

(Jonathan Carver - 1732 - 1780 - See D.N.B.)

Some extracts from Captain Carver's Journal of Travels, in the interior parts of North America, in 1766 and 1767.

September 3.rd I left Michillimackinac in company with some Traders, bound to the Mississippi River; September 18. arrived at Fort La Bay, situated on the banks at the bottom of the Bay, formerly called the Bay of Puants, but since the Conquest, the English most commonly call it the Green Bay, for this reason, that on leaving Michillimackinac, in the spring of the Year, before the Trees put forth either leaves or buds, the seldom so long as fourteen days in going it, yet the Vegetation in general at the Green Bay appears like Summer. This Fort is a small Stockaid, only Defensible against small Arms, and much decayed; It was built by the French for the protection of their Trade, sometime before the Conquest, and when Canada and its dependencies surrendered to the English, this Port, with other exterior fortifications, was garrisoned with an Officer and 30 men, who in the Indian Wars, in 1762 were made Prisoners by the Menomories, a Nation who inhabit the West and Northern parts of this Bay, this happened soon after the surprising and taking of Michillimackinac, by the Confederate Indian Nations, under Pontiac; since that, the Government have not thought

Green Bay.

Fort La Bay.

convenient,

convenient, to keep any Garrison at La Bay. The Bay is about ninety miles long, and in some places, thirty, twenty and fifteen broad, and lays nearly from North East to South West. At entering the Bay, from Lake Michigan, is a string of Islands extending from North to South, called the grand traverse, about 30 miles Grand Traverse in length, which serves to facilitate the passage for canoes, as the South Eastern side is the highest and best navigation; on the North East end of the Green Bay, just on entering the Bay, from the North end of Lake Michigan, is the Bay of the Noquets extending about North West to a considerable depth. The Islands in the grand traverse, are mostly small and rocky, many of the rocks of an amazing size, and looked as if they had been hewn by some artists; on the largest and best of these Islands, is a Town of the Ottowas, where I found a very considerable Chief of that Nation, who with his Warriors, received me with all the customary honors, they could possibly show, this to strangers it might appear an odd way of communicating. when I approached within about threescore rods from the shore, they began with their Feu de joy, their Pipes being loaded with Balls, discharged them in such a manner as to fly about four yards above my head, at the same time running from one Tree and Stump, to another, shouting as in the heat of battle, this surprized me a little untill I found it to be the manner

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in which they received the Chiefs of other Nations. The land on the South East side of the Green Bay is but very indifferent, being overspread with a heavy growth of Hemlock Trees, Pine, spruce, and Fir. The communication between Lake Michigan and the Green Bay, has been reported, by some, to be impracticable for the passage of any vessels larger than canoes and boats, by reason of the shoals between the Islands in the grand traverse; but on sounding, I found sufficient depth for a vessel of Sixty Tons, and of a good width. The land at the bottom of the Bay, is very fertile, the country in general Level, Prosperous and Pleasant, a few families live in the Fort, and opposite on the East of the entrance of the Fox River, are some French families who cultivate the Lands, and appear to live very well. On the 20th of Sept. I left Green Bay, and proceeded up the Fox River in company with the Traders, and some Indians, and on the 25th arrived at the great Town of the Winnebagoes, situate on a small Island, at the entrance into the East end of Lake Winnebago; here the Queen, for there was no King, received and entertained me in a very distinguished manner, during the time I remained here, which was four days, which time I spent in making the best observations possible, of the Country, and in collecting the best intelligence I could of this People; their Territories, Origin, Language & Customs. The Winnebagoes are supposed to be some of the Refugees, that were driven

Winnebago
formerly called
by the French
Puants.
signifies
Winning.

