

a party of voyageurs, with thirty Cris Indians, gave him the news of the massacre. On July 29 it was confirmed by four other Frenchmen, who arrived at the fort. Beauharnois wrote, that alarmed at their long absence the Commandant sent a canoe with eight men to verify the facts. They found young de la Vérendrye lying face downward, his back gashed with knives, a hoe imbedded in his loins, and the head separated from the trunk. Father Aulneau was kneeling on one knee, his left hand against the ground supporting the body, his right raised in the air. An arrow had pierced his side and there was a deep gash in the breast. It is not said that he was decapitated. Indeed, it was reported that the Indians were afraid to touch his body, but whether the posture in which he was found is a fancy picture, or whether he was really in that attitude after the butchery, must be left to adepts in surgery or anatomy to quarrel about. The skulls, we are told, were found placed on or wrapped in beaver skins. All the skulls and some of the bodies were transported to the fort.

Father Martin relates that M. Belcourt, a missionary at Pembina, had visited the island in 1843, and had seen a mound about seven feet high which had been built over the bodies. A grave was impossible, for the island was all rock, and hence stones were merely piled on top of the remains. One is tempted to ask why Father Martin did not visit the tomb himself. The explanation is not hard to find. A journey to that remote place is even now a matter of great difficulty and expense. It was out of the question in the time of Father Martin.

De la Vérendrye left Fort St. Charles in 1737. After that all knowledge of the exact location of Massacre Island naturally began to grow dim, at least among the whites. The man who knew it all was heard to get at. On October 3, 1738, we find him at Fort Maurepas, which he built; and a few months later he was away in the Missouri country among the Mandans. In 1740 we discover him in Montreal appeasing his clamorous creditors; and in 1741 he was at Mackinac. Subsequently he made his permanent abode at Fort la Reine, and from there directed the explorations of his sons, who valiantly sustained the family traditions. They established forts in many places and in 1742 started west.