

PERSONAL MEMOIRS

OF A

RESIDENCE OF THIRTY YEARS

WITH THE

INDIAN TRIBES

ON THE

AMERICAN FRONTIERS

Henry R[owe] Schoolcraft



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rites, but retained, to a great degree, his characteristic expression. Some one had given him an old blue broadcloth coat with yellow metal buttons, which he matched with dark-colored trousers, a vest, hat, and moccasins. I always received him with marked attention, and often sent him to the kitchen for a meal, where, indeed, the Indians had their claims ever allowed by Mrs. S. 27th. Muekudapenais, or Blackbird, an Ottawa, chief of I'Arbre Croche, visited the office. I directed his attention to the tradition mentioned by Chusco, respecting Wayne's treaty, and the inclusion of Michilimackinack in the cessions. He confirmed this tradition. He said that his uncle, Ish-ke-bug-ish-kum, gave the island, and that when he returned he denied that he had given it, but the British took away his medal in consequence. He said that three men of the party, who attended this treaty, were still living. They were Op-wagun, Che-mo-ke-mann, and Chusco. He thinks the land taken by the late surveys of Mr. Ellis, at Point St. Ignace, was not given, but admits that the cession embraced the area around old Mackinack, and the island of Boisblanc. The Indians called Gen. Wayne *Che Nodem*, the Strong Wind.

30th. The series of deposits, which embrace fossil salt, or produce strong brine water, in the geological column of the rocks of the United States, constitute a deeply important subject in science, and public economy. Mr. James R. Rees, of Clyde, Ontario County, N. Y., sends me the result of borings, made at that place, to the depth of 376 feet, with samples of the rock, which appear to denote, if I have rightly judged the geological data, a *roof and floor*, to the saliferous formation. And the result gives a stimulant to further investigations.

9th. Commerce is rapidly invading the wilderness. Wheat in bulk, and flour in bags and barrels, were brought down from St. Joseph's, through the straits of Michigan, this fall; which is the first instance of the kind, but one, in the commercial history of the country. Beef and wheat were brought from the same post last season.

Nov. 13th. A remarkable display of the aurora borealis was observed last night. The Indians, who call this phenomenon *Jebing nemeiddeward*, or dancing spirits, describe it as radiating balls, streams of fire or falling stars from the zenith into the lake.

Mr. Wm. Johnston, who was at Leech Lake, on the sources of the Mississippi, describes the changing phenomena as wonderful. "The weather," he says (13th Nov.), "is still very pleasant, with very little frost at night. About two or three o'clock in the morning one of the men came and awoke me. 'Come and see a strange sight,' he said. We went to the door, where we saw, every now and then, stars shooting or falling. The centre from whence they first appeared to the eye was, to us, nearly in a direct line above our heads—from whence they went in all directions, to all points of the compass. Most all our village people were looking at them with fearful astonishment, and they were making their remarks as their feelings caused them. We went in the house, and each smoked his pipe, and we could not say much about the cause of what we had seen, but only expressed our astonishment to each other.

"Before going to bed, we thought we would take another look at the heavens. What a sight it was! The whole heaven appeared to be lit with the falling stars, and we could now more plainly see, as it were, the centre from whence they would shoot. The night was calm, the air clear, nothing to disturb the stillness, but the hushed breathings of the men. The stars were accompanied with a rustling noise, and, though they appeared to fall as fast and as thick as hail, above them, now and then, we could see some of the fixed stars, shining as bright as ever. But these (falling stars) appeared to be far below them. I can compare it to nothing more comprehensive than a hail storm. The sight was grand beyond description. Yet I must confess that my feelings were awed into a perfect silence. We stood and gazed, till we saw the bright streaks of day appearing, and the stars began gradually to be less in number, till the light of the sun caused them to disappear."

28th. I resumed the old traditions. Mrs. Michael Dousman observes that her father (McDonnel) came to the island, with the troops, in 1782. That the government house, so called, was then built, and a few other buildings, but nothing as yet had been done towards the present fort on the cliff. Gov. Sinclair, so called, was then in command. He was relieved that year by Captain Robinson.

She thinks the removal from old Mackinack must have taken place about 1778 or 1779, under Sinclair. The inhabitants trans-