

EARLY DISCOVERERS AND EXPLORERS

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THE OREGONIAN'S HOME STUDY CIRCLE: DIRECTED BY PROF. SEYMOUR EATON

DISCOVERERS AND EXPLORERS OF AMERICA

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM HOUSTON, Samuel Champlain.

For a quarter of a century after the death of Jacques Cartier comparatively little was added to the information already acquired respecting the River St. Lawrence and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Fishermen from France and also from other European countries resorted to the Newfoundland "banks" in rapidly increasing numbers, but as they seldom sought land except for the purpose of drying their fish, they did little to supplement what was already known about the coast line or correct the prevalent misconceptions of geographers as to the shape of the continent. France was, during the latter half of the 15th century, in possession of the whole of Acadia and Canada as the result of Cartier's expeditions, but on account of religious dissensions, political strife and actual civil war in that unhappy country, nothing was officially done either to extend her American possessions or to make one of those already partially explored.

A more fortunate era came in with the advent of Henry IV to the throne. The publication of the edition of the States by proclaiming religious toleration, removed the chief cause of paralyzing civil war, and National activity was soon redirected toward the new world. Its trade had gradually been coming into prominence through intercourse between the fishermen and the Indians, and when any attempt was made by the French King, in accordance with the usual practice of those times, to grant a monopoly of it, the consequent restriction on their freedom was bitterly resented by the hardy adventurers who were engaged in a traffic that is still of considerable commercial importance. At the instance of a personal friend, the Governor of Dieppe, Henry IV offered such a monopoly to any one who would undertake to settle a French colony in New France, and the first attempt in that line was made at the mouth of the Saguenay in 1600. It was a failure, owing to the unsuitable character of the locality, though Tadoussac long continued to be a fur-trading post for the Indians who dwell inland toward Hudson's Bay.

A much more rational effort at colonization was made in 1603 by a fellow-townsman of Jacques Cartier, a rich merchant of St. Malo, named Pontrevert, who had with him as sailing master, the celebrated Samuel Champlain. The latter was a native and resident of Brouage, on the Bay of Biscay. He had served as a soldier during the civil wars, and had visited the West Indies in Spanish ship. He was doubtless acquainted with what had already been accomplished in the way of discovery and exploration, and he was fortunate enough to be able to record his observations with fair literary skill, but to illustrate his descriptive narrative with drawings and maps. When Champlain landed at Tadoussac, he found the first voyage of discovery for the Hurons of Stadacona and Hochelaga, had disappeared. They had been driven out by their relentless enemies, the Algonquians, and he was obliged to go away in the depths of the wilderness lying between Lake Simcoe and the Georgian Bay. Champlain found at Hochelaga a few Algonquian Indians of nomadic habits. They told him in a vague way of rivers and lakes beyond the Lachine Rapids, but finding these impassable he spent some time in exploring the Saguenay, and then returned to France.

In 1604 Champlain made his second voyage to America, this time in company with De Monts, a French nobleman who had secured a monopoly of the fur trade, and whose aim was to establish a colony. By a strange fatality, the beautiful Annapolis Valley, which had been first visited, was neglected, and the place selected for the new settlement was an unsuitable island in the mouth of the St. Croix River. The experience of one fateful season was fatal to the success of the enterprise.

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Though this expedition was a failure as a military invasion, it led to some very important results. It enabled Champlain to form a correct conception of the geographical relations between some points already well known to him individually. It made him acquainted with the great canoe route of the Upper Ottawa, which



CHAMPLAIN'S ATTACK ON INDIAN FORT IN WESTERN NEW YORK.

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Meanwhile, Champlain, whose restless energy had prompted him to explore the New England Coast in the Summer of 1606, was again chosen by De Monts to conduct a colonizing expedition at the time to the St. Lawrence. The spot selected was the abandoned site of the Huron village, Stadacona, and there, in 1608, Champlain laid the foundations of the present city of Quebec, which has had a continuous history till the present time. The first winter was one of extreme severity and anxiety. Champlain had to contend with discontent among his men, and the latter was finally suppressed only after the ringleader was convicted and executed. The ravages of scurvy made the winter a very unpleasant one, but the courage, resource, energy and persistence of Champlain overcame all obstacles, and the Summer of 1609 saw him again busily occupied in his favorite work of exploration.

