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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE COUNTRY OF THE NEUTRALS ***

THE COUNTRY OF THE NEUTRALS

(AS FAR AS COMPRISED IN THE COUNTY OF ELGIN)

FROM CHAMPLAIN TO TALBOT

By

JAMES H. COYNE.

ST. THOMAS, ONT.
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1895.



This is a copy of Galinee's map of 1670, the first made from actual exploration in which Lake Erie appears. It was printed in Faillon's "Histoire de la Colonie Française," and in "The History of the Early Missions in Western Canada." The plate was very kindly

placed at the service of the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute, for use in this work by the Very Reverend Dean Harris, the author of the last mentioned book.

The following explanations refer chiefly to the western portion of the map:

Title: "Map of the country visited by Messrs. Dollier de Casson and de Galinee, missionaries of St. Sulpice, drawn by the same M. de Galinee. (See M. Talon's letter 10th November, 1670)." L. Huron: "Michigan or Fresh-Water Sea of the Hurons." (These lakes were erroneously supposed to be but one). N. End: "Bay of the Pottawatamies." Islands near Mackinac: "I entered this bay only as far as these islands." W. of St. Clair River: "Great hunting ground." At Detroit: "Here was a stone, idol of the Iroquois, which we broke up and threw into the water." Essex Peninsula: "Large prairies." Lake Erie: "I mark only what I have seen." Long Point: "Peninsula of Lake Erie." North Shore Opposite: "Here we wintered." The Bay Opposite: "Little Lake Erie." Grand River: "Rapid River on Tina-Toua." East Side Grand River: "Excellent land." West Side Grand River: (up the river): "The Neutral Nation was formerly here." West of Burlington Bay: "Good land." Niagara River: "This current is so strong that it can hardly be ascended." At its Mouth: "Niagara Falls said by the Indians to be more than 200 feet high." Lake Ontario: "I passed on the south side, which I give pretty accurately." North Shore: "Mr. Perot's encampment. Here the missionaries of St. Sulpice established themselves."

THE COUNTRY OF THE NEUTRALS.

BY

JAMES R. COYNE.

In that part of the township of Southwold included in the peninsula between Talbot Creek and the most westerly bend of Kettle Creek there were until a relatively recent date several Indian earthworks, which were well-known to the pioneers of the Talbot Settlement. What the tooth of time had spared for more than two centuries yielded however to the settler's plough and harrow, and but one or two of these interesting reminders of an almost forgotten race remain to gratify the curiosity of the archæologist or of the historian. Fortunately, the most important of all is still almost in its original condition. It is that, which has become known to readers of the Transactions of the Canadian Institute as the Southwold Earthwork. It is situated on the farm of Mr. Chester Henderson, Lot Number Four North on Talbot Road East. Mr. David Boyle in the Archæological Reports printed in 1891 has given the results of his examinations of the mounds. A carefully prepared plan made from actual survey by Mr. A. W. Campbell, C.E., for the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute of St. Thomas, was presented by the latter to the Canadian Institute.^[1] These will together form a valuable, and, it is hoped, a permanent record of this interesting memorial of the aboriginal inhabitants of South-western Ontario.

The writer of this paper has been acquainted with "the old fort," as it was called, since the year 1867. At that time it was in the midst of the forest. Since then the woods have been cleared away, except within the fort and north of it. Indeed, a considerable number of trees have been felled within the southern part of the enclosure. In the mounds themselves trees are abundant, and there are many in the moat or ditch between. The stumps of those which have been cut down are so many chronological facts, from which the age of the fort may be conjectured with some approach to accuracy. A maple within the enclosure exhibits 242 rings of annual growth. It was probably the oldest tree within the walls. A maple in the outer embankment shows 197 rings; between the inner and outer walls a beech stump shows 219 rings, and an elm 266. Many of the trees were cut down a good many years ago. Judging from these stumps, it would be safe to calculate the age of the forest at about two hundred years, with here and there a tree a little older. The area enclosed is level. In the field south there are numerous hummocks formed by the decayed stumps of fallen trees. The walls were manifestly thrown up from the outside. There is an exception on the south-east. Here the ground outside was higher, and to get the requisite elevation the earth was thrown up on both walls from the intervening space, as well as on the exterior wall from the outside. Each of the walls runs completely round the enclosure, except where the steep bank of the little stream was utilized to eke out the inner wall for five or six rods on the west side, as shewn on the plan. Opposite the south end of this gap was the original entrance through the outer wall. The walls have been cut through in one or two other places, doubtless by settlers hauling timber across them.

The writer accompanied Mr. Campbell on his visits in the spring and fall of 1891. The members of the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute made a pretty thorough examination of a large ash-heap south-east of the fort. It had, however, been frequently dug into during the last score or two of years, with ample results, it is said, in the way of stone implements of various kinds. There still remained, however, arrow-heads and chippings of flint, stones partially disintegrated from the action of heat, fragments of pottery whose markings showed a very low stage of artistic

development, fish scales, charred maize and bones of small animals, the remains of aboriginal banquets. Within the enclosure, corn-cobs were found by digging down through the mould, and a good specimen of a bone needle, well smoothed, but without any decoration, was turned up in the bed of the stream where it passes through the fort.

The original occupants were manifestly hunters, fishermen and agriculturists, as well as warriors. Nothing appears to have been found in the neighborhood, pointing to any intercourse between them and any European race.

It would seem that the earth-work was constructed in the midst of a large clearing, and that the forest grew up after the disappearance of the occupants. A few saplings, however, may have been permitted to spring up during their occupancy for the sake of the shelter they might afford. These are represented by the oldest stumps above mentioned.

The question, who were the builders, is an interesting one. To answer it we need not go back to a remoter period than the middle of the seventeenth century, when the Iroquois after destroying the Huron Settlements turned their attention to the southwest, and the Neutral Nation ceased to exist. The enclosure was, we may reasonably believe, a fortified village of the Neutrals at the time of their evacuation of this province, nearly a quarter of a millennium ago.

Substantially all that is known of the Neutrals is to be found in Champlain's works, Sagard's History, the Relations and Journal of the Jesuits, and Sanson's map of 1656. A digest of the information contained therein is given in the following pages. The writer has availed himself of one or two other works for some of the facts mentioned. Mr. Benjamin Sulte's interesting and learned articles on "Le pays des grands lacs au XVIIe Siecle" in that excellent magazine, "Le Canada Francais," have been most valuable in this connection.

The first recorded visit to the Neutrals was in the winter of 1626, by a Recollet father, De Laroche-Daillon. His experiences are narrated by himself, and Sagard, who includes the narrative in his history, supplements it with one or two additional facts.

In company with the Jesuit Fathers Brebeuf and De Noue, Daillon left Quebec with the purpose of visiting and converting the Hurons, who were settled in villages between the Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe. After the usual hardships, journeying by canoe and portage, by way of the Ottawa and French Rivers, they arrived at their destination. The ill-fated Brule told wonderful stories of a nation, whom the French called the Neutrals, and Father Joseph Le Caron wrote Daillon urging him to continue his journey as far as their country.

He set out accordingly on the 18th October, 1626, with two other Frenchmen, Grenolle and La Vallee. Passing through the territory occupied by the Tobacco Nation, he met one of their chiefs, who not merely offered his services as guide, but furnished Indian porters to carry their packs and their scanty provisions. They slept five nights in the woods, and on the sixth day arrived at the village of the Neutrals. In this as well as in four other villages which they visited, they were hospitably entertained with presents of food, including venison, pumpkins, "neintahouy," and "the best they had." Their dress excited the astonishment of their Indian hosts, who were also surprised that the missionary asked nothing from them but that they should raise their eyes to heaven, and make the sign of the cross.

What excited raptures of admiration, however, according to his narrative was to see him retire for prayer at certain hours of the day: for they had never seen any priests beyond passing glimpses when visiting amongst the neighboring Hurons and Tobacco Indians.

At the sixth village, Ounontisaston, in which Daillon had been advised to take up his abode, a council was held at his instance. He observes that the councils are called at the will of the chiefs, and held either in a wigwam or in the open air, the audience being seated on the ground; that silence is preserved whilst a chief is addressing the assembly, and that what they have once concluded and settled is inviolably observed and performed by them.

Daillon explained that he had come on the part of the French to make alliance and friendship with them and to invite them to come and trade, and begged them to permit him to stay in their country "to instruct them in the laws of our God, which is the only means of going to Paradise." They agreed to all he proposed and in return for his gifts of knives and other trifles, they adopted him as "citizen and child of the country," and as a mark of great affection entrusted him to the care of Souharissen, who became his father and host. The latter was, according to Daillon, the chief of the greatest renown and authority that had ever been known in all the nations, being chief not only of his own village, but of all those of his nation, to the number of twenty-eight, besides several little hamlets of seven to eight cabins built in different places convenient for fishing, hunting, or cultivating the ground. Souharissen had acquired his absolute and extraordinary authority by his courage and his success in war. He had been several times at war with the seventeen tribes, who were the enemies of his race, and from all he had brought back the heads of those he had slain, or prisoners taken alive, as tokens of his prowess. His authority was without example amongst other tribes.

The Neutrals are reported by Daillon as being very warlike, armed only with war-club and bow, and dexterous in their use. His companions having gone back, the missionary remained alone, "the happiest man in the world," seeking to advance the glory of God and to find the mouth of the

river of the Iroquois, (probably the Niagara,) in order to conduct the savages to the French trading posts. He visited them in their huts, found them very manageable and learned their customs. He remarked that there were no deformed people amongst them. The children, who were sprightly, naked and unkempt, were taught by him to make the sign of the Holy Cross.

The natives were willing that at least four canoes should go to trade if he would conduct them, but nobody knew the way. Yroquet, an Indian known in the country, who had come hunting with twenty of his tribe and secured five hundred beaver skins, declined to give him any indication of the mouth of the river; but he agreed with several Hurons in assuring Daillon that a journey of ten days would take him to the trading post. The missionary, however, was afraid of taking one river for another and getting lost or perishing of hunger.

For three months he was treated with kindness. Then the Hurons became jealous lest the trade should be diverted from them. They accordingly circulated rumors through every village, that Daillon was a great magician, that he had poisoned the air in their country, and many had died in consequence, that if he was not killed soon, he would burn up their villages and kill their children, with other stories as extraordinary and alarming about the entire French nation. The Neutrals were easily influenced by the reports. Daillon's life was in danger on more than one occasion. The rumor reached Brebeuf and De Noue, that he had been killed. They at once despatched Grenolle to ascertain the truth, with instructions to bring Daillon back if alive. He acquiesced, and returned to the Huron country.

