

Five Fur Traders

OF THE NORTHWEST

Being the Narrative of PETER POND
and the Diaries of JOHN MACDONELL, ARCHIBALD N. McLEOD,
HUGH FARIES, and THOMAS CONNOR

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The Diary of John Macdonell

Introductory Note

Of the author of this diary, which represents a future Nor'wester at the beginning of a long and interesting career, little was known until recently, when his papers came into the possession of that prolific historian of Catholic Canada, the Reverend A. G. Morice.¹ According to these papers, writes Father Morice, John Macdonell was born in Scotland on November 30, 1768, the son of John Macdonell, who migrated to New York in 1773 and thence to Canada. Thus John, Jr., was twenty-five years old when he started West. The comments of the diary reveal that this was the young man's first trading trip.

The portion of the diary here printed is owned by McGill University. It carries the narrative only to Macdonell's arrival at his post on the upper waters of the Assiniboine River, but another manuscript, also in the possession of McGill University, continues the story through June 6, 1795. Both manuscripts are copies, but the later one seems to be in the author's autograph; presumably it was made in response to Roderic Mackenzie's circular letter sent to the fur traders in the spring of 1806.² It has been published in abridged form in Louis R. Masson's *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*.³ The portion of the diary printed below is here published for the first time.

¹ See Morice's article "The Macdonell Family in Canada" in the *Canadian Historical Review* for September and December, 1929.

² See Louis R. Masson, *Les bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Quebec, 1889), 1:51. A copy of Roderic Mackenzie's circular letter to several wintering partners and clerks of the Northwest Company, dated April 21, 1806, is in the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society. See page 199n. for a further explanation of this letter.

³ Vol. 1, pp. 266-295.

In 1797, according to Morice, Macdonell became a partner of the Northwest Company. For at least eight years after his arrival in the West his post remained in the general locality of his first station. By 1804 he was in the Athabasca country. In 1807 he was back on the River Qu'appelle. In 1809 he appears to have been stationed at Isle à la Crosse, and in 1812 at Lesser Slave Lake. Thus he saw, first and last, a large part of the West. His wife *à la façon du pays* was Magdeleine Poitras, a half-breed daughter of a trader on the Qu'appelle River, doubtless the same André Poitras who in 1805 was listed in the records of the company as a clerk on the Upper Red River.

Macdonell must have left the Indian country temporarily in 1812, for in October of that year he was made a captain in the corps of Canadian voyageurs which was the Northwest Company's rather spectacular response to Canada's enlistment call. He saw active service and was taken captive at the Battle of St. Regis, losing a sword with silver hilt, a spy glass, and other articles to the enemy. In 1814 he must have been living at the Long Sault on the Ottawa River, for there he entertained the Astorians of Franchère's party on their return trip from the Pacific.⁴ One of their number represented him as being at that time "a cheerful, healthy, and contented old man," despite his nickname of "the Priest," by which his voyageurs distinguished him from the many other Macdonells and MacDonalds in the fur country. There at Point Fortune, near Vaudreuil and close to the scene of the famous Dollard massacre, Macdonell established himself in his "Poplar Villa," where he kept a store and directed a line of boats that plied between Point Fortune and Montreal. He also

⁴He stated on the witness stand that he was in the interior in 1814. Probably he came out in that year. See *Report of the Proceedings Connected with the Disputes between the Earl of Selkirk and the Northwest Company at the Assizes Held at York, in Upper Canada, October, 1818* (London, 1819), p. 155.

served as judge of the district of Ottawa. He seems to have preserved his former reputation of piety, for he raised a fine calvary in front of his house, where his neighbors assembled for prayer. On April 24, 1853, he was legally married to Magdeleine.

John "the Priest" acted also as the banker of the family, especially while in the West, and he is known to have given lavishly to churches and schools. In later years he lived in more straitened circumstances and was embittered by a burden of debt that rested heavily upon him. In spite of all he seems to have been able to care for his brother Miles, who is well known for the prominent part he took in the affairs of the Red River Valley, and to provide for his own eight children. A tombstone in the cemetery of St. André (d'Argenteuil) tells us that the old trader died at Point Fortune on April 17, 1850. His wife, Magdeleine, survived him for twenty years. She died in 1870 at the age of eighty-seven.

Macdonell's diary has been preserved only in the form of an early, perhaps nearly contemporary, copy. Corrections seem to indicate that the author himself read it and emended it. Later an editor, probably Louis R. Masson, made still further corrections. Hence it is not always possible to be absolutely sure of the original form. In general, the copyist's text has been followed. Only that portion of the manuscript which relates to his trip to the interior is presented in this volume. Excerpts from the remainder have already been printed; moreover, his life in the Saskatchewan country does not have so direct a bearing on the development of the Minnesota area as does the journey to the interior, especially the trip along the canoe route from Grand Portage to the Lake of the Woods. Of particular value are the references to the manner of life and the customs of the voyageurs. Macdonell evidently was much interested in this class of men, in whose company it was to be his fate to spend nearly twenty of the best years of his life.

Here, as in the previous diary, an occasional period has been inserted where two sentences have been run together without punctuation by the diarist. Such lapses are obviously inadvertent and out of keeping with Macdonell's customary style, and hence it has seemed justifiable to make the correction. Similarly, an occasional misspelling of a word habitually spelled right has been corrected. Our misspellings have, of course, been allowed to stand. Words struck out by the diarist have been included within brackets with a *d.* ("deleted") before them.

G. L. N.

The Diary

1793. May 10th. Signed my Engagement with the North-West Company for five years to winter in the Indian Country as a clerk. The terms are £100 at the expiration, and found in necessaries.¹

May 25th Saturday. Embarked at Lachine on board of a Birch Bark canoe, the first that I remember to have been in—my foreman's name is Joseph La Tourelle, and my steer's-man Pierre Valois, both of the parish of Berthier.²

¹The discovery of the engagement to which Macdonell refers has furnished proof of his identity. Dr. Wayne E. Stevens has found the document in the notarial records in the archives of the district of Montreal. A transcript is now in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. As a clerk in the service of the Northwest Company, Macdonell held a position next in rank below the partners in the trade. Such clerks were apprenticed for a period of five or seven years at a fixed wage, with the understanding that at the end of this term of service they would be eligible for promotion to the rank of partner. They then assumed greater responsibilities in the administration of the fur posts and were entitled to a share in the business of the company. For an account describing the various ranks of *engagés* in the service see Gordon C. Davidson, *The North West Company* (University of California Publications in History, Vol. 7, Berkeley, 1918), pp. 226-231. For an enumeration of the necessaries that composed a clerk's personal outfit see Captain Thomas G. Anderson, "Personal Narrative," in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 9:139.

²Brigades of canoes en route to the interior embarked from a point above the rapids at Lachine and usually followed the route over the Ottawa or Grand River, as Macdonell traces it in his journal. Ascending to the forks at what is now Mattawa, the canoes left the Ottawa and proceeded up the Mattawa River and by a series of portages reached Lake Nipissing. They then descended the French River to Lake Huron and skirted the shore to Sault Sainte Marie. Here they portaged over to Lake Superior, on the northern shore of which was situated Grand Portage, the rendezvous of the fur traders. The Montreal canoes used over this route were about thirty-six feet long and six feet wide at the middle. They carried a load of some three or four tons and were paddled by eight or nine voyageurs. The foreman and the steersman were required to be particularly skillful and were paid double the wages

This brigade of Berthier men, was to be guided by Jos. Faignan, a faithful servant and favorite of Jos. Frobisher Esquire, for many years in the North west.³ But M^r Frobisher wishing to keep Faignan for the last or June Brigade, say Canoes, gave the Brigade in charge to François Huneau of Isle Perreault, nick named by the men *Le mangeur de Bled*, who directed the brigade to go and camp at Isle Perreault that he might pass another [day] in the bosom of his family and equip himself for the voyage.⁴ A Brigade of Canoes in the Grand River is generally four. The canoes when fully loaded carry about three Tuns.

May 27th Monday. At nine A. M. Crossed over to S^t Anns where we found the Priest saying mass for one Lalonde, who had been drowned, by the mens account, one hundred and ten leagues above this place; I. E. above the Roche capitaine.⁵

of the middlemen. See Davidson, *North West Company*, pp. 216-219, for a short description of canoes used in the trade. For a descriptive account of the Canadian voyageur see Grace Lee Nute, *The Voyageur* (New York, 1931). Berthier is situated on the St. Lawrence about fifty miles below Montreal.

³ Joseph Frobisher was a well-known trader and explorer of the Canadian Northwest during the last three decades of the eighteenth century. He built a fort on the Red River and also on the Churchill River, to which he penetrated in 1774. In 1775 he accompanied Alexander Henry on a trip up the Saskatchewan. He was later a partner of the Northwest Company and maintained an active interest in the fur trade until his retirement in 1798. Lawrence J. Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopaedia of Canadian History* (Makers of Canada Series, Vol. 12, New York, 1926), p. 224.

⁴ The nickname "*Le mangeur de bled*" (wheat-eater) is an alteration of the term *mangeur de lard*, which was applied with some derision by the Northmen to the voyageurs who paddled between Montreal and Grand Portage without pushing farther into the wilderness. The English translation of the term is "pork-eater." The Montreal voyageurs did not live on a diet of hulled corn and tallow, as did the Northmen, but included pork in their rations, a luxury seldom enjoyed in the north country. Huneau was apparently still more extravagant, requiring even breadstuffs in his diet. Isle Perreault is the Ile Perrôt of today.

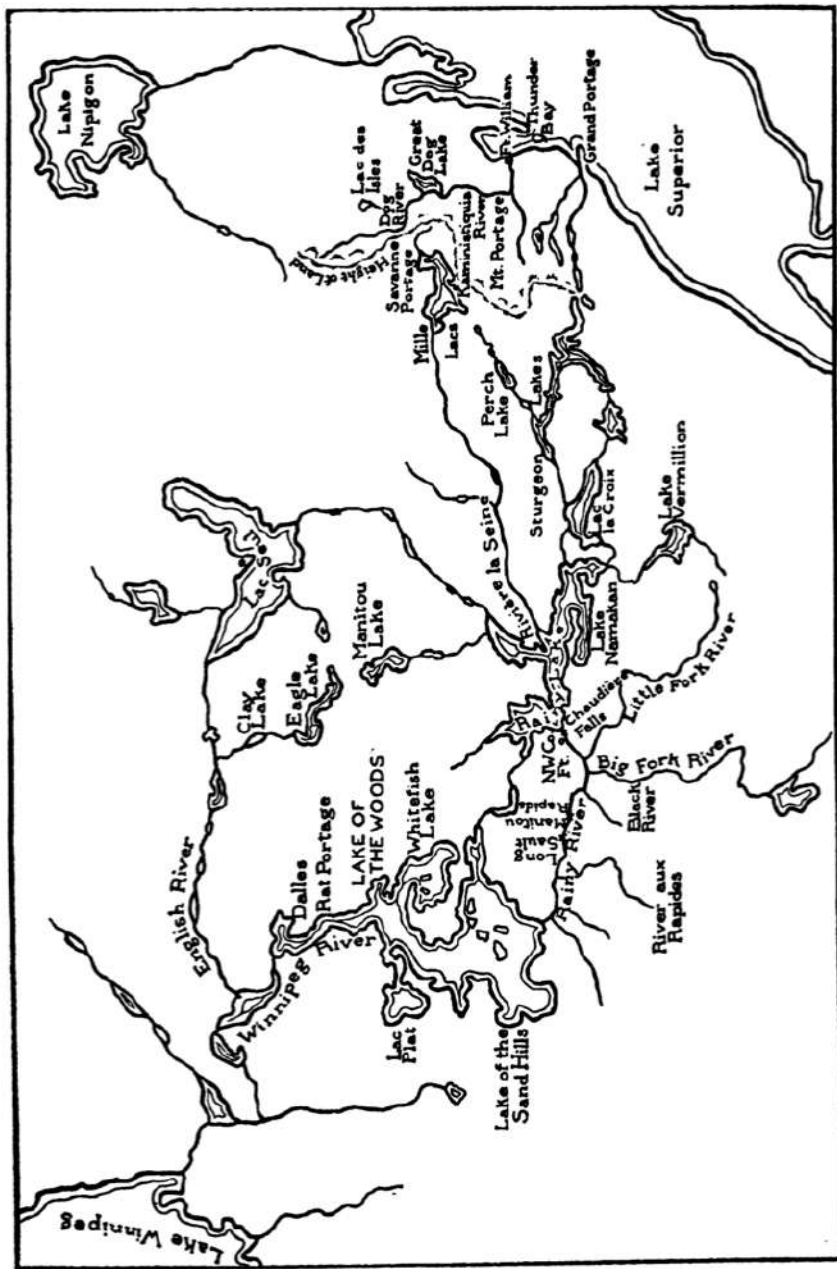
⁵ The Church of Ste. Anne was located on the western extremity of the Island of Montreal. It was the custom of the voyageurs to stop there before embarking on an expedition inland. See the reference in Pond's narrative, page 29, above. Roche Capitaine was the name given to a series of rapids in the Ottawa River below the forks at Mattawa. The portage around the

Tho drowned near twelve months ago his remains were only brought down by his brothers this spring on their return from the upper country in a coffin made for the purpose in order to give him Christian Sepulture, according to the Catholic Rites. At the church of S^t Anns the crews of the Canoes collected a voluntary donation amongst themselves to which I contributed my mite, in order to have prayers said for the prosperity of the voyage and a safe return to those engaged in it, to thier friends and families; and here we left two of the canoes to wait for M^r A. N. M^eLeod, who is to be my fellow traveller, and who returned to Montreal from La-Chine to take a final adieu of his fair acquaintances there.⁶ The Guide & I with a Mons^r *Le Moine* proceeded to *pointe au gravois* opposite the Indian village of *Lake of two-Mountains* where we put up for the night.⁷ Next morning the guide & I went across to the Indian

rapids went by the same name. Macdonell later mentions the passing of Lalonde's grave. See below, page 79.

⁶ Archibald Norman McLeod entered the service of the Northwest Company some time before 1790 and remained an important figure in the fur trade until his retirement in 1821. His journal covering the winter of 1800-01, which he spent at Fort Alexandria, appears below, pages 125-185. He must not be confused with Alexander N. McLeod, another trader active at about the same time. Macdonell met the latter at Grand Portage, returning to Montreal to regain his health. See below, page 95; also Elliott Coues, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814* (New York, 1897), 1:277n. The latter work will be cited hereafter as Coues, *New Light*.

