

HISTORY
OF
BRULÉ'S DISCOVERIES
AND EXPLORATIONS

1610-1626

Being a Narrative of the Discovery, by Stephen Brulé, of
Lakes Huron, Ontario and Superior; and of his Ex-
plorations (the First Made by Civilized Man)
of Pennsylvania and Western New
York, also of the Province
of Ontario, Canada

With a Biographical Notice of the Discoverer and Explorer,
who was Killed and Eaten by
Savages

*"The dauntless woodsman, pioneer of pioneers,
Étienne Brulé, the interpreter."*—PARKMAN

BY

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NOTE XXII.

EXTRACTS FROM SAGARD'S "HISTOIRE DU CANADA" (PARIS EDITION, 1866) RELATING TO BRULÉ.

[a]

"L'un de nos François nommé Crenole [Grenolle], ayant esté a la traicte du coste nord, en une nation esloignée environ 100 lieues des Hurons, tirant à la mine cuivre, nous dit à son retour y avoir veu plusieurs filles auxquelles on avoit coupé le bout du nés selon la coustume du pais, pour avoir faict bresche à leur honneur."—p. 323.

[Translation.]

One of our Frenchmen named Crenole [Grenolle], having been on the journey of the north shore to a nation about 100 leagues distant from the Hurons, approaching the copper mine, told us on his return that he had seen there several girls the end of whose noses had been cut off, in accordance with the custom of the country, for having made a breach in their honor.

[b]

Il se trouve une autre grande difficulté en ces langues (Huron, Ebiceriny, Montaignais) en la prononciation de quelques syllables, à laquelle consistent les diverses signification d'un mesme mot qui est une difficulté plus grande que l'on ne pense pas, car manquez seulement en une vous manquez en tout, ou si vous vous faites entendre, ce sera tout autrement que vous ne desirez, comme en ce mot Ebicerinyen: Kidauskinne, lequel avec une certaine façon de prononcer veut dire, tu n'as point d'esprit, et par un autre ton signifie: tu es menty. Ainsi en est-il de quantité d'autres mots, c'est pourquoi il faut ayder à la lettre, et apprendre la cadence si on y veut profiter, car le Truchement Brulé s'y est quelquefois lui-mesme trouvé bien empesché et moi-encore plus. . . . p. 338.

[Translation.]

There is another great difficulty in these languages (Huron, Ebiceriny, Montaignais) in the pronounciation of some of the syllables, in which consists the different significations of the same word, which is a greater difficulty than one would think, for if you fail only in one you fail in all, or if you make yourself understood, it may be quite otherwise than you desire; as in this

Ebicerlayen word, Kidauksinne; which, pronounced in a certain manner, signifies, "you have no sense;" and, with another accent, signifies, "you have lied." It is thus with a quantity of other words, which is the reason it is necessary to aid the spelling, and learn the cadence if you wish to avail yourself of them, for the Interpreter Brulé sometimes found himself much embarrassed with them and I myself still more. . . .

[c]

Ce pauvre Brulé, quoy qu'assez sçavant dans le país des Hurons et lieux circonvoisins, se perdit neantmoins et s'égara de telle sorte que faute d'avoir une de ses boussoles, ou prins garde au soleil, il tourna le dos aux Hurons, traversa force país et coucha quelques nuicts dans les bois, jusques à un matin qu'ayant trouvé un sentier battu, il se rendit par icelui dans un village d'Hiroquois, où il fut à peine arrivé qu'il fut saisi et constitué prisonnier en ensuite condamné à la mort par le conseil des Sages.

Le pauvre homme bien estonné ne sçavait à quel Saint se vouër, car d'esperer misericorde il sçavait bien qu'il n'estoit point en lieu, il eut dont [*sc. donc*] recours à Dieu et à la patience, et se soumit à ses divines volontez, plus par force qu'autrement, car il n'estoit guere devot, tesmoin ce qu'il nous dit un jour, que s'estant trouvé en un autre grand peril de la mort, pour toute priere il dit son Benedicite.