He speaks of a Neutral village called Ouaroronon, one day's journey from the Iroquois, the people of which came to trade at Ounontisaston. Their village was the last of the Neutral villages, and was probably east of the Niagara River.

Daillon, like every other traveller, was charmed with the Neutral country, which he pronounces incomparably greater, more beautiful and better than any other "of all these countries." He notes the incredible number of deer, the native mode of taking them by driving them into a gradually narrowing enclosure, their practice of killing every animal they find whether they needed it or not. The reason alleged was that if they did not kill all, the beasts that escaped would tell the others how they had been chased, so that afterwards when the Indians needed game it would be impossible to get near it. He enumerates moose, beaver, wild-cats, squirrels larger than those of France, bustards, turkeys, cranes, etc., as abundant, and remaining in the country through the winter. The winter was shorter and milder than "in Canada." No snow had fallen by the 22nd November. The deepest was not more than two and a half feet. Thaw set in on the 26th of January. On the 8th March the snow was gone from the open places, but a little still lingered in the woods. The streams abounded in very good fish. The ground produced more corn than was needed, besides pumpkins, beans and other vegetables in abundance, and excellent oil. He expresses his surprise that the Merchants' Company had not sent some Frenchman to winter in the Country: for it would be very easy to get the Neutrals to trade and the direct route would be much shorter than that by way of French River and the Georgian Bay. He describes the Neutrals' country as being nearer than the Huron to the French, and as being on one side of the lake of the Iroquois (Lake Ontario) whilst the Iroquois were on the other. The Neutrals, however, did not understand the management of canoes, especially in the rapids, of which there were only two, but long and dangerous. Their proper trade was hunting and war. They were very lazy and immoral. Their manners and customs were very much the same as those of the Hurons. Their language was different, but the members of the two nations understood one another. They went entirely unclad.

Sagard adds that "according to the opinion of some," the Neutrals' country was eighty leagues (about 200 miles) in extent, and that they raised very good tobacco which they traded with their neighbors. They were called Neutrals on account of their neutrality between the Hurons and the Iroquois; but they were allies of the Cheveux Releves (the Ottawas) against their mortal enemies of the Nation of Fire. Sagard was dissuaded by some members of the French trading company from attempting to bring about a peace between the Hurons and the Iroquois. It was supposed that this would divert the trade of the Hurons from Quebec by sending it through the Iroquois country to the Dutch of the Hudson River. At so early a date did the question of closer trade relations between the territories north and south of the lakes agitate the minds of statesmen and men of commerce.

In the winter of 1640-1, the Jesuit missionaries, Brebeuf and Chaumonot traversed the country of the Neutrals. The former composed a dictionary showing the differences between the kindred dialects of the Hurons and Neutrals. Chaumonot made a map of the country, which is not extant, but there is reason for believing that it was the authority for the delineation of the territory on Sanson's map of 1656 and Ducreux's Latin map of 1660. From the facts hereinafter detailed it is highly probable that they reached the Detroit River, and that they visited and named the Neutral village of which the Southwold Earthwork is the memorial. The first printed map in which Lake Erie is shown was made by N. Sanson d'Abbeville, geographer in ordinary to the King, and printed in Paris, with "privilege du Roy" for twenty years, in the year 1656. It is a map of eastern North America. The sources of information are stated in general terms, which may be translated as follows: "The most northerly portion is drawn from the various Relations of the English, Danes, etc. Towards the south the coasts of Virginia, New Sweden, New Netherlands and New England are drawn from those of the English, Dutch, etc. THE GREAT RIVER OF CANADA, OR OF St. Lawrence and all the neighboring regions (*environs*) are according to the Relations of the French."

Now, we know that Father Raymbault visited Sault Ste. Marie in 1641 and mapped Lake Superior, and that Father Chaumonot in the same year rendered the same service for the Neutral Country. Sanson's map is fairly accurate for the upper lakes, when compared with some maps published at much later periods when the lakes had become tolerably well known to traders and travellers. It shows an acquaintance with the general contour of Lakes Erie, St. Clair and Huron, with several of the streams emptying into Lakes Erie and Huron on both the Canadian and the American sides, with the names of tribes inhabiting both shores, and with the locations of five towns of the Neutrals, besides some towns of the Tobacco Nation. The Neutral towns are given as S. Francois, (north-east of Sarnia) S. Michel, (a little east of Sandwich), S. Joseph, (apparently in the county of Kent), Alexis, (a few miles west of a stream, which flows into Lake Erie about midway between the Detroit and Niagara Rivers, and where the shore bends farthest inland),[2] and N. D. des Anges (on the West bank of a considerable river, probably the Grand River, near where Brantford now stands). The Detroit and Niagara Rivers and four streams flowing into Lake Erie between them are shown but not named. The great cataract is called "Ongiara Sault." The name Ongiara may, however, be that of the Neutral village east of the Falls. Lake St. Clair is called Lac des Eaux de Mer, or Sea-water Lake, possibly from the mineral springs in the neighborhood. The country of the Tobacco Nation includes the Bruce peninsula and extends from the Huron country on the east to Lake Huron on the west, and Burlington Bay on the southeast. The Neutral Country (*Neutre ou Attiouandarons*) would embrace the whole of southwestern Ontario south of a line drawn from the west end of Lake Ontario to a stream which flows into Lake Huron about midway between Point Edward and Cape Hurd, and which is probably the Maitland River. The tribes to the south of the lakes are indicated from the Niagara River to Lake Superior. The Eries or "Eriehronons, ou du Chat," are south-east of Lake Erie; the "Ontarraronon" are west of what is probably the Cuyahoga River; at the southwest of the lake appear the "Squenqioronon;" west of the Detroit River are the "Aictaeronon;" west of Port Huron the "Couarronon;" Huron County in Michigan is occupied by the "Ariaetoonon;" at the head of Saginaw Bay and extending southward through Michigan are the "Assistaeronons ou du Feu;" in the peninsula extending north to Mackinac are the "Oukouararonons;" beyond them Lake Michigan appears as "Lac de Puans;" then come the northern peninsula and "Lac Supérieur." Manitoulin Island is marked "Cheveux Releves;" the old French name for the Ottawas. The Tobacco Nation called "N. du Petun on Sanhionontateheronons" includes villages of "S. Simon et S. Iude" in the Bruce promontory, "S. Pierre" near the south end of the County of Bruce, and "S. Pol," southwest of a lake which may be Scugog.

To return to the narratives, these agree in stating that the Neutrals, like their kinsmen of the Huron, Tobacco and Iroquois Nations, were a numerous and sedentary race living in villages and cultivating their fields of maize, tobacco and pumpkins. They were on friendly terms with the eastern and northern tribes, but at enmity with those of the west, especially the Nation of Fire, against whom they were constantly sending out war parties. By the western tribes it would appear that those west of the Detroit River and Lake Huron are invariably meant.

Champlain refers to the Neutrals in 1616 as a powerful nation, holding a large extent of country, and numbering 4,000 warriors. Already they were in alliance with the Cheveux Releves (the Ottawas), whom he visited in the Bruce Peninsula, against the Nation of Fire. He states that the Neutrals lived two days' journey southward of the Cheveux Releves, and the Nation of Fire ten days from the latter. The Nation of Fire occupied part of what is now Michigan, probably as far east as the Detroit and St. Clair Rivers.

Describing his visit to the Cheveux Releves, he adds:—"I had a great desire to go and see that Nation (the Neutrals), had not the tribes where we were dissuaded me from it, saying that the year before one of ours had killed one of them, being at war with the Entouhoronons (the Senecas), and that they were angry on account of it, representing to us that they are very subject to vengeance, not looking to those who dealt the blow, but the first whom they meet of the nation, or even their friends, they make them bear the penalty, when they can catch any of them unless beforehand peace had been made with them, and one had given them some gifts and presents for the relatives of the deceased; which prevented me for the time from going there, although some of that nation assured us that they would do us no harm for that. This decided us, and occasioned our returning by the same road as we had come, and continuing my journey, I found the nation of the Pisierinij etc."

NOTE.—This is a literal translation, and shows the crudity of Champlain's sailor style of composition.

Brebeuf, who reckoned the Hurons at more than 30,000, describes the Neutrals in 1634 as much more numerous than the former. The Relation of 1641 gives them at least 12,000, but adds that notwithstanding the wars, famine and disease (small pox), which since three years had prevailed in an extraordinary degree, the country could still furnish 4,000 warriors, the exact number estimated by Champlain a quarter of a century earlier. The name of the Neutrals is variously given as Attikadaron, Atiouadaronk, Attiouadaron, Attiwadaronk, but the last is the more common. The name signified "people who spoke a slightly different dialect," and the Hurons were known to the Neutrals by the same name. The latter are mentioned in the Relations as one of the twelve numerous and sedentary nations who spoke a common language with the Hurons. The Oueanohronons formed "one of the nations associated with the Neutral Nation." They are afterwards called in the same Relation (1639) the Wenrohronons, and are said to have lived on the borders of the Iroquois, more than eighty leagues from the Huron country. So long as they

were on friendly terms with the Neutrals they were safe from the dreaded Iroquois; but a misunderstanding having arisen between them, they were obliged to flee in order to avoid extermination by the latter. They took refuge, more than 600 in all, with the Hurons, and were received in the most friendly and hospitable manner.

The Relation of 1640 speaks of a Huron map communicated by Father Paul Ragueneau in which a large number of tribes, most of them acquainted with the Huron language, are shown, including the Iroquois, the Neutrals, the Eries, etc. The "Mission of the Apostles" was established among the Tobacco Nation by Garnier and Jogues in 1640. Nine villages visited by them were endowed by the missionaries with the names of apostles, two of which are given in Sanson's map of 1656.^[3] In one "bourg" called S. Thomas, they baptized a boy five years old belonging to the Neutral Nation, who died immediately afterwards. "He saw himself straightway out of banishment and happy in his own country." The famine had driven his parents to the village of the Tobacco Nation. The devoted missionaries add that this was the first fruits of the Neutral nation.

