

est channel on the bar, which is subject to shift very often ; so that a pilot is constantly employed in sounding. On every part of the bar there is nine feet water, and small vessels go over it without fear : frigates of thirty-six guns have often gone through the channel, after taking their guns out. When once a vessel has crossed the bar, the remainder of the navigation is very safe, keeping clear of the great trees, which float down with the current. When winds are contrary, vessels make fast to the trees on the banks of the river, and haul close, there being sufficient depth of water for any ship whatever. It is impossible to anchor without being exposed to the danger of the great trees which come down with the current almost continually, but more especially at the time of the floods, which if any of them should come athwart hawse, would most probably drive in the bows of the vessel ; and there is a certainty of loosing the anchors, as the bottom of the river is very soft mud, covered with sunk logs, and is in general at least sixty fathoms deep, and this sort of bottom and depth continues almost as far as the Natches ; and all vessels that enter the river, can go up within three miles of that post.

The merchandize necessary for the commerce to Natchitoches, Missouri, and in general the upper posts on or near the Mississippi, is carried by Batteaus, which are rowed by eighteen or twenty men, and contain about forty tons burthen ; they are commonly three months going from New Orleans to the Illinois. They always go in convoys from New Orleans, and before they set out appoint an officer from amongst themselves to command them ; or apply for a king's officer for that purpose ; and whenever they put on shore to eat their meals, or encamp for the night, they have a regular guard mounted : they use these precautions for fear of any attack from the Indians. The Chickasaws formerly were very troublesome to them. Two of these convoys, consisting of from
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