from

from some part of the new Mexican Provinces, either by intestine broils, or by
the Spanish Conquests, about a Century ago; my reason for such an opinion is,
first, their unalienable attachment to the Naudowessie, or Sioux, who
they say, first gave them protection in their emigration, tho' their present
residence, is more than six hundred miles from that People; 2^{dly} that their
Dialect totally differs from all other Nations in any parts yet discovered,
it being a very Unsmooth guttural jargon, which no Nation of their
acquaintance ever attempt to learn; they speak to all Nations whom they
have any concern, in the Chipaway tongue, which is the principal Language
among all the Nations from the Mochawks of Canada, to the Mississippi
Rivers, and North of the Hurons and Illinois Nations, near as far as
Hudsons Bay, 3^{dly} their inveterate hatred to the Spaniards, as they
informed me, that they had made several excursions to the South West, which
took up several Moons; in particular, an elderly Chief of the Winnabagoes
told me, that about forty six winters before, He, at the head of about fifty
Warriors went a march of three Moons, South West, and that while they were
crossing a plain they discovered a body of men and Horses, which belonged
to the black People, for so they call the Spaniards, they lay by till night, &
then got so near as to inform themselves of their numbers and situation, &
when about day they fell upon them, while sleeping, and killed the most
of the People, and took eighty Horses, loaded with what they called white
stone, which I suppose to be silver; this treasure, they took a little way with
them

Winnabago
destroy a Span
Carrivan.

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them, and when they supposed the distance and situation, sufficient to elude the rescues of the Spaniards, they left this ponderous metal, and mounted the horses, to ease their weary legs; he further informed me the horses were shod with the same metal, and the Bridles had much of the same upon upon them. This I suppose to be the Caravan which brings the silver which the Spaniards get from the mountains on the heads of the Colorado River, which falls into the Gulph of California, and those plains are the land of Carriage from thence to the heads of the River S. Fee, or Rio del nord, that enters the Gulph of Mexico to the West of the Mississippi. The Winnebagoes can raise about two hundred Warriors, their Town has about fifty houses, strongly built with Palisades, the Island on which it is built contains about fifty acres, and is about thirty five miles, as the River runs, from the Green Bay. The River for about four or five miles from the Bay, has a pretty gentle current, after that, the whole way to the Winnebago Lake, it is full of rocks and very rapid, and at many places we were obliged to take out our canoes and draw them round by land, the width of the River in general from the Green Bay to the Winnebago Lake, is between seventy and a hundred Yards; the Land in general is very good and light Timbered, with Hickory, Oak and Hazel. The Winnebago Lake is about fifteen miles long from East to West, and six Miles Wide; at the South West corner, comes in a River, which takes its rise near some of the northern branches of the Illinois River, this River, I called the Colorado River, in consequence of an

Adrian

Indian story, of their having destroyed an Animal, that by their description, must be a Crocodile or Allegator, some where in this River; The land about the Lake is very fertile abounding with Grapes, Plumbs, and other Fruits of a spontaneous growth; The Winnebagoes raise plenty of Indian Corn, Beans, Pumpkins, Squashes, Water Melons and some of Indian Tobacco; the Lake abounds with Fish, and in the fall of the Year with Geese and Ducks, particularly the Tied Duck, is remarkable good and fat, I have known the last to cut an Inch in depth, of fat on the neck, these Sowl are better than those near the Sea, as they get fat by feeding on the wild Rice that grows so plentifully in those parts. Sept. 29th left the Winnebago Town, and about twelve miles from the Town, came to the place where the Fox River enters the Lake on the North side, whence I proceeded up the Fox River, and on the Seventh of October arrived at the great carrying place, between the Fox and Occiconsin Rivers. The Fox River from the Winnebago Lake to the carrying place, has a pretty gentle current, and deep withall, from the Green Bay to the carrying place is reckoned about one hundred and eighty miles, there is much rice ground about this River, in some places it is with difficulty that Canoes can pass, the stalks of the Rice are so large and thick; the Country is very fertile, and without a fault, excepting near the River, in some places it is rather too low, no part from the Winnebagoes to the carrying place, is any ways heavy Timbered, and yet a tolerable supply for the utility of any number of inhabitants; on