The founder of Quebec has not put on record the motive which prompted him in that year to enter into an alliance with the Huron and Algonquian Indians, the Hurons, but he was probably mistaken as to the strength of the latter, and it was certainly to his interest to cultivate the friendship of the Hurons, who controlled the region of the Upper Ottawa, his best waterway into the interior of the continent. Whatever his object was, the immediate result was a victory for the Algonquian-Huron alliance over the aid of French-Huron. Later on, and for more than a century, the Hurons simply advanced themselves for this intervention by Champlain, who were easily able to do when they became possessed of firearms and ammunition by trading with the British to the south. From a geographical and historical point of view, Champlain's expedition was equally important, as it made the French acquainted with the lake which still bears Champlain's name, with the Richelieu River, which is its outlet to the St. Lawrence, and with the extensive region of the Saguenay, Lake George to the upper waters of the Hudson River. This great thoroughfare from New York to Montreal has figured prominently in every great war on this continent. Along it passed and repassed many a British and French hostile expedition prior to 1760. It was used for the same purpose during the Revolutionary War, which began in 1775, and it was devoted to a like use for the last time during the War of 1812-15.

Faithful records of the little French settlement during the next few years, and the heroic efforts and unwearied energy of its founder and ruler, who made several voyages to France in his interest, we owe to his next important attempt at exploration. While in Paris in 1612 he saw a map which purported to represent the great island discovered two years before by Henry Hudson, and still named after him—Hudson's Bay. About the same time there arrived from Canada a young Frenchman named Vignau, who informed Champlain that during the preceding winter he had gone northward with a party of Algonquian Indians and had while there visited a salt-water sea, on the shore of which they had found the remains of an English ship. The circumstances of the story seem to have outweighed its improbability with Champlain, and he resolved on his return to Canada to ascertain for himself the nature of the Ottawa Valley. Taking with him Vignau and four other Frenchmen, with an Indian guide, he voyaged by canoe up the Ottawa, passed the Rideau and Chaudiere Falls, and after the site of the present capital of the Dominion of Canada, and finally arrived at Allumette Lake, an expansion of the Ottawa River. From the Algonquians of this locality he learned that a great story was a concoction of falsehoods, which the lying rascal admitted to be the case. Champlain, however, turned the incident to good account, for he acquired much geographical information that was

afterward useful to him, and he further strengthened his hold on the esteem and confidence of the Indians.

Two years passed before Champlain again attempted the ascent of the Ottawa River, but in 1615, in fulfillment of a promise to aid the allied Hurons and Algonquians against the Iroquois, he made an extensive roundabout journey, of which the passage up the Ottawa formed but a part. The purpose of the expedition was to reach and destroy Onondaga fort, near Oneida Lake, in what is now the State of New York. Instead of passing directly by the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario, the allied Indians preferred to ascend the Ottawa and Mattawa Rivers to the vicinity of Lake Nipissing, descend French River to the Georgian Bay, and strike the eastern shore of the latter to the Huron settlement already referred to. The long journey was successfully accomplished by Champlain, two French attendants and eight Indians.

KILLED MANY GRIZZLIES

W. P. VANDEVERT, OF CROOK COUNTY, A FAMOUS HUNTER.

Importance to Tell Story of Slaying Silver Lake Grizzly—Some Thing of His Life.

EDUCATION IN LOUISIANA.

Much Ignorance Among Both Whites and Blacks.

New Orleans, June 25.—The biennial report for the years 1898 and 1899 of the State Superintendent of Public Education for Louisiana presents some interesting facts.

The total number of educable children, that is, those between the ages of 6 and 18 years, is given for 1898 at 94,757. The total number enrolled and actually attending schools—public and private—is given at 17,747, showing that 22,660 are not accounted for at school. One reason

for the apparently large number of educable persons not in the schools is that many persons quit school and go to work when they reach the ages of 14 to 15 years, being the point of divergence. Champlain's first voyage of discovery for the Hurons of Stadacona and Hochelaga, had disappeared. They had been driven out by their relentless enemies, the Algonquians, and he was obliged to go away in the depths of the wilderness lying between Lake Simcoe and the Georgian Bay. Champlain found at Hochelaga a few Algonquian Indians of nomadic habits. They told him in a vague way of rivers and lakes beyond the Lachine Rapids, but finding these impassable he spent some time in exploring the Saguenay, and then returned to France.

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