⁷ Le Moine was probably the Lemoine whom David Thompson found in charge of the Fond du Lac House, near the mouth of the St. Louis River, when he reached that post in May, 1798. See Davidson, *North West Company*, p. 94. The Lake of the Two Mountains is still so called. It is formed by a broadening of the Ottawa River for a distance of several miles above its confluence with the St. Lawrence. The Indian village remained for many years. Nicholas Garry mentions it as the Indian missionary village of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, and Bigsby also makes reference to it. See "The Diary of Nicholas Garry, Deputy-Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1822-1835," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 1900, Section 2 (Second Series, Vol. 6), p. 94, and John J. Bigsby, *The Shoe and Canoe, or, Pictures of Travel in the Canadas* (London, 1850), 1:135.



Village for a supply of bark, gum, and wattap, to mend our canoes in case of need, for all of which I gave a receipt.⁸

M^r A. N. M^cLoed [*sic*] and the two canoes that waited for him came up and we slept at the foot of *petites Ecors*, Carrillon Rapids, opposite to *Pointe Fortune*.⁹

May 29th. Slept at the *chute a Blondeau*.

30th. Walked up the *Long-sault* which the men call three leagues long. In it they made three portages and we slept two nights at the head of the third of these portages where I saw the first cross or grave mark. I am told it is that of a young Christian Indian who was drowned in attempting to run the Rapid in his canoe.¹⁰

The reason of our staying two nights at this place was to wait the arrival of our associate brigade conducted by an old guide named Denis who we find broke one of his Canoes and

⁸ The gum used in repairing canoes was a resinous substance made by boiling the pitch from pine trees. It was pressed along the seams, and when it hardened it made them water-tight. Wattap was used to sew the pieces of bark together. This fiber was furnished by small roots of the spruce or hemlock tree.

⁹ *Petites Ecors* was apparently a place where the river was confined between steep banks. It is mentioned by Belcourt as marking the boundary of Upper Canada. Georges A. Belcourt, *Mon itinéraire du Lac des Deux-Montagnes à la Rivière-Rouge* (Bulletin de la Société Historique de Saint-Boniface, Vol. 4, Montreal, 1913), p. 8. Carrillon, Point Fortune, and Chute à Blondeau are all modern towns that still bear the names used more than a century ago to indicate landmarks along the river. Macdonell made Point Fortune his home in later years.

¹⁰ Long Sault Rapids are of historic interest chiefly because they mark the spot where in 1660 Adam Dollard des Ormeaux and his little band of followers gave their lives in resisting an attack by the Iroquois Indians. The Iroquois were planning the destruction of Montreal, but upon encountering such heroic resistance, they abandoned the project. See Ralph Flenley, trans. and ed., *History of Montreal, 1640-1672, from the French of Dollier de Casson* (Toronto, 1928), pp. 253-265.

It was a custom among the voyageurs to erect a cross to mark the grave of any of their number who met his death along the trail. When passing such crosses the voyageurs always pulled off their hats, made the sign of the cross, and repeated a short prayer. Daniel W. Harmon, *Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America* (Trail Makers of Canada Series, Toronto, 1911), pp. 6, 9.

is gone back to the village of the Lake of the two mountains, either to get another or materials to repair the broken one. The guides orders being to wait for the associate Brigade, we are likely to lose much time on the road.¹¹

June 1st. We left our campment at the head of the *long sault* at 3 P. M. A League farther we came opposite to a very beautiful mountain on the north shore of the Ottawa; The men tell me it is part of a Ridge of mountains that extends along from Temiscamagne to Tadousac perhaps to the *Labrador Coast*.¹² At [word missing] the guides who shoot the Canoes down the long sault and *Carrillon Rapids* have their huts erected. The fare to a guide is five Dollars. From the long Sault we have twenty leagues of still water to navigate. The Ottawa in this distance runs a N. E. [?] to an E. N. E. Course. After ascending fourteen leagues of smooth water we came to La parents settlement at the barrier where our guide attempted in vain to hire a man in lieu of one who had turned back from the long sault on account of a rupture with which he was afflicted.¹³ The land on the south side begins to rise to some heighth. On the north the Ridge of Mountains which came to view at the head of the Long Sault is still to be seen. The water of this river is of a browner cast than that of the S^t Lawrence and much warmer at this time of the year.

¹¹ One or more guides were usually attached to each brigade of canoes. Their task was to point out the best course through the various streams and lakes, and to have general charge of the canoes and the property on board. Harmon, *Journal*, p. 2.

¹² David Thompson found that the "league" of the canoeemen averaged about two miles in length. See David Thompson, *Narrative of Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812* (edited by J. B. Tyrrell, Publications of the Champlain Society, Vol. 12, Toronto, 1916), p. 172. Lake Temiscaming is a long body of water formed by the broadening of the Ottawa River. The foot of the lake is about fifty miles north of the forks at Mattawa. Important fur posts were located in the vicinity. Tadoussac is situated on the left bank of the St. Lawrence directly across the mouth of the Saguenay River from Baie Ste. Catherine.

¹³ The settlement was located a few miles below the present city of Ottawa. Belcourt speaks of a small settlement which was doubtless the same one. Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 10.

Monday June 3rd. Left our campment for the first time before sun-rise. After paddling about a league & a half, the land on the South shore began to be rocky and steep from the edge of the water. Passed opposite the mouth of the Rideau River, the water of which falls perpendicular from the top of a Rock fourteen to sixteen feet high into the Ottawa.¹⁴ The Rideau may be about twenty five yards wide. About fifty paces from this is a second channel seperated by an Island that extends to the brinck of the fall. Both these channels are of an equal size and in the form of crescents with the upper channel of the round side turned towards the stream and the concave to the Ottawa, but the upper channel of the rideau is always dry at low water. When the water is high in the Rideau it is dangerous for canoes to pass near the mouths and on that account they pass on the opposite side of the ottawa. A mile farther on we came to a large fall called le grand des Chaudieres.¹⁵ The water being high we turned to our right into a long narrow cave surrounded with steep Rocks called *La Cave* which we ascended upwards of 300 Yards to its North Western extremity and there unloaded our canoes; the shore being too steep to haul up the canoes they were brought round light to the ordinary portage at low water and from there carried to the head of the falls. M^r M^oLeod and I went to fish, and take a view of the Rapids, but to our great surprise caught nothing. However our pains were amply paid by the view; this fall I have since found to be the most curious and picturesque in all the *grand River*. On the North shore the fall is about ten feet high but on the south side it comes down a

¹⁴ The present city of Ottawa is situated on the Rideau or Curtain River a short distance above its junction with the Ottawa. At the time Macdonell wrote there was no settlement either on the Rideau River or on the north bank of the Ottawa where in 1800 Philemon Wright laid the foundations of the modern city of Hull. For the story of this region in early times see Alexander H. D. Ross, *Ottawa Past and Present* (Ottawa, 1927).

¹⁵ Garry is eloquent in his description of these falls, which in English would be called Kettle Falls. "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, p. 95. It was at this spot that Wright built his settlement.

steep Rush or Race-way between an Island and the shore and since the country is settled tis here they float down the timber. There are several small rockay Islands looking over the brink of the fall. The rock which occasions it has several curious crevices in it through which the water pours with a wild appearance.

There are ten Portages following each other of this name in the space of about five miles and some discharges between them. At the uppermost or *portages des Chiens* we slept.¹⁶ The mosquitoes intolerable.

The Ottawa at this place seems little inferior to the St Lawrence at Cornwall in size. Above the *portage des Chiens* we entered the *Lac des Chaudières* a piece of dead water called ten Leagues from W. to E. and not above one in width. After ascending the Lake about three leagues, we got sight of the Ridge of Mountains to the N. which we had not seen since we reached the Rideau yesterday, owing to our rout laying close under an extensive point along the North Shore of the river. Eight miles farther we came to *pointe aux Irroquois* or *Pointe a la bataille*, so called from a party of that nation skirmishing with the Traders here in former times to way-lay them. Came to the Chats.¹⁷ Just below this portage is a pretty farm which was formerly a place of some trade.

Leaving the Chats we took but half the cargoe on board for the space of a league during which we voyaged among a number of small Islands divided from one another by various

¹⁶ This place is not Portage des Chiens or Dog Portage, as the author has it, but rather Portage des Chênes or Portage of the Oaks to which Garry makes reference. Garry, "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, p. 97.

¹⁷ Garry found the Falls of the Portage du Chat even more romantic than the Chaudière: "The Chaudière is one Fall, but here the whole Body of the River being fully two miles in Breadth runs over rocky Islands in Pinnacles and covered with Wood, and forms an innumerable number of falls (you see at once fifteen), the Water appearing angry with the Obstacles which oppose its Progress; a Battle between Rock and Water over a mile of Rocks ragged and uneven. The Portage is here very difficult and dangerous but only 270 Paces." Garry, "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, p. 97.

rapidous channels where we had to use the lines to haul up the canoes. The canoe line is not a stout cable such as used by Boats but consists of fine Hambro lines loosely twisted upon one another and is about 60 Yards long.¹⁸ After Gumming which is generally done before embarking on a Lake after passing a portage or *rapid* we entered the *Lac des Chats* which is [*d. after*] seven Leagues long and near one in breadth. At the western extremity of it we found ourselves amongst a cluster of Islands separated by Channels of different sizes and strong currants frequent; There is great plenty of Pine growing here on each side of us on the Ridges. A white rock of coarse grain is now mixed with the black one we had before. Passed the night at the Fort Ducharge.¹⁹

June 6th. Started from *Ducharge du Fort*. Made the portage; In these channels the water is sometimes swift and narrow and the course winds for we have gone sometimes North and at others due South. It would be difficult to find the rout at all without an experienced guide for setting aside the intricacy of these turns and windings the guide must have a competent judgement to choose the proper channel for the state of the water is [word illegible] in the Ottawa and it is known to rise and fall to great extremes in the Ottawa. Lost the half of this day by rain which must be much wanted in the inhabited parts of the provinces though a perfect nuisance to us voyageurs. Next morning we steered a N. E. Course to the portage called *la Montagne* where we carried Goods & Canoe up a steep hill. After embarking proceeded E. & North. Made *D'Argy* and reached the Grand Callumet. This portage, the

¹⁸ Hambro lines were, according to Landmann, part of the standard equipment of every canoe, but neither he nor Macdonell gives any description of them. Landmann is quoted in Davidson, *North West Company*, p. 216.

¹⁹ Garry notes that *Lac des Chats* was so named because of the number of raccoons that formerly filled the adjacent woods. See his "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, p. 97. Macdonell confuses Fort Ducharge with *Décharge Dufort*, which, according to Belcourt, was named after a man called Dufort, killed there in an attempt to run the rapids. Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 14. The present name of the place is Portage du Fort.

longest in the Ottawa is $\frac{1}{2}$ a League across. Upwards of three hundred yards from where we unloaded is a pretty steep ascent.²⁰ This Portage took more than twenty four hours of our time, before we cleared it, what with Gumming and mending our canoes. This is the first place I saw Fred Signorat who was since so esteemed a servant of the North West Company; He invited my fellow travellers and self to a supper of the best in his possession.²¹ The voyageurs called the Grand Callumet sixty Leagues from Montreal and I think it much about opposite to *Kingston* or *Lake Ontario*. There is a quarry of Marble on the opposite side of the River to where we unloaded our canoes at the foot of the Grand Callumet Rapid & I presume the portage takes its name from the Indians making use of this stone to make their pipes or calumets of it.

8th June. [*d.* Started from the Du] We embarked on the Smooth water above the Grand Callumet with a fair wind which blew straight up the river; After proceeding a few leagues the shore on both sides of the River began to get high and rocky particularly that on the left hand which was frequently one hundred feet perpendicular from the surface of

²⁰ The Portage d'Argy is called by Belcourt the Portage des Dargis. It was supposed to have taken its name from two brothers who perished in an effort to run the rapids. See Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 14. Associated with the Grand Calumet is the legend of Cadieux, which takes various forms as different narrators tell it. Cadieux fell into the hands of the Indians and met his death at the Calumet Portage. His friends buried him there, and he became a legendary figure to whom was attributed the composition of "Petit Rocher," one of the favorite songs of the voyageurs. For the story and the song see Nute, *Voyageur*, p. 147; Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 14; and Garry, "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, p. 99. Alexander Henry the elder explains that the portage was named for the "pierre à calumet," a kind of limestone found there, a material easily worked from which the Indians shaped their pipes. Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures in the Years 1760-1776* (edited by Milo M. Quaife, Chicago, 1921), p. 25 and note.

²¹ Belcourt found at this place a Northwester called Severight, who was by that time a well-known trader. See his *Itinéraire*, p. 15. Some years later Franchère wrote of one Sicought stationed at Fort Coulonge. See Otto Fowle, *Sault Sainte Marie and Its Great Waterway* (New York, 1925), p. 387. Fowle probably misread Franchère's writing.

the water, with which it formed a right-angle. In one place in particular I think it was so narrow that a stone might be cast by a good thrower from one shore to the other. This is called *les Rochers du Grand Callumet*, and here I saw for the first time, *tripe de Roche*, (rock weed) — which the men tell me is the last resource men have to subsist upon in the inhospitable regions of the dreary North, and has been known to keep men alive for months, boiled in water, after having the sand well washed off it. Six leagues [above] the Grand Callumet we came to the grand marais, on the North Shore of the River, for it has changed its course back to what it was at the entrance of the Chenaux 5 Leagues below the Grand Calumet.²² Opposite to this marais on the south shore there is a fine sand bank 30 to 40 feet high near a mile in length which bounds prettily around this point of the Grand Marais in the form of a Crescent having the same gradual *penchant* from one end to the other, from its summit all the way to the waters edge. It is shaded on top by fine groves of Norway Pine whose stalks grow up fifty feet frequently without branches. At intervals through the pines we could see like a large clearing apparently made by fire and which the Canadians would call a Grand-Brulé. This brulé came to the water's edge about two miles below the bank above mentioned.²³

Sunday 9th June. Left our campment at the head of the Grand marais where a branch of the *Ottawa* issues to the southward and joins the River some where near the entrance of *Lac des Chats* — making thus an Island of the *Grand Calumet* Portage. This Small channel it is said is only passable for small canoes. A league beyond the *Grand marais* we got sight of *Fort Coulonges*, a sorry hut, situated near the foot of the

²² The French word *marais* means swamp or marsh. The phrase *grand marais* was descriptive of many places along the canoe routes of the Canadian Northwest and in early times was not used as a specific place name.

