

With Cass in the Northwest in 1820

Edited by Ralph H. Brown

ON NOVEMBER 18, 1819, Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory placed before John C. Calhoun, secretary of war, his long-considered plans for an exploration of the interior Northwest. "It has occurred to me," he said in preface, "that a tour through that country, with a view to examine the production of its animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, to explore its facilities for water communication, to delineate its natural objects, and to ascertain its present and future probable value, would not be uninteresting in itself, nor useless to the Government."¹

This would seem to constitute a full program for a summer's expedition, but several "political objects," more definitely Cassian, also are listed. These include a personal inspection of the Indian tribes, the extinction of Indian land titles at many strategic sites, an examination of the copper deposit on the Ontonagon River, an inquiry into the attitude of the Indians at Chicago respecting the removal of the Six Nations to that area, a survey of the state of the British fur trade in the more remote districts, and instructions to the Indians of the views of the United States relative to their intercourse with the British at Malden and elsewhere.

Believing that the border Indians, especially the Chippewa, should be ruled with a firm hand, Cass proposed to announce to them in unmistakable terms that their visits to British posts "must be discontinued." The time had come, he said in effect, to exhibit to the Northwestern Indians the power and beneficence of the federal government. "I think it very important," writes Cass, who was experienced in Indian affairs, "to carry the flag of the United States into

¹ Lewis Cass to John C. Calhoun, November 18, 1819, in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 2:318. The exploration of the headwaters of the Mississippi was not officially referred to, although the Cass journalists included this in their lists of objectives. The examination of the copper deposit at Ontonagon is listed as a "political objective," presumably because of the government's interest in copper for use in building ships.

those remote regions, where it has never been borne by any person in a public station." If economy must be thought of, one canoe, piloted by French boatmen, would be adequate, but if the government wished some display of power, an additional canoe, "manned with active soldiers, and commanded by an intelligent officer," was highly to be recommended. Allegiance of the aborigines could also be maintained or won over by the distribution of presents. For this, funds would be required, but not in staggering amounts. In fact, it was estimated that the whole tour could be financed for less than fifteen hundred dollars, to be diverted from the usual sum appropriated for Indian expenditures.

As Calhoun read toward the end of the letter, the full scope of the expedition was gradually revealed. Would it not be desirable to assign to the party an officer from the corps of engineers, one capable of taking astronomical positions and of constructing a correct map? Furthermore, "some person acquainted with zoology, botany, and mineralogy" would contribute greatly to the geographical objectives of the party. Cass closed his long letter by saying that he would like an early reply, "as it will be necessary to prepare a canoe during the winter . . . should you think it proper to approve the plan."²

For several weeks, Cass awaited an answer, or at least an intimation of the secretary's attitude. In the hope of speeding a decision, Cass requested that William Woodbridge, Michigan's territorial delegate in Washington, act in his behalf. As early as mid-December a correspondent urged that if Calhoun approved of the expedition "it would be peculiarly desirable to Gov. Cass to be advised of such fact as early as possible. The materials of which the Bark canoes of the Lake Country are made, can be procured only by sending a great distance to Indians remote from Detroit, and the apprehension is lest they should not be purchased in time for the next season."³ When

² Cass to Calhoun, November 18, 1819, in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 2:319.

³ From an unsigned letter to Calhoun, dated December 13, 1819, and probably written by William Woodbridge, in the Department of War, Letters Received, National Archives, Washington. The Minnesota Historical Society has microfilm copies of all letters and other items from the National Archives cited herein. See also, Cass to Calhoun, November 18, 1819, in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 2:319.

Cass learned that his "political objects" had not found favor with the secretary of war, he again sought Woodbridge's intervention. "I am peculiarly solicitous," he informed the delegate, "that directions be given for the extinction of the land titles at the places stated in my letter to Mr. Calhoun. These were 1. In the vicinity of the Straits of St. Marys, 2. At the bed of copper ore on Lake Superior, 3. At Prairie du Chien, 4. At Green Bay, 5. Upon the water communication between the two latter places. . . . I consider it very necessary that the country upon each side of the Fox and Ouisconsin Rivers should belong to the United States. At present we are mere trespassers."⁴

The proposed tour was officially sanctioned on January 14, 1820, Calhoun expressing personal approval, even enthusiasm, for its geographical objectives. He suggested in addition that "Should your *reconnaissance* extend to the western extremity of Lake Superior, you will ascertain the practicability of a communication between the Bad or Burntwood [*Brule*] river and the Copper or St. Croix and the facility they present for a communication with our post on the St. Peter's [*Minnesota*]. The Montreal rivers will also claim your attention, with a view to establishing through them a communication between Green Bay and the west end of Lake Superior." However, Cass was not to engage in treaty making except as prescribed in a letter of April 5 by which he was authorized to negotiate for a military site, not exceeding ten miles square, at the Sault de Ste. Marie. Finally, the expedition was approved, provided it could "be made out of the sum allotted to your superintendency of Indian affairs, adding thereto one thousand dollars for that special purpose."⁵

The personnel of the expedition was to include, according to Calhoun's original plan, "some officers of the topographical engineers"

⁴ Cass to Woodbridge, January 29, 1820, Woodbridge Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

⁵ Calhoun to Cass, January 14, April 5, 1820, in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 2:319, 320. The post to which Calhoun refers is Fort St. Anthony, now Fort Snelling, which was established at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers in the summer of 1819. The Cass expedition cost exactly \$6,318.02; Dr. M. M. Quaife suggests that the "results accomplished were in inverse proportion to this insignificant item." See "From Detroit to the Mississippi in 1820," in *Burton Historical Collection Leaflet*, 6:60 (March, 1930).

and "a person acquainted with zoology, and botany, and mineralogy." Many likely candidates were approached by both Cass and Calhoun before the staff was finally complete. Economy dictated that members should receive no more than a dollar and a half a day, a stipend which many competent scientists considered to be inadequate. For example, Cass first proposed Andrew G. Whitney, "a respectable and intelligent lawyer of this place," as observer in zoology and mineralogy. The secretary of war gave his approval to this nominee, although Whitney, whose knowledge touched broadly upon many fields, questioned his own fitness. "I shall endeavour to pick up a little knowledge," he wrote, perhaps with undue modesty, in January, "more than I now have of Botany, Mineralogy, etc., to make my observations more useful"; but later he said, "If I should not go, it will be no loss. My going still depends on the quantum of pay." Whitney finally did not join the party, but aided it nevertheless by buying some of the equipment and interviewing candidates while he was traveling in the East. Many condemned the government's penny-wise policy; a professor of mathematics, for example, urged that by all means the party should include a "first rate astronomer, geologist, and mineralogist," and should be equipped with at least two astronomical theodolites.⁶

