

PERSONAL MEMOIRS

OF A

RESIDENCE OF THIRTY YEARS

WITH THE

INDIAN TRIBES

ON THE

AMERICAN FRONTIERS

Henry R[owe] Schoolcraft



ARNO PRESS

A New York Times Company

New York - 1975

AMERICAN
LIBRARY ★

Editor
effen

Board
ownlee
age, Jr.

This volume
is of titles

447-450,
572
#111

cloth, two guns, five pounds of net-thread, and two hoes, together with a requisition for provisions.

24th. Mud-je-ke-wiss, chief of Thunder Bay, a descendant of the captor of old Mackinack, being questioned of his family, their former residence, his knowledge and remembrance of affairs at old Mackinack, replied that his father's name was Mud-je-ke-wiss; it had been Kaigwaidosa when he had been a young man. He had lived at Mackinack, going to Thunder Bay to hunt. He died, not very old, at a treaty held on the Maumee. He (himself) had heard of the taking of old Mackinack, but was born after the removal of the post to the island, and his father died before he had instructed him. He had not heard of Wawitum, or Mench-wehwa, of whom I questioned him.

This answer is a specimen of Indian caution and suspicion of white men. I knew but little of the man then, and had seen him but once or twice. He evidently "played shy," and was determined the Anglo-Saxon race should get no facts from him that might ever be told to the disadvantage of the Indians who had once, under the lead of a noted chief (Pontiac), been led, under the deception of a ball-play, to fall on the unprepared ranks of a British garrison, and stain their history with a horrible tale of blood. Henry's travels preserve the most vivid account of this massacre, for he was himself an eye witness of some of its atrocities, and was spared, by a remarkable Providence, from being one of its victims.

It was not credible that seventy years should have left so little of Indian tradition of that sanguinary event.

It is reported that letters written by Longlade, Indian interpreter at old Mackinack, at and during the era of the massacre of the English garrison, are in the possession of the Greenough family, at Green Bay. They would, perhaps, throw some light on a transaction which is by far the most tragic event of this *transition* period of our Indian history. By transition, I mean the era of the change from French to English supremacy.

Treaty of 28th March, 1836.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Anniversary of the Algic Society—Traditions of Chusco and Mukndapenais respecting Gen. Wayne's treaty—Saliferous column in American geology—Fact in lake commerce—Traditions of Mrs. Dousman and Mr. Abbott respecting the first occupation of the Island of Michilimackinack—Question of the substantive verb in the Chippewa language—Meteoric phenomena during the month of December—Historical fact—Minor incidents.

1833. *Oct. 12th.* BUSINESS called me to Detroit, where I had a work in the press, early in October. The Algic Society held its first anniversary this day, in the Session Room of the Presbyterian Church. The Secretary read a report of its proceedings, and submitted a body of the vital statistics of the tribes of the Upper Lakes, which elicited an animated discussion. Mr. La-throp called attention to the singular fact, that of the mothers reported in the tables, the rate of reproduction in the hunter tribes did not exceed an average of over two children per female. Mr. Sheldon thought the causes of their depopulation, since we have been their neighbors, were rather seated in their extraordinary attachment to the use of ardent spirits, than in the effects of wars, internal or external. Mr. Clark believed the Indian youth were capable of being brought under the power of moral and religious instruction. Mr. Schoolcraft depicted the adverse circumstances under which the masses had heretofore labored, in coming under plans of instruction and Christianity, owing to their poverty; their dispersion over large areas of country for large parts of the year; the impracticability of their finding subsistence in large bodies at one place; and the deleterious influence of the commerce in furs and peltries, on their moral and mental character. He submitted a report of the proceedings of the St. Mary's committee, showing, in detail, operations within the year. With the limited sum of \$151 10, they had been able to furnish elder John Sunday an outfit for Keweenaw Bay in Lake Superior, and

given two other native converts, namely, John Otanchey and John Cabeach, the means of pursuing their labors amongst the Chippewas during the winter of 1833. They had sent an express, during the month of February, to the mission of the American Board at La Pointe, in Lake Superior. Their minutes of monthly meetings denoted that a valuable body of information had been collected, respecting the population and statistics of the Chippewa nation, and the grammatical structure of their language, &c.

The occasion being coincident with the meeting of the Synod of the Western Reserve, at Detroit, many gentlemen of learning, benevolence, and piety, were brought together, and a high degree of interest excited respecting the condition and prospects of the tribes.