Or je ne sçay s'il le dit icy se voyant prisonnier et dans le premier appareil de la mort, car des-jà ils l'avaient fait coucher de son long contre terre et lui arrachaient la barbe, lorsque l'un d'eux avisant un Agnus Dei, qu'il portait pendu à son col, lui voulant arracher, il se prit à crier et dit à ses bourreaux, que s'ils lui ostaient, Dieu les en chastierait, comme il fist; car ils n'eurent pas plutost mis la main dessus pour lui tirer du col, que le ciel auparavant serein, se troubla et envoya tant d'esclairs et d'orages et de foudres, qu'ils en creurent estre au dernier jour, s'enfuyrent dans leurs cabanes et laisserent là leur prisonnier, qui se leva et s'enfuit comme les autres mais d'un autre côté. . . .

A la fin ce fortuné Brulé a este du depuis condamné à la mort, puis mangé par les Hurons, auxquels il avait si longtemps servy de Truchement, et le tout pour une hayne qu'ils conceurent contre luy pour je ne sçay qu'elle faute qu'il commit à leur endroit.

Il y avait beaucoup d'années qu'il demeurait avec eux, vivait quasi comme eux, et servait de Truchement aux Français, et après tout cela n'a remporté pour toute récompense qu'une morte douloureuse et une fin funeste et malheureuse; je prie Dieu qu'il lui fasse miséricorde, s'il lui plaist et aye pitié de son ame.—
p. 430.

[Translation.]

This poor Brulé, though very well-informed about the country of the Hurons and the surrounding regions, got lost nevertheless and strayed so far from lack of having one of his compasses, or taking notice of the sun, that he turned his back on the Hurons, traversed many regions and slept several nights in the woods, until one morning having found a beaten path he proceeded by this to a village of the Iroquois, where he had scarcely arrived when he was seized and made prisoner, and then condemned to death by the council of the Sages.

The poor man, much astonished, did not know to which Saint to make vows, for he knew well there was no chance of any hope of mercy, so he had recourse to God and to patience, and submitted himself to his Divine will, more by force than otherwise, for he was not very pious, as witness what he said to us one day, that finding himself in another great peril of death, for all prayer he said his Benedicite.

Now I do not know whether he said it here, seeing himself a prisoner and in solemn preparation for death, for already they had made him lie down at full length on the ground, and were pulling out his beard, when one of them perceiving an Agnus Dei, which he wore hung at his neck, wishing to snatch it from him, he began to cry out and said to his executioners that if they took it from him, God would chastise them, as He did: for they had no sooner put their hands upon him to draw it from his neck, than the sky, before this serene, grew cloudy and sent so many flashes of lightning and tempests, that they believed the last day had come, and fled into their huts leaving their prisoner there, who rose and fled like the others but in another direction.

Finally this fortunate Brulé was later condemned to death and eaten by the Hurons, to whom he had so long served as Interpreter, and all for a hatred which they had conceived against him for I do not know what fault which he had committed with respect to them.

He had dwelt with them a great many years, lived almost as they did, and served as Interpreter to the French, and after all

that, he had gained for all recompense only a painful death and a sad and unfortunate end; I pray God to have mercy on him, if it pleases Him, and to have pity on his soul.

[d]

Ils m'ont montré plusieurs rochers sur le chemin de Kebec, ausquels ils croyent presider quelque esprit, et entr'autres, ils me montrèrent un à quelque 150 lieues de là, qui avoit une profonde caverne de tres-difficile accès. Ils me voulaient persuader et faire croire à toute force avec eux, que ce rocher avoit este autrefois homme mortal comme nous et qu'eslevant les bras et les mains en haut, il s'estait metamorphosé en cette pierre et devenu à succession de temps un si puissant rocher, lesquels ils ont en veneration et lui offrent du petun en passant par devant avec leurs canots, non toutes les fois, mais quand ils doutent que leur voyage doive réussir; et lui offrant ce petun qu'ils jettent dans l'eau contre la roche même, ils lui disent tien prend courage et fai que nous ayons bon voyage, avec quelques autres paroles que je n'entends point, et le Truchement Brulé duquel nous avons parlé au chapitre precedant nous dit (à la confusion) d'anoir une fois fait pareille offrande avec eux (de quoy nous le tancâmes fort) et que son voyage lui fut plus profitable qu'aucuns autres qu'il ait jamais faict en tous ces pais-là. — p. 456.