Calhoun made two principal appointments: Captain David B. Douglass and Henry R. Schoolcraft. Douglass, then on the West Point faculty, was appointed primarily to fill the post of topographer. He was informed that "The astronomical and topographical observations will of course be made by you, and the departments of zoology and botany will require as much of your attention as you may be able to bestow upon them." Douglass finally accepted the assignment following a lengthy period of consideration during which he wrote to an acquaintance of his concern that acceptance "would have laid me constructively under the obligation to resign even though the expedition (of which at the time I was not so well informed)

⁶ Calhoun to Cass, January 14, April 5, 1820, in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 2:320; A. G. Whitney to Woodbridge, January 28, March 7, 1820, Woodbridge Papers; Cass to David B. Douglass, March 17, 1820, Cass Papers, Burton Historical Collection.

failed to hold out advantages sufficient to justify such a step.”⁷ Calhoun introduced Schoolcraft to Cass as “a gentleman of science and observation, and particularly skilled in mineralogy [who] has applied to me to be permitted to accompany you on your exploring tour. . . . I have directed him to report to you for that duty, under the belief that he will be highly useful to you, as well as serviceable to the Government and to the promotion of science.”⁸

Perhaps Calhoun knew something of Schoolcraft’s literary ambitions, which had already been displayed in the publication of one book and the writing of a number of magazines distributed in manuscript form. Calhoun doubtless surmised that the expedition would gain some publicity as a result of the appointment. In this instance, Schoolcraft proved to be more than prompt, for the *Detroit Gazette* of February 9, 1821, announced that “We are happy to learn that an account of this interesting tour may be expected from the pen of this gentleman, for it is believed that few persons are more competent to the task. His view of the Lead Mines in Missouri, has shewn that in all the essential requisites of an observer and an author, he will ere long claim a distinguished station among the literary men of our country. . . . We learn that Mr. Schoolcraft’s book will be printed in Albany, N. Y. and that it will be completed in March or April.”⁹

The wide coverage and popularity of the Schoolcraft narrative may have forestalled the completion of a geographical work by Douglass. Even after Schoolcraft’s book had been on the market for some weeks, Douglass was writing from West Point saying, “The Sec’y of War has just communicated his approbation to a plan lately furnished by me upon an understanding with Gov’r Cass and

⁷ Douglass to Woodbridge, February 10, 1820, Woodbridge Papers; Cass to Douglass, March 17, 1820, Cass Papers.

⁸ Calhoun to Cass, February 25, 1820, in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 2:320.

⁹ Schoolcraft’s *Narrative Journal of Travels through the Northwestern Regions of the United States . . . to the Sources of the Mississippi River* was published at Albany in 1821. Two years after his expedition of 1832, which resulted in the discovery of Lake Itasca, Schoolcraft issued a new journal, and in 1855 his *Summary Narrative*, which combines accounts of both expeditions, appeared at Philadelphia. The Minnesota Historical Society has a photostatic copy of the file of the *Detroit Gazette* that is owned by the Burton Historical Collection.

Mr. Schoolcraft for the publication of the geographical and other scientific results of our last summer's expedition." The projected volume was to be of wide scope, apparently, for, wrote Douglass, "Agreeably to this plan, besides a map, a memoir Geographical, Descriptive and peradventure Philosophical on the country generally embraced by our observations will fall to my share in the execution of it." Cass wrote approvingly of the prospective Douglass report, saying "The progress of our geographical knowledge has not kept pace with the extension of our Territory, nor with the enterprize of our traders. But I trust that the accurate observations of Capt. Douglass will render a resort to the old French maps for information respecting our own Country entirely unnecessary."¹⁰ Possibly Douglass was glad to be freed from the necessity of completing so stupendous a task. Had Cass lived to see all the printed matter which originated in his tour, however, he would probably have been satisfied. Newton H. Winchell attributes to this source fifteen scientific papers by members of the party or by others to whom botanical and geological collections had been sent.¹¹

Cass appointed the other men who assembled in Detroit late in May for the great adventure. He informed Calhoun that he planned to take Dr. Alexander Wolcott, "Indian Agent at Chicago with the expedition: I do this," Cass explained, "because he is a scientific man and a skilful Physician, and we are therefore not under the necessity of engaging a person for the latter object. The information to be derived from the tour will be useful to him in his future communications with the Indians."¹² James D. Doty, official journalist, prepared at least two reports. Extracts from one, written in the form of a let-

¹⁰ Douglass to Augustus B. Woodward, August 14, 1821, Woodward Papers, Burton Historical Collection; Cass to Calhoun, September 27, 1820, Department of War, Letters Received, National Archives.

¹¹ See N. H. Winchell, in *The Geology of Minnesota*, 1:32 n. (Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota, *Final Report* — Minneapolis, 1884). Among the authors of papers listed are Samuel L. Mitchill, John Torrey, D. H. Barnes, and Isaac Lea. A letter that accompanied a keg of minerals sent to Dr. Daniel Drake of Cincinnati indicates that Schoolcraft carefully selected and labeled the specimens. See Cass to Drake, March 11, 1821, Cass Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

¹² Cass to Calhoun, March 23, 1821, Department of War, Letters Received, National Archives.

ter to Governor Cass, were first published by Jedidiah Morse, who also made a tour of the upper Great Lakes country during the summer of 1820 under the authority of Calhoun. A more complete version of this report was later edited by Lyman C. Draper and published under the title of "Northern Wisconsin in 1820." The other Doty report, primarily a narrative, was edited by Reuben G. Thwaites and may be known briefly as the "Official Journal." This report ends abruptly, for no assigned reason, with the arrival of the party at Prairie du Chien on the return journey. An anonymous account which bears many resemblances to these reports appeared in five installments in the *Detroit Gazette*. The inference that the newspaper story derives from Doty is inescapable. Cass's own report to Calhoun was not intended for publication, though in it he promised later to submit a more complete statement which apparently never was written.¹³

Cass was also responsible for the appointment of Charles Christopher Trowbridge, whose journal of the expedition is herewith reproduced in full. This youth of twenty had been a resident of Detroit for only a year before the organization of the Cass party. When asked by his employer, Major Thomas Rowland, if he would like to accompany the expedition, the young man replied with emphasis that "he would rather black boots than miss it." Following the tour, Trowbridge returned to Detroit where, in 1826, he married Catherine Whipple Sibley, eldest daughter of Judge Solomon Sibley, a family connection which may have led to later visits to the Minnesota area. At least there is some indirect evidence that Trowbridge visited his brother-in-law, Henry H. Sibley, at Mendota in 1843. Bishop Jackson Kemper, who traveled by boat to Fort Snelling in the summer of