this

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This River is the greatest resort of all sorts of wild Fowl, that I saw during my whole Travels, often the air would be darkened with the numbers of them for some minutes together. About forty miles from the great Town of the Winnibagoes up the River, is another Town of that Nation. Deer and Bear are very numerous in those parts, a great many Beavers is taken upon the streams that fall into this River, and some other Furrs. This River is remarkable for being, about eighty Years ago, the residence of the united bands of the Ojigawmies, and Sawkies; called by the French Des Sac et Des Reynard, in English, the Fox and the Beags, I observed that it was usual with the French to give such names, to all nations where they were acquainted, the reason they give for doing so, was that, then they could speak to one another about the Indians, in their presence, and not be understood, for it was observed, in early times, by the French, that when they were speaking about the Indians, and mentioned them by their proper names, that they appeared rather suspicious and jealous, that they were either plotting, or speaking no good of them, and that is the reason why the English and French Geographers have rather confounded each other, by giving different names, to the same People, in their Plans, of the Interior parts of North America.

About sixty Years ago the French Missionaries and Traders, having received, several very great insults from the Sawkies & Ojigawmies, fitted out a force of French and Indians, under the Command of
Captain

Captain Moran, who marched from the Green Bay, in the Winter upon snow to their Villages, about 50 miles up the Fox River, and came upon them by surprize; killed and took the most of them, but in returning to the Green Bay, the Ottigawmies report, that one of the Indian Chiefs, with the French, had a number of Prisoners with him, the men were all bound, the Chief, or Captain of the Warriors, stooped in crossing a brook to drink, during which Time his attendants moved on; a Woman Prisoner observing him stooping before her, while drinking, saw a fair opportunity of revenging herself upon the Enemy, seized with both her hands, the Captain of the Guard by a most critical part, and held him fast untill he expired upon the spot, and that without giving any alarm to the party forward, then cut the men Prisoners loose and made their escape. The Woman was afterward treated as their deliverer, & with every honor in their power to bestow, by being made a Chiefess in her own right, and to descend to her heirs forever. remarkable
Woman of the
Saukies.

About twelve miles before I arrived to the Carrying place; I observed several small mountains, which continued to the Carrying place, and what is remarkable, these are the first mountains I had seen after my leaving Niagara, which is about eleven hundred miles; and these would be accounted only as mole hills, in comparison to those on the back of the Colonies. The River of the Foxes where it enters the Winnebago Lake, is about fifty yards wide, and gradually decreases

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decreases in width to the carrying place, where it is no more than five yards
over, but of considerable depth; I don't recollect any thing more remarkable
in this River, except a Crook, which in going five miles, had gained no
more than one quarter of a mile. The carrying place into the Wisconsin
River is about a mile and three quarters, near one half of the way, is a
quag, overgrown with a sort of meadow grass, the rest of the way is a
plain, with some few Oak and Pine Trees, here I observed were a great many
Rattle Snakes, Mons.^r Pinnisance, a French trader, told me a remarkable
story, of an Indian belonging to the Menomonic band, who had taken one of these
snakes, and tamed it, and treated it as a Dicty, calling it his great father,
carried it with him for several Summers in a Box, that when they arrived
here, in traveling for a Winter hunt, the Indian set down his Box and told
the snake, to be sure and return at such a time, when He came there again,
which was to be in the May following, this being in October, Mons.^r told the Indian
that he believed he might wait long enough, at that time, before his great
father would return, the Indian offered to lay a Wager of two gallons of rum,
that it would come and crawl into the box at that time they were to return, which
was agreed upon to be the second week in May following; that they returned,
at the time fixed upon, and the Indian set down his box, and called for his
great father to take his station, but on his not coming untill the time was
expired, the Indian acknowledged he had lost, but offered to double the bet,
if his great father did not come within two days more, which was again
agreed

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agreed on, and about one o'clock the second day, the box being laid in the same place, that it was when he left it, the snake came and crevled in of his own accord.

