

*Copy*

TRAVELS  
AND ADVENTURES  
IN  
CANADA  
AND  
*THE INDIAN TERRITORIES,*  
BETWEEN  
THE YEARS 1760 AND 1776.  
IN TWO PARTS.  
BY ALEXANDER HENRY, ESQ.

NEW-YORK:  
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY I. NILEY.  
----  
1809.

# TRAVELS

## AND ADVENTURES,

&c. &c.

PART THE SECOND.

---

### CHAPTER I.

*Fur-trade permitted only to licensed and privileged persons. Author obtains the exclusive trade of Lake Superior. Further commercial details of Michilimackinac. Author proceeds to the Sault de Sainte-Marie—embarks for his Wintering-ground at Chagouemig. Grave of the Iroquois—tradition. River Ontonagan—Sturgeon-fishery—and Copper. Indians beat the Copper into Spoons, Bracelets, &c. Chagouemig—distressed state of Indians there. Indians supplied—go to the chase.*

UNDER the French government of Canada, the fur-trade was subject to a variety of regulations, established and enforced by the royal authority ; and, in 1765, the period at which I began to prose-

ecute it anew, some remains of the ancient system were still preserved. No person could go into the countries lying north-westward of Détroit, unless furnished with a license ; and the exclusive trade of particular districts was capable of being enjoyed, in virtue of grants from military commanders.

The exclusive trade of Lake Superior was given to myself, by the commandant of Fort Michilimackinac ; and to prosecute it, I purchased goods, which I found at this post, at twelve months' credit. My stock was the freight of four canoes, and I took it at the price of ten thousand pounds weight of good and merchantable beaver. It is in beaver that accounts are kept at Michilimackinac ; but in defect of this article, other furs and skins are accepted in payments, being first reduced unto their value in beaver. Beaver was at this time at the price of two shillings and sixpence per pound, Michilimackinac-currency ; otter skins, at six shillings each ; marten, at one shilling and sixpence, and others in proportion.

To carry the goods to my wintering-ground in Lake Superior, I engaged twelve men, at two hundred and fifty livres, of the same currency, each ; that is, a hundred pounds weight of beaver. For provisions, I purchased fifty bushels of maize, at ten pounds of beaver per bushel. At this place, specie was so wholly out of the question, that in

going to a cantine, you took with you a marten's skin, to pay your reckoning.\*

On the 14th of July, 1765, I embarked for the Sault de Sainte-Marie, where, on my arrival, I took into partnership M. Cadotte, whom I have already had frequent occasion to name; and on the 26th I proceeded for my wintering-ground, which was to be fixed at Chagouemig.

The next morning, I crossed the Strait of Sainte-Marie, or of Lake Superior, to a point, which the Chipeways call the Grave of the Iroquois. To this name there belongs a tradition, that the Iroquois, who, at a certain time, made war upon the Chipeways, with the design of dispossessing them of their country, encamped, one night, a thousand strong, upon this point; where, thinking themselves secure from their numbers, they indulged in feasting on the bodies of their prisoners. The sight, however, of the sufferings and humiliation of their kindred and friends, so wrought upon the Chipeways, who beheld them from the opposite shore, that with the largest number of warriors they could collect, but which amounted only to three hundred, they crossed the channel, and at break of day fell upon the Iroquois, now sleeping after their excesses,

\* See Part I. Chapter 5.

and put one and all to death. Of their own party, they lost but a single man ; and he died of a wound which he received from an old woman, who stabbed him with an awl. She was at work, making shoes for the family, when he broke into the lodge, near the entrance of which she sat.—Some of the old men of my crew remembered at this place to have seen bones.

On the lake, we fell in with Indians, of whom I purchased provisions. One party agreed to accompany me, to hunt for me, on condition of being supplied with necessaries on credit.

On the 19th of August, we reached the mouth of the river Ontonagan, one of the largest on the south side of the lake. At the mouth, was an Indian village ; and at three leagues above, a fall, at the foot of which sturgeon were at this season so abundant, that a month's subsistence for a regiment could have been taken in a few hours.

But, I found this river chiefly remarkable for the abundance of virgin copper, which is on its banks and in its neighbourhood, and of which the reputation is at present more generally spread, than it was at the time of this my first visit. The attempts, which were shortly after made, to work the mines of Lake Superior to advantage, will very soon claim a place, among the facts which I am to describe.

The copper presented itself to the eye, in masses of various weight. The Indians showed me one of twenty pounds. They were used to manufacture this metal into spoons and bracelets for themselves. In the perfect state in which they found it, it required nothing but to be beat into shape. The Pi-wâ-tic, or Iron-river, enters the lake to the westward of the Ontonagan; and here, as is pretended, silver was found, while the country was in the possession of the French.