¹³ Extracts from Doty's letter are included in Jedidiah Morse, *Report to the Secretary of War of the United States on Indian Affairs*, 55; Appendix, 31-41 (New Haven, 1822). For Doty's "Northern Wisconsin in 1820" and his "Official Journal," see *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 7:195-206, 13:163-219. The anonymous account is in the *Detroit Gazette* for November 24, and December 8 and 29, 1820, and January 12 and 19, 1821; news items announcing the departure and return of the expedition appear in the issues for May 26 and September 15, 1820. Cass's original report of thirteen pages, in the form of a letter to Calhoun, dated October 21, 1820, is among the papers of the office of Indian affairs, in the National Archives; it is published in Schoolcraft's *Summary Narrative*, 280-284.

1843, referred to "C. C. Trowbridge, an assessor on board," and stated his relationship to Sibley.¹⁴

Trowbridge was serving a kind of apprenticeship in his 1820 journey, for on that occasion he began a study of French-Canadian and Indian dialects which fitted him for a post in the Michigan superintendency of Indian affairs. While thus employed, he prepared several documents relating to Indian traditions and cultures, two of which have been published recently. Some of his valuable records were loaned to Francis Parkman during the preparation of that famous author's *Conspiracy of Pontiac*. In 1864 Trowbridge deposited many of his manuscripts in public institutions in Detroit. He evidently enjoyed writing, but, unlike Schoolcraft, was not eager to publish. Exemplifying the essential modesty of this scholar who wrote much but published little is his brief list of titles.¹⁵

It appears probable that Trowbridge's journal of the Cass expedition was written in Detroit from more copious notes recorded in the field. This surmise derives in part from the consistent legibility of the handwriting and the similarity of the ink used throughout. The volume does not seem to have suffered the vicissitudes which might be expected during a lengthy canoe voyage. Furthermore, in 1868, on the one occasion when Trowbridge is known to have quoted from his notes, the statement differs in wording and length from the corresponding portion of the journal.¹⁶ The narrative contains

¹⁴ James V. Campbell, "Biographical Sketch of Charles C. Trowbridge," in *Michigan Pioneer Collections*, 6:478-491; Grace Lee Nute, ed., "Bishop Jackson Kemper's Visit to Minnesota in 1843," *ante*, 7:269n. Additional biographical information has been derived from M. M. Quaife's "Manuscript Briefs," in the Burton Historical Collection.

¹⁵ Trowbridge's *Meeameeear Traditions* and his *Shawnee Traditions* have been published recently by the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan as numbers 7 and 9 of its *Occasional Contributions* (Ann Arbor, 1938, 1939). The former volume has been edited by Vernon Kinietz; the latter, by Mr. Kinietz in collaboration with Erminie W. Voegelin. Perhaps the most comprehensive publication issued by Trowbridge during his lifetime is his "Detroit, Past and Present," in *Michigan Pioneer Collections*, 1:371-385. He is the author also of a letter on "Gen. Cass at St. Marie in 1820" and of a "Note on Eleazer Williams," in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 5:413-416, 7:413; and of a letter on the life of Robert Stuart, a "History of the Episcopal Church in Michigan," a letter of September 5, 1878, on the history of Allegan, and accounts of "The First Saw-mill in Detroit," and of "Detroit in 1819," in *Michigan Pioneer Collections*, 3:53-56, 213-221, 4:173-176, 410, 471-479.

¹⁶ Compare Trowbridge's letter in the *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 5:413-416, with his entry for June 16. In the letter, Trowbridge states that "my journal of the events is now before me."

some additions and corrections, minor changes which could have been entered over a lengthy period, for Trowbridge lived to a venerable age, in fact, he outlived all other members of the expedition. The journal remains essentially the writing of a youth who had grown to manhood in Albany and then was plunged into the raw Northwest frontier in 1820. Through a hundred and fifty pages, the youthful traveler hews closely to his self-appointed task of recorder of facts, incidents, and personal observations. His record, at least, helpfully supplements and clarifies the accounts of the Cass expedition previously published.

The pocket-size journal, written in an admirable hand, is now owned by Mrs. Thomas B. Byrd of Boyce, Virginia, a member of the Trowbridge family. Through her courtesy and the co-operation of Mr. Frank B. Hubachek of Chicago, Dr. Grace Lee Nute of the Minnesota Historical Society, Dr. Randolph G. Adams of the William L. Clements Library in the University of Michigan, and Mr. Edward R. Wright, Mr. Cleveland Thurber, and Mr. Ferris D. Stone of Detroit, the journal was made available to the present writer. Dr. Milo M. Quaife, secretary of the Burton Historical Collection in the Detroit Public Library, has furnished by interview and letter much valuable material necessary to the annotation of the narrative. Extracts from a typewritten copy of the journal made many years ago by Clarence M. Burton for the Burton Historical Collection have been quoted in one of its publications.¹⁷

¹⁷ M. M. Quaife, "From Detroit to the Mississippi in 1820," in *Burton Historical Collection Leaflet*, 6:49-64 (March, 1930). A film copy of the original journal is owned by the Minnesota Historical Society, which received it from the writer. It is accompanied by a copy of an unsigned booklet of rough sketch maps and notations made in pencil, which was found by Mr. Vernon Kinietz among the Trowbridge Papers, in the Burton Historical Collection. Internal evidences suggest that the booklet, which is the same size as the journal, contains field sketches made by Trowbridge as a method of keeping notes. The copying of the Trowbridge journal on film slides and a trip which included among its purposes the inspection of the manuscript by the present writer were financed in part by funds granted by the graduate school of the University of Minnesota.