²³ The literal translation of *brulé* is "burnt." The term was commonly applied to the clearings that appeared when areas of forest were laid waste by fire.

mountains; Entered *Lac Coulonges*; these lakes are in this River what knots would be on a cord; two or three times the breadth of the River and of various lengths.²⁴ *Lac Coulonges* is about two leagues long and is near two miles broad. At the upper end of it is another *brulé* with which such another sand bank as that opposite to the grand marais but on a smaller scale. The *Allumets* are the next rapids two *Decharges* and a Portage. The portage is fifteen to twenty paces, over a pretty steep ascent. This portage would be worth a good deal of money in a flourishing settlement being the best mill seat I ever saw.²⁵ The water at the lower end of the portage is from ten to fifteen feet lower than that above it, so that a canal might be made through the rock to act on machinery. After emptying our canoes of their cargoes they were hauled round the point of which this portage is the Isthmus. A mile farther we came to the *Lac des Allumets* about four miles wide and nine long from north to south. It is shallow and abounding in shoals, and rocky lands; around it, especially on the East, are very fine Groves of pine. We are now directly towards the chain of Northern mountains as if we meant to cut through them. Turned to the north West and entered the *Rivière creuse* still a part of the *Ottawa* under another name, which is

²⁴ The town of Fort Coulonge preserves the name of this trading post, which was established by the Northwest Company in 1784 and named after a French officer who spent the winter in the vicinity in 1694. Commission de Géographie de Québec, *Nomenclature des noms géographiques de la province de Québec* (Premier Rapport, Québec, 1916), p. 28. See also page 368 of *Along Quebec Highways, Tourist Guide*, published in 1930 by the Quebec Department of Highways and Mines.

²⁵ The Allumettes Portage, called by Belcourt the "Portage de la Culbute des Allumettes," was short but very steep, and all the skill and strength of the voyageurs were called into play in lifting the heavy canoe to the summit. Garry reports that bedding was placed in the declivities of the rock, which served as steps upon which one end of the canoe could be rested. On the return trip down the portage the voyageurs, finding it inconvenient to load the pieces of baggage on their backs in the usual manner, passed them from hand to hand or tumbled them down the cliff (*leur font faire la culbute*). Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 15; Garry, "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, p. 99.

twelve leagues long to the Portages called *Les Joachims* and so straight withall that you can see as far as the Lake a mile broad extends, the chain of mountains running parallel close along side of us on the right hand.²⁶ The land on the left is covered with p[1]enty of excellent Pine.

Tuesday 11th June. We made the two *Joachims* which together, are reckoned equal to the *Grand Callumet*. Camped at the settlement of the *River du moine*. My bowman had the misfortune of breaking his Canoe to-day and stowing in three of her ribs. This house at the *riviere du Moine*—is the last we shall see to Sault of S^t Marys.²⁷ The *Roche Capitaine* is the next portage we came to, a rough turbulent Rapid. A League above it I saw the grave of poor lalondes the Body had been taken out of, to be buried at S^t Anns as before mentioned.²⁸ Detained half a day on account of Titiche Lafrênières having broken the bow of his Canoe by running it against the Shore.

15th June. Left the *Grand River at Mattawin* in which we made eighteen portages and about as many discharges. It is said there was four days Voyage for a loaded canoe from this place to lake Temiscaming.²⁹

²⁶ The *Rivière Creuse* or Deep River was the name given to the Ottawa as it flowed through a narrow valley from the lower Joachim portage to the Lac des Allumettes. See Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 16, and Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, p. 27n. The Minnesota Historical Society has a photostatic reproduction of an old French map (Map B 4044 No. 15), the original of which is in the Paris Archives, library of the Service hydrographique de la Marine, which shows a Creuse River as a tributary of the Ottawa. Between the two Joachim portages was a small lake or basin scarcely fifty yards in width. When crossing this the voyageurs told one of their standing jokes about a canoe man who had been stopped there at one time because of a head wind. Garry, "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, p. 100.

²⁷ Alexander Henry mentions the post at the mouth of the *Rivière du Moine* as being in operation in 1760. *Travels and Adventures*, p. 27.

²⁸ See above, page 69.

²⁹ "Mattawin" is one of several ways in which the name of the settlement at the forks was spelled. "Mattawan" and "Mattaouan" were also used. "Mattawata" is now the accepted form. Eugène Rouillard, *Noms géographiques de la province de Québec* (Québec, 1906), p. 58.

Entered the little river which runs east at its entrance and is so narrow that a good gun would carry Shot from side to side, further on it is considerably wider. *Mattawin* means a fork in the *Algonquin* or Nipissing Tongue. A league up the little river which we now navigate made the *portage du plain Champs*, a considerable one where we passed the night.³⁰ Here the brigade was separated so that only two canoes travelled together, owing to the portages being frequent and only affording room for two canoes to load and unload at a time.

Saturday 16th June. We are now going in a deep glen of still water called 3 leagues long, very straight and from three to four hundred paces wide, between two ridges of Rocky Mountains.

Monday 18th. We passed a cave called by the men *Porte de l'enfer*; it is a cave in the face of the Rocky mountain on the north side of the River, thirty to forty paces from the water, the entrance to it appears to be from six to eight feet high and arched; they say this cave receives light from the top and is very spacious within; about a mile farther on we found the *piresseu Portage*, a pretty long one: the rapid that occasions it has a perpendicular fall of about ten feet; this is the fifth portage we made since entering the little River.³¹ At some of

³⁰ Macdonell's version of *Plain Champs* is not the same as that of Belcourt, who calls the place *Plain-Chant* (plain song) and traces the origin of the name to voyageurs who claimed to have heard spirits singing melodies of this sort. See Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 17. The difference may be accounted for by the fact that the pronunciation of *champ* and *chant* is almost identical in French. The Little River, by which the author says the party proceeded from Mattawa to the height of land, was the Mattawa, and was known to the elder Henry by that name. The latter goes on to mention a "little river by which we descended into the lake" (Nipissing), and it is possible that Macdonell confused the two. He gives no name to the "small rivulet" mentioned on page 82. Belcourt calls this short stream the Nipissing River. Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, p. 29; Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 19.

³¹ In mentioning *Porte de l'Enfer* (Hell Gate), and the *Paresseux Portage*, Macdonell reverses their order. Hell Gate, so called because of the gloom of the ravine and the restless agitation of the stream near the cave, was located several hundred yards above the *Paresseux Portage* instead of being below it as is stated. See Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 19; Bigsby, *Shoe and Canoe*,

the portages a tree would bridge the river across. Eight or nine leagues above the *piresseu* is *l'anse au Perches* where the setting poles are thrown away to the reserve of two per canoe which the Bowman and Steers-man keep. The ceremony of throwing away the poles our men performed with a loud huzza.³² The next impediment our navigation met with was the portage of *Talon* occasioned by a fall nearly forty feet high which is not perpendicular but has two cascades. The portage is long and difficult, at the west [?] end [?] of it we encamped and passed the night. About three leagues beyond this portage we left the Little River and made two portages called *Les Musiques*, one of them is horrid, nothing but ups and downs among broken and rugged rocks. After passing the last of the *musiques* we proceeded about a quarter of a mile in a ditch not much wider than the canoe, which nature seems to have made through the centre of a *cedar Swamp* for the convenience of the North west Trade; then we embarked on a small lake two Leagues long which brought us to the Portage *la Tortue* being the last. Came next to *Lac la Tortue* three leagues long and one in breadth. This lake is the [d. main] source of the Little River the whole of which from *Matawin* is computed by the men to be thirty leagues to the first portage of the *vases*. *Lac La Tortue* is much clearer water than the little River. Leaving this lake we have three portages running called the *vases*.³³ The men will have the first vase to be some perches longer than the *Grand Callumet* and is the height of land dividing the waters which fall into

1:161. See also a photostatic reproduction at the Minnesota Historical Society of Map B 4040 No. 13a in the Paris Archives, library of the Service hydrographique de la Marine.

³² The setting poles were thrown away at the height of land since they were not necessary on the journey downstream. Apparently paddles were adequate after passing the *Anse aux Perches* despite the fact that the actual divide was above *Lac la Tortue*.

³³ The propriety of the name *Portages des Vases*, or Muddy Portages, was attested to by Henry the elder, who noted the term with understanding in 1760, and by Bigsby, who passed that way more than half a century later. Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, p. 30; Bigsby, *Shoe and Canoe*, 1:164.

the *Ottawa* from those which fall into *Lake Huron*.⁸⁴ After passing *le grand des Vases* we found a small rivulet which brought us to Lake Nipising. It is curious to see the North West and Mackinac trade carried on through a small creek that a man can in many places jump over.⁸⁵ After following this brook for half a league we came to the second Portage of the *vases*, after which the brook is joined by another about as big, which made it sufficiently deep to float a loaded Canoe, until you came to the third or last vase. At the entrance of this little River into *Lake Nipising* or *prairie des vases* we encamped four nights without even shifting the place of our tent.⁸⁶

Monday 24th June. Left the *Prairie des vases* and crossed a large Bay of the *Lake Nipising*, which is called from 16 to 20 leagues Long but we only pass twelve of it from East to west and in that distance it does not appear to be more than from three to four leagues wide in the outmost extent from North to South. I have been informed it is so shallow that they spear fish in winter in the middle of it under the Ice not exceeding three to four fathoms: its water is of a Grayish muddy colour. About the center of this lake is point aux Croix on which is erected the crosses of eleven men who were swallowed up in it canoe, & Cargo, some years ago.⁸⁷ Three leagues beyond

⁸⁴ The *perche*, an old French unit of distance, was eighteen feet.

⁸⁵ The Northwest and Mackinac trade during this period was a very considerable one. The total value of exports of furs from Quebec reached an annual figure well in excess of two hundred thousand pounds sterling, and the business is stated by Innis to have brought to the Northwest Company an average annual return on the capital investment of seventy-two thousand pounds during the years 1790-95. See Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (New Haven, 1930), p. 260. What proportion of the trade went over the canoe route via Lake Nipissing and the Ottawa River it is impossible to determine accurately. Boats were being introduced, and the route by way of Niagara and the Great Lakes was used to some extent. The larger part of the trade, however, was dependent upon canoe transportation. See below, page 94.

⁸⁶ *Prairie des Vases* is mentioned by Belcourt as a point of land situated at the entrance of the river into Lake Nipissing. *Itinéraire*, p. 20.

⁸⁷ Roderic Mackenzie in his "Reminiscences" states that one of those who lost their lives was a man by the name of Smith and that the tragedy oc-

this point we met an Indian and two little girls in a small bark Canoe to whom we gave some biscuit in exchange for fish. Seven leagues from the *Prairie des vases* we entered among a number of Islands through which we have five leagues to navigate before reaching the *Chaudiere des français* and left the Lake to continue its course farther than our sight could extend to the West North West.⁸⁸

At the *chaudiere des Français* we carry from the Lake Nipising to a deep still water cove of the River *des Français*, which issues out of the Lake by a variety of channels to the North North West of the portage and are too rapidious to be navigable above if they are to be judged of by [the] nearest of them to the portage which is steeper than a mill race and not wider in places. After proceeding about two miles down the cove [where] we carried from *Lac Nipising* the current of the main body of the *Français* River coming from the N. N. E. took us broad side and carried us down merrily being the first current able to make an impression on the canoe that we have drifted with. At the *Chaudiere des Français* I saw the first Juniper berry growing but now they are to be met with all along the French River.

June 26th. Came down the following Rapids, *Les Pins*, *Rapide Croche*, *La Fausille*, *Le Parisien*, *petit parisien*. The day is a beautiful clear day and sun shine. Have seen nothing but rocks since we entered the French River producing moss and some ever-greens stunted in growth, one would think that a bird could scarcely live on these Rocks.

Fourteen leagues from *Lake Nipising* is *L'Enfant perdu* a fine encampment where according to the Story an Indian child that was bathing in sight of his parents was suddenly pulled under water and not coming up soon his friends repeatedly dived for him, but to no purpose. Some time after cured in 1785, on Mackenzie's first venture into the fur country. Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:8.

⁸⁸ The potholes worn in the rock along the course by water and pebbles gave to the *Chaudiere des Français* its name. Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, p. 31; Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 20. The French River flows from Lake Nipissing into Lake Huron.

they heard moaning under the ground they were encamped upon, they then began to dig with sticks and paddles and only gave up their attempts as vain when they heard the cries of the child proceeding under the high rocky ground and wood back of their encampment. It is said the Boy's cries were heard for six days during which his friends used all their endeavours to relieve him until discouraged by the above mentioned circumstance.³⁹ A league below *l'Enfant perdue* under the high rocky ground and wood back of their encampment is a portage called *le Grand Recolet* where one of the North West Company's canoes manned by brothers of the name of Majeau [upset] and lost half the cargo about fifteen days ago.⁴⁰ The few survivors and the goods that floated were picked [up] below the Rapid by the other canoes of the Brigade. These unfortunate men had made portage and loaded their canoe below it, but had neglected to put a man or two on shore with a bit of Line to stem the strong eddy which carries back to fall, from a foolish confidence in their own power, and in consequence were drawn down by the eddy under the pitch of the fall where the canoe instantly filled and sunk. Though some of the bodies were found far below this the seven crosses are erected here as a warning to others along with seven others in memory of former casualties. Two leagues below the *Grand Recolet* is *Derraud's Rapid* named after a voyageur of that name who broke his Canoe in it; this being the communication between *Lake Huron* and the *Ottawa River* appears to have been much frequented by the *savages* of old, as may be judged from the various figures of animals &c. made by them on the face of the steep Rocks in many places along the banks. Some leagues below *Derreaud's*

³⁹ The story of the lost child was one of the narratives that formed a part of the folklore of the voyageurs. It is repeated in essentially the same form in Harmon, *Journal*, p. 8.

⁴⁰ This incident also was one that was recalled each time a brigade passed the portage, being preserved in this way for many years. Seven men lost their lives in the accident. Belcourt was told of the tragedy when he passed over the route in 1831. *Itinéraire*, p. 20.

Rapid is the figure of a man standing over an animal that lays under him, with a sun on one side and a moon on the other side of him each surrounded by a large circle — a little farther on, is at least sixteen figures of different animals standing promiscuously together on the face of a steep Rock. Amongst them may be seen fish, flesh, and Tortoise all of them painted with some kind of Red Paint. These figures are made by scratching the Rock weed (moss) off the Rocks with the Point of a knife or some other instrument. Two leagues from *Lake Huron* there is a figure of an ox which gives name to a fine long View of the river called *Lad [sic] du Boeuf*.