In the fall of the same year "The Mission of the Angels" was begun among the Neutrals. The lot fell upon Jean de Brebeuf and Joseph Marie Chaumonot. The former was the pioneer of the Jesuit Mission. He had spent three years among the Hurons from 1626 to 1629, and, after the restoration of Canada to the French by Charles I., he had returned in 1634 to the scene of his earlier labors. His associate had only come from France the year before. Brebeuf was distinguished for his mastery of the native tongues, and Chaumonot had been recognized as an apt student of languages. The plan of the Jesuits was to establish in the new mission a fixed and permanent residence, which should be the "retreat" of the missionaries of the surrounding country, as Ste. Marie was of those of the Huron mission.

Lalemant from their report describes the Neutral Nation as exceedingly populous, including about forty villages ("bourgs ou bourgades.") The nearest villages were four or five days' journey or about forty leagues (100 miles) distant from the Hurons, going due south. He estimates the difference in latitude between Ste. Marie and the nearest village of the Neutrals to the south at about 1°55'. Elsewhere the distance is spoken of as about thirty leagues.

From the first "bourg," going on to the south or south-west (a mistake for south-east it would seem,) it was about four days' journey to the mouth of the Niagara River. On this side of the river, and not beyond it, as "some map" lays it down, (Champlain's, doubtless,) were most of the "bourgs" of the Neutral Nation. There were three or four on the other side towards the Eries. Lalemant claims, and there is no doubt as to the fact, that the French were the first Europeans to become acquainted with the Neutrals. The Hurons and Iroquois were sworn enemies to each other, but in a wigwam or even a camp of the Neutrals until recently each had been safe from the other's vengeance.

Latterly however the unbridled fury of the hostile nations had not respected even the neutral ground of their mutual friends. Friendly as they were to the Hurons and Iroquois, the Neutrals engaged in cruel wars with other nations to the west, particularly the Nation of Fire, as has been stated above. The previous year a hundred prisoners had been taken from the latter tribe. This year, returning with 2,000 warriors, the Neutrals had carried off more than 170. Fiercer than the Hurons, they burned their female prisoners. Their clothing and mode of living differed but little from those of the Hurons. They had Indian corn, beans and pumpkins in equal abundance. Fish were abundant, different species being met with in different places. The country was a famous hunting ground. Elk, deer, wild cats, wolves, "black beasts" (squirrels), beaver and other animals valuable for their skins and flesh; were in abundance. It was a rare thing to see more than half a foot of snow. This year there was more than three feet. The deep snow had facilitated the hunting, and, in happy contrast with the famine which had prevailed, meat was plentiful. They had also multitudes of wild turkeys which went in flocks through the fields and woods. Fruits were no more plentiful than amongst the Hurons, except that chestnuts abounded, and wild apples were a little larger.

Their manners and customs, and family and political government, were very much like those of the other Indian tribes, but they were distinguished from the Hurons by their greater dissoluteness and indecency. On the other hand they were taller, stronger and better formed.

Their burial customs were peculiar, although similar customs are reported at this day amongst some African tribes. The bodies remained in their wigwams until decomposition rendered them insupportable, when they were put outside on a scaffold. Soon afterward, the bones were removed and arranged within their houses on both sides in sight of the inmates, where they remained until the feast of the dead. Having these mournful objects before their eyes, the women habitually indulged in cries and laments, in a kind of chant.

The Neutrals were distinguished for the multitude and quality of their madmen, who were a privileged class. Hence it was common for bad Indians to assume the character of maniacs in order to perpetrate crimes without fear of punishment. The Jesuits suffered very much from their malice. Some old men told them that the Neutrals used to carry on war "towards" a certain western nation, who would seem to have lived on the Gulf of Mexico, where the "porcelain, which are the pearls of the country," was obtained from a kind of oysters. It is an undoubted fact that a traffic was carried on with tribes as far south as the Gulf of Mexico, from whom shells used for wampum were obtained by successive interchanges of commodities with intervening tribes. They

had also some vague notion of alligators, which are apparently referred to by the description, "certain aquatic animals, larger and swifter than elk," against which these same people had "a kind of war," the details of which are somewhat amusing, as given by Lalemant.

The two Jesuits left Ste. Marie the 2nd November, 1640, with two French servants (probably "donnes,") and an Indian. They slept four nights in the woods. The fifth day they arrived at the first village ("bourg") of the Neutral Nation called Kandoucho, but to which they gave the name of All Saints. This is probably the same as N. D. des Anges on Sanson's map, and was not far perhaps from the site of Brantford.

Owing to the unfavorable reports which had been spread through the country about the Jesuits, the latter were anxious to explain their purposes to a council of the chiefs and old men. The head chief, "who managed the affairs of the public" was called Tsohahissen (doubtless the same as Daillon's Souharissen). His "bourg" was "in the middle of the country;" to reach it, one had to pass through several other villages ("bourgs et bourgades.") In Sanson's map, Alexis is placed almost exactly "in the middle of the country" of the Neutrals. No other village is marked on the map, to which the expression could be applied. Its situation nearly midway between the Detroit & Niagara Rivers, a few miles west of a stream which flows into Lake Erie just where the mouth of Kettle Creek would appear in a map of our own century, corresponds with that of the Southwold earthwork. Was the latter the Neutrals' capital? We can only conjecture; but the evidence of the Relations, the map and the forest growth, all points to an affirmative answer. There is a strong probability that it was here Tsohahissen reigned (if the expression is allowable in reference to an Indian potentate) as head chief of the forty Neutral villages. Through the western gate, doubtless, his warriors set out to wage their relentless warfare against the Nation of Fire. Within these mounds, returning satiated with blood, they celebrated their savage triumph, adorned with the scalps of their enemies.

Brebeuf's Huron surname "Echon" had preceded him. He was regarded as "one of the most famous sorcerers and demons ever imagined." Several Frenchmen had travelled through the country before him, purchasing furs and other commodities. These had smoothed the way for the Jesuits. Under the pretext of being traders, Brebeuf's party succeeded in making their way in spite of all obstacles interposed. They arrived at the head-chief's village, only to find that he had gone on a war party and would not return until spring. The missionaries sought to negotiate with those who administered affairs in his absence. They desired to publish the Gospel throughout these lands, "and thereby to contract a particular alliance with them." In proof of their desire, they had brought a necklace of two thousand grains of "porcelain" or wampum which they wished to present to "the Public." The inferior chiefs refused to bind themselves in any way by accepting the present, but gave the missionaries leave, if they would wait until the chief of the country returned, to travel freely and give such instruction as they pleased. Nothing could have suited the fathers better. First however they decided to return in their steps and reconduct their domestics out of the country. Then they would resume their journey for the second time, and "begin their function." As it had been the servants however, who had acted the part of traders, this pretext was now wanting to the Jesuits. They suffered everywhere from the malicious reports which had been circulated as to their purposes in visiting the nation and the acts of sorcery with which they were charged. The Hurons of the Georgian Bay alarmed for the monopoly they had hitherto enjoyed and jealous of the French traders, had sent emissaries amongst the Neutrals to poison their minds against the adventurous travellers, by the most extraordinary calumnies.

For these reports two Huron Indians Aouenhokoui and Oentara were especially responsible. They had visited several villages, presented hatchets in the name of the Huron chiefs and old men, and denounced their white visitors as sorcerers who desired to destroy the Neutrals by means of presents. These representations were so effectual that a council was at length held by the chiefs and the present formally refused, although permission to preach was granted.

From village to village they passed, but everywhere the doors were barred to them. Hostile looks greeted them wherever they went. No sooner did they approach a village than the cry resounded on all sides "Here come the Agwa." This was the name given by the natives to their greatest enemies. If the priests were admitted into their dwellings at all, it was more frequently from fear of the "sorcerers'" vengeance than for the hope of gain, "God making use of everything in order to nourish his servants."

In the graphic language of Lalemant: "The mere sight of the fathers, in figure and habit so different from their own, their gait, their gestures and their whole deportment seemed to them so many confirmations of what had been told them. The breviaries, ink-stands and writings were instruments of magic; if the Frenchmen prayed to God, it was according to their idea simply an exercise of sorcerers. Going to the stream to wash their dishes, it was said they were poisoning the water: it was charged that through all the cabins, wherever the priests passed, the children were seized with a cough and bloody flux, and the women became barren. In short, there was no calamity present or to come, of which they were not considered as the source. Several of those with whom the fathers took up their abode did not sleep day or night for fear; they dared not touch what had been handled by them, they returned the strangers' presents, regarding everything as suspicious. The good old women already regarded themselves as lost, and only regretted the fate of their little children, who might otherwise have been able to repeople the earth."

The Neutrals intimidated the fathers with rumors of the Senecas, who they were assured were

not far off. They spoke of killing and eating the missionaries. Yet in the four months of their sojourn Brebeuf and Chaumonot never lacked the necessaries of life, lodging and food, and amidst difficulties and inconveniences better imagined than described they retained their health. Their food supply was bread baked under ashes after the fashion of the country, and which they kept for thirty and even forty days to use in case of need.

"In their journey, the fathers passed through eighteen villages (*bourgs ou bourgades*), to all of which they gave a Christian name, of which we shall make use hereafter on occasion. They stayed particularly in ten, to which they gave as much instruction as they could find hearers. They report about 500 Fires and 3,000 persons, which these ten *bourgades* may contain, to whom they set forth and published the Gospel." (Lalemant's Relation.)^[4]

Disheartened, the fathers decided to return to Kandoucho or All Saints to await the spring. Midway, however, at the village of Teotongniaton, or S. Guillaume, (perhaps in the vicinity of Woodstock) the snow fell in such quantities that further progress was impossible. They lodged here in the cabin of a squaw, who entertained them hospitably and instructed them in the language, dictating narratives syllable by syllable as to a school boy. Here they stayed twenty-five days, "adjusted the dictionary and rules of the Huron language to that of these tribes (the Neutrals), and accomplished a work which alone was worth a journey of several years in the country."

Hurons from the mission of La Conception volunteered to go to the relief of the daring travellers. After eight days of travel and fatigue in the woods the priests and the relief party arrived at Ste. Marie on the very day of St. Joseph, patron of the country, in time to say mass, which they had not been able to say since their departure.

