Turkey and Wapsipicon rivers.

On October 26 Marin was back at his post, which henceforth he called Fort Vaudreuil, probably in honor of Pierre Rigaud de Vaudreuil, who soon became governor general of New France. He was a brother of François Arnaud, marquis de Rigaud, to whom the post of La Baye, or Green Bay, had been granted in 1752 "on condition that it be exploited by the officer whom the governor-general shall find sufficiently capable and prudent to manage the great number of savages in that region."<sup>7</sup> The officer was, of course, Joseph Marin.

The day after Marin's return to Fort Vaudreuil he found the post being built "as I had ordered," and mentioned the construction of the stockade or "enceinte" as well as four houses and a shop. For the next week or so he made only brief entries in his diary: "Nothing new, always working on the fort." Then, on November 10, three Frenchmen arrived bringing a letter from Paul Lacroix. According to Marin, "He let me know that a day from Sandy Lake, as he was hurrying to the source of the Mississippi according to his orders, he encountered the Sieur de Laverandrie, commandant at La Pointe Chequemagon, who ordered him, as from M. le Général, to turn back; and he seized Lacroix' goods and prevented him from continuing his explorations." Marin here, as always, misspelled La Vérendrye's name, as did most of his contemporaries.

It has long been a question which of La Vérendrye's four sons was known contemporaneously as the Chevalier.<sup>8</sup> In French-Canadian usage "Chevalier," when employed in reference to the sons of a given family, means merely "the youngest." Louis Joseph La Vérendrye, the man whom Lacroix met that October day, when autumn's glory was fading from the foliage about the vicinity of Pokegama Falls and the western end of the Mesabi Range, was the fourth and youngest son of the great

<sup>7</sup> See an extract from a letter of Governor Duquesne to the French minister, August 21, 1752, in Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., "The French Regime in Wisconsin 1743-1760," in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 18:127 (Madison 1908). A footnote gives a sketch of Rigaud's life.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of this controversy, see William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 1:49 n. (St. Paul, 1921).

explorer. Hence he was the Chevalier de la Vérendrye. His eldest brother, Jean Baptiste, had been massacred by the Sioux on an island in the Lake of the Woods in 1736. His two other brothers, like himself, had served at the post on the Lake of the Woods and at other forts in the region between Lake Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains.

The engagements of voyageurs preserved in the Canadian Archives reveal that the Chevalier, but not his brothers, was active in the fur trade until the close of the French regime. Thus, in 1759, François Pouchot listed the Indians coming down from the fur country under their traders to aid the French in their struggle with the English armies during the Seven Years' War.<sup>9</sup> Among them he mentioned Charles Langlade and "la Verandrie" with twelve hundred Cree, Sioux, Sauk, Folles Avoines, Chippewa, and Foxes. Langlade could have brought members of all the tribes listed except the Cree, with whom, so far as is known, he was never associated. The published lists of engagements of voyageurs, from 1756 until the end of the French period, year after year show Joseph la Vérendrye securing voyageurs for the Post of the Sea of the West and for Grand Portage. These posts were in Cree country. It would seem, therefore, that he remained in charge at La Pointe until 1756, when he returned to the scenes of his exciting youth along Minnesota's boundary waters, and perhaps even farther west. A document giving indisputable proof that Joseph and the Chevalier were one and the same person is the engagement of Pierre St. Paul, "*dit* Montauban," who engaged himself on May 18, 1752, to "Joseph écuyer Chevallier de la Verandry" to go to "Chagouamigon," that is, Chequamegon Bay, where La Pointe is located.<sup>10</sup>

Young La Vérendrye also met Houl, Marin's other agent, on the upper Mississippi in October, 1753. The same couriers who brought Lacroix' letter to Marin had a missive from Houl, which, according to Marin's diary, reported the meeting "when Houl . . . had established himself at the mouth of the Crow Wing River to await the Yankton . . . and . . . the Sieur Laverandrie immediately upon arrival, seized his goods and ordered him to return to Fort La Jonquière and not even to winter at Fort Duquesne, which I had built the preceding season." La Vérendrye, according to Marin's diary, told Houl that he had orders from the governor to prevent the discoveries that Marin could make and

<sup>9</sup> Extract dated June 29, 1759, as printed by Thwaites, in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 18:212, 213.