After passing a narrow Rapid named the Dalles we saw an Island on which as the story goes, the Irroquois in former days, say 40 or 50 Years ago tried to cut off a strong Brigade of trading canoes. But upon finding themselves discovered by the French they abandoned their ambush with precipitation and the canoes pursued their rout. It is said this was amongst the last attempts the Irroquois made in the long wars they had with the French in Canada. I think it strange that the Irroquois should have come so far out of their own territories to wage war; But it is known to be a fact that a strong body of them consisting of not less than 800 to 1000 men had been surprised [and] cut off by the Chippewa's on an Island in *Lake Superior* opposite to the *Gros Cap*.⁴¹

Thursday June 27th. After coming 25 Leagues yesterday and today, which is, the full length of the *French River*, from *Lake Nipissing* to *Lake Huron*, we entered the latter with a very strong head wind which compelled us to put ashore as soon as we found a suitable place to unload and haul up the

⁴¹ The conflict between the French and their Indian allies and the Irroquois dates back to the middle of the seventeenth century. See accounts in George M. Wrong, *Rise and Fall of New France* (New York, 1928), 2:493-550, and in Kellogg, *French Régime in Wisconsin*, Chapters 11 and 12. Miss Kellogg shows that the Irroquois penetrated as far west as Wisconsin. The massacre of a band of Irroquois by the Sioux in the vicinity of *Lake Superior* is mentioned in Edward D. Neill, "History of the Ojibways and Their Connection with the Fur Traders," *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 5:402.

canoes.⁴² The French River enters the Lake by a great number of branches separated by high rocky Islands. The Lake appears like an Ocean no land to be seen but that of the side we are upon and a few petty Islands belonging thereto. About the mouths of the French River are a few rocky shoals where the natives find a variety of water fowls eggs in the season; baskets full of which they brought to our tents for sale, and tried all the ways they could devise to make us give them Rum, but finding us staunch in our refusal offered to appease the wind if they could be indulged with something to drink, and, taking no more effect than the rest of their loguick, they departed much dissatisfied, vowing they would conjure and cause the wind to blow with increased violence from the same quarter for eight days.⁴³

The account the guide gives me here is "The entrance of the French River into the Lake Huron is nearly at an equal distance from Detroit on the S. S. E., St Mary's Falls on the W. N. W. and Mackinac on the W. S. W. which is farther by ten leagues than either of the other two places. The Canoes to & from Mackinac keep the same course with those bound for St Mary's, till they reach Pointe Tessalon whence they cross amongst Islands to the Pointe du Detour fifteen leagues from Mackinac. The whole distance from Tessalon to Mackinac is twenty five leagues." This is certainly a mistake for

⁴² It was no uncommon thing for the voyageurs to put ashore because of wind when they were traveling across broad expanses of water. The canoes they used were primarily adapted to river travel and were in danger of being broken or swamped if the waves were high. Duncan McGillivray and Harmon both tell of similar delays, and Kennicott explains the difficulties he encountered some years later. *The Journal of Duncan McGillivray of the North West Company, at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-1795* (edited by Arthur S. Morton, Toronto, 1929), p. 5; Harmon, *Journal*, p. 3; "Biography of Robert Kennicott," *Transactions of the Chicago Academy of Sciences*, 1869, Vol. 1, Part 2, p. 158.

⁴³ The Canadians thought of the wind as *la vieille* or "the old lady." When they wished to encourage her to give them a favorable breeze they would throw small pieces of tobacco or other insignificant articles into the water as a sacrifice, saying at the same time, "*Soufle, soufle, la vieille.*" Grace Lee Nute, "The Voyageur," *Minnesota History*, 6:161.

Detroit is farther from the entrance of the French River than either of the other places though I cannot specify the distance.⁴⁴ The following are the names of the portages from Montreal line in the order in which they occur in ascending the Ottawa River &c. to Lake Huron. Viz—1st Chute a Blondeau. N° 2. 3. 4. Long Soult. N° 5. 6. 7. Les Chaudieres. N° 8 Les Chats. N° 9 Portage du Fort. N° 10 La Montagne. N° 11 D'argy. N° 12 Le Grand Callumet. N° 13 Allumettes. N° 14. 15 Les Joachins. N° 16 La Roche Capitaine. N° 17. Les deux Rivieres. N° 18 Le Trouc. Those of the Little River N° 1 Le plain Champs. N° 2. Les Roses. N° 3. Campion. N° 4 La Gross Roche. N° 5 Le Paresseu. N° 6 La Prairie. N° 7 La Cave. N° 8 Talon. N° 9 and 10 Les Musiques. N° 11 La Tortue. N° 12. 13. 14. Les vases. And the portages in the French River N° 1 La Chaudiere des Français. N° 2 Parisiens. N° 3 Le Grand Recollet. N° 4 La Petite Fausille.

18	portages	in	the	Ottawa
14	"	"	"	Little River & Vases
4	"	"	"	French River

In all 36 portages to the entrance of Lake Huron and there are besides these about an equal number of Décharges.

⁴⁴ Reference to a map of the region will show how justified Macdonell was in his objection. The distance from the mouth of the French River to Detroit is something over three hundred miles, whereas the distance to Sault Sainte Marie is more nearly two hundred miles. Point Tessalon is on the north shore of Lake Huron southeast of the Sault; Detour Point is situated on the straits between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan, opposite to Mackinac. Mackinac was one of the important distributing points for the trade of the Northwest. Situated on the boundary line between the territories of the Ottawa and the Chipewya Indians, it was in a position to encourage the trade of both, and it served as a depot to which furs were brought from the area south of Lake Superior and west and south of Lake Michigan. See Ernest A. Cruikshank, *Early Traders and Trade Routes in Ontario and the West, 1760-1783* (Toronto, 1893), p. 259. Although Sault Sainte Marie was not as valuable as Mackinac as a depot, it was nevertheless a post of some importance to the Northwest Company as a station on the route to Grand Portage. For the story of the Sault see Otto Fowle, *Sault Sainte Marie and Its Great Waterway* (New York, 1925).

In the evening of the 27th in spite of the fellows conjuring the wind abated, and according to M^r Jos. Frobishers written instructions to M^r A. N. M. Leod we lightened the guide's canoe of forty five pieces, which were distributed among the other canoes and shipped all M^r M. Leod, Lemoine, and my effects on board of it and took a man out of each of the other canoes which made us a crew of fourteen paddles, and set out on our journey leaving the brigade to wait the arrival of Dannis our associate guide whom we had not seen since the *long Sault* but who we since learnt came to them that same evening. We are now but a single canoe making the best of our way to the Grand Portage.⁴⁵ After proceeding four leagues we put on shore for the evening.

The 28th. Being a fine sunshiny day we made good progress—next day we had a thick fog in which we were bewildered for some hours and camped at the serpens point—halfway to the Sault.

Saturday 29th. Met a number of canoes coming from Michilimackinac and passed point Tessaion. We continue coasting the North shore of the lake.

Sunday 30th. Arrived at the Sault St Mary's. The only settlements are on the South shore of the straits dividing Lake Superior from Lake Huron at the bottom of a large Rapid which makes us carry our goods a mile to their head. M^r Nolin who transacts the North West Companys business here has much the best improvements of any of those settled here.⁴⁶

⁴⁵The usual load for a Montreal canoe was about sixty pieces. The term was applied to the bundles, each weighing some ninety pounds, into which the cargo was packed. When crossing a portage each man carried two pieces on his back and shoulders, using a leather sling over his forehead to support one piece, while the second rested on the first. Garry, "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, pp. 90, 96; Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, p. 16. A single canoe such as Macdonell was using would now be called a light, or express, canoe. For a note on the Grand Portage see below, page 92n.

⁴⁶At the time Macdonell visited Sault Sainte Marie no substantial improvements had been made. A few years later the Northwest Company

From this gentleman M^r M^cLeod and I received every attention, and rooms in his House while we remained at the Sault.

Vast numbers of white fish are taken, here, of an excellent quality many of which are salted and sent to *Mackinac & Detroit* where they ought to sell well to bear the expense and repay the export, for salt sells at the Sault for 1/8 p^r lbs.

July 2nd. We left the hospitable roof of Mons^r Nolin who escorted us to the western end of the portage where we pitched our tent and finished the Madeira that remained in our care with Mons^r Nolin, Mons^r Lemoine &c. Lemoine remains here to shift for himself—stopped at pointe au Pins where two leagues above the Sault we found M^r Nelson building a vessel for the North West Company to navigate the Lake Superior and to be called the Otter. She is to be launched shortly.⁴⁷ Left Pointe aux Pins at 4 P. M. with a fair wind which soon Brought us opposite to the Gros Cap after which we entered the great Lake Superior the Mother & mistress of the other Lakes; its water is so green and transparent that I am confidently told the bottom can be seen in 30 fms [fathoms] water.

The 4th. We were prevented from stirring by stormy weather—a cold raw day.

located on the Canadian side of the Sault and built locks by which the canoes could pass from Lake Huron to Lake Superior without a portage. A road was also constructed and a sawmill built, which furnished boards and timber for Grand Portage. See Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 226; Fowle, *Sault Sainte Marie*, p. 235. "Mr. Nolin" was probably Augustin Nolin, who traded in the vicinity of Sault Sainte Marie and later built a home there. See Wisconsin Historical Collections, 20:155n.; Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, 15:113.

⁴⁷Pointe aux Pins was a spot peculiarly suited to the building of boats, since there was an abundance of pine timber there. There were but few ships on the Great Lakes at this time. The "Athabasca" had been built at Pointe aux Pins for service on Lake Superior, but having been found inadequate for this purpose, had been floated down the falls to be used on the lower lakes with the "Beaver." The "Otter" now took the place of the "Athabasca," under the command of Captain John Bennet, who sailed her on Lake Superior for the Northwest Company for a number of years. See below, page 96; Masson, *Bourgeois*, 2:149; and Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 226.

July 5th. Passed the Bay of Michipicotton in which the North West Company have a trading post.⁴⁸ This bay runs a long way into the Country and its shores run so parrallel that the head wind we had upon one side of it was aft-wind on the other side, for the space of ten leagues. We made by the men's Compute twenty four leagues this day. Next day we passed Tête a la loutre where it is said a collumn of Rock stands upon a lofty round mountain to the height of ten to Twelve feet perpendicular; Twelve to fifteen leagues furthur on we found the entrance of the Pic River where there is a Trading Post belonging to M^r Coté and associates situated within half a mile of our encampment.⁴⁹ This was the coldest night ever I felt at this time [of] the year, and in the vicinity of our encampment there are eleven Crosses in memory of that number [of] men that are buried here most of whom perished last winter by various casualties.

We keep our arms in good order ever since we parted from the canoes being told the Indians are apt to attack a single canoe. The crews of the canoes have seldom any arms of their own. At l'anse a la Bouticille met a canoe of Forsyth Richardson & C^{os}, that had wintered in Nipigon alongside of the H. B. Company's Traders, who did not make a single pack,

⁴⁸The post at Michipicotton had been found to be a profitable one for some years. It had been auctioned for 3,750 livres in 1743 and in one year produced, according to the account of Count Andriani cited by La Roche-foucauld in 1791, forty bundles of fine furs. Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, pp. 111, 268n.

⁴⁹Tête à la Loutre, or Otter Head Point, took its name from the unusual shape of a large block of stone there, which was a standard landmark, commonly taken to be halfway between Kaministiquia (Fort William in later years) and Sault Sainte Marie. See William H. Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, etc.* (London, 1825), 2:184.

The yield of the Pic River post about 1790 was thirty bundles of furs. See Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 268n. Gabriel Cotté, son of Nicholas Cotté, was an outfitter and trader at Mackinac for a number of years, having located there as early as 1768. See Jean Baptiste Perrault, "Narrative of the Travels and Adventures of a Merchant Voyageur in the Savage Territories of Northern America Leaving Montreal the 28th of May 1783 (to 1820)," *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, 37:536 and note.

for M^r Hudson their cheif, had been frozen to death in [the] winter seeking subsistance for himself and his fellow sufferers.⁵⁰ This Canoe was loaded with the same goods they took into the interior last autum. Next day we passed the *Nipigon* River which appears a large [one], saw the mamel two round mountains in the form of Sugar Loaves whose bases seemed united. After which we passed the *Bay noir*, which is so deep that the eye cannot see the land that terminates the bottom of it, though the mouth is but moderately large, passed close to the *Thunder* Mountain one of the highest land about the lake though the whole of its Northern Coast be an Iron bound one; one half of *thunder* Hill rises in about the proportion of 45 Degrees from the waters edge and is topped off by the other half of its height a perfect perpendicular. So that at a distance it resembles an extensive citadel wall, sloping from above half its height in a regular proportion to the waters edge.⁵¹

From the *Tosinerre* to the *Pâte*, another curious round mountain upon an Island of near the same height with the

⁵⁰Lake Nipigon, situated due north of Lake Superior, dates back in the history of the fur trade well into the seventeenth century. Posts in this area were very productive during the French régime, but their output declined during the period of British occupation. Duncan Cameron, stationed there by the Northwest Company, suffered from competition with the Hudson's Bay Company, whose traders penetrated south into the Nipigon area from the Albany River and established a fort at Osnaburgh Lake in 1786. Cameron's report of 1804 described the country as very much impoverished. See Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopaedia*, p. 455; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, pp. 157, 268n.; Masson, *Bourgeois*, 2:232, 292-300.

A pack of furs refers to the bundles into which the peltries were pressed and tied up. Packs were made up according to weight, each containing about ninety pounds of furs. It was common to mix the different kinds, though some bundles were made up of peltries of a single kind. Each pack was marked, and a bill of contents made out to show what it contained. Elliott Coues, ed., *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike to Headwaters of the Mississippi River, through Louisiana Territory, and in New Spain, during the Years 1805-6-7* (New York, 1895), 1:284; Harmon, *Journal*, p. 16; Anderson, "Personal Narrative," *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 9:143.

⁵¹Major Long, passing Thunder Hill in 1823, estimated its height as eight hundred feet. Keating, *Narrative*, 2:173.

Thunder, is a traverse of about two leagues, passed which, we paddled against a strong hard wind till we reached *point au Père* where we passed the night. This point tradition says had its name from a *Père Jusuite* murdered here upon it of old by the Indians.⁵² Here M^r M^cLeod and I shaved and shifted being the last night we shall sleep out, wind and weather permitting; this side of the grand portage. Leaving *pointe au père* we paddled two pipes and put to shore to give the men time to clean themselves, while we breakfasted—this done a short pipe brought us to *Pointe au Chapeaux* around which we got a sight of the long wished for Grand Portage.⁵³ The beach was covered with spectators to see us arrive, our canoe went well and the crew sung paddling songs in a vociferous manner.