Amongst the eighteen villages visited by them, only one, that of Khioettoa, called by the fathers Saint Michel, gave them the audience their embassy merited. In this village, years before, driven by fear of their enemies, had taken refuge a certain foreign nation, "which lived beyond Erie or the Cat Nation," named Aouenrehronon. It was in this nation that the fathers performed the first baptism of adults. These were probably a portion of the kindred Neutral tribe referred to above as having fled to the Huron country from the Iroquois. Their original home was in the State of New York. Sanson's map shows S. Michel a little east of where Sandwich now stands.

Owing to their scanty number and the calumnies circulated amongst the Indians respecting the Jesuits of the Huron Mission the latter resolved to concentrate their forces. The Neutral mission was abandoned, but Christian Indians visited the Neutrals in 1643 and spread the faith amongst them with a success which elicits Lalemant's enthusiastic praises. Towards the end of the following winter a band of about 500 Neutrals visited the Hurons. The fathers did not fail to avail themselves of their opportunity. The visitors were instructed in the faith and expressed their regret that their teachers could not return with them. A different reception from that experienced by Brebeuf and Chaumonot three years before was promised.

Lalemant relates that in the summer of 1643, 2,000 Neutrals invaded the country of the Nation of Fire and attacked a village strongly fortified with a palisade, and defended stoutly by 900 warriors. After a ten days' siege, they carried it by storm, killed a large number on the spot, and carried off 800 captives, men, women and children, after burning 70 of the most warlike and blinding the eyes and "girdling the mouths" of the old men, whom they left to drag out a miserable existence. He reports the Nation of Fire as more populous than the Neutrals, the Hurons and the Iroquois together. In a large number of these villages the Algonkin language was spoken. Farther away, it was the prevailing tongue. In remote Algonkin tribes, even at that early day, there were Christians who knelt, crossed their hands, turned their eyes heavenward, and prayed to God morning and evening, and before and after their meals; and the best mark of their faith was that they were no longer wicked nor dishonest as they were before. So it was reported to Lalemant by trustworthy Hurons who went every year to trade with Algonkin nations scattered over the whole northern part of the continent.

Ragueneau in the Relation of 1648 refers to Lake Erie as being almost 200 leagues in circuit, and precipitating itself by "a waterfall of a terrible height" into Lake Ontario, or Lake Saint Louys.

The Aondironnons a tribe of the Neutrals living nearest to the Hurons were treacherously attacked in their village by 300 Senecas, who after killing a number carried as many as possible away with them as prisoners. The Neutrals showed no open resentment but quietly prepared to revenge themselves. A Christian Huron, a girl of fifteen, taken prisoner by the Senecas, escaped from them and made her way to the Neutral country, where she met four men, two of whom were Neutrals and the others enemies. The latter wished to take her back to captivity; but the Neutrals, claiming that within their country she was no longer in the power of her enemies, rescued her and she returned in safety to Ste. Marie on the Georgian Bay. These incidents were the prelude to the storm which shortly afterward burst.

In 1650 the principal part of the Iroquois forces was directed against the Neutrals. They carried two frontier villages, in one of which were more than 1600 men, the first at the end of autumn, the second early in the spring of 1651. The old men and children who might encumber them on their homeward journey were massacred. The number of captives was excessive, especially of young women, who were carried off to the Iroquois towns. The other more distant

villages were seized with terror. The Neutrals abandoned their houses, their property and their country. Famine pursued them. The survivors became scattered amongst far-off woods and along unknown lakes and rivers. In wretchedness and want and in constant apprehension of their relentless enemy, they eked out a miserable existence.

The Journal (April 22, 1651) adds that after the destruction of the Neutral village in the previous autumn, the Neutral warriors under the lead of the Tahontaenrat (a Huron tribe) had followed the assailants and killed or taken 200 of them; and 1,200 Iroquois warriors had returned in the spring to avenge this disaster. In August a Huron reported at Montreal the capture of Teot'ondiaton (probably the village in which Brebeuf composed his dictionary, and which is referred to in the Relation as having been taken in the spring). The condition of the Neutrals was desolate and desperate. In April, 1652, news reached Quebec that they had leagued with the Andastes against the Iroquois, that the Senecas had been defeated in a foray against the Neutrals, so that the Seneca women had been constrained to quit their village and retreat to the Oneida country; also that the Mohawks had gone on the war path against the Andastes during the winter, and the issue of the war was unknown. The last of July, 1653, seven Indians from the Huron country arrived at Quebec and reported a great gathering near Mackinac of all the Algonkin nations with the remains of the Tobacco and Neutral Nations at A'otonatendie three days above the Sault Ste. Marie (Skia'e) towards the south. The Tobacco Indians had wintered at Tea'onto'rai; the Neutrals to the number of 800 at Sken'chio'e towards Teo'chanontian. These were to rendezvous the next fall with the Algonkins, who were already on the spot to the number of 1,000.

This is probably the last we hear of the Neutrals under their own name. Some of the survivors united with the remnant of the Hurons at Mackinac and on Lake Superior; and under the name of the Hurons and Wyandots they appear from time to time on the page of history. Their removal to Detroit on the establishment of the latter trading post by Cadillac, is perpetuated by the name of Wyandotte, to the south of the City of the Straits.

Parkman mentions the circumstance that an old chief named Kenjockey, who claimed descent from an adopted prisoner of the Neutral Nation, was recently living among the Senecas of Western New York.

It is stated in the "History of the County of Middlesex" that over 60 years ago, "Edouard Petit, of Black River, discovered the ruins of an ancient building on the Riviere aux Sables, about 40 miles from Sarnia. Pacing the size, he found it to have been 40×24 feet on the ground. On the middle of the south or gable end, was a chimney eighteen feet high, in excellent preservation, built of stone, with an open fire place. The fire place had sunk below the surface. This ruin had a garden surrounding it, ten or twelve rods wide by twenty rods in length, marked by ditches and alleys. Inside the walls of the house a splendid oak had grown to be three feet in diameter, with a stem sixty feet high to the first branch. It seemed to be of second growth, and must have been 150 years reaching its proportions as seen in 1828-9."

This must have been the mission of S. Francois shown on Sanson's map.

THE IROQUOIS' HUNTING GROUND.

After the expulsion of the Neutrals, the north shore of Lake Erie remained an unpeopled wilderness until the close of the last century. The unbroken forest teemed with deer, racoons, foxes, wolves, bears, squirrels and wild turkeys. Millions of pigeons darkened the sky in their seasons of migration. For generations after the disappearance of the Neutrals, the Iroquois resorted to the region in pursuit of game. The country was described in maps as "*Chasse de Castor des Iroquois*," the Iroquois' beaver ground. Numerous dams constructed by these industrious little animals still remain to justify the description.

The French built forts at Detroit, Niagara and Toronto to intercept the beaver traffic, which otherwise might be shared by the English on the Hudson and Mohawk rivers; but for nearly a hundred and fifty years no settlement was attempted on the north shore. References to the region are few and scanty. Travellers did not penetrate into the country. Coasting along the shore in canoes on their way to Detroit, they landed as rarely as possible for shelter or repose. There were forest paths well known to the Indians, by which they portaged their canoes and goods from one water stretch to another. One of these led from the site of Dundas to a point on the Grand River near Cainsville; another from the latter stream to the Thames River near Woodstock; and a third from the upper waters of the Thames to Lake Huron. Besides these, there was a trail from the Huntly farm in Southwold on the River Thames (Lot 11, Con. 1,) to the mouth of Kettle Creek; and a fifth from the Rondeau to M'Gregor's Creek near Chatham. These were thoroughfares of travel and of such rude commerce as was carried on by the savages with their French and English neighbors.

THE FRENCH EXPLORATION.

Joliet was the first Frenchman to descend Lake Erie from Detroit. He had been sent by Talon to investigate the copper mines of Lake Superior. He returned to Quebec in the autumn of 1669 by way of the lower lakes, instead of taking the usual route by the French River and the Ottawa. At the mouth of Kettle Creek he hid his canoe. Thence he portaged, doubtless by the well-known trails to the Thames and Grand rivers, until he reached Burlington Bay.[5]

At the Seneca village of Tinaouatoua, midway between the Bay and the Grand River, he met La Salle and the Sulpician priests, Dollier de Casson and Galinee on their way to Lake Erie and the Ohio River. The result of the meeting and of the information given by Joliet was that the priests altered their purpose and decided to proceed to Sault Ste. Marie and then to the Pottawatamies, where they would establish their mission: whilst La Salle, who evidently was dissatisfied with his companions, went back with Joliet and, it is now pretty generally believed, discovered the Ohio by journeying overland from the Seneca villages south of Lake Ontario during the winter or the following spring. Joliet gave the missionaries a description of his route, from which Galinee was able to make a map which was of great assistance in the further progress of their expedition.[6] The priests descended the Grand River to Lake Erie, and wintered at the forks of Patterson's Creek, where Port Dover now stands. After a sojourn of five months and eleven days, during which they were visited in their cabin by Iroquois beaver hunters, they proceeded westward along the north shore of the lake. Losing one of their canoes in a storm, they were obliged to divide their party. Four men with the luggage proceeded in the two remaining canoes. Five of the party, including apparently the two priests, made the wearisome journey on foot from Long Point all the way to the mouth of Kettle Creek, where on the tenth of April, 1670, they found Joliet's canoe, and the party was reunited for the rest of the long journey to the Sault. Upon leaving their winter abode however the whole party had first proceeded to the lake shore, and there on the 23rd March 1670, being Passion Sunday, planted a cross, as a memorial of their long sojourn, and offered a prayer. The official record is as follows:

"We the undersigned certify that we have seen affixed on the lands of the lake called Erie the arms of the King of France with this inscription: The year of salvation 1669, Clement IX. being seated in St. Peter's chair, Louis XIV. reigning in France, M. de Courcelle being governor of New France, and M. Talon being intendant therein for the King, there arrived in this place two missionaries from Montreal accompanied by seven other Frenchmen, who, the first of all European peoples, have wintered on this lake, of which, as of a territory not occupied, they have taken possession in the name of their King by the apposition of his arms, which they have attached to the foot of this cross. In witness whereof we have signed the present certificate."

"FRANCOIS DOLLIER,
Priest of the Diocese of Nantes in
Brittany.
DE GALINEE,
Deacon of the Diocese of Rennes in
Brittany."