Beyond this river, I met more Indians, whom I furnished with merchandise on credit. The prices were for a stroud blanket, ten beaver-skins; for a white blanket, eight; a pound of powder, two; a pound of shot, or of ball, one; a gun, twenty; an axe, of one pound weight, two; a knife, one.—Beaver, it will be remembered, was worth, at Michilimackinac, two shillings and sixpence a pound, in the currency of that place; that is, six livres, or a dollar.

On my arrival at Chagouemig, I found fifty lodges of Indians there. These people were almost naked, their trade having been interrupted, first by the English invasion of Canada, and next by Pontiac's war.

Adding the Indians of Chagouemig to those which I had brought with me, I had now a hundred

families, to all of whom I was required to advance goods on credit. At a council, which I was invited to attend, the men declared, that unless their demands were complied with, their wives and children would perish ; for that there were neither ammunition nor clothing left among them. Under these circumstances, I saw myself obliged to distribute goods, to the amount of three thousand beaver-skins. This done, the Indians went on their hunt, at the distance of a hundred leagues. A clerk, acting as my agent, accompanied them to Fond du Lac, taking with him two loaded canoes. Meanwhile, at the expense of six days' labour, I was provided with a very comfortable house, for my winter's residence.

## CHAPTER II.

*Chagouemig. Hunt. Feast of Sacrifice to the Great Spirit—motives—and mode. Ludicrous incident. Comment of the Indians. Chipeway Campaign against the Nadowessies. Scalping the killed in battle esteemed honourable to the Nation to whom they belong. Author leaves Chagouemig—further explores the Banks of the Ontonagon.*

CHAGOUEMIG, or Chagouemigon, might at this period be regarded as the metropolis of the Chipeways, of whom the true name is *O'chibbuoy*. The chiefs informed me, that they had frequently attacked the Nadowessies, (by the French called *Sioux* or *Nadouessieux*;) with whom they are always at war, with fifteen hundred men, including in this number the fighting-men from Fond du Lac, or the head of Lake Superior. The cause of the perpetual war, carried on between these two nations, is this, that both claim, as their exclusive hunting-ground, the tract of country which lies

between them, and uniformly attack each other when they meet upon it.

The Chipeways of Chagouemig are a handsome well-made people ; and much more cleanly, as well as much more regular in the government of their families, than the Chipeways of Lake Huron. The women have agreeable features, and take great pains in dressing their hair, which consists in neatly dividing it on the forehead and top of the head, and in plaiting and turning it up behind. The men paint as well their whole body as their face ; sometimes with charcoal, and sometimes with white ochre ; and appear to study how to make themselves as unlike as possible to any thing human. The clothing, in which I found them, both men and women, was chiefly of dressed deer-skin, European manufactures having been for some time out of their reach. In this respect, it was not long, after my goods were dispersed among them, before they were scarcely to be known, for the same people. The women heightened the colour of their cheeks, and really animated their beauty, by a liberal use of vermilion.

My house being completed, my winter's food was the next object ; and for this purpose, with the assistance of my men, I soon took two thousand trout and white-fish, the former frequently weigh-

ing fifty pounds each, and the latter commonly from four to six. We preserved them by suspending them by the tail in the open air. These, without bread or salt, were our food through all the winter; the men being free to consume what quantity they pleased, and boiling or roasting them whenever they thought proper. After leaving Michilimackinac, I saw no bread; and I found less difficulty, in reconciling myself to the privation, than I could have anticipated.

On the 15th of December, the Bay of Chagouemig was frozen entirely over. After this, I resumed my former amusement of spearing trout, and sometimes caught a hundred of these fish in a day, each weighing, on an average, twenty pounds.

My house, which stood in the bay, was sheltered by an island of fifteen miles in length, and between which and the main the channel is four miles broad. On the island, there was formerly a French trading-post, much frequented; and in its neighbourhood a large Indian village. To the south-east is a lake, called Lake des Outaouais, from the Otawas, its former possessors; but it is now the property of the Chipeways.

From the first hunting-party which brought me furs, I experienced some disorderly behaviour; but

happily without serious issue. Having crowded into my house, and demanded rum, which I refused them, they talked of indulging themselves in a general pillage, and I found myself abandoned by all my men. Fortunately, I was able to arm myself; and on my threatening to shoot the first who should lay his hands on any thing, the tumult began to subside, and was presently after at an end. When over, my men appeared to be truly ashamed of their cowardice, and made promises never to behave in a similar manner again.

Admonished of my danger, I now resolved on burying the liquor which I had; and the Indians, once persuaded that I had none to give them, went and came very peaceably, paying their debts and purchasing goods. In the month of March, the manufacture of maple-sugar engaged as usual their attention.