The Grand Portage is situated in the bottom of a shallow Bay perhaps three miles deep and about one league and a half wide at its mouth from *Pointe aux Chapeaux* to *pointe a la*

⁵² Macdonell apparently intended to write "Père Jesuite." Belcourt speaks of the point as being named for a Jesuit father, but states that he died of some sickness during the course of a missionary expedition. Belcourt was unable to learn the man's name. *Itinéraire*, p. 33.

⁵³ The "pipe" was one of the units of time commonly used by the Canadians. It was apparently a flexible unit, for there seems to be no agreement as to the length of time it covered. The editor of Belcourt's *Itinéraire* says (page 55 note) that the voyageurs would stop every half or three-quarters of an hour, rest a few minutes, and light their pipes. Davidson asserts that they stopped much more infrequently, every two hours only. See his *North West Company*, p. 218n.

Pointe aux Chapeaux is the Hat Point of today, which guards the north-eastern entrance to Grand Portage Bay. Grand Portage was the general rendezvous of the Montreal fur traders until the opening years of the century when the Northwest Company moved their post northward along the shore of the lake to Fort William. Most of the pork-eaters who brought goods from Montreal went no farther, but returned to the St. Lawrence, their canoes loaded with the packs of furs that the Northmen had brought down from the interior. Although the name Grand Portage at first referred to the nine-mile trail over which all goods and furs had to be carried between the harbor and the waters of the Pigeon River, it later came to be applied to the post at the eastern end of the trail, Fort Charlotte being at the upper end of the portage. The rendezvous was an active place during the summer when the canoes from the fur country met those from Montreal. Nearly a thousand

Framboise having a small Island just opposite the fort about half way from one of these points to the other: on a low spot which rises gently from the Lake. The pickets are not above fifteen to twenty paces from the waters edge. Immediately back of the Fort is a lofty round Sugar loaf mountain the base of which comes close to the Picket on the North West Side.

The Gates are shut alyways [*sic*] after sunset and the Bourgeois and clerks Lodge in houses within the pallisades, where there are two Sentries keeping a look out all night chiefly for fear of accident by fire. A clerk a guide and four men are considered watch enough. These are Montreal engagees.

The North men while here live in tents of different sizes pitched at random, the people of each post having a camp by themselves and through their camp passes the road of the portage. They are seperated from the Montrealeans by a brook. The Portage is three leagues from one navigation to the other which caused great expense and trouble to the company. The men have Six Livers of this currency for every peice of Goods or pack of Furs they carry from one end of it to the other—the currency of the North west is double that of Canada which currency had its origine, I presume, from the mens' wages being formerly paid in peltries and it was supposed that one *liver's* worth of Furs would be worth two livers to the person that took it to Montreal to be paid. The currency existed long before the North West Company

men were there (see below, page 95), engaged in transferring goods and furs over the portage, while agents and wintering partners of the company held their annual meeting and laid out plans of action for the coming year. Macdonell's description of Grand Portage, quoted by Davidson on page 237 of his *North West Company*, is one of the best that has been preserved. The transfer of the post to Kaministiquia was effected after a move by the United States to collect customs duties made its advisable to establish headquarters on British soil. See Solon J. Buck, *Story of the Grand Portage* (Minneapolis, 1931), for further details. This pamphlet is a revised reprint of an article with the same title published in *Minnesota History Bulletin*, 5:14-27.

had a being and I believe before Canada was taken from the French.⁵⁴

All the buildings within the Fort are sixteen in number made with cedar and white spruce fir split with whip saws after being squared [*sic*], the Roofs are covered with shingles of Cedar and Pine, most of their posts, Doors, and windows, are painted with spanish brown. Six of these buildings are Store Houses for the company's Merchandize and Furs &c. The rest are dwelling houses shops compting house and Mess House—they have also a wharf or kay for their vessel to unload and Load at.⁵⁵ The only vessel on the Lake Superior is the new [one] M^r Nelson was building when we passed at *Point aux Pins* and is to be called the *Otter*, the *Athabaska* which sailed the Lake before her is to be [*d.* called the otter] floated down the falls of S^t Mary, to help the Beaver to bring the needfull [supplies] from Detroit and Mackinac to the Sault, which the otter is supposed sufficient, to convey from S^t Mary's to the Grand Portage and in return she takes a cargo of Furs to the Sault when they are arrived from the North.⁵⁶ Part of the Company's Furs are sent Round the Lakes in Shipping, but the major part goes down the Ottawa in the Montreal Canoes. Every improvement about this place appertains to the North West Company. Between two and three hundred yards to the East of the N. W. Fort beyond the Pork eaters camp is the spot Mess^{rs} David and Peter Grant have selected to build upon, as yet they have done nothing to it but marking out the four corners of the ground they mean to occupy with posts stuck in the ground. They are now

⁵⁴ Grand Portage currency was reckoned by units usually designated as G. P. C. Twelve of these units were equal to a pound sterling. See Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:61–66. The livre of Canada after the conquest was worth about seven-eighths of an English shilling. Davidson, *North West Company*, p. 202n.

⁵⁵ Macdonell's reference to the wharf at Grand Portage is one of the few that have been preserved. The dock was reconstructed in 1931, the project having been executed in connection with the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of La Vérendrye's exploration of the harbor.

⁵⁶ See above, page 89.

off for the interior without leaving any vestige of their having been here but the four posts above mentioned.⁵⁷ It is called Sixty leagues from here to *Fond du Lac* where the *Rivier S^t Louis* enters Lake Superior and which is half the Lake, measuring either side from thence to the Sault S^t Mary.⁵⁸ Fogs are frequent on this immense Lake which renders the navigation difficult. The New Ship otter has been expected some time now and we are anxiously looking out for her; provisions have turned so scarce that near 1000 men upon the ground in the company's service have been put upon half allowance. A full allowance to a voyageur while at this Poste is a Quart of Lyed Indian Corn or maize, and one ounce of Greece. It is reckoned there is only six days allowance remaining in the Stores, and should the vessel protract her arrival beyond that period I am at a loss to think what shift the gentlemen would adopt to subsist their servants.

August the 1st. M^{rs} Robert Grant, Peter Pangman, Alex. M^cLeod and W^m Thorburn set out in two Large Canoes for Montreal. These Gentlemen are universally regretted; the

⁵⁷ David Grant, mentioned by John McDonald as an old experienced trader in the Northwest, is credited with the leadership of a group organized in opposition to the Northwest Company which had its headquarters in 1793–94 at Sturgeon River. See Masson, *Bourgeois*, 2:20; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 258. Peter Grant, clerk of the Northwest Company in 1784, had become a partner in 1791, but at the time of this narrative he was associated with David Grant. The two men apparently planned an independent post at Grand Portage in 1793, but left it unfinished to go to the interior. According to later entries in Macdonell's journal (Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:284), Peter Grant made a temporary encampment five miles from Macdonell's fort on the Qu'appelle River. In 1794 he established a post on La Coquille or Shell River, representing one of the five different oppositions who were trading in that year in the region of the Assiniboine and Qu'appelle rivers. After these opposition activities in 1793–94, Peter Grant again joined his fortunes to the Northwest Company, serving as proprietor of the Rainy Lake post in 1799 and later taking charge of the Red River department. See Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:66, 294, and Coues, *New Light*, 1:80n.

⁵⁸ Fond du Lac was the name given to the region around the southwestern end of Lake Superior. In the parlance of the fur trade the department of that name embraced not only the lake shore but also the territory around Leech and Sandy lakes and the upper waters of the Mississippi. See Thwaites in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 19:173n.

two former retire from the concern with handsome compensations and the two later merely to recruit their health, injured through bad fare and fatigues in the interior.⁵⁹

Aug^t 2nd. Old Bazil Ireland the guide arrived with two Montreal canoes and brings the agreeable news of the Otter lying off *Pointe au Père*. Early next morning a Boat well manned was sent to tow her up into port, and to their surprise spied her behind the point a la Framboise after passing before the fort in the Night with a North West wind. It was ten o'clock before She anchored at the wharffe having entered partly by sailing and partly by towing.

Monday 5th Agu^t. I left the lake Superior and walked over the Grand Portage to Fort Charlotte accompanied by M^{rs}. Cuthbert Grant and John Bennet the sailing master of the otter.⁶⁰ The Portage is full of hills is divided by the voyageurs into sixteen *Poses* or resting places, its soil is chiefly composed of copper coloured clay the chief vegetable produc-

⁵⁹ These men were all traders connected with the Northwest Company. Robert Grant, whose trading career dated back at least to 1778, had been stationed in the Red River department with William McGillivray and had traded at that time in competition with the opposition company organized by Pangman, Gregory, and McLeod, to which reference has been made (page 12 above). About 1784 Grant established Fort Espérance on the Qu'appelle River, the post at which Macdonell was to spend the winter. See Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, pp. 200, 236. Davidson in his *North West Company*, page 46 and note, gives the date of the founding of this post as 1787. See also Coues, *New Light*, 1:47n. Pangman, the organizer of the Montreal Company in 1784, afterwards joined the Northwest Company, and at the time of his retirement in 1793 was apparently in sufficiently good standing to be "universally regretted." See Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopaedia*, p. 479. Thorburn was a trader who had a post on the Qu'appelle River. See Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 252, and Coues, *New Light*, 1:300n. Alexander McLeod had been in the Athabasca region for some years, wintering in 1789-90 at Fort Chipewyan. Coues, *New Light*, 1:277n.

⁶⁰ Cuthbert Grant was one of the leading traders of the Northwest Company in the decade 1780-90. He had been on the Athabasca River with Peter Pond and had established a post near the mouth of the Slave River in 1786. At the time he met Macdonell he was on his way to Fort Qu'appelle, where he was to spend the winter. Grant was associated with the opposition movement of the decade following 1790 which finally led to the organization of the X. Y. Company in 1798, and he was one of those who

tion of which is spruce, fir and other evergreens.⁶¹ M^r Donald Ross has been so long in charge of Fort Charlotte that he has acquired the respectable name of Governor.⁶² Next day I assisted my Bourgeois in sending off fourteen canoes for the Red River. These N. W. Canoes are about half the size of the Montreal or Grand River Canoes and when loaded to the utmost can carry a Tun and a half. The number of men required to navigate them is four to five i. e. the near hand posts have but [?] four men. A head clerk or Bourgeois is allowed by the concern to have an extra man in his canoe to wait upon him. There has been great abuse in these things formerly certain gentlemen who were fond of Dashing taking an unnecessary number of chosen men into their canoes from motives of vanity. I set out after the fourteen Canoes above mentioned to winter in the Red River.⁶³ The River we navigate from Fort Charlotte falls into Lake Superior in l'Anse aux [d. Trembles] Tourtes three leagues to the East of the Grand Portage.⁶⁴ This river is both narrow Shallow and full of falls and Rapids. The first carrying place we came to was

later signed the agreement by which the two companies were consolidated. See Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopaedia*, p. 247; Davidson, *North West Company*, pp. 73, 93, 243; Coues, *New Light*, 1:80n.; and Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 253.

⁶¹ The term "pose" was of French origin, and was applied to the stopping places which were to be found at intervals on every long portage. A pose was not merely a resting place; it was also a temporary depot, and all the packs were brought to the first pose before any were carried to the second. This arrangement was designed as security against possible raids by the Indians. Inasmuch as the same places were used as poses by all who passed, it came to be the common thing to measure the length of a portage by the number of poses along the trail. The distance between two poses varied from six to eight hundred yards, depending upon conditions on the trail. Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, 37:172n. Wisconsin Historical Collections, 19:180.

⁶² This statement by Macdonell is evidence that Fort Charlotte was already, in 1793, an old post. See Buck, *Story of the Grand Portage*, p. 9.

⁶³ At the time of Macdonell's journey the Assiniboine River was called the Upper Red River, while the present Red River was distinguished from it by the name Lower Red River.

⁶⁴ The Anse aux Tourtes is Pigeon Bay.

Perdrix caused by the Rivier falling over a Rock from the height of about fifty feet.⁶⁵ Here I was surprised to see two men shoulder the canoe mouth upwards and from end to end of the portage. Passed the night at the prairie along with M^r John Finlay, so far on his way to fort des Prairies.⁶⁶

Wednesday 7th Aug^t. Passed the caribeau and slept at the Outarde from whence we had to send a canoe back to the Caribeau for seven pieces that are missing out of a brigade caused by a throng of canoes together. The Outarde Portage is longer than the Grand Callumet.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Portage Perdrix was known to English-speaking traders as the Partridge Portage. Coues, *New Light*, 1:8.

⁶⁶ The North canoes used on the voyages from Grand Portage to the interior were considerably smaller and lighter than the Montreal canoes used on the lower part of the route. Two men, the bowman and the steersman, were able to carry these canoes over the portages, whereas six men were usually required to carry the Montreal canoes. The larger canoes were carried bottom up. See Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Lawrence through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans* (London, 1801), pp. xlvii, xlvi.

The "prairie" or "meadow," which was the usual camping ground the first night above Grand Portage, was situated about two and a half miles above the Partridge Portage. Coues, *New Light*, 1:8 and note.

John Finlay was one of the wintering partners of the Northwest Company, trading in later years in the Athabasca region. Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:61; 2:498.

It is difficult to determine the location of Fort des Prairies, since the name seems to have been applied to several different posts. Pond puts it above the forks of the Saskatchewan on the North Branch, whereas Bain says it was just below the junction of the two branches. See Davidson, *North West Company*, p. 37n. In tracing Thompson's route of 1808, Tyrrell says the explorer passed Fort à la Corne "on the site of the old French Fort des Prairies," some miles below the forks. Coues points out that as the trade pushed up the river, the name was applied to establishments on the upper reaches of the North Branch, such as Forts George, Vermilion, and Augustus. When two of these were operating, they were sometimes called Upper and Lower Forts des Prairies. Thompson, *Narrative*, pp. lxxxviii; Coues, *New Light*, 2:481n.

⁶⁷ The Caribeau, or Caribou, Portage was also called the Deer Portage. Literally *outarde* would be translated "bustard," but the portage was more frequently called Goose or Fowl Portage. See Coues, *New Light*, 1:9n. For Macdonell's description of Grand Calumet, which he had crossed two months before, see above, page 75.