THE JOURNAL OF CHARLES C. TROWBRIDGE,
MAY 24-SEPTEMBER 13, 1820¹⁸

THE EXPEDITION fitted out by Gover[n]ment, under the direction of his Excellency Lewis Cass, Governor of the Territory of Michigan, for the purpose of exploring the country north and west of Lake Superior, and the practicable communications between that Lake, and the Mississipp[i] River, left the City of Detroit, on the twenty fourth day of May 1820 at 4 p.m, in three bark canoes. These canoes were about five fathoms in length and one fathom in breadth, and being sufficiently strong to withstand the violence of the waves, were capable of carrying about two tons burthen, besides the men and their personal baggage. The Governors suite was composed of eight, viz, Capt. David B. Douglass of the Corps of Engineers, Henry R Schoolcraft Esq a mineralogist, Alexander Wolcott, Physician, Lieut A[e]neas Mackay, of the corps of artillery, Robert A Forsyth Esq private Secretary, James Duane Doty Esq, journalist, A[lexander] R Chase and myself in the capacity of assistants to Cap^t Douglass. We had twelve french voyageurs well acquainted with this mode of travelling, Eleven Soldiers, most of them frenchmen, selected by the Governor on account of their capacity to endure fatigue, Nine Indians of the Ottawa and Chippeway nations, and Two Interpreters, making our party to consist in all of forty three persons, a number sufficiently strong to repel any attacks which we might expect from the savages among whom we intended to travel.¹⁹

¹⁸ The original form of the Trowbridge manuscript has been closely followed. The diarist's paragraphing, spelling, and capitalization are reproduced throughout, and his punctuation has been followed except in cases where he used dashes or colons at the ends of sentences. In the interest of clearness, such punctuation marks have been replaced by periods. Words or passages that Trowbridge crossed out have been omitted unless they contain significant information not otherwise included, in which case they are enclosed in brackets and followed by footnotes explaining that the author intended to omit them.

¹⁹ Of this group, only Cass and Schoolcraft again engaged in exploration. Upon returning from the expedition, Douglass became professor of mathematics at West Point and later was president of Kenyon College. Doty was destined to serve as governor of two territories, Wisconsin and Utah. For sketches of these men, as well as of Cass and Schoolcraft, see the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 3:562-564, 5:390, 405, 16:456. Forsyth, who had the rank of major in 1820, continued his military career. Lieutenant Mackay, who had command of the soldiers of the expedition, also remained in the army and served with distinction in the Mexican War. Dr. Wolcott was Indian agent at Chicago until his death in 1829. Alexander Ralston Chase, a brother of Salmon P. Chase, became a merchant in southern Ohio. The interpreters were James Ryley and Joseph Parks. The entourage, according to Schoolcraft's *Narrative Journal*, 78, included "ten Canadian voyageurs, — seven U. S. soldiers, — ten Indians of the Ottawa and Shawnee tribes, an interpreter and a guide, making thirty-seven persons exclusive of myself."

We were escorted to Grosse Pointé, a distance of ten miles above Detroit, and at the head of Detroit River, by the citizens, in carriages and on horseback,²⁰ and here we were obliged to remain in consequence of violent adverse winds until Friday the 26th at noon, when we ventured to cross Lake St Clair, although the wind had not yet entirely subsided; indeed the waves ran so high that our canoes were sometimes almost filled with water, but by keeping a man at work constantly to throw out, we succeeded in making Lautons Island, about four miles from the mouth of the River St Clair, by nine in the evening: On this island are some handsome farms, cultivated by scotch peasants, by whom we were treated with much hospitality, in part owing perhaps to our wearing Plaided cloaks, which the good old Lady said, gave us a very friendly appearance.²¹

There are a great many mouths to this River but only one ship channel, though there is a resemblance between them: I beli[e]ve there is no difficulty however in finding the correct one.

Saturday 27th May. This morning at 7 we left our friends of the island, not without many prayers for our safety and much caution for our health, & we proceeded up the river, occasionally assisted by a breeze, at the rate of four miles an hour, against a current which for most of the distance is extremely rapid. At 5 oclock p.m. we arrived at Fort Gratiot and landed amidst the roar of cannon, which contrasted with the animated songs of our frenchman had a pleasing effect. The River St Clair is forty miles in length, generally half a mile in width, and extremely regular in its course. The lands are rich and its banks are rendered beautifully picturesque by the many handsome settlements,

²⁰ The ceremonies attending the departure of the expedition are described as follows in the *Detroit Gazette* for May 26, 1820: "The canoes (three in number) are propelled by twenty-six men with paddles, of whom ten are Indians of the Chippewa nation, ten *voyageurs*, or Frenchmen accustomed to the Indian trade, and six U. S. soldiers. A handsome U. S. flag is placed in the stern of each canoe. . . . The departure of the expedition afforded a pleasing, and, to the strangers of this place, a novel spectacle. The canoes were propelled against a strong wind and current with astonishing rapidity; the *voyageurs* regulating the strokes of their paddles by one of their animated row-songs, and the Indians encouraging each other by shouts of exultation. On leaving the shore considerable exertion was made by the voyageurs and Indians in order to take the lead, and a handsome boat race was witnessed, in which the Indians displayed their superior skill, and soon left the other canoes far behind."

²¹ The island doubtless was Laughton's Island, which was also known as Stromness. In a letter to the writer, dated November 19, 1941, Dr. M. M. Quaife of the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit, expressed the opinion that the Scotch settlers referred to were some of the refugees from Lord Selkirk's Baldoon settlement, which lay immediately across the channel from the island.

chiefly made by french people, who if they can have nothing more will build good houses and cultivate fine gardens. There are two principal islands in this River besides Lautons, vis, Hursons & Elk islands; the former is the largest, affords fine farms and is thickly settled.²²

Fort Gratiot is situated on a handsome eminence, commanding the entrance to Lake Huron as well as the Lake itself for some distance, and also the country for miles around. There is at present a very small force stationed here, and that is to be removed before our return, to the upper posts, as there is at present no necessity for their remaining to guard the Country, and above they may be usefully employed in constructing fortifications, &c.

Two Rivers of considerable size empty their waters into River St Clair, Belle Riviere or Handsome River, and Black River.

