

FIND OLD LA SALLE PAPERS IN PARIS

In Musty Files Manuscripts Have Lain Forgotten Until Now; American Value

In the musty files of the French national library, searchers have found hitherto unpublished correspondence of the great French explorer, Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle. Time has proved the value of his prophetic vision in foreseeing the American middle-west as the potential granary of the world, says a special United Press dispatch from Paris.

For two and a half centuries, these letters, among the earliest known documents concerned with American history, have laid un-read in a bundle tied with silk cords. They were evidently intended as the memoirs of the explorer, written from ample notes which he composed, as he and his priests and warriors travelled by canoe through the great lakes, tributary rivers and down the Mississippi.

To Continue Research

Convinced that other letters of La Salle exist which may throw an entirely new light on the French influence of American development, officials of the national library will continue their researches in the damp caves. Strangely, the La Salle documents were very well preserved.

The yellowing letters and memoirs of the scholar-adventurer attest his keen appreciation, 250 years ago, of the fertile lands watered by the Ohio, Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

Sought to Reach China

La Salle began his travels with an attempt to reach China by descending the Ohio river, convinced that it entered the Pacific ocean. Despite this chief interest, however, he found time to write at some length of what he saw in the great river valleys of the mid-west.

Prefacing a part of his memoirs in the quaint style of the 17th century, he says:

"The Sieur de La Salle, having always had a great inclination to make discoveries and to establish colonies which may be advantageous to religion and useful to France, passed from Canada in 1666." The explorer then proceeded to describe, with the enthusiasm of a child and the accuracy of a matured explorer, the wonders of new lands.

He had his first glimpse of buffalo in the regions south of Lake Michigan, which is now the great Chicago area. He called them wild oxen, "Which bore instead of hair very fine wool, quite serviceable in the making of garments and hats, and whose leathers are much better than those in France."

La Salle, on his long and severe trip down the Mississippi, saw and recounted with startling accuracy the future agricultural possibilities of the vast basin lying along the river. He was particularly impressed by the im-

mensities of the prairies, "so ideally suited to grazing and to the planting of grains."

Dogged by Hard Luck

Misfortune pursued the explorer in the last year. After planting the arms of France at the mouth of the Mississippi in the spring of 1682, he

returned to the gulf two years later with the intention of establishing a permanent French settlement in Louisiana.

He mistook Martagorda bay for the mouth of the Mississippi, landed there and then spent two years in unsuccessful journeys to find the great

river. His colonists and soldiers were convinced he had never seen the Mississippi and they gradually drifted away, tragedies following upon discontentment. His harshness of manner, more than his lack of success, caused several of his followers to assassinate him in a fit of bitterness.

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