Mess^{rs} Robert Thomson and W^m M^cKay both bound for the English River came up and passed the night with us.⁶⁸

Thursday 8th. Made the Orignal and Grand des Cerises Portages and Passed another night with our agreeable friends M^{essrs} Thomson and M^cKay.⁶⁹

Friday 9th. Passed the petit portage neuf and Part of the Grand Portage neuf at the N. W. end of which we Passed the night with M^r Simon Fraser.⁷⁰

Saturday 10th. Passed the whole day at the Grand Portage neuf waiting our canoes that are behind.

Sunday 11th. It was noon when we left Grand Portage neuf. Passed the Martes, les Perches and Slept at the height of Land, where I was instituted a *North man* by *Batême* performed by sprinkling water in my face with a small cedar Bow dipped in a ditch of water and accepting certain conditions such as not to let any new hand pass by that road without experiencing the same ceremony which stipulates particularly never to kiss a voyageur's wife against her own free will the whole being accompanied by a dozen of Gun shots fired one after another in an Indian manner.⁷¹ The intention of

⁶⁸ The Churchill River was known as the English River, Joseph Frobisher having given it the name. Davidson, *North West Company*, p. 39.

Robert Thompson and William McKay had been located for some years on the Churchill and Nelson rivers and succeeded in offering considerable competition to the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory, situated near the mouth of the Nelson River. Thompson was killed in a quarrel with some Indians in the winter of 1794-95. Thompson, *Narrative*, p. xxxix.

⁶⁹ Portage Orignal was called by its English equivalent, Moose Portage. Grand des Cerises was translated Great Cherry Portage. Coues, *New Light*, 1:9n.

⁷⁰ Coues says that the Portages Neufs (New Portages) were so named from the fact that the old route had originally followed a different track. The name Watab Portage was later used. Coues, *New Light*, 1:10n.

Simon Fraser, later to become famous as a fur trader and explorer, had at this time done little that was worthy of note. He joined the Northwest Company in 1792 and served as agent at Grand Portage in 1797 and at Athabasca in 1799. He did not become a partner until 1802. His expeditions to the Peace River, McLeod Lake, and Fraser River were made in 1808. Burpee, *Oxford Encyclopaedia*, p. 219.

⁷¹ Some form of initiation or celebration at the expense of the passengers was customary among the voyageurs. The amount of formality varied on

this Bâtême being only to claim a glass. I complied with the custom and gave the men, between M^r Neil M^cKay and self a two gallon keg as my worthy Bourgeois M^r Cuthbert Grant directed me.⁷² We are now at the head of the waters that run into Lake Superior.

Monday 12th Aug^t. Steered off the height of land upon the waters running to the North West into Hudson's Bay. Passed the Epingl[e] Décharges. Entered *Lac de la Pierre à fusile*.⁷³ A pretty Lake having beautiful well wooded mountains running parallel to it, forming its south shore, it is from two to three miles wide and barely [?] double that in length. A fine calm sunny day the water smooth as Glass. Passed l'Escalier and the cheval de Bois. Camped at the Gros des Pins.⁷⁴ Mess^{rs} Angus Shaw, and Duncan M^cGillivray [*sic*] came up and passed us on their way to *Fort des Prairies*.⁷⁵ M^r Shaw

different occasions, but the desired dram remained the underlying motive for whatever ceremony or other persuasion there might be. See Harmon, *Journal*, p. 2; Coues, *New Light*, 1:11; and "Robert Kennicott" in *Transactions of the Chicago Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 1, Part 2, p. 155.

⁷² There were several persons named McKay in the fur trade. Neil McKay was at this time headed for the forks of the Qu'appelle River where he wintered near Peter Grant at a point about five leagues from Fort Espérance. See Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:284. The opposition activities of David and Peter Grant during this year have already been noted (page 94 above). Apparently David Grant was on the Sturgeon River while Peter traded on the Qu'appelle.

⁷³ Lac Pierre à Fusil is now called Gunflint Lake. Harmon called it Flinty Lake and attributed the name to the stones found along its shores. Harmon, *Journal*, p. 18.

⁷⁴ The Gros des Pins is the Portage des Gros Pins (Portage of the Big Pines), which later became simply Pine Portage. It was a carry of 640 paces over a high ridge. L'escalier (the stairway) and the Cheval de Bois (wooden horse) are mentioned by Alexander Mackenzie. The former was a portage of 55 paces around a waterfall; the latter, a longer carry of 380 paces. See Coues, *New Light*, 1:12n., and Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal*, p. li.

⁷⁵ Angus Shaw was a well-known trader of the Northwest Company who during the previous year had established Fort George on the north branch of the Saskatchewan River. Shaw had been active in the Nipigon region during the decade from 1780 to 1789, and from 1789 to 1791 he had been developing the trade in the vicinity of Moose Lake. See Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, pp. 157, 206, 237, 253, 262, and Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:31, 61; 2:17. Duncan

being a dashing Bourgeois gave the men of my fifteen canoes a dram out of a big keg he had upon Tap.

Thursday 13th. M^r Daniel M^cKenzie in the light canoe with the Arabaska papers came to our fire before we left it in the morning so far on his way to montreal to recruit his injured health. Went down the little fausille, Descharge du vaseu, the cedars, and a number of shallow little Rapids called the Châts.⁷⁶ Cleared the Marabeau at 1 P. M. Made the two little Rochers of saguinage and camped at l'Anse au Sable. Next day made the little Rocher and Prairie Portages also Rocher des Couteaux and entered the Lake of that name, the clearest water in the North.⁷⁷ Passed the Rapids des cauteaux and slept at the second Portage below them where our Bourgeois came up with us and ordered each man a dram, which I served out to them.

Thursday 15th. Waited at the Carpe for the Canoes behind. Mixed nine Gallons of Indian Rum it being customary for Bourgeois to wet the whistle of every Indian they met on the

McGillivray was a *bourgeois* of the Northwest Company, a younger brother of William McGillivray and a nephew of Simon McTavish. In 1800 he made an expedition to the source of the North Saskatchewan through Howse Pass. He also took part in the effort, vain though it was, to negotiate with the Hudson's Bay Company regarding the transfer of goods and furs to and from the interior by way of the Bay instead of sending them through the Great Lakes. See McGillivray, *Journal*; also Davidson, *North West Company*, pp. 83, 85, 96; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 281; and Coues, *New Light*, 1:439n.

⁷⁶ Daniel McKenzie was a bourgeois of the Northwest Company for a number of years. In 1797 he was stationed at Fort des Prairies and the Red Deer River. Two years later he was the proprietor of the department which included Upper Fort des Prairies and the Rocky Mountains. In 1806 he was proprietor of the Athabasca department. See Coues, *New Light*, 1:216n.; Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:62; and manuscript minutes of the Northwest Company. The "Arabaska papers" were the dispatches and letters sent by the traders in the Athabasca region to those located at posts farther south and to officials of the company at Montreal.

⁷⁷ Marabeau was also spelled Marabou or Maraboeuf. Saguinage should probably be Saginaga, although the spelling varies on different maps and in different accounts. See Coues, *New Light*, 1:12n. Lac des Couteaux is known as Knife Lake.

way. At Gros des Bois-Bleus M^r Grant bought a canoe for old Aguse, his, being the worst in the Brigade.⁷⁸ Slept at Petit des Bois bleus.

16th Aug^t. Passed Grand des pins at 6 A.M. Pointe de Bois at 7 A.M. Breakfasted at the Galais du Lac Croche.⁷⁹ Cleared the Rideau portage at 3 P.M. Dined at Flanon [*sic*] and Slept there.⁸⁰ Here I saw the first dog (a large Black Indian one that Augé the interpreter killed in Lac Croche) eaten. He castorated him as soon as he fell to prevent rank taste in the flesh. The hair of the animal was singed off as Canadians singe their hogs and then washed clean with water. Next day we were stopped at our last night's quarters by a strong head wind till half after twelve. Killed a cub Bear on an Island in Lac la Croix and slept in sight of the *Mai*.⁸¹

Sunday 18th. Lac la Croix is twelve leagues long. Made the Portage of La Croix. Passed Lake Vermillion,⁸² three leagues long, separated from Lac la méccan by a shallow straight.

Monday 19th. Passed the remainder of Lake Miccan with

⁷⁸ Obviously the copyist has made an error here. This is the Portage Bois Blanc or Basswood Portage. Macdonell so lists it at the end of the journal. See below, page 117.

⁷⁹ Lac Croche is Crooked Lake, so named from the extreme irregularity of its shore line. The canoe route varied in direction through ninety degrees in crossing it. Coues, *New Light*, 1:15n.

⁸⁰ Flanon should be Flacon, referring to Bottle Portage. Macdonell spells it correctly in his list; see below, page 117.

⁸¹ Lac la Croix or Cross Lake later became the junction where the Grand Portage canoe route and the route from Fort William came together at Pointe du Mai. See Coues, *New Light*, 1:218. The northern route, which passed from Fort William, via the Dog and Savanne rivers and Sturgeon Lake, to the Maligne River and Cross Lake, was at first very unpopular. It was used because it was an all-Canadian route that was not subject to diplomatic controversies, as was the Grand Portage route. The question of British transit rights over the latter was not definitely settled until 1842.

The *Mai* was probably a lobsterstick, or maypole, a favorite landmark of voyageurs. Such a pole was made by cutting away all but a few branches of a tree, usually one which stood on a headland or promontory. Nute, *Voyageur*, pp. 67, 208.

⁸² On Lake Vermilion see below, page 202n.

a brisk fair wind.⁸³ Made the small portages neufs, at 9 A.M. Entered Lake La Pluie at 10½.⁸⁴ A fair wind carried us over the Grand Traverse of four leagues and we camped at the petit detroit about three P.M. to wait the canoes behind. Rained hailed and thundered in loud peals accompanied by a tempestuous wind. Some of the hail stones we picked up were as big as the yolke of an egg. After the shower the weather cleared up but it blew so fresh that one of our canoes who staid behind to feast on a large white dog they had stolen was unable to come to us.

20th. Sent a light canoe and guide in search of the canoe missing. As soon as it appeared we set out intending to reach the Fort of Lake Lapluie, but a strong head wind forced us a shore five Leagues from the first detroit. Here we found the Premier, *Nectam*, with twenty young men; to whom, the Bourgeois gave a treat of Rum and Tobacco.⁸⁵

21st. Left the place of our Degrade⁸⁶ and made five Leagues which brought us to the end of the lake which is called 18 Leagues Long—from the N.W. End of the Lake issues *Lake Lapluie river* which is supposed to be 40 Leagues

⁸³ Coues explains that the name of Lake Miccan, now known as Lake Namakan, is not of French origin but is rather a modification of an Indian word. The spelling of the name varied, a more acceptable form being Namaycan. It refers to a place where the natives formerly speared sturgeon. Coues, *New Light*, 1:17n.

⁸⁴ Lac la Pluie is Rainy Lake. The name is traced to Joseph la France, who maintained that the name originated in the fact that the cascade, near the discharge of the lake into the Rainy River proper, raised a mist like rain. See Coues, *New Light*, 1:18n. The Rainy Lake fort was a post of considerable importance to which the Athabasca traders came to exchange their furs for supplies and goods brought from Montreal. After the union of the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 the Athabasca traders received their supplies from York Fort in Hudson's Bay. Garry, "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, p. 125. The diary of a trader stationed at the Rainy Lake fort appears below, pages 195-241.

⁸⁵ For mention of the Premier, a noted chief, see below, page 212.

⁸⁶ When the Canadians were forced by adverse winds to land and wait for more favorable sailing conditions, they were said to have made a "degrade."

long emptying itself into the Lake of the woods. In sight of the fort of Lake La Pluie is the Kettle fall, causing a portage. The Fort stands on the top of a steep bank of the river. It has two wooden Bastions in front flanking the Gate.

Thursday 22nd. Left the Fort at 10 A. M. and slept below the manitou Rapid.⁸⁷ This is deemed the most beautiful River in the N. W. and is generally about ¼ mile wide.

Friday 23rd August. Slept at the Isle au sable three leagues from the mouth of the main channel of the River at the foot of the widest traverse in the lake of the woods. Next day we proceeded to the *Roche Rouge* having been detained in exchanging our old canoes for new ones we found at Isle au Sable in possession of the Indian makers.⁸⁸

Sunday 25th Aug^t. Left our fires at 3 P. M. Made the little portage of Lac des Bois which is made merely to avoid a circuitous rout—at the most western part of this lake. Made Portage du Rat into the River Winipic [Winnipeg] which issues out of Lac des Bois in a number of different channels. Lake of the Woods is called thirty leagues the way the canoes come—but like the River of Lac la pluie is made much longer than it really is. The portage du Rat is said to [be] the place where the American Line by the treaty of 83 finishes having followed the Canoe track from the Grand Portage to here and from this place it is to take a due west course till it intersects the Mississippi—a thing impossible in the nature of things, for the source of the said Mississippi is said to be 300 Miles due south of the portage du Rat. Camped at M^r Frobisher's Galais about the Dalls.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Manitou Rapid was on the Rainy Lake River. See below, page 218.

⁸⁸ Sable Island, lying in Lake of the Woods near the mouth of the Rainy River, is mentioned by Bigsby as being five and a half miles long and made up largely of sand hillocks and granite mounds. *Shoe and Canoe*, 2:288.

⁸⁹ It is interesting to note that although the British and American foreign offices did not have satisfactory information regarding the geography of the upper waters of the Mississippi River, it was nevertheless common knowledge among the fur traders that the Treaty of 1783 was impossible of execution. Peter Pond's part in the story has already been suggested (page 13 above). The need of exact data was appreciated by the two governments, and Article

Monday 26th. Passed the Grand Décharges, terre Jaune, petit Rocher de Charette, Terre-Blanche and cave Portages and Slept at the old fort of Portage de l'isle called by the natives *Wabartim*.⁹⁰ Next day passed the Portage de l'isle Below which we were informed by Indians that a party of Traders from Hudson's Bay consisting of three boats and two canoes, had for the first time descended the waters about 8 days ago—and in testimony showed us where one of them had been shot through the arm by the Indian who guides these Hudson's Bay Traders. Slept at *Châte à Jacques*.⁹¹

4 of the Jay Treaty of 1794 provided that a joint survey of the upper Mississippi should be made. Although David Thompson, surveying for the Northwest Company, determined the location of the Northwest Angle of the Lake of the Woods and the source of the Mississippi in the years immediately preceding 1800, the official survey was delayed until after the War of 1812, and the boundary line was not precisely drawn until 1818. Even then a dispute remained unsettled regarding the details of the boundary between Lake Superior and the Lake of the Woods. According to the agreement finally reached in 1842, it was decided that the line should run along the canoe route from Grand Portage, but that transit rights should be enjoyed by both parties. Rat Portage was not, however, the northwesternmost point of the lake to which the line extended, as Macdonell here states. That point was found to be at the head of a bay to the west and south, later named Monument Bay. For the text of the treaties of 1783, 1794, 1814, 1818, and 1842, see William M. Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776-1909*, Vol. 1 (Washington, 1910); see also Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. lviii; Thompson, *Narrative*, pp. 170-180; Buck, *Story of The Grand Portage*, p. 13; James White, "Boundary Disputes and Treaties," in the Edinburgh edition of the series edited by Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, *Canada and Its Provinces*, Vol. 8 (Toronto, 1914), pp. 751-878. The Dalles are rapids just below Rat Portage, where the river, some forty yards wide, flows between perpendicular granite cliffs. A "galais" ("galet") was a gravel bank in the voyageur's vocabulary.