Galinee grows enthusiastic over the abundance of game and wild fruits opposite Long Point. The grapes were as large and as sweet as the finest in France. The wine made from them was as good as *vin de grave*. He admires the profusion of walnuts, chestnuts, wild apples and plums. Bears were fatter and better to the palate than the most "savory" pigs in France. Deer wandered in herds of 50 to 100. Sometimes even 200 would be seen feeding together. In his enthusiasm the good priest calls this region "the terrestrial paradise of Canada."

Fortunately for the explorers, the winter was as mild at Port Dover as it was severe at Montreal. Patterson's Creek was however still frozen over on the 26th March, when, having portaged their goods and canoes to the lake, they embarked to resume their westward journey. They had to pass two streams before they arrived at the sand beach which connected Long Point with the mainland. To effect the first crossing they walked four leagues inland before they found a satisfactory spot. To cross Big Creek, they were obliged to spend a whole day constructing a raft. They were further delayed by a prolonged snow storm and a strong north wind. On the west bank was a meadow more than 200 paces wide, in passing over which they were immersed to their girdles in mud and slash. Arriving at the sandy ridge which then connected Long Point with the mainland, they found the lake on the other side full of floating ice, and concluded that their companions had not ventured to proceed in their frail barques. They encamped near the sandbar and waited for the canoes, which had doubtless been delayed by the weather. The missionaries put themselves on short rations in order to permit the hunters to keep up their strength for the chase, and were rewarded with a stag as the result. As it was Holy Week the whole party decided not to leave the spot until they had kept their Easter together. On the Tuesday following, which was the eighth day of April, they heard mass and, although the lake had still a border of ice, they launched their canoe, and continued their journey as before, five of the party going by land. When they arrived at "the place of the canoe," on the 10th great was their disappointment to find that the Iroquois had anticipated them and carried it away. Later in the day however it was found, hidden between two large trees on the other side of a stream. The discoverers came upon

it unexpectedly whilst looking for dry wood to make a fire, and bore it in triumph to the lake. The hunters were out the whole day without seeing any game. For five or six days the party subsisted on boiled maize, no meat being obtainable. Being provided now with three canoes, the party paddled up the lake in one day to a place where game was abundant. The hunters saw more than 200 deer in a single herd, but missed their aim. In their craving for flesh-meat, they shot and skinned a poor wolf and had it ready for the kettle, when one of their men perceived twenty or thirty deer "on the other side of a small lake on the shore of which we were."^[7] The deer were surrounded and forced into the water, where 10 were killed, the rest being permitted to escape. Well supplied with fresh and smoked meat they went on nearly twenty leagues (about fifty miles) in one day, "as far as a long point which you will find marked in the map of Lake Erie. We arrived there on a beautiful sand-beach on the east side of this point."^[8] Here disaster overtook them. They had drawn up their canoes beyond high water mark, but left their goods on the sand near the water, whilst they camped for the night. A terrific gale came up from the north-east, and the water of the lake rose until it swept with violence over the beach. One of the party was awakened by the roaring of the waves and wind and aroused the rest, who attempted to save their supplies. Groping with torches along the shore, they succeeded in securing the cargo of Galinee's canoe, and of one of Dollier's. The other canoe load was lost, including provisions, goods for bartering, ammunition, and, most important of all, the altar service, with which they intended establishing their mission among the Pottawatamies. The question was debated whether they should take up their mission with some other tribe, or go back to Montreal for a new altar service and supplies, and, returning at a later period, establish themselves wherever they should then determine. Deciding in favor of the latter view, they concluded that the return journey would be as short by way of the Sault and the French River as by the route which they had followed from the east. In favor of this decision was the further consideration that not only would they see a new country but they would have the escort of the Ottawas who were assembling at the Sault for their annual trading visit to Montreal and Quebec. Galinee continues: "We pursued our journey accordingly towards the west, and after having made about 100 leagues on Lake Erie arrived at the place where the *Lake of the Hurons*, otherwise called the *Fresh-water Sea of the Hurons*, or the Michigan, discharges itself into that lake. This outlet is perhaps half a league wide and turns sharply to the north-east, so that we were in a measure retracing our steps; at the end of six leagues we found a place that was very remarkable and held in great veneration by all the savages of these regions, because of a stone idol of natural formation, to which they say they owe the success of their navigation on Lake Erie when they have crossed it without accident, and which they appease by sacrifices, presents of skins, provisions, etc., when they wish to embark on it."

"This place was full of huts of those who had come to pay homage to this idol, which had no other resemblance to a human figure than that which the imagination chose to give it. However it was painted all over, and a kind of face had been formed for it with vermillion. I leave you to imagine whether we avenged upon this idol, which the Iroquois had strongly recommended us to honor, the loss of our chapel."

"We attributed to it even the scarcity of food from which we had suffered up to that time. In fine there was nobody whose hatred it had not incurred. I consecrated one of my hatchets to break this god of stone, and then having locked canoes we carried the largest piece to the middle of the river, and immediately cast the remainder into the water, that it might never be heard of again."

"God rewarded us forthwith for this good act: for we killed a deer that same day, and four leagues farther we entered a little lake about ten leagues long and almost as wide, called by Mr. Sanson the *Lake of the Salted Waters*, but we saw no sign of salt. From this lake we entered the outlet of Lake Michigan, which is not a quarter of a league in width."

"At last ten or twelve leagues farther on, we entered the largest lake in all America, called here "the Fresh-water Sea of the Hurons," or in Algonkin, *Michigan*. It is 600 to 700 leagues in circuit. We made on this lake 200 leagues and were afraid of falling short of provisions, the shores of the lake being apparently very barren. God, however, did not wish that we should lack for food in his service."

"For we were never more than one day without food. It is true that several times we had nothing left, and had to pass an evening and morning without having anything to put into the kettle, but I did not see that any one was discouraged or put to prayers (*sic*) on that account. For we were so accustomed to see that God succored us mightily in emergencies, that we awaited with tranquility the effects of his goodness, thinking that He who nourished so many barbarians in these woods would not abandon his servants."

"We passed this lake without any peril and entered the *Lake of the Hurons*, which communicates with it by four mouths, each nearly two leagues in width."

"At last we arrived on the 25th May, the day of Pentecost, at Ste. Marie of the Sault, where the Jesuit fathers have made their principal establishment for the missions to the Ottawas and neighboring tribes."

Here they found fathers D'Ablon and Marquette in charge of the mission, with a fort consisting of a square of cedar posts, enclosing a chapel and residence. They had cleared and seeded a large piece of ground. The Sulpicians remained only three days and then hired an experienced

guide to take them to Montreal, where they arrived on the 18th June after a fatiguing journey of twenty-two days. They had been absent since the 6th July 1669, and were welcomed as if they had come to life again after being dead. It was their intention to return in the following spring and renew their search for the Ohio River, where they purposed establishing a mission; but this intention was never carried into effect.

"This famous voyage," says Dean Harris in his interesting 'History of the Early Missions in Western Canada,' "stimulated to an extraordinary degree enthusiasm for discovery, and in the following year Talon sent out expeditions to the Hudson Bay, the Southern Sea, and into the Algonquin country to the north." Marquette, Tonty, Hennepin, Du Lhut, La Salle and Perrot explored the Mississippi valley, and the head waters of the St. Lawrence system, and almost the entire continent was claimed by the French as belonging to New France. As far as appears, there were no Indians having settled abodes on the north shore of Lake Erie for more than a century after the expulsion of the Neutrals. Nor does any attempt appear to have been made by the whites to explore south-western Ontario until the close of the last century. The Iroquois continued for a long period to range its forests for beaver in the winter. The rivalry between the French and the English for the control of the vast western fur trade led to the erection of outposts by the English at Oswego and by the French at Cataragui, Niagara, Detroit and Michilimakinac, during the latter part of the 17th century. English traders sailed or paddled up the lakes to get their share of the traffic, and were from time to time summarily arrested and expelled by their rivals. Both parties tried to ingratiate themselves with the natives. The French were as eager to maintain a state of warfare between the Iroquois and the Indians of the upper Lakes—the Hurons, Ottawas, Pottawatamies, Ojibways etc.—as to induce the former to keep the peace with the white inhabitants of Canada. There were two great trade routes to Montreal, viz: by Mackinac, the Georgian Bay and the French and Ottawa River and by Detroit, Lake Erie and Niagara; the Lake Simcoe portage routes by the Trent River system, and the Holland River and Toronto were also used. Trading or military parties, under the leadership of La Salle, Tonty, Perrot, Du Lhut, Cadaiillac, passed along the coast of L. Erie in canoes; but little record if any remained of their visits to the shores. Kettle Creek was long called the Tonty River. It is so named in one of Bellin's maps of 1755, and by the Canadian Land Board at Detroit as lately as 1793. The only northern tributaries of Lake Erie to which names are given on the map of 1755 are the Grand River, River D'Ollier (Patterson's Creek), which in some maps is called the River of the Wintering—a manifest reference to Galinee and Dollier de Casson's sojourn in 1669-70—the River a la Barbue (Catfish Creek), the River Tonty (Kettle Creek) a little east of P'te au Fort (Plum Point or else Port Talbot) and the River aux Cedres (M'Gregor's Creek in Essex). The Thames is described as a "River unknown to all geographers, and which you go up eighty leagues without finding any rapids (*saults*)." The Chenail Ecarte is indicated as the only outlet of the Sydenham river the map-makers assuming that Walpole Island was part of the mainland. The mouths of four or five streams are shown between Long Point and "the Little Lake" (Rondeau), and the shore is marked "The High Cliffs." "The Low Cliffs" were between the Rondeau and Point Pelee. In one of Bellin's maps of 1755 in the present writer's possession Long Point is shown as a peninsula, and the streams now in the County of Elgin are marked "Unknown Rivers," but the map firstly mentioned and published in the same year, is more complete, represents Long Point as an island, and names the Barbue and Tonty rivers and Fort Point, (*P'te au Fort*) which are not named in the other. The Tonty, moreover, is represented as an inlet by way of distinction from the other streams (including the Barbue) which appear as of equal insignificance. The naming of Kettle Creek after the great explorer and devoted lieutenant of La Salle indicates its consequence. Its harbor was of paramount importance to the navigation of these early days, but no doubt the portage route extending from its mouth to the Thames, exalted the little river in the eyes of the explorers who honored it with Tonty's name.^[9]

THE INDIAN TITLE.