I observed that the main body of the Fox River came from the South West, while the Ouisconsin River came from the North East, and that some of the waters in the small brooks that descended into these two Rivers doubled within a few feet of each other, a little south from the carrying place, the one running more than two thousand miles into the Gulf of Mexico, rather west of South, * the other about two thousand miles, falls into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, something to the North of East; that waters so near each other, running such different courses, and falling into the seas at such amazing distances, is an instance hardly known in the extensive Continent of North America besides, I draw this conclusion, from the many observations that I had opportunities of making, upon the other different head branches, of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi waters, of their affinity to each other, in the course of my travels the Year following.

The 8th of October got our Canoes into the Ouisconsin River, which at this place, is better than an hundred yards wide, and on the next day arrived at the great Town of the Saukies, tarried near this Town two days travelled over several Mountains to the South of the Town, took a view of the mountains of Lead Ore, near fifteen miles from the Town, was on one of the highest of these Mountains when I could take a view of the Country for many miles which appeared like a meadow full of hay Cocks, these mountains are generally free from Timber,

then

Calculated from
the Ouisconsin
Carrying place

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There were some groves of hickory, and scrubby Oaks in the valleys. The Town of the Saukees, is by far the largest and best built Indian Town that I ever saw, it contains near eighty houses, each large enough for several families, the streets are pretty regular and wide, the houses are built with hewn Plank, the edges well jointed and close, they have comfortable shades at their doors, fronting the streets with seats, where they sit and smoke their pipes in hot weather, the land near the Town is very good, they raise abundance of Indian Corn, Beans, Pumpkins, Squashes, of all sorts, and water melons, insomuch that this Town is esteemed the best market for Traders to buy Provisions at, of any Town within eight hundred miles of it, I saw abundance of good Lead laying about in the streets; they are about three hundred Warriors strong, these are mostly employed every Summer, in War, against the Illinois and Paimcee Nations from whence they bring numbers of Slaves, sometimes they are served in the same manner by those their enemies, which I judge is the reason that they don't increase more. The 11th of October proceeded down the River, the next day reached the first Town of the Ottigawmies, this Town contains about fifty houses, but found them mostly deserted, on account of a very Epidemical disorder that raged among them, and had carried off more than one half of the Inhabitants, the rest had mostly fled into the Wilderness, to avoid the Contagion. On the 15th of October, entered the Mississippi; The Quiconsin River, from the Carrying place to where it joins the Mississippi, flows with a smooth, tho' pretty hard Current, a most clear sandy bottom without

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many rocks, with few Islands, and them good land, tho somewhat Timbered, the land in general is very good near the river, but at a distance, very full of Mountains where tis believed, are many Lead mines. About five miles above the junction, I saw the ruins of a large Town, in a very pleasant situation, on enquiring of the Natives into the reason of this desolation, was informed that about thirty Years before, that, the great Spirit appeared on the top of a Pyramid of rocks at a small distance from the West of the Town, and warned them to quit the Town, immediately, for the land there was his, or belonged to him, and for a demonstration of his words, told them grass should grow on the top of those rocks, where he then was, which they say has grown there ever since, but was none ever seen there before, they took me to see the grass, but the growth appeared to me no ways supernatural, this I took to be a trick of the Spaniards or French, to answer some design of their own, but in what manner they effected this vision, I know not. The same People, being part of the Ottagumie Nation, went and built a Town about five miles above the mouth of the Ouiscousin, on the banks of the Mississippie, at a place called by the French La Prairie Lachine, which signifies the Dog plains; This is a pretty large Town, contains about three hundred families, the houses are well built after the Indian manner, and pleasantly situated, on very rich land, where they raise every necessary of life in abundance, here I saw a great many horses of a good kind. This place, is the great thoroughfare, for all Nations thereabouts, and on the remoter heads of the Mississippie, who in the latter end of May assemble
here