In accordance with a resolution passed the year previous, I recited a poetic address on the character of the race, which was received with approbation, and directed to be printed. This had been, in fact, sketched in a time of leisure in the wilderness some years before.

I returned to Mackinack near the close of October, when I resumed my traditional inquiries. It was sought, as a mere matter of tradition, to obtain from the Indians a recognition of the cession of this island, &c. made by them to the United States through the instrumentality of Gen. Wayne, at Greenville, in Ohio, in 1793.

Chusco* (musktrat), the old prophet or jossakeed of the Ottawa nation, had told me of his presence at Greenville, at the treaty, while a young man, along with others of his tribe. He was a man who would attract attention, naturally, from the peculiarities of his person and character. He had been a man of small stature, not over five feet four inches, when young, and of very light make. But he was now bent by age, and walked with a staff. His hazel eyes still sparkled in a head of no striking development, and with a peculiarity of expression of his lips, gave him a striking expression of placidity in cunning. Hence his name, which was given by the Indians from some fancied resemblance to this animal, when jutting its head above water. He had, for forty years, made *jeesucké-win* (prophecying) for his people, when he was converted to Christianity at the Mackinack Mission. He gave up at once his Indian

* From Wauzhusko.

ries, 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 L'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 Nôden*, 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.

36th. 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 *Jeting nemeidewand*, 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 (McDonnell) 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-

20th. The thermometer sinks to 18° at eight o'clock A. M. Snows, and is boisterous all day, the wind being north-east.

21st. The snow, which has continued falling all night, is twelve to fourteen inches deep in the morning; being the heaviest fall of snow at one time, all winter. Some ice is formed.

22d. The body of snow on the ground, and the continuance of cold, give quite a wintery aspect to the landscape. In the course of the day, Mr. Ferry, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Stuart call.

23d. S. Cold.

24th. Wintery feeling and aspect.

25th. The temperature still sinks. Visits from Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Ferry, and Mr. Stuart. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell, Mr. Hulbert, Mr. Chapman, and Mr. Johnston spend the evening.

26th. Drove, with Mr. Ferry, to Mr. Boyd's, and thence to Mr. Davenport's.

27th. Ice still lingers in the harbor, but the day is clear and sunshiny, and the snow melts rapidly. Visit the mission, and inquire into the effects of its government and discipline on the character of the boys, one or two of whom have been recently the subject of some scandals. Accompanied in this visit by Mr. Hulbert, Mr. Stuart, and Mr. Mitchell. Thomas Shepard, a mission boy, calls on me at an early hour, and states his contrition for his agency in any reports referred to.

28th. Weather mild; snow melts; wind S. W.; some rain.

With this evening's setting sun,
Years I number forty-one.

Visited the officers in the fort. Rode out in my carriage in the evening, with Mrs. Schoolcraft, to see Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell, and Mr. and Mrs. Ferry. Satan's emissaries appear to be busy in circulating scandal respecting our pastor, Mr. F., a person of high moral worth and probity.

To put these down effectively, it appears necessary to probe them to the bottom, and ascertain their length and breadth. This was a duty of the eldership, and it could be thoroughly performed without fear, respecting a man of Mr. F.'s character. It was necessary, I found, to unmask all the actors. The scandal appears to be one originating with certain Metif boys of the Mission school. One of these, it was averred, had looked through the key-hole of the

common parlor door of the Mission house, and beheld the Rev. Mr. F. sitting near a Miss S., one of the assistant missionaries of the establishment. The door was locked. The hair of the young lady was dishevelled; her comb had fallen on the floor. It was early in the morning. Another boy was called to look; no change of position was observed—nothing that was not respectful and proper.

This story was detailed, a night or two afterwards, by Thomas Shepard, one of the boys, at a drinking conclave in the village, where *bon vivants*, and some persons inimical to Mr. F. were present, and created high merriment. From that den it was spread. It appeared that Miss S. had, for some time, had doubts on the subject of her conversion, and sought a conversation with her pastor to resolve them.

29th. Moderate temperature continues. A meeting of some of the leading persons of the place, citizens and officers, at which statements, embracing the above narrative, were made, which were quite satisfactory in regard to the reports above mentioned. The reports are traced to a knot of free livers, free drinkers, and infidels, who meet a-nights, in the village, to be merry, and who drew some of the mission boys into their revelries. A case of discipline in the church, which led, finally, to the excommunication of one of the leading persons of the place, has raised enemies to the Rev. Mr. F., who were present at these orgies, and helped to spread the report.

30th. Service as usual, but more than usually interesting.

