

Antoine Denis Raudot, "Memoir Concerning the Different Indian Nations of North America." in *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes, 1615–1760*, ed. W. Vernon Kintz (Ann Arbor, 1940), 407–8.

LETTER 71

The Hunting of the Illinois in Summer and Winter

Sir,

These Illinois savages leave their village in winter; there remain only a few women and some old men who absolutely cannot march. They go to hunt buffalo, deer, wapiti, beaver, and bear. They camp always in the prairies far from the woods, to be in a position to discover from farther off those who wish to attack them and to be able to pursue them more easily, and use mats of rushes tied together to cover their cabins.

When they have perceived a herd of buffalo the young men jog toward them and when they are about a quarter of a league away they run with all their strength, they come up to them soon, discharge their guns, and shoot an infinite number of arrows. Several buffalo fall from these shots, and the young men always pursue those who remain and make them pass by the old men who are ambushed and who make a great killing of them.

They take the tongues of the buffalo and the flat sides which they keep to carry to their village. It is the women who have the care of gathering this meat and smoking and preserving it.

Toward the end of April they return to their old village to do their sowing; they remain all summer, from time to time going on small hunts, but without going far away.

For their hunts of summer and winter they use large canoes of wood in which they carry all their baggage. One of these canoes would not dare separate from the mass, for immediately some guard canoes would run after it and break it and all that was in it. Likewise, one of these savages would not dare separate from the mass to go and hunt when they are on land, for immediately a band of young men who are guards would run after him to make him return, break his arms, and tear off all that he had on him. These savages have established this kind of law among themselves because those who go in advance would cause the animals to flee while killing only a very few of them, which would oblige them to go much farther to find some.

I am, sir, etc.