<sup>10</sup> Montauban's engagement is summarized in "Répertoire des engagements pour l'Ouest conservés dans les archives judiciaires de Montréal (1670-1778)," published by the archivist of the province of Quebec in his *Rapport* for 1930-31, p. 440 (Quebec, 1931). Summaries of other collections of licenses and voyageurs' engagements may be found in the *Rapports* for 1921-22, 1929-30, 1930-31, 1931-32.

to confiscate the goods of the men he might send to the upper river. Both of Marin's men obeyed La Vérendrye and went to winter at Fort La Jonquière.

A third letter was handed to Marin by the couriers. This one, from La Vérendrye himself, was described in Marin's journal as "containing no details except that he had orders from M. le Général to winter there where he was and to stop the explorations that I had ordered made and to confiscate all that might pass." Marin added: "I wrote a letter to him asking him to send me a copy of the [Governor] General's order, since it was designed to stop my explorations and since I did not care to believe his mere word. For it was not the first time that he had imposed upon me. Last year at Fort Duquesne, when he came to see me, he told me that he had all the St. Croix River for trade, clear down to its junction with the Mississippi, but that he had left his orders to the effect at Mackinac and that I could rely on his word. He promised that he would let me see the orders when we got to Mackinac. This prevented me from confiscating the goods of his clerk, whom he had sent to winter at Sunrise River, and caused me considerable loss, for I was deprived of all the trade with the Wahpeton Sioux, who are forty lodges in number. When we got to Mackinac, his orders showed that he had only as far down [the St. Croix] as Snake River." Marin, according to his diary, wrote La Vérendrye that he was sending orders to his men to go on with their discoveries, at the same time calling attention to a map which La Vérendrye had sent to the governor.

The map, Marin recorded, showed "the source of the Mississippi, which could not be correct except in the stretch from the mouth of the river heading in Sandy Lake down to Pine River, which may be a distance of 45 to 50 leagues." It "could not be correct," Marin said, because La Vérendrye himself "has no knowledge of the Mississippi higher or lower than these two rivers." Later, in another version of this statement, included in a letter to the governor dated June 1, 1754, Marin corrected his reference to "the river heading in Sandy Lake" to read "the Sandy Lake River."

One can infer from these statements that in 1752-53 La Vérendrye visited the upper Mississippi for the first time, traveling from his La Pointe post by way of the regular canoe route up the St. Louis River and the portage trail into Sandy Lake; and that he then descended the near-by Mississippi as far as its junction with the Crow Wing River, where he visited Marin at Fort Duquesne, just constructed or in process of construction.

Marin also wrote to La Vérendrye that he was sending word to Lacroix to try to see the Cree. Leech Lake was their wintering ground, according

to word brought by the Sioux. Marin recorded that he also wrote of "sending orders to Houl to return upstream in order to see the Yankton Sioux." Houl was to obey La Vérendrye only if he had indisputable proof that "the limits of the Green Bay district end at Fort La Jonquière."

On December 2 there arrived at Marin's Fort Vaudreuil four Sisseton Sioux who had been sent by their chiefs. They reported that when they reached the place where they intended to meet the Cree in order to make peace with them, they found that the Yankton had already learned about the La Vérendrye episode. Believing that they would be tricked by the Frenchmen, the Yankton had gone off into the prairies, a hundred and sixty lodges of them. The four scouts had come to Fort Vaudreuil to learn what should be done now and whether the main group of Sisseton would be received by Marin. He sent word for them to come with all assurance of a good reception. When the scouts departed, Marin sent two Frenchmen with them on their "fifteen-day journey."

On December 14 Peminan arrived with the news that he had found a Sioux village "very far away, to the number of 200 lodges." He said he would have been able to bring these Indians back with him, except for the fact that the Yankton had sent a messenger to them warning of what had happened between the two French commanders among the Chipewewa and Sioux. So these newly discovered Indians went off "into the depths (*fond*) of the prairies, into the forks of the Cotté de Missouri." As frequently used by Marin, "cotte" seems to mean the slope of a height of land. On December 19 eighty lodges of Sisseton arrived and camped above Marin's fort, some "two arpents distant." An arpent was slightly less than 193 feet. Marin had a conference with them, smoked the peace pipes, and told them to have no fear. On December 22 these Indians played a game of lacrosse with the Sauk and Fox Indians of the Wisconsin River.