On July 19th, 1701, the Iroquois ceded to the British the entire country between the lakes, "including the country where beavers and all sorts of wild game keep, and the place called De Tret,"^[10] but this appears to have been a mere formality as no possession was taken by the purchasers.

The Ojibways have a tradition that they defeated the Iroquois (called by them the Nottawas or Nahdoways) in a succession of skirmishes, ending in a complete victory at the outlet of Burlington Bay, and the final expulsion of the Six Nations from that part of Ontario between the Great Lakes. The Ojibways then spread east and west over the country. "A treaty of peace and friendship was then made with the Nahdoways residing on the south side of Lake Ontario, and both nations solemnly covenanted, by going through the usual forms of burying the tomahawk, smoking the pipe of peace, and locking their hands and arms together, agreeing in future to call each other *Brothers*. Thus ended their war with the Nahdoways."^[11]

Whatever may be the truth of the details, there is no doubt of the fact that the Ojibways or their kindred the Mississagas were the sole occupants of Western Ontario at the time of the conquest in 1759, except near the Detroit River where the remnant of the Hurons or Wyandots had settled. It was with the Mississagas that the British negotiated in 1784 for the cession of the

country from the "head of the Lake Ontario or the Creek Waghguata to the River La Tranche, then down the river until a south course will strike the mouth of Cat Fish Creek on Lake Erie." On the 21st May, 1790, Alexander M'Kee announced to the Land-board at Detroit the cession to the Crown by the Indians of that part of Upper Canada west of the former grant. The surrender of the Indian title opened the way in each division of the lake shore district for settlement.[12]

NOTE.—The explanatory notes referring to the extract are by the late Leonidas Burwell, M.P.P., and are given by him in a letter to His Honor, Judge Hughes, which has been kindly presented by the recipient to the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute.

CHARLEVOIX'S DESCRIPTION.

In the year 1721 the distinguished traveller, Charlevoix, passed through Lake Erie on his way up the Lakes and thence down the Mississippi to New Orleans. The north shore of Lake Erie, and chiefly that part now embraced within the limits of the County of Elgin, is singled out by him as the most beautiful country he met with in his passage. Many travellers since Charlevoix have admired the charming scenery at the mouths of Otter, Catfish, Kettle and Talbot Creeks, but few if any have described it so well. As Colonel Talbot was influenced mainly by Charlevoix's description of the country to establish his settlement at the outlet of Talbot Creek in 1803, the present writer makes no apology for reproducing the following extended passage from the celebrated and gifted traveller:

"The 28th May, 1721, I went eighteen leagues and found myself over against the *great river* which comes from the East in forty-two degrees fifteen minutes. Nevertheless the great trees were not yet green. This country appeared to me to be very fine. We made very little way the 29th and none at all the 30th. We embarked the next day about sun rise, and went forward apace. The first of June being Whitsunday, after going up a pretty river almost an hour which comes a great way, and runs between two fine meadows, we made a portage about sixty paces to escape going round a point which advances fifteen leagues into the lake: they call it the *Long Point*. It is very sandy and produces naturally many vines." [13]

"The following days I saw nothing remarkable, but I coasted a charming country that was hid from time to time by some disagreeable skreens, but of little depth. In every place where I landed I was enchanted with the beauty and variety of landscape bounded by the finest forest in the world; besides this water fowl swarmed everywhere. I cannot say there is such plenty of game in the woods: but I know that on the south side there are vast herds of wild cattle." [14]

"If one always travelled as I did then, with a clear sky and charming climate on water as bright as the finest fountain, and were to meet everywhere with safe and pleasant encampings, where one might find all manner of game at little cost, breathing at one's ease a pure air, and enjoying the sight of the finest countries, one would be tempted to travel all one's life."

"It put me in mind of those ancient patriarchs who had no fixed abode, dwelt under tents, were in some manner master of all the countries they travelled over, and peaceably enjoyed all their productions without having the trouble which is unavoidable in the possession of a real domain. How many oaks represented to me that of *Mamre*? How many fountains made me remember that of Jacob? Every day a situation of my own choosing, a neat and convenient house set up and furnished with necessaries in a quarter of an hour, spread with flowers always fresh, on a fine green carpet, and on every side plain and natural beauties which art had not altered and which it can not imitate. If the pleasures suffer some interruption either by bad weather or some unforeseen accident, they are the more relished when they reappear."

"If I had a mind to moralize, I should add, these alternations of pleasure and disappointment which I have so often experienced since I have been travelling, are very proper to make us sensible that there is no kind of life more capable of representing to us continually that we are only on the earth like pilgrims, and that we can only use, as in passing, the goods of this world; that a man wants but a few things; and that we ought to take with patience the misfortunes that happen in our journey, since they pass away equally, and with the same celerity. In short how many things in travelling make us sensible of the dependence in which we live upon Divine providence, which does not make use of, for this mixture of good and evil, men's passions, but the vicissitudes of the seasons which we may foresee, and of the caprice of the elements, which we may expect of course. Of consequence, how easy is it, and how many opportunities have we to merit by our dependence on and resignation to the will of God?"

"They say commonly that long voyages do not make people religious, but nothing one would think should be more capable of making them so, than the scenes they go through."

THE BRITISH OCCUPATION.

The conquest of Canada in 1759 was followed by the occupation of Detroit and the upper forts by a British force under the famous Major Robert Rogers. He followed the south shore of Lake Erie, and near the site of Cleveland was met by the celebrated Ottawa chief, Pontiac, who challenged his right to pass through the country without the formal permission of its savage sovereign. The operations of the conspiracy of Pontiac (1763-5) are described in Parkman's glowing pages. The success of the American Revolution was followed by the settlement not only of the U.E. Loyalists but also of many of the disbanded British troops in the most fertile districts north of the lakes. To locate these advantageously a Land-board was established at Detroit by the Canadian Government and it continued to perform its functions until the surrender of that post to the United States under the provisions of the Jay Treaty of 1794.

McNIFF'S EXPLORATION.

The Indian title to the whole north shore region having been surrendered to the Crown, no time was lost in opening the territory for settlement. Patrick McNiff, an assistant surveyor attached to the Ordinance Department, was ordered by Patrick Murray, Commandant at Detroit, to explore the north shore from Long Point westward and investigate the quality and situation of the land. His report is dated 16th June 1790. The following extract is interesting:

"From Pointe aux Pins to the portage at Long Point, no possibility of making any settlement to front on the Lake, being all the way a yellow and white sand bank from 50 to 100 feet high, top covered with chestnut and scrubby oak and no harbours where even light boats may enter except River Tonty and River a la Barbue.[15] A load boat may enter the latter having four and a half feet water on the bar; on each side of River a la Barbue are flats of excellent lands, but not above fifteen or twenty chains wide, before very high land commences, which in many places does not appear to be accessible for any carriage. On the tops of these very high hills, good land, timber, some very large chestnut, hickory and bass. These hills are separated by dry ravines almost impassable from their great depth—on the back of Long Point very good land, not so hilly as what I have passed. Timber bass, black walnut and hard maple, but marshy in front for twenty or thirty chains."

In consequence of this unfavorable report, townships were directed to be laid out on the River Thames, instead of the lake shore.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR SIMCOE.

In the year 1791 the Quebec Act was passed, dividing Quebec into two provinces, and Colonel John Graves Simcoe became the first lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada. Before the Bill was introduced into parliament, it was understood that Simcoe had been selected by Pitt to govern the new province, direct its settlement and establish constitutional government after the model of the British system. As early as January, 1791, he had written a letter to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society,[16] in which after mentioning his appointment, he explained his own plans as to the administration, and stated his desire to profit by the ideas of his correspondent whom he would wait upon for that purpose.

"For the purpose of commerce, union and power, I propose that the site of the colony should be in that Great Peninsula between the Lakes Huron, Erie and Ontario, a spot destined by nature, sooner or later, to govern the interior world."

"I mean to establish a capital in the very heart of the country, upon the River La Tranche, which is navigable for batteaux for 150 miles—and near to where the Grand River, which falls into Erie, and others that communicate with Huron and Ontario almost interlock. The capital I mean to call Georgina—and aim to settle in its vicinity Loyalists, who are now in Connecticut, provided that the Government approve of the system."

As a member of the House of Commons, Simcoe spoke in support of a provision in the bill for the establishment of an hereditary nobility, which Fox had moved to strike out. The report states that Colonel Simcoe "having pronounced a panegyric on the British constitution, wished it to be adopted in the present instance, as far as circumstances would admit." The provision was in the bill as finally passed.

Having proceeded to Quebec to enter upon the performance of his duties, he appears to have utilized every opportunity for informing himself of his new domain. He writes to Hon. Henry Dundas from Montreal, December 7, 1791, in a letter marked "secret and confidential," as follows:—

"I am happy to have found in the surveyor's office an actual survey of the River La Tranche. It answers my most sanguine expectations, and I have but little doubt that its communications with the Ontario and Erie will be found to be very practicable, the whole forming a route which, in all

respects, may annihilate the political consequences of Niagara and Lake Erie. * * * My ideas at present are to assemble the new corps, artificers, etc., at Cataraqui (Kingston), and to take its present garrison and visit Toronto and the heads of La Tranche, to pass down that river to Detroit, and early in the spring to occupy such a central position as shall be previously chosen for the capital."

On the 16th July, 1792, the name of the River La Tranche was changed to the Thames by proclamation of the Governor, issued at Kingston. In the spring, he had written that "Toronto appears to be the natural arsenal of Lake Ontario and to afford an easy access overland to Lake Huron." He adds: "The River La Tranche, near the navigable head of which I propose to establish the Capital, by what I can gather from the few people who have visited it, will afford a safe, more certain, and I am inclined to think, by taking due advantage of the season, a less expensive route to Detroit than that of Niagara."