Sunday 28th May. At eight a. m. We parted with our friends Maj^r [Alexander] Cummings and Lieut Hunt.²³

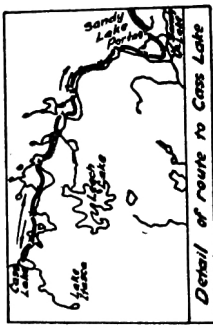
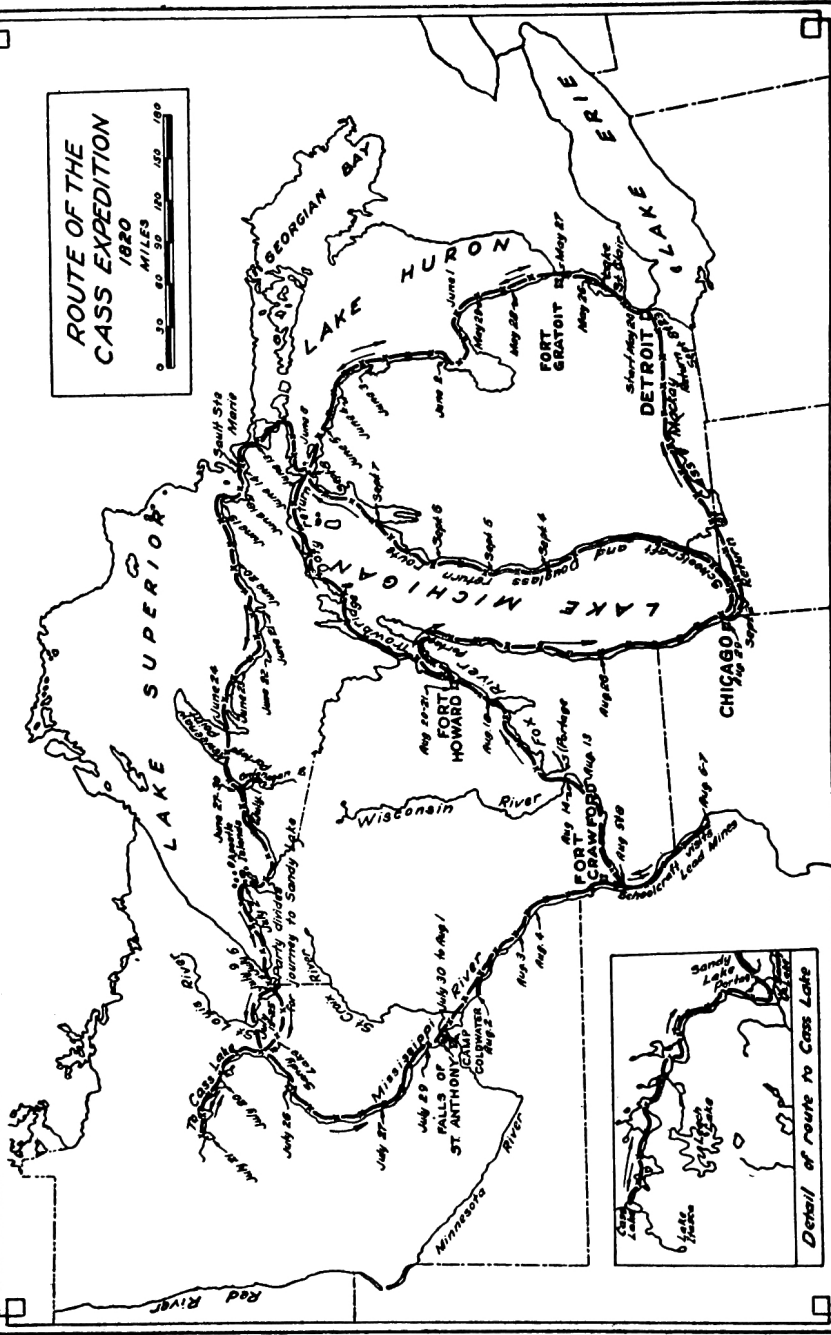
We found the appearance of the Lake and its borders to day much as they had been represented to us, the timber heavy, the soil apparently strong, though the land is generally Low, and we landed and encamped on a Sandy Beach near Long Point, having made to day 33 miles, according to our Voyageurs' estimation.

Monday 29th May. Embarked at 6 oclock a.m. and proceeded on with much ease and pleasantness for 30 miles when a violent wind arose and we were obliged much against our wish to put ashore on a very rocky point, where with the greatest difficulty we succeeded in getting our canoes ashore uninjured; in fact the construction of these vessels, so frail yet so generally and so wisely used for the purposes of navigation on the Rivers of this Country, is such, that without the most extreme caution, the traveller is every hour in danger of losing his canoe, baggage and perhaps his life; for the Bark of which they are constructed is not more than 1/16 of an inch in thickness, and this is stretched over and then sewed to Beams or knees which are not more than 3/8 to 1/2 inch

²² The first-named is probably Harsen's Island. Dr. Quaife, in his letter of November 19, 1941, infers that Elk Island is Isle aux Cerfs.

²³ At this point in the journal Trowbridge crossed out six and a half lines; they are illegible in the film copy. The officers referred to were stationed at Fort Gratiot, in command of sixty men. "The present Fort," says Schoolcraft, in his *Narrative Journal*, 81, "is understood to have been built about the close of the late war, (1814)." He notes that "at a very early period the *Coueurs du Bois*, had erected a Fort at this spot at their own expense. — This was afterwards occupied by the French Government, under the name of *Fort St. Joseph*, and finally abandoned and burnt by the commandant, La Hontan, on the 27th August, 1688."

ROUTE OF THE CASS EXPEDITION 1820



thick; between these knees (which are placed very close to each other) and the bark, are thin pieces of cedar wood, of the thickness of a quarter of an inch and length of ten to twelve feet, and arranged in such a manner as to join the edges, whereby the bark on the outside is prevented from yielding to trifling pressures.

But the greatest strength of a canoe of this kind is in the gunwale (which is made of strong tough wood and well bound with watape) and the stiffening poles which are laid in the bottom of the vessel to support the lading, and prevent it from breaking in the waves. So that a canoe is equally strong and safe, whether laden or empty, provided it is not too heavily laden.²⁴ This afternoon we met five canoes loaded with Indians who were on their way to their hunting grounds. They looked comfortable & happy, and no doubt each one of them who is possessed of a canoe, a gun, a dog and (last because they respect them least) a wife, feels himself a man of as much consequence as the greatest Potentate in Europe.

On this Rocky point we were obliged to remain, very much to our mortification, until Thursday the 1st day of June, when although the wind had not subsided altogether, we were so disgusted with our confined situation that we were glad to put to sea and try our fortune.

Thursday 1st June. But we only proceeded to the next point, three miles distant when we were obliged to land again and stay until 3 in the afternoon. Here however we found something to amuse ourselves with, as the squirrels were plenty, & the land open and dry. In hunting to day one of our indian Hunters shot a very large Bear but did not succeed in getting him.

