

North-Carolina Chronicle; or, Fayetteville Gazette.

—[No. 15, of Vol. II.]—

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1790.

—[Total No. 67.]—

HISTORY.

CARVER'S TRAVELS.

(Continued.)

THE Straights of St. Marie are about forty miles long, bearing South-East, but varying much in their breadth.

The current between the falls and Lake Huron is not so rapid as might be expected, nor do they prevent the navigation of ships of burden as far up as the island of St. Joseph.

It has been observed by travellers that the entrance into Lake Superior from the Straights, affords one of the most pleasing prospects in the world: The place in which this might be viewed to the greatest advantage, is just at the opening on the lake, from whence may be seen on the left, many beautiful little islands that extend a considerable way before you; and on the right, an agreeable succession of small points of land, that project a little way into the water, and contribute, with the islands, to render this delightful basin (as it might be termed) calm and secure from the ravages of those tempestuous winds by which the adjoining lake is frequently troubled.

Lake Huron, into which you now enter from the Straights of St. Marie, is the next in magnitude to Lake Superior. It lies between forty-two and forty-six degrees of North latitude, and seventy-nine and eighty-five degrees of West longitude. Its shape is nearly triangular, and its circumference about one thousand miles.

On the North side of it lies an island that is remarkable for being near an hundred miles in length, and no more than eight miles broad. This island is known by the name of Manitoulin, which signifies a place of spirits, and is considered by the Indians as sacred as those already mentioned in Lake Superior.

About the middle of the South-West side of this lake is Saganaum Bay. The straits that separate this bay from the lake are about eighteen miles distant from each other; near the middle of the intermediate space stand two islands, which greatly tend to facilitate the passage of

canoes and small vessels, by affording them shelter, as without this security it would not be prudent to venture across so wide a sea; and the coasting round the bay would make the voyage long and tedious. This bay is about eighty miles in length, and in general about eighteen or twenty miles broad.

Nearly half way between Saganaum Bay, and the North-West corner of the lake lies another, which is termed Thunder Bay. The Indians, who have frequented these parts from time immemorial, and every European traveller that has passed through it, have unanimously agreed to call it by this name, on account of the continual thunder they have always observed here. The bay is about nine miles broad, and the same in length, and whilst I was passing over it, which took me up near twenty-four hours, it thundered and lightened during the greatest part of the time to an excessive degree.

There appeared to be no visible reason for this that I could discover, nor is the country in general subject to thunder; the hills that stood around were not of a remarkable height, neither did the external parts of them seem to be covered with any sulphureous substance. But as this phenomenon must originate from some natural cause, I conjecture that the shores of the bay, or the adjacent mountains, are either impregnated with an uncommon quantity of sulphureous matter, or contain some mineral apt to attract in a great degree the electrical particles that are hourly borne over them by the passing clouds. But the solution of this, and those other philosophical remarks which casually occur throughout these pages, I leave to the discussion of abler heads.

The fish in lake Huron are much the same as those in lake Superior. Some of the land on its banks is very fertile, and proper for cultivation, but in other parts it is sandy and barren. The promontory that separates this lake from lake Michigan, is composed of a vast plain, upwards of one hundred miles long, but varying in its breadth, being from ten to fifteen miles broad. This track, as I have before observed, is divided into almost an equal portion between the Ottawa and Chipeway Indians. At the

North-East corner, this lake has a communication with Lake Michigan, by the Straights of Michillimackinac already described.

I had like to have omitted a very extraordinary circumstance relative to these Straights. According to observations made by the French, whilst they were in possession of the fort, although there is no diurnal flood or ebb to be perceived in these waters, yet, from an exact attention to their state, a periodical alteration in them has been discovered. It was observed that they rose by gradual, but almost imperceptible degrees, till they had reached the height of about three feet. This was accomplished in seven years and an half, and in the same space they as gently decreased, till they had reached their former situation; so that in fifteen years they had completed this inexplicable revolution. At the time I was there the truth of these observations could not be confirmed by the English, as they had been only a few years in possession of the fort; but they all agreed that some alteration in the limits of the Straights was apparent. All these lakes are so affected by the winds as sometimes to have the appearance of a tide, according as they happen to blow, but this is only temporary and partial.

A great number of the Chipeway Indians live scattered around this lake, particularly near Saganaum bay. On its banks are found an amazing quantity of the sand cherries, and in the adjacent country nearly the same fruits as those that grow about the other lakes.

From the falls of St. Marie, I leisurely proceeded back to Michillimackinac and arrived there the beginning of November 1767, having been fourteen months on this extensive tour—travelled near four thousand miles, and visited twelve nations of Indians lying to the west and north of this place. The winter setting in soon after my arrival, I was obliged to tarry there till the June following, the navigation over Lake Huron for large vessels not being open, on account of the ice, till that time. Meeting here with social company, I passed these months very agreeably, and without finding the hours tedious.