31st. Mild weather continues; clear and sunny; snow melts. The remaining ice is completely broken up by an easterly wind. Visit Mr. Stuart's child, which is very low.

April 1st. A dark drizzly morning terminates before ten o'clock in rain. It cleared away at noon; the broken ice of the day and night previous, is mostly driven down the lake by westerly winds. Satisfied of the excellency of the mission school, I sent my children to it this morning. The Rev. Mr. Ferry, Rev. Mr. Barber, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. D. Stuart, and Mr. Chapman dine with me. In the evening, Capt. and Mrs. Barnum, and Lieut. Kingsbury make a visit.

2d. The harbor is now entirely clear of ice, with a west wind. Wrote to Rev. D. Greene, Missionary Rooms, Boston, giving my

opinion respecting the establishment of a mission among the Ojibwas at Fond du Lac, Lake Superior.

3d. Pleasant, mild, clear. Winter has now clearly relaxed his hold. Indians who came in to-day from L'Arbre Croche, report that the ice is, however, still firm at Point Wa-gosh-ains (Little Fox Point), on the straits above. This point forms the bight of the straits, some twenty miles off, at their entrance into Lake Michigan. Attended the funeral of William Dolly, a Metif boy, of Indian extraction.

4th. The season is visibly advancing in its warmth and mildness. Began to prepare hot-beds. Set boxes for flowers and tubs for roots.

5th. The mission schooner "Supply" leaves the harbor on her first trip to Detroit, with a fine west wind, carrying our recent guests from St. Mary's. Transplant flowering shrubs. Miss McFarland passes the day with Mrs. Schoolcraft at the agency.

7th. Cloudy but mild. Adjusting fixtures for gooseberry bushes, &c.

8th. Superintending the construction of a small ornamental mound and side wall to the piazza, for shrubbery and flowers. Some Books are now thrown by for the excitement of horticulture. Some Indians visit the office. It is remarkable what straits and suffering these people undergo every winter for a bare existence. They struggle against cold and hunger, and are very grateful for the least relief. *Kite-mau-giz-ze Sho-wain-e-min*, is their common expression to an agent—I am poor, show me pity, (or rather) charity me; for they use their substantives for verbs.

9th. The schooner "White Pigeon," (the name of an Indian chief,) enters the harbor, with a mail from Detroit. "A mail! a mail!" is the cry. Old Saganosh and five Indian families come in. The Indians start up from their wintering places, as if from a cemetery. They seem almost as lean and hungry as their dogs—for an Indian always has dogs—and, if they fare poor, the dogs fare poorer.

Resumed my preparations at the garden hot-beds. The mail brought me letters from Washington, speaking of political excitements. The project for an Indian academy is bluffed off, by saying it should come through the Delegate. Major Whit-

ing writes that he is authorized to have a road surveyed from Saginaw to Mackinack.

10th. Engaged at my horticultural mound. The weather continues mild.

11th. Transplanting cherry trees.

12th. Complete hot-bed, and sow it in part.

14th. The calmness and mildness of the last few days are continued. Spring advances rapidly.

15th. Mild, strong wind from the west, but falls at evening.

Write to Washington respecting an Indian academy.

Walking with the Rev. Wm. M. Ferry through the second street of the village (M.), leading south, as we came near the corner, turning to Ottawa Point, he pointed out to me, on the right hand, half of a large door, painted red, arched and filled with nails, which tradition asserts was the half of the door of the Roman Catholic church at old Mackinack. The fixtures of the church, as of other buildings, were removed and set up on this spot. I afterwards saw the other half of the door standing against an adjoining house.

16th. Wind westerly. Begin to enlarge piazza to the agency. A party of Beaver Island Indians come in, and report the water of the Straits as clear of ice, and the navigation for some days open.

The schooner "President," from Detroit, dropped anchor in the evening.

17th. The schooners "Lawrence," "White Pigeon," and "President," left the harbor this morning, on their way to various ports on Lake Michigan, and we are once more united to the commercial world, on the great chain of lakes above and below us. The "Lawrence," it will be remembered, entered the harbor on the 14th of March, and has waited thirty-two days for the Straits to open.

18th. Wind N. E., chilly. It began to rain after twelve o'clock A. M., which was much wanted by the gardens, as we have had no rain for nearly a month. All this while the sun has poured down its rays on our narrow pebbly plain under the cliffs, and made it quite dry.

I was present this morning at the Mission, at the examination of the Metif boy Thomas Shepard, and was surprised at the reck-