From this point the distance is eight miles to Black River, a stream of 20 yards in width and in certain seasons is said to abound in fish. From this River to Point[e] au[x] Barque[s] or Vessel Point (so called from the resemblance of the Rocks at the point to a vessel) the distance is 15 miles, and for the whole distance the coast is extremely rocky and dangerous, but particularly so at the point, from which a reef of sharp rocks extends about two miles into the Lake, or rather Bay. This is the southern or south eastern point of Saganau Bay. We had a fair wind

²⁴ This description adds a few essential details to that in Schoolcraft's *Narrative Journal*, 66-70 and plate. Compare also with earlier descriptions in Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal . . . in the Years 1789 and 1793*, xxiv-xxvi (London, 1801), and Douglas S. Robertson, ed., *An Englishman in America, 1785, Being the Diary of Joseph Hadfield*, 108 (Toronto, 1933). Watape is a thong made from the pliant boughs and roots of spruce.

this afternoon which partly compensated us for our misfortune of the morning, and at Sundown we landed in the Bay of Saganau three miles from Pt au Barque, having made 23 miles.²⁵

Friday June 2nd. At 5 oclock this morning we left our encampment, and proceeded up Saganau Bay for Point au Chene [*Oak Point*]. About 6 miles from Pt au Barque is La Riviere au Tourte or Pigeon River, which is navigable for Boats a few miles and takes its rise in a small Lake near Pt au Chene, called Me-ke-nau-ko-kau-ning or Turtle Lake, which is 5 miles in circumference.

From Point au Chene (which is 15 miles distant from Pt au Barque) the distance to the crossing island is 12 miles. The course from the point to the island is N.67.w. — it is called by the Voyageurs Mackinaw island,²⁶ and by the indians Shau-wanagunk, is four miles in circumference, well timbered, and has proved very interesting in the mineralogical way, as Mr Schoolcraft procured some elegant specimens of chalcedony and flint here. There are two small islands near this between which the water is very shallow.

After remaining on the island a short time to rest the men, we steered for the northern point of the Bay, which is called Cranberry point and is distant from the island 20 miles.²⁷ This is a low Sandy point, destitute in a great measure of herbage & affording in other respects little appearance of vegetation.

From this point we continued on ten miles, when we arrived at La Riviere au Sable or Sandy River, where we encamped.

This river is thirty yards wide at its mouth and though its entrance is obstructed by a sand bar, it is very deep above; it is navigable for 6 miles with boats of considerable sise, and to the head waters which are about 60 miles from the Lake, with canoes; its waters abound in fish particularly sturgeon, of which an abundance was presented to us by the natives, who reside here at all seasons of the year in considerable numbers. In consequence of a fair wind for this afternoon, we made to day 62 miles.

Saturday June 3rd. On inquiry I learn that Saganau Bay at its mouth

²⁵ Probably the site of present-day Port Austin, Huron County. Pointe aux Barques derived its name, according to Doty, in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 13:170, from the fancied resemblance of the rocks to the stern of a vessel.

²⁶ The larger of the Charity Islands, in modern nomenclature.

²⁷ Cranberry Point is identifiable as Tawas Point, east of Tawas City. The mouth of the Au Sable River, where the party encamped, is about fifteen canoe miles from Tawas Point.

is about 55 miles wide, but seldom crossed there on account of the danger should a wind rise from any direction.²⁸

To day we embarked at 6 a. m. from Sandy River to Thunder Bay the distance is 30 miles and the shore is extremely uninteresting. The Bay is 14 miles wide at the mouth and 16 m. deep. We crossed it in one hour and forty minutes with a fair wind.

In a direction N.E. from the northern point of Thunder Bay, and about two miles distant from the shore lay three islands called Thunder Bay Islands. From Saganau to Thunder Bay the shore is sandy. After waiting the arrival of one of the canoes which had remained behind through fear, we continued our journey, and at night landed on a point 12 miles distant from Thunder Bay, called Sho-she-ko-kau-ning or Flat Stone Point. On this point Mr. Schoolcraft collected an abundance of specimens, chiefly organic remains and many of them of animals now extinct. The land from Saganau to this place appears sandy and barren, but we are told that it falls into a low swampy country. Opposite to flat-stone point and about 2 miles from the shore lays middle Island, so called, as is supposed from its being equidistant from Pt au Barque & Michilimackinac.²⁹

Sunday June 4th This morning we embarked at 6 but before we had proceeded two miles, a violent storm arose accompanied by thunder and lightning, and we were in consequence of it obliged to stay 2 hours when we again put out and continued on the water until sunset, when we landed on a point called by the indians Ke-no-sha-kah-ning, or Portage Point. Here we were much troubled with the musqu[i]toes, now very numerous, and succeeded in getting little sleep on account of their invasions, for although we were all provided with Bars or Nets, yet we did not trouble ourselves to pitch them. The evening was somewhat cold, and we found our Buffaloe skins and Blankets very comfortable.

Monday 5th June. We left Portage Point at 8 a. m. and in Two hours our canoes arrived at She-bah-tah-wah-gog or Presqu' Isle, we having been obliged to walk on account of the wind, which blew extremely hard. Here we remained until the wind subsided, which was not until 5 p. m. when having carried our goods & c across the portage, a distance of only 120 yards, while around, it is about 2 miles, we con-

²⁸ This distance is correct if Saginaw Bay is measured from Au Sable to Pointe aux Barques. It is fifteen miles from Point Lookout to Oak Point.

²⁹ Trowbridge's supposition about Middle Island, still so named, is correct. Flat Stone Point is northwest of the present city of Alpena.

tinued our course, with the intention to travel all night, but an adverse wind arose, and at 11 at night we were glad to get ashore,³⁰ satisfied with having made 20 miles from Presqu' Isle.

Tuesday 6th June At 20 minutes before 5 we put out tho' the wind had not ceased, and by unremitted exertion we were at 2 o'clock, at the foot of Bois Blanc Isle, or White wood Island. This Island is 18 miles in length, but as the land is not thought valuable there have as yet been no settlements made upon it.³¹

We continued up the west shore of Bois Blanc and before dark arrived at Mackinac, having made to day against a strong wind 60 miles.

The Island of Michilimackinac is about nine miles in circumference. The town, harbor, and the forts, Mackinac & Holmes, present to the traveller a view at once picturesque and sublime. Fort Mackinac is situated on the cliffs which completely surrounded the island and render it inaccessible to an enemy, is about 120 feet above the water and completely overlooks and guards the town and harbor. Fort Holmes, not only commands fort Mackinac but the whole island, and is built on a circular eminence 150 feet higher than Fort M. The situation of this fortress is so peculiar, that with a garrison of 200 men it would be tenable against any number; and it was in consequence of a strategem in getting possession of this that the whole island fell into the hands of the British troops during the late war. The Town contains 100 buildings, including a Court house and jail; The houses are generally constructed of bark. The population is chiefly french, who are mostly very poor.³²

The island is situated about 4 miles from the main shore, and 2 m. from B. Blanc; near it (8 miles distant,) lay the St Martin Islands, on which large and apparently inexhaustible beds of gypsum have been found. At this place is stationed the Head Quarters of the American Fur Company: this company is very extensive and their establishments are

³⁰ Near the present town of Rogers.

