

river in wooden canoes, since bark canoes would be dangerous, by reason of the multitude of snags.¹

In 1714 Juchereau de Saint-Denis was sent by La Mothe-Cadillac to explore western Louisiana, and pushed up Red River to a point sixty-eight leagues, as he reckons, above Natchitoches. In the next year, journeying across country towards the Spanish settlements, with a view to trade, he was seized near the Rio Grande and carried to the city of Mexico. The Spaniards, jealous of French designs, now sent priests and soldiers to occupy several points in Texas. Juchereau, however, was well treated, and permitted to marry a Spanish girl with whom he had fallen in love on the way; but when, in the autumn of 1716, he ventured another journey to the Mexican borders, still hoping to be allowed to trade, he and his goods were seized by order of the Mexican viceroy, and, lest worse should befall him, he fled empty-handed, under cover of night.²

In March, 1719, Bénéard de la Harpe left the feeble little French post at Natchitoches with six soldiers and a sergeant.³ His errand was to explore the country, open trade if possible with the Spaniards, and establish another post high up Red River. He and his party soon came upon that vast entanglement

¹ Hubert, *Mémoire envoyé au Conseil de la Marine*.

² Penecaut, *Relation*, chaps. xvii., xviii. Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane*, i. 13-22. Various documents in Margry, vi. 193-202.

³ For an interesting contemporary map of the French establishment at Natchitoches, see Thomassy, *Géologie pratique de la Louisiane*.