[Translation.]

They showed me several rocks on the road to Quebec, over which they believe some spirit presides, and among others they showed me one at about 150 leagues from there, which had a deep cavern very difficult of access. They wished to persuade me into believing absolutely with them that this rock had been formerly a mortal man like us, and that raising his arms and hands on high he had been transformed into this stone and become in the course of time so powerful a rock, which they hold in veneration and offer to it tobacco in passing before it with their canoes, not every time, but when they are doubtful of their voyage being successful; and when offering this tobacco which they throw into the water against the rock itself, they say to it: Hear! Take courage and give us a good voyage, with some other words which I do not understand, and the Interpreter Brulé, of whom we spoke in the preceding chapter, told us (to our confusion) that he once made a similar offering with them (for which we rebuked him severely) and that his voyage was more profitable to him than any others which he had ever made in all these regions.

[e]

Le Truchement Brulé avec quelques Sauvages nous ont assuré qu'au delà de la mer douce, il y a un autre grandissime lac, qui se discharge dans icelle par une cheute d'eau que l'on a surnommé le Saut de Gaston, ayant près de deux lieues de large, lequel lac avec la mer douce contiennent environ trente journées de canots selon le rapport des Sauvages et du truchement quatre cent lieues de longueur. — p. 589.

[Translation.]

The Interpreter Brulé with some Savages assured us that beyond the fresh sea there is another very large lake, which empties into this one by a waterfall named the Saut de Gaston, being nearly two leagues wide, which lake with the fresh sea contains about thirty days' journey by canoe according to the statement of the Savages, and of the interpreter four hundred leagues in length.

[f]

Premierement il y a quantité de pelletteries de diverses especes d'animaux terrestres & amphibies, comme vous avez pû remarquer dans le chapitre qui traite des animaux terrestres & aquatiques. Il y a des mines de cuivre desquelles on pourroit tirer du profit, s'il y avoit du monde & des ouvriers qui a voulessent travailler fidèlement, ce qui se pourroit faire, si on y avoit establi des Collonies: car environ 80. ou 100. lieues des Hurons, il y a une mine de cuyure rouge, de laquelle le Truchement Brulé me monstra un lingot au retour d'un voyage qu'il fit à la nation voisine avec un nommé Grenolle. — p. 716.

[Translation.]

In the first place there are a quantity of furs of different species of terrestrial and amphibious animals, as you have been able to observe in the chapter which treats of the terrestrial and aquatic animals. There are copper mines from which much profit might be drawn if there were people and workmen who would be willing to work faithfully, which could be done if colonies were established there: for about 80 or 100 leagues from the Hurons there is a mine of red copper from which the Interpreter Brulé showed me an ingot, on his return from a journey which he made to the neighboring people, with a man named Grenolle.

[g]

De là nous allâmes cabaner à la petite nation que nos Hurons appellent Queunontateronons.— Le Truchement Brulé, qui s'étant là venu cabaner avec nous, traicta un chien duquel nous fîmes festin le lendemain matin en compagnie de quelques François; puis nous partîmes encore.—p. 751.

[Translation.]

From there we went to live in huts among the little nation which our Hurons call Queunontateronons. The Interpreter Brulé, who being there, came to live in our hut with us, obtained a dog on which we made a feast on the following morning in company with several Frenchmen; then we set out again.

[h]

Nous avions esté fort mal couchés la nuit passée (à Saut S. Louis) mais nous ne fîmes pas mieux la suivante, car il nous la fallut passer à deux lieues du Cap de Victoire, sous un arbre bien peu de couverts des playes, qui durèrent jusques au dit Cap où desja estoit arrivé depuis deux jours le Truchement Brulé, avec deux ou trois canots Hurons, duquel j'appris la déffense que les Montaignais et Algoumequins leur avoient faites de passer outre, voulant à toute force qu'ils attendissent là avec eux les barques de la traicte, et qu'ayant pensé leur resister ils s'estoient mis en hazard d'estre tous assommés, particulièrement luy Truchement Brulé qui en avoit esté pour son sac à petun et craignoit encore un autre plus mauvais party, s'y on n'y apportoit quelque remède.