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here with their furs, in order to meet the Traders, when the Chiefs in Council order matters so that they either trade here, or go to Louisiana, or Michillimackinac, just as their interest or inclination leads them. The Mississippi at the entrance of the Wisconsin, is about half a mile wide, with a pretty large Mountain opposite, rising close on the banks of the River, but against the Town last mentioned, it appears to be much more than a mile wide, and full of Islands, the soil extraordinary rich, and but lightly Timbered, a little above on the West side, a small river falls into the Mississippi, called by the French, *Jaune*, or as in English, Yellow River; here the traders that came in company with me, took up their residence for the Winter, when I bought a Canoe and took two men, for servants and proceeded up the Mississippi, and on the 1st of November arrived at Lake Pepin, about two hundred miles from the Wisconsin; The Mississippi from the Wisconsin flows with a gentle current, but very uncertain in its width, some places upwards of a mile wide, and in some others not more than a quarter, it has a range of Mountains on each side all the way, in some places near, and at others farther off; the land on the side of the Mountains, mostly covered with grass, with some groves of Trees, where every now and then were large droves of Deer and Elk feeding; in many places Pyramids of rocks, appeared like old stacks of Chimneys, at others most amazing Precipices of rocks, on sides of Mountains in part, when on the other part were the finest herbage gradually quite to the top, which afforded prospects pleasant beyond description, here were seen
beautiful

beautiful plains and meadows, with Islands numerous, with a soil of the richest kind, with rich nut Trees, Maple for sugar, and the shores lined with vines, loaded with the richest grapes, Plumbs and other spontaneous fruits, this Lake is about 20 Miles long and about six in width, the water in some places is very deep, it abounds with abundance of Fish, a vast plenty of Food frequent the Lake, and the River hereabout, of Storks, Swan, Cormorants, Geese, Ducks of all sorts and Brant, in the Groves of trees are great plenty of Turkeys and Partridges, on the the plains are Buffels of the largest size, I believe of any in America besides, here I found the ruins of a factory, where it was said, Captain St. Pierre resided and carried on a very great trade with the Naudouissie bands, before the conquest of Canada. The 7th of November proceeded up the Mississippi, and on the 17th arrived at the great falls of St. Anthony. The Mississippi, as far as the entrance of the St. Croix, thirty miles above Lake Pepin, is very full of Islands, some of which are covered with Maple or sugar trees, some of these Islands are miles long, and many of the highest trees have vines turning round them loaded with grapes to the very tops, from the Lake upwards, are few Mountains to be seen, and those but small, the Land in general is very good, about thirty miles below the falls is a remarkable great Cave, the entrance about ten feet wide, the height five feet, the Arch within is near fifteen feet high and about thirty feet broad, the bottom is a clean fine sand, within twenty feet from the mouth begins

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a fine Lake of clear Water which extended to an unknown distance, as darkness soon obstructed the light; I cast a small Stone with all my strength, which I could hear fall into the Water, and made a horrible Echo, in those gloomy regions, here I found many Indian hieroglyphics, that appeared very Ancient, which time had covered with moss, upon the Stones that constitutes the inside walls of the Vault; this Stone I observed cut as easy as Cheese, the same sort of Stone is every where to be found in those parts of the Mississippi, the Cave is accessible from the edge of the River by ascending about fifteen feet up a steep narrow foot passage.

A little distance from this cave, is the great Burying place of three bands of the Naudowessie Nation, tho' this People have no stated residence for more than a few Months in a place, living in tents, yet I observed that they bring the Bones of their dead to this place, this is most commonly done in the Spring, when their Chiefs of bands meet, and hold their Councils, and settle all public affairs for the Summer following. Ten miles below the falls of St. Anthony, the River of St. Pierre falls into the Mississippi from the West; this river is not mentioned by father Hennipin, in his travels thro' these parts, tho' a fair large River, the reason for this omission, I suppose to be owing to a small Island, that just locks out the prospect, at its entrance, I should not have discovered it, had I not taken a view from the highlands opposite, when I was in search for it.