⁹⁰ Macdonell's log of the route may be checked by reference to Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 50; Mackenzie, *Voyages*, p. lix; and Coues, *New Light*, 1:27. The spelling of "Wabartim" is not clear in the manuscript.

⁹¹ The post at Portage de l'île was situated on the Winnipeg River a short distance below the entrance of the modern English River. The trail by which the Hudson's Bay people pushed inland in 1793 from Fort Albany via the Albany River became an established route which joined the Winnipeg River route near Portage de l'île. See maps in Masson, *Bourgeois*, Vol. 1, and

Wednesday 28th. M^r Grant's Canoe and mine set out in pursuit of the Hudson's Bay Traders leaving the rest of the Canoes with the guide to follow as fast as they can. Made the Pointe de Bois, Petit Rocher, Rocher Brules and Chute aux Esclaves by 9 A.M.⁹² Proceeded to the Barriere at noon Grand Rapid at 2 P.M. and slept at the *Grand Galais* of the *Riviere Blanche*. Having performed a journey of 25 Leagues and made 8 Portages since morning — all hands quite fatigued. This Rivier Blanche is but a part of the River Winipic under another name.

The River winipic is full of shocking rapids which occasions this frequent carrying. The Country from *Matawin* but more particularly from Lake Nipising is hardly fit for cultivation except in certain choice spots such as sault S^t Mary and Rivier of *Lac Lapluie*.

29th. Made three running portages of the *Rivere Blanche* and two small *Rochers* above the *Bonnét*, passed *Lac du Bonnét* two leagues in this direction with a stiff aft wind. Overtook the Hudsons Bay traders with their three boats and two canoes as the Indians had informed us in the *Bonnét*, where they had slept, having done as much in two days as they had in ten; this party is headed by M^r Donald M^cKay late of pointe Claire and a M^r Sutherland.⁹³ This day we

in Thompson, *Narrative*; also the reference in Harmon, *Journal*, p. 21. Chute à Jacqueau was spelled in various ways, being anglicized by Mackenzie as Jacob's Falls. C. N. Bell, *Some Historical Names and Places of the Canadian North West* (Transactions of the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, no. 17, 1884-85), p. 2.

⁹² Tradition has it that Slave Falls took its name from a slave of the Chippewa who escaped from his captors and procured a canoe, but either by design or accident went over the falls and was killed. Bell, *Historical Names*, p. 2.

⁹³ John Sutherland was a few years later to be in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company post at the Elbow of the Assiniboine River, near the site of Fort Pelly. He is mentioned frequently in McLeod's diary. See below, page 126. Little seems to be known about Donald McKay other than that he was a Hudson's Bay Company trader who sometimes went by the nickname "Mad" McKay. See below, page 107.

made nine carrying places and passed the night at the *Grand des Eaux qui remeuent*.⁹⁴

Friday 30th Augt. Passed the three Decharges and the last portages of the River Winipic. Upon a high round knoll between the last Rapid on the N.E. Shore of the River stood a french Fort of which there is now not a vestige remaining except the clearing. This place is now called by the men Pointe au F—e. Two leagues lower down on the opposite side of the River is the North West Company's Fort built by Mons^r Toussaint Le Sieur a year ago. This is also called bas de la Riviere Fort, for three miles below it the Rivier Winipic discharges into the lake Winipic after a course of an hundred computed Leagues from *Lac des Bois*.⁹⁵ This fort is chiefly dependant upon fish taken in its environs for subsistence except when the provisions from the Red River are deposited here. The remains of the Biscuit we brought from the Grand Portage has been so bruised in the carrying places that we find it now most convenient to eat it with a spoon.

31st Aug^t. D. M^cK. alias Mackay *le malin* passed with his three Boats and two Canoes. Attended our ladings giving the canoes 21 ^{ps} and the Boats, three in number, 23 ^{ps} each, of the largest and most clumsy [articles] such as cases of guns, Iron, knives, hats, with cassettes and sacks flour.

⁹⁴ The Portage des Eaux qui Remuent would be in English the Portage of the Troubled Waters. It is mentioned by Belcourt, *Itinéraire*, p. 52, and by Garry, "Diary," Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 1900, Section 2, p. 133.

⁹⁵ Fort Maurepas was an old post built by La Vérendrye in 1734. It was originally situated near the mouth of the Red River but was soon removed to the mouth of the Winnipeg, where it was re-established on the eastern shore. Although this fort was not maintained by the British, a post was built by the Northwest Company on the opposite bank which was variously known as the Bas de la Rivière post or Fort Alexander. In 1800 Harmon reported that the Hudson's Bay Company had located a post in the immediate neighborhood. After the merging of the two companies a single post was maintained, which was called Fort Alexander. See McGillivray, *Journal*, p. 5; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 237; Harmon, *Journal*, p. 46; Bell, *Historical Names*, p. 2; Coues, *New Light*, 1:35n. The voyageurs were not squeamish in giving names to topographical features, as Pointe au Foutre shows.

Sunday Sept. 1st. Left le Sieurs Fort, a head wind prevented our reaching the *Isle a la Biche* till about ten P. M.

2nd. Made a large Bay called la *Baie du Portage*, at sunset when the wind fell.⁹⁶

Thursday 3rd. Made the Grand marais where we were stoped by the same wind that kept us back since we entered the lake. At this last campment had to shift some of the bagages, six times during the night the shore being flat and the wind violent of the Lake. The Hu[d]son's Bay Party is here with us.

Wednesday the 4th. Started after sunrise, made the traverse to the entrance of the red River Streight. The men call it six leagues, entered the long wished for Red River. It is only reckoned 18 Leagues from the mouth of the River winipic to the mouth of the Red River; that is, six from the latter to the Grand Marais, six from the Grand Marais to Fall a la Biche and six from the latter place to the entrance of River Winipic.

The Red River enters Lake Winipic by a variety of channels seperated from one another by low Islands full of Rushes and Reeds, one only of which produces a few conspicuous trees for land mark; A sand bank stretches from the shore for two miles opposite to their channels. Got provisions of fish from all the Indians we saw at the mouth of the River of which we are in great want having left the Grand Portage with only 3 Sacks corn to a canoe which were out at *bas de la Riviere* and they have had nothing since but half a sack of flour per canoe and whole one to each Boat excepting what little provisions we got from the Indians; but the Red River abounding in fish the industrious at that employ caught a

⁹⁶ Ile à la Biche is Elk Island. The regular canoe route from Grand Portage to the Assiniboine area followed the river system through Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods, and Lake Winnipeg. From Fort Alexander traders paddled across the bay at the southeastern end of the lake, passed inside Elk Island, and turned due south past Portage Bay. Having crossed a large bay known as Grand Traverse, they entered the mouth of the Red River, which they ascended to the forks where the Red and the Assiniboine rivers join.

sufficient number to relieve their hunger. The Trading with the Indians prevented our proceeding farther than Six leagues into the River this day and put up for the night at old seite of M^r Jos. Frobishers Fort, the first he ever entered [wintered?] at in the interior of the North West. This place is now overgrown with brush so as [not] to be known except from the traditions of the antients. The *Rivier aux morts* is about half way between this siet and the lake — a league from the Lake you have the whole Red River together which is here a ¼ to ½ mile wide.⁹⁷

[d. Tuesday] Thursday 5th September. Overtook D. M^cKay and his Hudson's Bay Party in the Rapid of sault a la Biche, (they having passed us while trading with the savages in [?] the entry of the Red River) about noon. Here I broke my canoe, being the eighth stove, in so as to be hauled up in this Rapid, slept at the head of the sault a la Biche which is masy and shallow and called by the voyageurs 3 Leagues long. The Great Plains began at the River aux morts, but the soil is so rich that grass grows nearly as tall as a man upon them, so that it is impracticable to walk and keep up with the canoes.

Friday 6th Sep^t. Arrived at the Forks after comming five leagues from the head of the sault a la Biche.⁹⁸ The Distance from here to lake Winipic is reckoned twenty leagues and

⁹⁷ The Dead (or Death) River was originally the Indian equivalent, Nipuwini or Nipuwinsipi. The melancholy name recalled the tragedy of a camp of Crees, old people and children, who were attacked and massacred by the Sioux while their warriors were taking furs to Hudson's Bay. In later years the stream went by the name of Nettley Creek. A short distance above the mouth of the river was the spot where Joseph Frobisher spent the winter of 1770-71. Coues, *New Light*, 1:41, 42, and note.

⁹⁸ The junction of the Red and the Assiniboine rivers had been the site of Fort Rouge, established about 1738 by La Vérendrye. This was the earliest white settlement in the Red River area. At the time of Macdonell's voyage, no post was maintained at the forks, but in 1806 the Northwesters built Fort Gibraltar, and from that time a post under one name or another was operated by the fur traders. Agricultural settlement began with Lord Selkirk's project of a Red River Colony in 1811 and persisted until Fort Garry, which replaced Fort Gibraltar, came to be known as Winnipeg.

from thence to *Bas de la Rivier* eighteen so that the whole distance from *Bas de la Rivier* to here is about 38 Leagues but as all these accounts are exaggerated I think a fourth may be deducted to come at the truth. At the Forks we found two lodges of Indians who have a Moose deer killed not far off, sent six men for the meat of it which they are to bring on their backs, our flour and Biscuit, are now, entirely out, and we shall have to live like Indians upon fish or flesh; as providence supplies us. At these Forks we leave the Main Red River that comes from the Scioux country to our left and enter the small branch called the *assinibouan River*.

Saturday 7th Sept. Rain-bound till Sunday late in the afternoon — so we may only be said to have shifted our camp.

[d. Monday] Sunday 8th Sept. At the passage we found a Buffalo Bull which the men killed; Being the first I saw, I was struck with its coarse aspect.

Monday 9th. Rained and loud peals of Thunder. Our hunters killed another Buffalo.⁹⁹ Ever since the *forks* we have walked on delightfull plains — so extensive that the view is only terminated by the horizon; the country perfectly level. The River windes so that we can keep a head of the canoes and have time enough to hunt and fish.

Tuesday 10th. Passed the place where M^r Blondishes Fort stood.¹⁰⁰ Slept opposite to a large morass or swamp in the plains which resounded all night with the various cries of Swans, geese, Ducks &c.

Wednesday 11th. The Strip of wood that lines the River has now got so large that we remain in the canoes as it might be trouble some to find them when required. Passed the seite

⁹⁹ A trading party always hired hunters, whose task it was to supply meat for the men. These men went out, often for days at a time, sending in to camp occasionally for men to come and bring in the game they had killed. In regions where it was possible, the hunters were active even while a party was en route, as here, to the post where they were to spend the winter.

¹⁰⁰ Macdonell has confused the first and last names of this trader. Maurice Blondeau was one of the first traders to penetrate the Red River district after the British conquest. See Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, pp. 192-196.

of an ancient Fort *de la Reine*.¹⁰¹ The spot on which it stood can scarcely be known from the place being grown up with wood. Supped upon a Bear killed by the hunters and while at supper a Snake came into the Tent and was not perceived till it got half its length across M^r Neil Mackay's plate.

12th. The Hunter requested our staying where we were till we heard him fire. An hour after his departure we heard him fire about twelve shots. Upon his return we sent for the meat of an Elk or Moose Deer, with her fawn and a Red Deer he had killed — bringing and dividing the meat most of the day.

13th. The Hunter killed a Red Deer.

Saturday 14th. Raised Bark to mend our canoes. Passed the scites of several old Forts particularly that of Mons^r de S^t Pierre near the portage de la Prairie.¹⁰² Slept three pipes above the last mentioned place. From the portage La prairie the French used to carry their goods and canoes three leagues across the plains to Lake Manitou-a-barac [?] which communicates with our present rout to Fort Dauphin.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Fort la Reine was a post established about 1738 by La Vérendrye's men as a basis of operations from which a line of posts could be organized extending north to the Saskatchewan. The exact location of the fort is uncertain, but it appears to have stood near Portage la Prairie, possibly a short distance below it. It was burned by the Crees about 1752, and Fort des Trembles replaced it as a fur post. See below, page 112; Bell, *Historical Names*, pp. 4, 5; Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:270; and Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 195.

¹⁰² Jacques le Gardeur, Sieur de St. Pierre, became, during more than thirty years in Canada, one of the most noted officers in the service of New France. He gained an unusual familiarity with Indian languages and was very skillful in dealing with the natives in war, as well as in diplomacy and in trade. In 1750 he was sent west to continue the explorations of La Vérendrye, and penetrated as far as the Saskatchewan. In 1753 he was in western Pennsylvania, where he received George Washington, then messenger from Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia. He met his death in the Battle of Lake George in 1755. See a sketch of his life in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 17:165. It is suggested by some historians that the Rivière St. Pierre, later to be called the Minnesota River, may have taken its name from Jacques le Gardeur.

¹⁰³ Lake Manitou-a-banc is Lake Manitoba. The younger Henry uses the same nomenclature in his journal of 1803 and 1804. See Coues, *New Light*,

Sunday 15th. Buried John Miln's child who died last night at the seitt of the *Fort des Trembles*.¹⁰⁴ This fort was abandoned twelve years ago (or the year of the small Pox). The savages having attempted in a treacherous manner to take the property and murder all the whites in it, they were beat off with the loss of seven Indians killed; the whites also lost three men killed. Camped at L'Anse aux Pieres.