While the snow still lay on the ground, I proposed to the Indians to join me in a hunting excursion, and they readily agreed. Shortly after we went out, my companions discovered dents or hollows in the snow, which they affirmed to be the footsteps of a bear, made in the beginning of the winter, after the first snow.—As for me, I should have passed over the same ground without acquiring any such information; and probably without remarking

the very faint traces which they were able to distinguish, and certainly without deducing so many particular facts : but, what can be more credible, than that long habits of close observation in the forest, should give the Indian hunter some advantages, in the exercise of his daily calling? The Indians were not deceived ; for, on following the traces which they had found, they were led to a tree, at the root of which was a bear.

As I had proposed this hunt, I was, by the Indian custom, the master and the proprietor of all the game ; but, the head of the family which composed my party begged to have the bear, alleging, that he much desired to make a feast to the Kichi Manito, or Great Spirit, who had preserved himself and his family through the winter, and brought them in safety to the lake. On his receiving my consent, the women went to the spot where we had killed the bear, and where the carcass had been left in safety, buried deep in the snow. They brought the booty back with them, and kettles being hung over the fires, the whole bear was dressed for the feast.

About an hour after dark, accompanied by four of my men, I repaired to the place of sacrifice, according to invitation. The number of the Indians exactly equalled ours, there being two men and three women ; so that together we were ten per-

sons, upon whom it was incumbent to eat up the whole bear. I was obliged to receive into my own plate, or dish, a portion of not less than ten pounds weight, and each of my men were supplied with twice this quantity. As to the Indians, one of them had to his share the head, the breast, the heart, with its surrounding fat, and all the four feet; and the whole of this he swallowed in two hours. He, as well as the rest, had finished before I had got through half my toil; and my men were equally behind-hand. In this situation, one of them resorted to an experiment which had a ludicrous issue, and which, at the same time, served to discover a fresh feature in the superstitions of the Indians. Having first observed to us, that a part of the cheer would be very acceptable to him the next day, when his appetite should be returned, he withdrew a part of the contents of his dish, and made it fast to the girdle which he wore under his shirt. While he disposed in this manner of his superabundance, I, who found myself unable to perform my part, requested the Indians to assist me; and this they cheerfully did, eating what I had found too much, with as much apparent ease as if their stomachs had been previously empty. The feast being brought to an end, and the prayer and thanksgiving pronounced, those near the door departed; but, when the poor fellow who had concealed his meat, and who had to pass from the further end of the lodge, rose up to go, two dogs, guided by

the scent, laid hold of the treasure, and tore it to the ground. The Indians were greatly astonished ; but, presently observed, that the Great Spirit had led the dogs by inspiration to the act, in order to frustrate the profane attempt to steal away this portion of the offering. As matters stood, the course they took was to put the meat into the fire, and there consume it.

On the 20th of April, the ice broke up, and several canoes arrived, filled with women and children, who reported that the men of their band were all gone out to war, against the Nadowessies. On the 15th of May, a part of the warriors, with some others, arrived, in fifty canoes, almost every one of which had a cargo of furs. The warriors gave me some account of their campaign ; stating, that they had set out in search of the enemy, four hundred strong ; and that on the fourth day from their leaving their village, they had met the enemy, and been engaged in battle. The battle, as they related, raged the greater part of the day ; and in the evening, the Nadowessies, to the number of six hundred, fell back, across a river which lay behind them, encamping in this position for the night. The Chipeways had thirty-five killed ; and they took advantage of the suspension of the fray, to *prepare the bodies* of their friends, and then retired to a small distance from the place, expecting the Nadowessies to recross the stream in the morning,

and come again to blows. In this, however, they were disappointed ; for the Nadowessies continued their retreat, without even doing the honours of war to the slain. To do these honours is to scalp ; and to *prepare the bodies* is to dress and paint the remains of the dead, preparatorily to this mark of attention from the enemy : "The neglect," said the Chipeways, "was an affront to us—a disgrace ; "because we consider it an honour, to have the "scalps of our countrymen exhibited in the villages of our enemies, in testimony of our valour."

The concourse of Indians, already mentioned, with others who came after, all rich in furs, enabled me very speedily to close my traffic for the spring, disposing of all the goods, which, on taking M. Cadotte into partnership, had been left in my own hands. I found myself in possession of a hundred and fifty packs of beaver, weighing a hundred pounds each, besides twenty-five packs of otter and marten skins ; and with this part of the fruits of my adventure, I embarked for Michilimackinac, sailing in company with fifty canoes of Indians, who had still a hundred packs of beaver, which I was unable to purchase.

On my way, I encamped a second time at the mouth of the Ontonagan, and now took the opportunity of going ten miles up the river, with Indian guides. The object, which I went most expressly to

see, and to which I had the satisfaction of being led, was a mass of copper, of the weight, according to my estimate, of no less than five ton. Such was its pure and malleable state, that with an axe I was able to cut off a portion, weighing a hundred pounds. On viewing the surrounding surface, I conjectured that the mass, at some period or other, had rolled from the side of a lofty hill, which rises at its back.