The Mississippi from the St. Pierre, is rather more rapid to the
falls

falls of S.^t Anthony than common, and no Islands of any bigness. The falls
of S.^t Anthony was named by father Louis Hennipin who travelled in these
parts in the Year 1688, if I remember right, being the first European, ever
seen here by the Natives, the Perpendicular of the falls, is about 29 feet, and the
rapids below in the distance of three hundred yards, has near twenty feet
more fall, so that the whole of the falls, are but little short of fifty feet, tho' ^{these falls was}
father Hennipin has, if I remember right, laid them down about Seventy ^{called by father}
feet; in the middle of the falls is a small Island, about forty feet broad and ^{Hennipin, the}
but a little longer, with a few ragged hemlock and some spruce trees, and ^{Falls of S. Anthony}
but small; about half way between this Island and the East shore, is a rock ^{of Padaw.}
that appeared to be thirty or forty feet long, and about five or six feet broad,
lying on the edge of the fall, in a Posture somewhat tilted or Poized. The
Country hereabout is very beautiful, and now and then a little Grove of trees,
with moderate ascents and descents, which together with the falls, would
make a Landship, I believe scarcely to be equalled in all the works of
nature besides, a little below the falls is a small Island of about an Acre and
an half, with a great number of Oak trees upon it, full of Eagles nests, upon
every limb that could bear one; the resort of these Hawks here, is on one
account, of the safety of the situation, by reason of the rapids, from Man or
beast, as it is thought by the Indians inaccessible; another account, is the
abundance of Animals and Fish that are dashed to pieces by the
falls, and cast upon the shores, afford sufficient prey for themselves

and

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and Young ones, I went near sixty miles above the falls, to the River
St. Louis named by father Hennipin.

Decem^r. I returned again to the entrance of the River
St. Pierre, when I proceeded up that River about two hundred miles,
a little above the forks, where a branch from the South, almost joins
the Messoie River; by the best accounts from the Indians, it
appears to me that the Messoie and St. Pierre Rivers, tho' near
twelve hundred miles apart, in their junction with the Mississippi,
yet these two Rivers have some of their head branches, as near as
a mile of each other, the River St. Pierre's Northern branch rises
from a number of Lakes, near under the Shining Mountains;
It is from some of these Lakes, that a Capital branch of the River
Bourbon has its source, that runs into Hudsons Bay, by the
intelligence that I received from the Naudowessie, the time I resided
among them, which was upwards of seven Months, in which
time, I took the utmost pains to learn their Language, and by
the accounts I afterwards had from the Assinipoils, who speak
the same tongue, being a revolted band from the Naudowessie, who
are inveterate enemies to each other; and the Killisnoes, neighbours to
the Assinipoils, who speak the Chipeway tongue, and inhabit the
heads of the River Bourbon; I say from those nations, together with
my own observations, I learned that the four most Capital Rivers on the

Continued

of the Continent of North America, (viz.) the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi,
of the River Bourbon, and the River of West, have their Sources in the
the same neighbourhood, and I find that some of the waters of the three
see former, are within thirty miles of each other, tho' the latter is much
say farther west; this shows that these parts are the highest Lands in
and all the vast Continent of North America, it being in general, as it is
of calculated, esteemed upwards of two thousand miles from the Bay
see of St. Lawrence East, from the Bay of Mexico South, from Hudson's
see Bay North, and from the West Bay at the Straits of Anian in the
see Pacific Ocean, West. An instance of the kind in magnitude, is not known
the in any of the other three quarters of the Globe.

Naturalists take notice, that wind, in some respects
see resembles water, by running in Channels, and that the large
see Streams have the wind to blow, either up or down, more common
see-ly, than directly across Streams; It is well known that the winds
see in the Gulph of Mexico, set in hard towards land about Michael
see or mas, I should not wonder, if in time it is found that those Winds
see by pressing up the Mississippi River, and meeting the North Winds
see from Hudsons Bay, are forced down the Current of the Waters
see of the St. Lawrence on the great Lakes, expand and become
see a more general, and continue their course with such Violence,
see from the North West, upon the Colonies, at certain times of the Year;
but

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but as I am not enough acquainted with every course of nature, as
as to be certain, in what manner this exertion may have its origin,
and from such causes, I leave the more minute explanation to
those better acquainted, in the natural causes of such extraordinary
exertions of Nature than myself to decide. From such minutes as
I have here hinted upon this subject, I wish may be deduced
such demonstrations, as may give the greatest satisfaction to the
Public. —