Je trouvai ce procédé fort mauvais et en fis quelques reproches à ces mutins, qui me dirent pour excuse que si personne ne descendait, les barques seraient contraintes de les venir trouver, sans avoir la peine de trainer leurs femmes et leurs enfants jusques à Kebec, où il n'y avoit de quoy disner pour eux. Je leur dis que j'y avais nécessairement affaire et que je desirais y descendre que pour eux qu'ils en fissent comme ils voudroient. Cette resolution ne les contenta pas beaucoup, neantmoins ils ne voulurent pas me violenter comme ils avoient fait le Truchement, mais ils trouverent une autre invention plus favorable pour intimider nos Hurons et tirer d'eux quelque petit present.

Ils firent donc semer un faux bruit qu'ils venoient de recevoir vingt colliers de porcelaine des Ignierhonons (ennemis mortels des Hurons) à la charge de les envoyer advertir à l'instant de l'arrivée desdits Hurons, pour les venir tous mettre à mort et qu'en bref ils seroient icy.

Nos gens vainement espouvantés de cette mauvaise nouvelle tindrent conseil là-dessus, un peu à l'écart dans le bois où je fus appelé avec le Truchement, qui étoit d'aussi légère croyance qu'eux et cotisèrent tous, qui de rets, qui de petun, farine et autres choses, qu'ils donnerent aux capitaines des Montagnais et Algonmequins pour estre protegez contre leurs ennemis. . . .

Pour suivre le dessein que j'avais de partir du Cap de Victoire pour Kebec, nonobstant la contradiction de nos Algonmequins et Montagnais, je fis jeter notre canot en l'eau dès le lendemain de grand matin, que tout le monde dormoit encore et n'esveillay que le Truchement pour me suivre, . . . p. 752.

[Translation.]

We had had a very bad sleeping place the past night (at Saut S. Louis) but we were not better off the following, for we had to pass it within two leagues of Cape Victory, under a tree very little sheltered from the rains which lasted up to the said Cape, where already the Interpreter Brulé had arrived two days before with two or three Huron canoes, from whom I learned that the Montagnais and Algonmequins had forbidden them to pass beyond, desiring at all costs that they would await there with them the boats for the journey, and that having thought of resisting them they had put themselves in danger of all being killed, particularly the Interpreter Brulé who had been in danger on account of his bag of tobacco, and who feared a still worse condition, if some remedy were not applied.

I found this proceeding very bad, and made some reproaches to these mutineers, who said to me in excuse that if no one descended, the boats would be forced to come to find them, without their having the trouble of dragging their wives and children to Québec where there was nothing for them to eat. I told them that I had business there and desired to descend, and that for them they could do as they wished. This resolution did not much content them, nevertheless they did not wish to do violence to me as they had done to the Interpreter, but they found another contrivance more favorable for intimidating our Hurons and getting from them some little gift.

They caused a false report to be spread that they had just received twenty porcelain necklaces from the Ignierhomons, (mortal enemies of the Hurons), on condition that they would send to inform them immediately of the arrival of the said Hurons, that they might come to put them all to death, and that in short they would be here.

Our people, uselessly terrified by this bad news, held council

thereupon a little apart in the woods, where I was called with the Interpreter, who was as ready of belief as they, and they assessed all, nets, tobacco, flour and other things, which they gave to the captains of the Montagnais and Algonmequins to be protected against their enemies. . . .

In order to follow out the plan which I had of departing from Cape Victory for Quebec, notwithstanding the opposition of our Algonmequins and Montagnais, I had our canoe thrown down into the water very early the next day while everybody was still asleep, and awakened only the Interpreter to follow me. . . .