At Quebec Simcoe had met the Hon. Thomas Talbot, who had joined the 24th Regiment as Lieutenant in the previous year. Talbot was then a young man of twenty, whilst Simcoe was in his fortieth year. A strong attachment sprang up between these two remarkable men, and Talbot accompanied the lieutenant-governor to Niagara, in the capacity of private and confidential secretary. After meeting the first Legislature elected in Upper Canada during the fall of 1792 Simcoe decided to make a journey overland to Detroit. He left Navy Hall on the 4th February, 1793, and returned on the 10th March. His travelling companions were Capt. Fitzgerald, Lieutenant Smith (previously Secretary to the Detroit Land Board, subsequently the first Surveyor General of Upper Canada, an M.P.P., Speaker of the House, etc., and afterward created a baronet), Lieutenants Talbot, Gray, Givens and Major Littlehales. All of these were prominent afterward in the history of the Province. Talbot became the founder of the Talbot Settlement. Gray was appointed Solicitor General; he perished in the schooner 'Speedy' on Lake Ontario in 1804 with Judge Cochrane, Sheriff Macdonell and others. Givens was afterward the well-known Colonel Givens, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at York. Littlehales was afterward Sir E. B. Littlehales, Secretary of War for Ireland, during the Lord-Lieutenancy of the Marquis of Cornwallis; he married in 1805 the Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, daughter of the Duke of Leinster and sister of the unfortunate Lord Edward Fitzgerald.[17]

The journey was made partly in sleighs, but chiefly on foot. Littlehales kept a diary of the occurrences on the way. The route was by Ten-mile Creek, Nelles' house at the Grand River, the Mohawk Indian village (a little below Brantford), the portage route to the Forks of the Thames (London), and then down or along the River to Detroit. Joseph Brant with about a dozen of his Indians accompanied the party from the Mohawk Village to Delaware, doubtless to furnish them with game and guide them over the long portage. The Indians excited admiration by their skill in constructing wigwams of elm bark to lodge the company. After leaving the Grand River the trail passed a Mississauga encampment, a trader's house, fine open deer plains, several beaver dams, "an encampment said to have been Lord Fitzgerald's when on his march to Detroit, Michilimackinac and the Mississippi," a cedar grove; crossed a small branch of the La Tranche, and the main branch soon afterwards; "went between an irregular fence of stakes made by the Indians to intimidate and impede the deer, and facilitate their hunting;" again they crossed the main branch of the Thames,[18] and "halted to observe a beautiful situation, formed by a bend of the river—a grove of hemlock and pine, and a large creek. We passed some deep ravines and made our wigwam by a stream on the brow of a hill, near a spot where Indians were interred. The burying ground was of earth raised, nearly covered with leaves; and wickered over—adjoining it was a large pole, with painted hieroglyphics on it denoting the nation, tribes and achievements of the deceased, either as chiefs, warriors, or hunters." This was on the 13th February. The food of the party consisted of soup and dried venison, to which squirrel and racoon meat added variety. Littlehales remarks about the latter: "The three racoons when roasted made us an excellent supper. Some parts were rancid, but in general the flesh was exceedingly tender and good." On the 14th they encamped a few miles above the Delaware village. During the day the diarist had "observed many trees blazed, and various figures of Indians (returning from battle with scalps) and animals drawn upon them, descriptive of the nations, tribes and number that had passed. Many of them were well drawn, especially a bison."

"This day we walked over very uneven ground, and passed two lakes of about four miles in circumference, between which were many fine larch trees."

Next morning they walked on the ice of the river five or six miles to the Delaware village, where the chiefs received them cordially and regaled them with eggs and venison. "Captain Brant being obliged to return to a council of the Six Nations, we stayed the whole day. The Delaware Castle is pleasantly situated upon the banks of the Thames; the meadows at the bottom are cleared to some extent, and in summer planted with Indian corn. After walking twelve or fourteen miles this day, part of the way through plains of white oak and ash, and passing several Chippawa Indians upon their hunting parties, and in their encampments, we arrived at a Canadian trader's; and a little beyond, in proceeding down the river the Indians discovered a spring of an oily nature, which upon examination proved to be a kind of petroleum. We passed another wigwam of Chippawas, making maple sugar, the mildness of the winter having compelled them in a great measure to abandon their annual hunting. We soon arrived at an old hut where we passed the night."

On the 17th, after a journey of four or five miles, they passed the Moravian Village which had

been begun in May, 1792. The Delaware Indians were "under the control, and in many particulars, under the command of four missionaries, Messrs. Zeisberger, Senseman, Edwards and Young." They were making progress towards civilization, and already had corn fields and were being instructed in different branches of agriculture. "At this place every respect was paid to the Governor, and we procured a seasonable refreshment of eggs, milk and butter. Pursuing our journey eight or nine miles, we stopped for the night at the extremity of a new road, cut by the Indians and close to a creek."

"18th—Crossing the Thames and leaving behind us a new log house, belonging to a sailor named Carpenter, we passed a thick, swampy wood of black walnut, where His Excellency's servant was lost for three or four hours. We then came to a bend of the La Tranche (Thames)[19] and were agreeably surprised to meet twelve or fourteen carioles coming to meet and conduct the Governor, who, with his suite, got into them, and at about four o'clock arrived at Dolsen's, having previously reconnoitred a fork of the river, and examined a mill of curious construction erecting upon it. The settlement where Dolsen resides is very promising, the land is well adapted for farmers, and there are some respectable inhabitants on both sides of the river: behind it to the south is a range of spacious meadows—elk are continually seen upon them—and the pools and ponds are full of cray fish."

"From Dolsen's we went to the mouth of the Thames in carioles, about twelve miles, and saw the remains of a considerable town of the Chippawas, where, it is reported, a desperate battle was fought between them and the Senecas, and upon which occasion the latter, being totally vanquished, abandoned their dominions to the conquerors. Certain it is, that human bones are scattered in abundance in the vicinity of the ground, and the Indians have a variety of traditions relative to this transaction." [20]

We pass over briefly the Governor's reception at Detroit. The Canadian militia on the east bank fired a *feu de joie*. He crossed the river in boats amidst floating ice. The garrison of Detroit was under arms to receive His Majesty's representative. A royal salute was fired.

The farms, the apple orchards, windmills and houses close together on the river bank gave an appearance of population and respectability. Talbot's regiment, the 24th, was stationed at Detroit. Fort Lenoult and the rest of the works were inspected. The party visited at the River Rouge a sloop almost ready to be launched. They went to see the Bloody Bridge, memorable for the slaughter of British troops by Pontiac 30 years before.

On the 23rd, the Governor left Detroit on his homeward journey. Col. McKee, Mr. Baby and others escorting His Excellency as far as the high bank where the carioles had met the party on the 18th. "Here we separated; and each taking his pack or knapsack on his back, we walked that night to the Moravian village."

On the 27th the chiefs at the village entertained the party with venison, and dancing, "a ceremony they never dispense with when any of the King's officers of rank visit their villages."

"28th.—At six we stopped at an old Misissaga hut, upon the south side of the Thames. After taking some refreshment of salt pork and venison, well cooked by Lieutenant Smith, who superintended that department, we, as usual, sang God Save the King, and went to rest."

"March 1st.—We set out along the banks of the river; then, ascending a high hill, quitted our former path, and directed our course to the northward. A good deal of snow having fallen, and lying still on the ground, we saw tracks of otters, deer, wolves and bears and other animals many of which being quite fresh induced the Mohawks to pursue them, but without success. We walked 14 or 15 miles and twice crossed the river, and a few creeks, upon the ice; once we came close to a Chippawa hunting camp, opposite to a fine terrace, on the banks of which we encamped, near a bay. * * * 2nd.—We struck the Thames at one end of a low flat island enveloped with shrubs and trees; the rapidity and strength of the current were such as to have forced a channel through the main land, being a peninsula, and to have formed the island. We walked over a rich meadow, and at its extremity came to the forks of the river.[21] The Governor wished to examine this situation and its environs: and we therefore remained here all the day. He judged it to be a situation eminently calculated for the metropolis of Canada. Among many other essentials, it possesses the following advantages: command of territory,—internal situation,—central position,—facility of water communication up and down the Thames into Lakes St. Clair, Erie, Huron and Superior,—navigable for boats to near its source, and for small crafts probably to the Moravian settlement—to the northward by a small portage to the waters flowing into Lake Huron—to the south-east by a carrying place into Lake Ontario and the River St. Lawrence; the soil luxuriantly fertile,—the land rich, and capable of being easily cleared, and soon put into a state of agriculture,—a pinery upon an adjacent high knoll, and other timber on the heights, well calculated for the erection of public buildings,—a climate not inferior to any part of Canada."

"To these natural advantages an object of great consideration is to be added, that the enormous expenses of the Indian Department would be greatly diminished, if not abolished; the Indians would, in all probability, be induced to become the carriers of their own peltries, and they would find a ready, contiguous, commodious, and equitable mart, honorably advantageous to Government, and the community in general, without their becoming a prey to the monopolizing and unprincipled trader."

"The young Indians, who had chased a herd of deer in company with Lieutenant Givens, returned unsuccessful, but brought with them a large porcupine; which was very seasonable, as our provisions were nearly expended. This animal afforded us a very good repast, and tasted like a pig. The Newfoundland dog attempted to bite the porcupine, but soon got his mouth filled with the barbed quills, which gave him exquisite pain. An Indian undertook to extract them, and with much perseverance plucked them out, one by one, and carefully applied a root or decoction, which speedily healed the wound."

"Various figures were delineated on trees at the forks of the River Thames, done with charcoal and vermilion; the most remarkable were the imitations of men with deer's heads."

"We saw a fine eagle on the wing, and two or three large birds, perhaps vultures."

"3rd.—We were glad to leave our wigwam early this morning, it having rained incessantly the whole night; besides, the hemlock branches on which we slept were wet before they were gathered for our use.—We first ascended the height at least 120 feet into a continuation of the pinery already mentioned; quitting that, we came to a beautiful plain with detached clumps of white oak, and open woods; then crossing a creek running into the south branch of the Thames, we entered a thick swampy wood, where we were at a loss to discover any track; but in a few minutes we were released from this dilemma by the Indians, who making a cast, soon descried our old path to Detroit. Descending a hill and crossing a brook, we came at noon to the encampment we left on the 14th of February, and were agreeably surprised by meeting Captain Brant and a numerous retinue; among them were four of the Indians we had despatched to him when we first altered our course for the forks of the River Thames."

On the 4th, after crossing brooks and rivulets, much swollen by a thunder-storm, and passing the hut occupied by them on the 12th February they noticed "very fine beech trees."

Next day:—"We again crossed one of the branches of the south-east fork of the Thames, and halted in a cypress or cedar grove, where we were much amused by seeing Brant and the Indians chase a lynx with their dogs and rifle guns, but they did not catch it. Several porcupines were seen."

