

FORT CHARTRES.

Its Walls are Crumbling and Being Carried Away as Souvenirs by Relic Hunters.

[Chicago Inter Ocean:] Old Fort Chartres will soon be a thing of the past, as the walls are fast crumbling and being carried away as souvenirs by the many relic hunters who visit the place each summer.

The fort was first begun of wood in the year 1718, and completed in less than two years. It was located twelve miles south of Red Bud, Ill., about three miles from the eastern bluff of the Mississippi River, and one mile from the river. The fortress was called by way of emulce, "Fort des Chartres," having a charter from the crown of France for its erection.

The first fort contained all the necessary buildings to accommodate the seat of government of the country and garrison. The quarters of the officers and barracks for the soldiers were finished in the neat and becoming style of the country in pioneer times. Surrounding the whole was erected a strong palisade, fortified with earth between the walls of wood, until it bade defiance to any enemy that might approach it in this remote situation. The headquarters of M. Phillip Renault were also established in this fort. It was from this point he left Illinois in the year 1744 to return to France. About the time of his arrival in his native land he died.

Under the mild and impartial government the country began to grow and flourish, and the seat of government, Fort Chartres, became the center of fashion, business and gayety of all the Illinois country.

Under Gov. La Buissoniere Fort Chartres was built entirely new. Its reconstruction was of solid and durable limestone. The rocks were quarried at the bluffs, three miles east of the fort, and then rafted and hoated over the lake to the building. This fort was constructed in the year 1756. In 1776 a great flood swept over the Mississippi River Valley, partly destroying the fort. The English government then abandoned Fort Chartres and established its authority at Fort Gage, on the bluffs east of Kaskaskia.