On December 27 Marin's couriers, Biron and Lavergne, returned from their visit to La Vérendrye, who threatened dire things if Marin continued in his outlined course.<sup>14</sup> They also brought a letter from Paul Lacroix and one from Houl, both of the same tenor. Lacroix had gone up to see La Vérendrye again and had been threatened with being placed in irons and sent off to Governor Duquesne unless he left the upper Mississippi. He also learned that the Cree were not far from La Vérendrye, to whom they had sent a courier. After getting this news, Marin assembled the Sioux and told them that La Vérendrye had informed the

<sup>14</sup> The couriers probably were Pierre Biron and Joseph Lavergne, whose engagements to "Paul De la Margue pour aller au poste de la Baye," May 29, 1752, and to Jean Garau Saint-Onge and Company, "pour aller jusq'au poste de la Baye," April 24, 1754, are listed by the archivist of the province of Quebec in his *Rapports*, 1929-30, p. 443, 1930-31, p. 445.

Cree that the Frenchman Marin was too far away for them to go either to him or to the Sioux.

The rest of the winter was relatively uneventful at Fort Vaudreuil. On June 20, 1754, Marin left for Mackinac, having written up his journal and prepared his letters and reports. Some of the letters, if not all, were copied in the back of his diary. In one, addressed to Duquesne and dated June 1, Marin remarked: "with your permission I will make some representations about the limits of my jurisdiction." He then gave the story of La Vérendrye's visit. In telling of the latter's journey downstream with Lacroix to the mouth of the Crow Wing River, Marin said that La Vérendrye told both of Marin's men to winter "no higher on the Mississippi than Fort La Jonquière, and not even to winter at Fort Duquesne, which I caused to be built in 1753 and of whose construction you have approved."

Marin went on to say that he had no idea that La Vérendrye would winter where he did, since it was Sioux country, and "because, when the district of La Pointe Chequamegon was created and given to M. St. Luc de la Corne, the limits were stated to be along Lake Superior from the Grands Sables on the Sault Ste. Marie side (*cotté*) to the Roche Debout on the Kaministiquia side (*cotté*), and along the height of land of all the rivers flowing into the lake between those points; and that the limits were not to include the rivers flowing into the Mississippi."<sup>12</sup> Thus a large part of the South Shore and a considerable part of the North Shore of Lake Superior were included in the La Pointe district. Roche Debout is shown on early French maps in such a position as to suggest Palisade Head on the North Shore near the mouth of the Baptism River.

Marin also told Duquesne that "if the jurisdiction centering at La Pointe had had the limits claimed by M. de Laverandrie, it would have had a trade worth ten thousand francs (*livres*) per year, to the ruin of the Green Bay post." Without going outside the area included in La Corne's limits, the writer continued, he himself while at La Pointe under M. de la Galissionère's orders, succeeded in making peace where there had been tribal wars for many years. Then he took up the false map and told of the Cree incident. This time, however, he called the Cree courier to La Vérendrye "The Little Roebuck."

Marin also told how La Vérendrye had traded all the winter of 1753-54 with the Cree, had sent *traines*, or sleds of merchandise, to the hunting grounds of those Indians, and had kept a clerk at the source of the Mississippi. Because La Vérendrye ordered his Chippewa to hunt on grounds

<sup>12</sup> For an account of the leasing of the La Pointe post by La Corne, see Thwaites, in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 18:191.

always reserved hitherto to the Sioux, a war had been averted only by Marin's influence. He added that the Sioux who would take Marin's letter to Duquesne would relate all these matters to the governor.

Since Marin repeated himself again and again in the several letters dated June 1, 1754, and later, it is possible to get from the various versions minor details of incidents and conditions mentioned earlier in his diary. Thus October 21 was given as the date of La Vérendrye's encounter with Lacroix; Houll was said to have had one canoe, seven men, goods, and presents for the Cree; Lacroix was declared to have had two canoes with four men in each, presents for the Cree, merchandise for trade, and a peace pipe; and La Vérendrye was claimed to have damaged Marin to the extent of six barrels of rum of sixteen "pots" each, at the rate of twenty-four livres per "pot."