³¹ Bois Blanc Island is about twelve miles long. The journalist's distances are often only rough approximations and there appears to be no consistency in the errors.

³² Mackinac Island and its environs are treated more fully in Schoolcraft's *Narrative Journal*, 110-124. Schoolcraft distinguishes between the "modern town of Michilimackinac" on the island and the ancient town "which was located on the extreme point of the Peninsula of Michigan," the present site of Mackinac City. Following the capture of Mackinac by the British in 1812, they erected a fort, which they called Fort George, on the highest point. The Americans changed its name to Fort Holmes when they regained possession of the island after the War of 1812. Fort Mackinac, which was established by the British in 1780, and was held alternately by the British and the Americans until 1815, was south of Fort Holmes on lower ground. For brief accounts of these forts, see Edwin O. Wood, *Historic Mackinac*, 1:534-537 (New York, 1918).

spread over all the country between the Mississipi & the great lakes. They have about 300 men in their employment, who come to Mackinac in the spring with the fur collected during the winter, where they stay from one to three months, when they receive another assortment of goods and proceed to their wintering grounds. Here during the winter they live like savages, enduring every privation and hardship for the sake of lucre. The capital employed is 300,000, but I am informed that they never have use for the whole amount.

Tuesday June 13th. Having procured two additional canoes of the burthen of three tons, and left one of ours which we found too weak for safety, and having repacked our provisions which had been sent from Detroit by a schooner, from Barrels into Kegs, we left Mackinac at 10 o'clock, with a fair wind for the Sau[il]t de St Marie Nine miles from Mackinac, in the course from the island to the mouth of St Marys River lays Goose[berry] Island, memorable on account of battles fought there in the old wars.³³ The main shore on our passage across the bend, to the River, was too distant to afford us much matter for the satisfaction of our curiosity, and at night we landed five miles from the mouth (or rather one of the mouths) of the St Marys and opposite to Drummonds Island, on which is a military post of the British Gov^t, and also a small village. The islands in the mouth of this river are almost innumerable, and their elevated situation and beautiful foliage, contrasted with the clear and extended expanse of water, afford to the contemplative traveller a source of infinite gratification. From Mackinack to the Detour, or turn i.e. the mouth of the River the distance is 45 miles.³⁴

Wednesday 14th June. At 5, we embarked and proceeded to ascend the river for twenty miles, where our guide through ignorance or from some other cause, led us through the wrong channel, and we had much difficulty in ascending the numerous rapids which opposed our progress; in one of these we injured our canoes so much that it became necessary to land and repair them. This is done with much facility by the Voyageurs, who are always supplied with the necessary articles of Bark, Watape and gum, for that purpose; indeed we find it necessary to gum

³³ An engagement of the War of 1812 occurred on Gooseberry or Brant Island, one of the cluster in the Cheneaux group.

³⁴ The post on Drummond's Island was Fort St. Joseph, which was erected in 1795. Since it was abandoned and burned by the British in 1814, only the ruins were visible to the exploratory party of 1820. See a note by R. G. Thwaites, in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 13:178 n.; and Wood, *Historic Mackinac*, 2:629. The "Detour" is indicated as the "Detour Passage" on modern pilot charts.

our canoes every night after landing, which however, and fortunately too, is a work of little labor. We found the ascent of the river upon the whole quite interesting, and though no inhabitants were to be seen, the scenery possessed sufficient variety. The general width of the River is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, though in some places it is twice that width.

At 6 in the afternoon we landed at the Saut, and the appearance of our little sq[u]adron spread an universal astonishment among the natives who had assembled to witness our arrival. Our show was rendered much more imposing by an escort of 25 men under the command of Lieut [John S.] Pierce, who had accompanied us from Mackinac to render assistance in case of any hostility on the part of the indians, who, we had been informed were not altogether so friendly in their disposition as we could have wished.³⁵

Immediately after our arrival we were welcomed to the Saut by M^r George Johns[t]on, a son of Co^l [John] Johns[t]on, and invited to his fathers house, where during our stay we were treated with the greatest hospitality. Co^l Johnson has resided at the Saut for a great number of years. He married a native, a daughter of one of the influential chiefs, by whom he has a large family of children.³⁶

Mrs Johnson though not very comely in her person, being quite as dark complexioned as the natives generally, is yet extremely easy and polite in her manners; and the young gentlemen and ladies are highly accomplished, one of them having received her education, and in fact passed the early part of her life in Europe.

Thursday 15th June. To day we walked up to the head of the falls and descended in a canoe. They are extremely rapid and dangerous on the American side of the river, tho' barges sometimes descend them with the usual lading. The length is about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, and in that distance the fall is 22 feet and 10 inches. The rocks over which the water falls is a red sand stone.

Below the falls, i.e. at the foot of them, we saw a number of indians in the act of taking white fish. These delicious fish are caught here in very great quantities and in fact constitute the principal food of the indians who are generally about 50 families in number, as well as that of

³⁵ Lieutenant Pierce was a brother of President Franklin Pierce. The augmented party, now numbering sixty-six men, was taken in a twelve-oared barge to Sault Ste. Marie.

³⁶ John Johnston, who settled at the Sault in 1793 and married an Indian woman, was in Europe in the summer of 1820. His eldest daughter, Jane, who had been educated in Ireland, later became Schoolcraft's first wife.

the whites, who are agreeably to the census lately taken 80 in number, men, women and children.³⁷ They take them in scoop-nets, with which they fish from canoes and the rocks. The fish caught at this place are acknowledged superior to any of the kind caught in the Lakes, possessing more richness of flavor, and being of much greater weight.