Monday 16th. Took the land road on foot with M^r C. Grant with all the clearks and Interpreters to lighten the canoes, the water being very low. Some time ago a courier was sent to *pine fort* for Horses to lighten the canoes. This day we met four young Indians who left the fort after hearing of the canoes by our emmissary, from them we learnt the tragical end of M^r David Monin the North West cleark whom M^r Robert Grant left in charge of Pine fort last spring. He undertook a jaunt to the Mississouy country contrary to his duty by the solicitations of Morgan, Jussomme and Cardin free men who accompanied him, for the austensible motive of providing himself with a capital horse; but on his return from there accompanied by Morgan, he fell in with a war party of Scioux, who had just cut off fifteen lodges of Assinibouans near tête a la Biche, and who instantly dispat[c]hed both.¹⁰⁵

1:236. The French could easily reach the lake by way of the Rat and White Mud rivers; they then paddled north through the lake to Fort Dauphin, then situated at the northern end. The dotted line on the map on page 128 shows the usual route of the British to Lake Manitoba. In the British period, Fort Dauphin was the name given to a post built by Peter Pond on the north shore of Lake Dauphin and later removed to the Ochre River a few miles south of the lake. Ernest Voorhis, *Historic Forts and Trading Posts of the French Régime and of the English Fur Trading Companies* (Ottawa, 1930), p. 58.

¹⁰⁴ According to Coues, John Miln was at this time in charge of Pine Fort, one of the Northwest Company's posts on the Assiniboine. But Macdonell speaks of David Monin as having been left in charge of Pine Fort the previous spring. Possibly Miln replaced Monin when the latter was killed by the Sioux, as mentioned in the next entry. Fort des Trembles was situated on the south bank of the river about five miles above Portage la Prairie. It was abandoned about 1781 because of Indian raids. Coues, *New Light*, 1:292; 3:986; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, p. 195.

¹⁰⁵ The upper Mississippi and Missouri valleys were a region in which there was considerable rivalry between the British traders in Canada and the

Below River du milieu, we [?] met five Horses with all the provisions that were at Pine Fort on their Backs. Disagreeable news to us who had been on Short allowance for a fortnight. Horses came to this country from the Spanish settlement, and are spread all over as far as the plains extend — the native use them in war and to [word illegible] down Buffaloes, some are very fleet. Stealing them is an endless source of quarrel

Spaniards to the south. During the period of the American Revolution the Spanish, finding themselves unable to supply the Indians with the goods they desired, gave the British permission to engage in a trade with the natives which had previously been closed to them. This was the beginning of the decline of Spanish control in the northern area, a decline to which the activities of the Canadians during the decade from 1790 to 1800 further contributed. The expedition of Monin with Morgan and Jussomme seems not to have been undertaken as a trading project of the Northwest Company. In December, 1793, an expedition of nine men was equipped by Macdonell to go to the Mandans and trade with them, but the goods supplied were charged against their personal accounts. Eight of these men returned the following spring, Macdonell entering their arrival in his diary under the date of March 13. According to Captain McKay, who mentions the incident in his journal, the Canadians were not successful in their trading efforts because of rivalry among themselves. Chrysostome Joncquard, a member of the expedition, who remained behind on the Missouri, was taken south in 1795 by Jacques d'Eglise, and gave to the Spanish at St. Louis important information regarding the activities of the Canadians. In October, 1794, Jussomme, who had escaped the fate of Morgan and his companions, led a party sent by the Northwest Company from the Mouse River post to the Mandan region. This time Jussomme established a more permanent post, where the British carried on their trade until dislodged in 1796 by John Evans, an explorer in the service of a company of Spanish merchants at St. Louis. For further detail regarding the trading efforts of the British and of the Spanish see Abraham P. Nasatir, "The Anglo-Spanish Frontier in the Illinois Country during the American Revolution, 1779-1783," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 21:291-358; Nasatir, "Jacques d'Eglise on the Upper Missouri, 1791-95," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 14:47-56; "Documents on the Spanish Exploration of the Upper Missouri," translated and edited by Nasatir, in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 14:57-71; Milo M. Quaife, ed., "Extracts from Capt. McKay's Journal — and Others," *Wisconsin State Historical Society Proceedings*, 1915, pp. 186-210. The original manuscript of Macdonell's journal covering the period from October 11, 1793, to June 6, 1795, gives information regarding expeditions to the Mandan region which does not appear in the printed portion of the diary as published by Masson. Pertinent entries are those for December 6, 8, 10, 1793; March 13, 1794; October 6, 1794; and May 21, 1795.

amongst the savages. The Indian's horse is accustomed to provide for himself during winter; It paws away the snow to get to the Grass.

Wednesday 18th. The canoes [that] came to us at Rivier du Millieu were lightened of some peices to be forwarded on Horseback to the Pine Fort for which place M^r C Grant and Augé started on horseback, leaving me to give their ladings to the horses when they came.

Saturday 21st. Every thing having gone I set out on foot for Fort distant ten leagues and arrived at it two hours before sunset. Starvation worse at the Fort [than] along the road. The people who were out in various directions looking for Indians with provissions returned on the 26th with nine lodges of assinibouans well loaded with peices [of] meat. These people formerly a tribe of the Scioux or Naudawessi; live in Tents made of leather which they carry with them when they remove from one place to another. They make each Dog haul a trunk [?] (made of two sticks tied close together right over the dogs head, the other end of which drags upon the ground as far asunder as a pair of Cart wheels, upon which they put from 50 to 100 ^{lbs} weight according to the dog's strength) both summer and winter.¹⁰⁶

Saturday 28th. Sent off the canoes and goods for the upper posts. It begins to freeze hard at night. Indeed it is remarked that the frost invariably [begins] here about the 25 September.

Monday 30th. Left the Pine Fort on foot having a few horses to carry our provisions and bedding for we are not to sleep with the canoes any more. There are two sorts of Juniper in the plains, one of which grows in tufts while the other runs on the ground like a vine. The berries of each are so alike that I would find no difference; the leaf of the latter is verry like Red Cedar. These berries are not yet quite ripe.

Tuesday 1st Oct^b. M^r C. Grant placed Augé in opposition

¹⁰⁶ This crude form of drag was called the *travois* and was used rather commonly by the plains Indians. See Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, Part 1, p. 802.

to M^r Ranald Cameron whom M^r Peter Grant settled at a new place two miles above the mouth of the River La Sourie; a small river from the S. W. that empties itself into the Assinibouan River.¹⁰⁷

Thursday 3rd Oct. After walking till 3 P. M. I mounted a high round hill from the summit of which I spyed three Buffaloes on a hill at some distance. Having got two men to accompany me we killed one of the three, a thigh of which I carried to our campment to make Steaks.

Friday 4th. We killed five large Bulls.

Saturday 5th. Overtook M^r Peter Grant and his canoes above the River au *bois de flèche*. The River continues so crooked all this time that in two hours we can travel as much as the canoes can do from sunrise to sunset. Our remaining time is agreeably spent in hunting Buffaloes many of which we kill, or in fishing, the River abounding in fish.

Monday 7th. Incredible numbers of Buffaloes to be seen in all directions.

Friday [*sic*] 8th Oct. Arrived at the Fort of the River qui *appelle* where I am to winter. This place is built upon the banks of the small river qui *appelle*, four leagues over land from where it falls into the Assinibouan River. I am informed it was established by M^r Rob. Grant in the year 1787.¹⁰⁸

The Red or rather Assinibouan River is the part most abounding in all the north west, the following animals are natives of it, viz—Buffaloes, Moose Deers, Originals, Elks,

¹⁰⁷ Ranald Cameron was later to be active in the trade of the Nipigon region. He was a clerk there in 1797, and was reported as being there with Duncan Cameron in 1799. Masson, *Bourgeois*, 1:64; Coues, *New Light*, 1:189. He is mentioned by Farics, below, page 225. For the activities of David and Peter Grant in opposition to the Northwest Company see above, page 95n. The Souris (Mouse) River is a considerable stream in North Dakota.

¹⁰⁸ Masson speaks of a legend which grew up around the name of the Qu'appelle River. The stream was supposed to have been haunted by a spirit whose voice wailed in the night, causing the natives to call it *la rivière qui appelle*. Masson, *Bourgeois*, 2:274n. In regard to the founding of the fort see above, page 96n.

Red Deer, Cabeniers [?] of various kinds, Grizzly, Black, Brown, and yellow [*sic*] Bears, carcajoux, Badgers, Raccoons not plenty, skunks, large ground squirrels of two kinds, Fishers, Minks, Martins, Lynx, Wolves, Foxes, Kitts, the common Red wood squirrel, and the striped Swiss—moles and mice in great abundance, Eagles, Vultures (*oiseau Puant*) Crows and Rooks, a variety of Hawks, and Owls. The water fowls are Pelicans, swans of two kinds, Gray or Bustard Geese of two kinds, stock Ducks (*canard de France*), several kinds of Teals and Divers or Poule d'eau; with beavers, Otters, and Musk Rats, weazels and two kinds hare; i. e.; the common wood and the *lievre de Prairie* twice his size. Pheasants are very plenty about as big as house hens, something like the Grouse or Moor fowl at home.¹⁰⁹ The River is stocked with the following fish viz—Sturgeons which ascends it to spawn in the spring of the year, Breams, suckers or carpes, Pike, Doré, Cat fish or *Barbue*, Mulletts, *Mâe Achigan* called by the Men Mâle Achigan and Nacaishe. The men call these latter Lacaiche, and they abound in some places to that degree that I caught a score of them with a hook while the canoes stopped to smoke their pipes.¹¹⁰ The wild plumb, and Grape, the pair, choak and sand cherries, Summer berry and the Rasp-

¹⁰⁹ Professor Innis suggests that *kitts* may have reference to the small prairie fox, commonly known as the kit fox. The carcajoux is the *Meles labrodorica*, or the American badger. The *lièvre des prairies* is the prairie hare. See Monseigneur Taché, *Esquisse sur le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique* (Montreal, 1869), p. 112. The *poule d'eau* is the water hen or grebe. Four varieties are listed by Taché, who makes a distinction between these and his classification of divers. The *canard de France* is the mallard, a species of large duck found in abundance in the Canadian Northwest. Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, translated by Captain D. R. Cameron (Montreal, 1870), pp. 197, 201.

¹¹⁰ The malashagané is mentioned by Taché as having the peculiar power of producing a noise like a distant beating of a drum deep in the water. It is a good fish for eating. The doré is another name for the American sandre, also a palatable species. Suckers or carps were used for food, though without enthusiasm, especially when the diet was restricted in variety. The catfish, or barbue, takes its name from its beard appendages (barbes) and its broad, square head. The meat of the fish is rich and well-flavored. Taché, *Sketch of the North-West*, pp. 207-210.

berry are also natives of this country. Names of the Portages from Lake Superior to Red River—1st Grand Portage 3 Leagues Long, 2nd Perdrix, 3rd Grosse Roche, 4th Carribou, 5th L'Outarde ½ league long, 6th L'Original, 7th Grand des Cerises, 8th and 9th the two vases, 10th Petit Portage Noeuf, 11th Grand Portage noeuf ½ league long, 12th La Marte, 13th Les Perches, 14th Heighth of Land, 15th l'Escalier, 16th Le Cheval de Bois, 17th Gros des Pins, 18th Petit Rocher de Saguinaga, 19th Petit Rocher de la Prairie, 20th La Prairie, 21st 22nd 23rd The 3 Rochers des Couteaux, 24th La Carpe, 25th Gros des Bois Blancs, 26th Petit des Bois Blancs, 27th Grand des Pins, 28th La Pointe de Bois, 29th Petit Rocher du Lac Croche, 30th Le Rideau, 31st Le flacon, 32nd 33rd 34th Les 3 Portages La croix, 35 & 36, Les deux petits Portages Neuf, 37th La Chaudiere in view of Fort L. L. P.

The Portages from Lac La Pluie to Lake Winipic are, 1st Portage in Lake of the woods, 2nd Portage du Rat, 3rd La terre Jaune, 4th Petit Rocher de Charette, 5th La Terre Blanche, 6th Portage de l'Isle, 7th Châte a Jaco, 8th Pointe de Bois, 9th Petit Roché, 10th Roché Brulé, 11th Châte des Esclaves, 12th La Barriere, 13th 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th The six Portages of the Riviere Blanche, 19th & 20th The 2 Petit Rochers du Bonnet, 21st Le Bonnet about a mile Long, 22nd Galais du Bonnet, 23rd La Terre Blanche, 24th 25th 26th Les trois eaux qui Remuent.

From Lachine to Lake Superior	36 Por ^s
From Lake Superior to Lac la Pluie	36 "
From Lake la Pluie to Lake Winipic	26 "

Total Portages from Montreal to Lake Winipic 98 "

I add for your information all the portages from York House H. B. to Lake winipic and consequently to the Red River settlement p^r Ja^s Halero who knows the Road well having been twenty years voyaging in the Hudson's Bay Service.

Hill River

1 st	The Rock	10 yds	long
2 nd	White mud	50 "	"
3 rd	Little Rock	30 "	"
4 th	Burnt wood	60 yds	long
5 th	Upper Burnt wood	60 "	"
6 th	Swamp in y ^o hill	120 "	"
7 th	Little Rocky Portage	50 "	"
8 th	Mossy	350 "	" or 1/4 mile
9 th	Little Rock	100 "	"
10 th	Mr Thomson's Por ^t	50 "	"
11 th	Upper	"	50 "
12 th	D—l's Creek	20 "	"
13 th	Grownwater's Island	15 "	"

now pass swampy Lake
and then Jack River

14 th	Hand ^s place Jack Ri.	130 yds	
15 th	Long Portage	400 "	1/4 mile
16 th	Swampy "	400 "	1/4 "
17 th	Little Rock	12 "	"
18 th	Uppermost Jack River	70 "	"

then pass Knee Lake

Trout River

19 th	Trout fall	50 yds	Long
20 th	Middle Portage	60 "	"
21 st	Upper	"	60 "
22 nd	Crooked Chute above	20 "	"
23 rd	Back Creek	200 "	"

Then holy Lake Oxford house

Jack River

24 th	Wapanapans	40 "	"
25 th	Middle Portage	20 "	"
26 th	Upper Spout	25 "	"
27 th	Hill Portage	800 "	1/2 mile
28 th	White Fall	1200 "	3/4 "

29 th	Painted Stone	40 "	"
30 th	Stony Beaver Dam	40 "	"
31 st	Little " " "	20 "	"
32 nd	Sea River	25 "	"

Jack River—Riviere au Brochét
Plea Gru & Lake Winipic

My informant says this is utmost number of portages to be carried over at the lowest he ever saw the water.