To "Monsieur Deschambeau, mon cher frère," Marin also wrote on June 1, saying that he had expected to "go down" during the year with the Indians, but that "Monsieur le Général" had instructed him in all his letters to stay in the fur country, and in his place to send M. de Vilbon, Marin's representative at the Green Bay post. Marin indicated to his relative—sometimes termed his brother and sometimes his brother-in-law—that the governor's orders were puzzling, and that Deschambeau would do Marin a very great favor by going to Montreal in his stead and looking after his own interests and those of M. de Rigaud.

The recipient of Marin's letter was probably Joseph Fleury, sieur d'Eschambault, a nephew of the Marquise de Vaudreuil and a brother-in-law of Rigaud.<sup>13</sup> Apparently Marin believed that he was being kept in the fur country in order that he might not make trouble for some of Duquesne's favorites. Houll, he wrote to d'Eschambault, would go down as interpreter for the Sioux, excellent people who had done all he recommended. If d'Eschambault could take the trouble, Marin suggested, the Sioux would like to see his magic lantern (*lanterne magique*), for Marin had told them about it and about his brother-in-law, and they expected to pay him a visit in Canada.

In the same letter, after stating that La Vérendrye had wintered on the headwaters of the Mississippi, Marin declared it would be unjust if he were allowed to remain there. He had followed his orders to the letter, Marin said. If La Vérendrye's territory included the upper Mississippi, then he might as well have Green Bay also, for the Indians of that post had nowhere to hunt "except on the lands of the Sioux." Then Marin added this interesting observation: "My men have told me that Monsieur

<sup>13</sup> A sketch of d'Eschambault is given by Thwaites, in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 18: 200 n.

de St. Pierre . . . promised to put his boundary for Green Bay at the Portage St. Anthony, but I believe M. de St. Pierre is too good an officer to put limits where he has no knowledge. For it is a fact that he has never been more than four or five leagues higher than the St. Croix, and that he knows that when he was commandant among the Sioux [*at Fort Beauharnois*], he had orders to go up the Mississippi as high as possible. Consequently the Mississippi belongs to the Sioux, not to the Chipewewa."<sup>14</sup> Thereupon Marin took up trade prospects for the year 1754-55, which, he said, bade fair to offer as many packs as the past season secured.

In the next letter, addressed to Rigaud, Marin told the same story about La Vérendrye, but added a few details of interest. For example, Marin disclosed that he secured 760 packs of furs in 1753-54, adding, that "if Laverandrie had not stopped my people, I should have made a haul (*un coup*) such as Green Bay never made before."

The Marin document is valuable from many angles. It reveals several French trading posts in the Minnesota country that have been hitherto unknown; it shows the great value of the Sioux as hunters of beaver, and reflects the bitter struggle for their territory that waged between French traders from the 1720's to 1760; it indicates in a general way the residences of the several branches of Minnesota Sioux and Cree in the 1750's; it tells not a little about place names, many of which are retained to this day; it gives the names of minor traders and voyageurs in the area; and it includes some interesting facts about the careers of La Corne and St. Pierre in the Minnesota country. Outstanding, however, is the new knowledge afforded on the careers of Joseph Gaultier, sieur de la Vérendrye, and Joseph de la Margue, sieur Marin.

<sup>14</sup> Jacques le Gardeur, sieur de St. Pierre, was a great-grandson of Jean Nicolet, one of the first French explorers in the West. In 1718, as a lad of seventeen, St. Pierre accompanied his father to the latter's command at La Pointe. In 1735 he was sent by Governor Beauharnois at the head of a relief party to aid a small garrison at Fort Beauharnois, which the Fox and other western tribes were threatening. Later he was sent to follow up the senior La Vérendrye's explorations on the Saskatchewan; he received George Washington at Fort Le Boeuf in 1754; and he was killed in 1755 in the prelude to the Seven Years' War. Kellogg, *French Régime*, 424, 425, 434.



FOUR WATER COLORS by Peter Rindisbacher have been acquired by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, according to the summer number of the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*. All depict Indians of the Red River Valley and their activities, and all date from the early 1830's, when the artist was living in St. Louis. The pictures, three of which are reproduced with the announcement, will be of special interest to readers of the article on Rindisbacher which appeared in the September issue of this magazine.



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