Friday June 16th. A treaty for the cession of a small quantity of Land at this place for the purpose of the establishment of a military post had been contemplated, and accordingly on this morning the Indians were assembled in council at the Marquee of the Governor, and their sentiments were required with respect to the Cession! There were not many old chiefs at the Council, and the young men of influence, were very vehement in their protestations against a cession. The Governor informed them that we were perfectly sensible of our rights to the land by the Treaty of Greenville, and a copy of that treaty was produced and explained to them, but they would listen to no terms, and were apparently determined to prevent any innovation of their rights.³⁸ They were informed that a military post would certainly be established there, and that although they had once received a compensation for their lands, yet if they chose to improve the present opportunity another would be granted them, but if they suffered the present one to pass by, another never would offer. This forcible reasoning had no effect on their minds, and the council broke up, when the Chiefs returned to their camp. Immediately after they had retired the Governor observed the British flag flying at their lodges, and with that bravery and just sense of honour

³⁷ Various estimates or actual counts of the Indian population are available. Many censuses were made by Indian agents. Typical is the exhaustive census of the Indians of the Northwest made by Nicholas Boilvin and enclosed with a letter from Cass to Calhoun, December 31, 1818, in Department of War, Letters Received, National Archives. Boilvin was United States agent for the Winnebago, with headquarters at Prairie du Chien. Reuben G. Thwaites, "Notes on Early Lead Mining in the Fever (or Galena) River Region," in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 13:285.

³⁸ The treaty of Greenville, Ohio, was concluded on August 3, 1795, between Anthony Wayne and chiefs representing the Delaware, Shawnee, Wyandot, and Miami Confederacy. It established a definite boundary within the Northwest Territory between Indian lands and those open to white settlement. Lands westward and northward of the treaty line were conceded to the Indians, except Detroit and other specified French settlements. The United States claimed a tract of land at the Sault by virtue of an earlier grant made to this country by France and confirmed by the treaty of Greenville, and reconfirmed by the treaty of Spring Wells or Detroit on September 8, 1815, and by the treaty of Fort Harrison on June 4, 1816. See the *Dictionary of American History*, 2:425 (New York, 1940); Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal*, 136 n.; and William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 1:103 n. (St. Paul, 1921). It is perhaps understandable that the two hundred Chippewa at the Sault would not be amenable to observing the terms of a treaty entered into a quarter of a century earlier by confederate nations inhabiting the Ohio country.

which characterizes a great man, he walked up without an attendant (for he would suffer none to accompany him) and entering the encampment amongst that ferocious band of savages threw the flag to the ground.

So much bravery terrified the Indians, and the Governor called to his Interpreter through whom he told them that if they attempted to raise the flag again he would order his men to fire on them without reserve. He concluded however to send the flag to his own encampment there to keep it until his departure.

In less than ten minutes from this time every woman and child with all their baggage was on the opposite side or crossing the River. The indians prepared themselves, expecting an attack from us, and we being under the same apprehensions from them, loaded our arms, doubled our guards, and made every preparation to sell our lives as dearly as possible. During this part of the scene our attention and admiration were particularly attracted by the conduct of one of our indians, a young man of a very uncommonly prepossessing appearance and dignified deportment for a native, who, when the other indians of our party strongly protested against taking arms in opposition to their bretheren, came to the Governor, & demanded a gun with ammunition &c. saying that the conduct of the others should be no rule for his conduct, and that as he had joined the Governors party with the expectation of sharing the difficulties and dangers with them, he would now, however repugnant to his feelings, offer his services against his relatives and acquaintances, in the same manner, as if they were his enemies, for from what he had observed he considered their conduct highly reprehensible. The Brave fellow had no cause to exert his good courage, for a new council was held at the house of Mr Johnson, from which the young and boisterous chiefs were excluded, and in consideration of certain goods paid them on the spot, they ceded to the United States a tract of Land Sixteen Square miles commencing at the head of the falls, running down the line of demarkation to the little Rapids, thence back from the river so as to make the above quantity of land.³⁹

The young chiefs afterwards apologised to the Governor for their rude conduct, and humbly solicited his pardon.

³⁹ This incident has been recounted in a dozen places, especially in biographies of Lewis Cass, wherein the actual course of events has often been confused by the imaginations of the several authors. The most complete summary heretofore available is in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 5:413-416, in which a letter by Trowbridge, who was living at the time of its publication, is quoted. See *ante*, p. 133.

We have to acknowledge ourselves much indebted for this session, to Mr Geo Johnson, without whose kind offices nothing would have been effected.

Saturday 17th June. In consequence of our too great quantity of lading, of which we were not aware at the time of our departure from Mackinac, where we received on board our stock of provisions, we were obliged to procure an additional canoe at this place, after purchasing which we procured two french guides and proceeded to take our goods &c to the head of the falls. This is a work of considerable labor, as the difficulty and danger of ascent is so great, that only about one third of an ordinary load can be carried at a time. With much exertion we had by four p.m. succeeded in getting all our lading above the falls, and we continued our course up the River to Point aux Pins or Pine Point, so called from the growth of pine timber here which is somewhat unusual in this country. From this point which is 6 miles distant from the falls, & 12 m. from the lake, the Voyageur has an extensive view of that vast inland sea, on which perhaps he is destined to encounter almost insurmountable difficulties. At this place we passed the night very comfortably and on the morning of

Sunday June 18th, we prepared to take a serious departure (for we had hardly considered it so as yet,) from civilized Beings. The natural reflection that it would be the melancholy lot of some of us never to return, here strongly suggested itself to our minds, and our spirits were enlivened only by the animated boat songs of our Canadians. In three hours we were at the head of this beautiful river which connects the waters of Lakes Huron & Superior. The whole length is 63 miles; its banks afford very fine timber and a rich alluvial soil well adapted to the purposes of husbandry. This river is the great and in fact the only key to the upper country, and the importance of a military post at the Saut of St Marys must strike forcibly on the minds of all persons, acquainted with the advantage of a security to our Traders in the indian country, as well as to the white inhabitants at that place.

We continued to row all day against very unfavorable winds, and at 12 at night, exhausted with fatigue and hunger we Landed at Shell Drake River 24 miles from the head of the St Marys, having made only 42 miles to day.

Here we found two lodges of Indians of the Chippeway nation, who resided on the head waters of the Mississippi River; and who were now

on there way to Mackinac, for the purpose of soliciting the interposition of the U. S. Indian Agent at that place in their quarrels with their neighbors the Sioux, with whom they are perpetually at war. They appeared to be in a miserably poor condition, and when we gave them a plug of tobacco each, they were transported with joy. They told us that it would take them a great while to earn sufficient or rather to collect a sufficient quantity of furs for the purchase of so much as we had presented them gratuitously.

Shell Drake River is thirty yards wide at its mouth and very deep, though the entrance is much obstructed by an extensive Sand bar.

We are becoming quite accustomed to our mode of travelling and sleeping, and it has been resolved that if our appetites continue to increase as they have done, we shall on our return surprise our friends.

[To be continued]



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