

traded for years. In pursuance of his orders he built a fort, which he named Fort Orléans, and which stood on the Missouri not far above the mouth of Grand River. Having thus accomplished one part of his mission, he addressed himself to the other, and prepared to march for the Comanche villages.

Leaving a sufficient garrison at the fort, he sent his ensign, Saint-Ange, with a party of soldiers and Canadians, in wooden canoes, to the villages of the Kansas higher up the stream, and on the third of July set out by land to join him, with a hundred and nine Missouri Indians and sixty-eight Osages in his train. A ride of five days brought him again to the banks of the Missouri, opposite a Kansas town. Saint-Ange had not yet arrived, the angry and turbid current, joined to fevers among his men, having retarded his progress. Meanwhile Bourgmont drew from the Kansas a promise that their warriors should go with him to the Comanches. Saint-Ange at last appeared, and at daybreak of the twenty-fourth the tents were struck and the pack-horses loaded. At six o'clock the party drew up in battle array on a hill above the Indian town, and then, with drum beating and flag flying, began their march. "A fine prairie country," writes Bourgmont, "with hills and dales and clumps of trees to right and left." Sometimes the landscape quivered under the sultry sun, and sometimes thunder bellowed over their heads, and rain fell in floods on the steaming plains.