On the 6th they reached the Mohawk village, crossing the river at a different place and by a nearer route than before. The Indians had met the Governor with horses at "the end of the plain, near the Salt Lick Creek." The party finally arrived at Navy Hall on the 10th day of March.

At this period the overland route from Detroit to Niagara was apparently well known. There was an annual "Winter-express" each way, which Simcoe met on his westward journey on the 12th February and on his homeward route on the 5th March. Littlehales mentions a Mr. Clarke as being with it on each occasion. On their first meeting, the express was accompanied by a Wyandot and a Chippawa Indian. The second time, Mr. Augustus Jones, the surveyor, was either with or following it. He surveyed the north-west part of Southwold in the following year. On the up trip, the Governor's party met one man, who afterward proved to be a runaway thief from Detroit. They were also overtaken by a traveller, who, as they were subsequently informed, had got himself supplied with provisions and horses to the Grand Rivet, and a guide from thence to Detroit, by the false representation that he had despatches for the Governor. "He quitted us under the plausible pretence of looking for land to establish a settlement."

It appears that immediately after the capture of Niagara by Johnston in 1759, merchants from New England and Virginia had rushed in to participate in the fur-trade, which until that time had been largely monopolized by the French. As might be expected, many lawless acts were committed by these adventurers, and various proceedings were adopted by the Government to check and control them. After the American Revolution land-hunters came into the peninsula and undertook to purchase lands directly from the Indians. These purchases were ignored by the Land Boards, who always repudiated the idea that the Indians were proprietors of the land. No steps were taken however to locate settlers until the Indian title by occupancy was surrendered to the Crown. Even then, Simcoe's first step was to procure surveys for the purpose of establishing military roads, fortified posts, dockyards, etc., in order that when the settlers came they might be easily defended against hostile attacks, whether from the Indians, the United States troops, or the French or Spanish, who it was believed might invade the province by way of the Mississippi, the Ohio and the upper lakes.

Patrick McNiff's survey of the River Thames, as far as the upper Delaware village, was finished in 1793. His map is dated at Detroit on the 25th June of this year. In it he mentions that "from the entrance to the 12th lot of the 3rd township was surveyed two years since, from the 12th lot * * * to the upper village was surveyed in April and May 1793."

The map gives the "road leading from the Delawares to the Moravian village," "corn-fields" along the east bank of the river, an Indian village in the Southwold bend, and opposite on the southerly bank the "road leading to the entrance of Kettle Creek[22] on Lake Erie. Five hours' journey." It also shows the road leading to the Mohawk village on the Grand River.

The Moravian village is near the site of the battle field, and it is marked "commenced in May, 1792." The present location of Dundas Street and the Longwoods Road would appear to correspond with the roads east and west of Delaware as laid down.[23] Simcoe in forwarding

McNiff's survey to Mr. Dundas on 20th September, 1793, thus refers to the Lake Erie region:

"The tract of country which lies between the river (or rather navigable canal as its Indian name and French translation import) and Lake Erie, is one of the finest for all agricultural purposes in North America, and far exceeds the soil or climate of the Atlantic States. There are few or no interjacent swamps, and a variety of useful streams empty themselves into the lake or the river."

The Governor makes frequent reference in his correspondence and state papers to his plans for establishing the capital of Upper Canada at the upper forks of the Thames, to be called Georgina, London or New London. Down to the very time of his departure in 1796, and after the seat of government had been transferred to York (now Toronto), he regarded the latter as but a temporary capital, the real metropolis having yet to be built at London in accordance with his original design.

Talbot remained in the service of the Lieutenant Governor until June 1794, when as Major of the 5th Regiment he departed for England under orders for Flanders, carrying with him special letters of recommendation from Simcoe to Dundas and to Mr. King, the Under Secretary of State. He had been employed in various confidential missions. In 1793 he had been sent to Philadelphia to await news from Europe, when war with France was believed to be imminent. On the 22nd August, 1793, we find Talbot in "the most confidential intercourse with the several Indian tribes," as Simcoe expresses it, at the Miamis Rapids, where he had met the United States Commissioners and the Confederated Indians to consider the boundary question. In April, 1794; Simcoe was himself at the Falls of the Miami, and he repeated the visit during the following September, going by way of Fort Erie. This visit was a prolonged one; for we find that in October he met an Indian Council at Brown's Town in the Miami country. It is probable Talbot accompanied him in his capacity as military secretary. The construction by Simcoe of the fort at the foot of the rapids of the Miami in the spring of that year was an audacious step, which might easily have produced a new war between the United States and England, although Simcoe believed it had had the opposite result, and prevented war. All disputes between the two nations were however concluded by the treaty of 1794, usually called the Jay Treaty. Provision was made for the abandonment of the frontier posts hitherto occupied by English garrisons. Forts Niagara, Detroit, Miami and Michilimackinac received American garrisons in 1796 or shortly thereafter; English troops were stationed in new forts at St. Joseph's Island, Malden, Turkey Point, Fort Erie, Toronto, etc. The English flag floated no longer south of the great lakes. During the year 1796, Simcoe went to England on leave of absence, and he never returned to Canada.

COLONEL TALBOT.

The Honorable Thomas Talbot received his company and his majority in the same year, 1793. He was Colonel of the Fifth Regiment in 1795, at the early age of twenty-five. After eight years of military service on the Continent, partly in Flanders and partly at Gibraltar, he was still in 1803 a young man with every prospect that is usually considered alluring to ambition. Suddenly, to the amazement of his friends and the public, he abandoned the brilliant career upon which he had entered under so favorable auspices, cut himself loose from civilization itself, and buried himself in the recesses of the Canadian forest. He determined to settle on the north shore of Lake Erie, where he had previously selected a location on one of his journeyings with Governor Simcoe. Talbot had formed plans for diverting the stream of immigration from the United States, or rather for continuing its current as far as Upper Canada. He would attract settlers from New York, Pennsylvania and New England, who were dissatisfied with republican institutions or allured by the fertility of the Lake Erie region, and would build up a loyal British community, under the laws and institutions of the mother land.

It was a memorable event in the history of the County of Elgin, when on the 21st day of May, 1803, landing at Port Talbot, he took an axe and chopped down the first tree, thus inaugurating what has since been known as the Talbot Settlement. Henceforward, Colonel Talbot, Port Talbot, the Talbot Road, and the Talbot Settlement, are names inseparably connected with the history of the making of Upper Canada.

At that time the nearest settlement on Lake Erie was near Turkey Point, 60 miles away. In 1802 there was but one settled minister west of Niagara, Father Marchand, of Sandwich, a Roman Catholic priest. There were but seven clergymen settled in the whole Province. The record^[24] states, however, that "Besides, there are several missionaries of the Methodistical order, whose residence is not fixed." Even at that early day the circuit-rider threaded the maze of forest between the Long Point clearings and those near the mouth of the Thames, and made his way down the Detroit River to the Essex shore of Lake Erie, where there was a fringe of settlement. But, generally speaking, the country north of Lake Erie to the borders of Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay was still a wilderness of continuous unbroken forest.

Footnotes

1 ([Return](#))

Mr. J. H. Scott, of St. Thomas, has made a number of photographs of the mounds at the instance of an American lady, who, it is understood, will reproduce them in a work about to be published by her.

2 ([Return](#))

Alexis corresponds with the actual position of the Southwold Earthwork, and the stream with that of Kettle Creek.

3 ([Return](#))

The principal "bourg" was Ehwae, surnamed S. Pierre et S. Paul. If S. Pierre on Sanson's map is the same place, this most have been near the southern end of the county of Bruce. The other village or mission shown on the map is S. Simon et S. Iude.

4 ([Return](#))

In another place it is stated that there were 40 villages of the Neutrals in all.

5 ([Return](#))

This is the most probable inference from the facts stated by Galinee.

6 ([Return](#))

Galinee's map is reproduced in Faillon's *Histoire de la Colonie Francaise*.

7 ([Return](#))

Evidently the Rondeau.

8 ([Return](#))

This was Point Pelee.

9 ([Return](#))

General John S. Clarke, of Auburn, N. Y., in correspondence with the present writer, dwells upon the importance of the Kettle Creek portage route in the seventeenth century. He is a recognized authority upon the subject of Indian trade routes.

10 ([Return](#))

History of Middlesex County, p. 17.

11 ([Return](#))

"Peter Jones and the Ojebway Indians," p. 113.

12 ([Return](#))

The north shore of Lake Erie appears to have been so little known to the officials, that Kettle Creek and Cat Fish Creek were continually confused and taken as being one or different streams as chance would have it. The Land-board considered that a surrender of the lands west of Kettle Creek gave the Crown all the territory not previously ceded. The Indians at Detroit who made the cession were the Ojibways, Hurons, Ottawas and Pottawatamies.

13 ([Return](#))

This river is what is now known as "Big Creek" and, answers this description at the present day. It enters the lake a little above Fort Rowan.

14 ([Return](#))

This charming country is evidently, the greater part of it, the County of Elgin, as the portage is not more than thirteen miles from the boundary line of Bayham. In passing up the lake one would meet with a great variety of landscape as the sand-hills in Houghton and the mouths of the Otter, Catfish and other creeks would be passed. The lofty pines and chestnuts and oaks along this coast, in their original state no doubt appeared like the "finest forest in the world."

15 ([Return](#))

Kettle and Catfish Creeks.

16 ([Return](#))

Record book of the Land Board at Detroit, now in the Crown Lands Department at Toronto.

17 ([Return](#))

Dr. Scadding's notes to his reprint of Littlehales' Journal.

18 ([Return](#))

This was no doubt where London now is.

19 ([Return](#))

Afterwards referred to by the diarist as the high bank.

20 ([Return](#))

Note Peter Jones' statement as quoted on page 28.

21 ([Return](#))

Now the city of London.

22 ([Return](#))

This disposes of the story told by Colonel Talbot to Mrs. Jamieson in 1837. He informed her that the name originated from his men having lost a kettle in the creek. But the creek was called Riviere a la Chaudiere or Kettle River by the French, and that is one of the names given to it in D. W. Smith's Gazetteer, of Upper Canada published in 1799.

23 ([Return](#))

The writer has not been able to see Mr. McNiff's report upon this survey.

24 ([Return](#))

Tiffany's Upper Canada Almanac, Niagara, 1802.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE COUNTRY OF THE NEUTRALS ***

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