

or from the description of others, giving the estimated distances and directions of rivers, lakes, and portages, which the travellers followed, with here and there an observation for latitude, which, when they are given, I have often found to be a degree or more in error. Still, most of them are interesting, as amongst the earliest records of our country, and there is no doubt that, in some sections of the Province particularly, some of them do give details, which appear no where in our published maps, and are not to be found in the records of the Crown Lands Office. This arises in a great measure from that tendency to centralization, which has always characterized the French nation. If any trader or missionary had penetrated into an unknown region, a description of it was sure, sooner or later, to find its way to the Intendant, and by him was transmitted to the Government at home; whilst with us, if an individual hunter or lumberer has obtained a detailed knowledge of a particular locality, he does not feel in any way bound to report it to Mr. Cauchon, and he would still less think of transmitting it to Downing-street. I have seen private charts in considerable detail, of the country between the Ottawa and Lake Huron, where our published maps present nothing but a blank; and I myself, nearly twenty years ago, made a map, from my own knowledge and the descriptions of hunters and others, of several chains of lakes, forming the head waters of the River Trent, which are still only partially laid down with any correctness, partly by Mr. Murray, of the Geological Survey, and partly from some exploratory lines run last year by order of the Crown Lands Department. All such rough plans have the same distinguishing feature, that the distances are very much exaggerated, especially the portages; for, when you have a heavy pack or a canoe on your shoulders, a mile assumes very formidable proportions. The same thing is observable in these French maps. The latest discovery generally is unnaturally enlarged, and though the easy observation for latitude keeps the distances from north to south within reasonable bounds, those from east to west, where there is no such check, attain very exaggerated proportions.

But it is not for the geographical information to be obtained from them, so much as for their historical interest, that I propose introducing these maps to the Institute. It must, however, be confessed that there is a great drawback to their value in this point of view, in the fact that some of them bear no date, nor is there any record accompanying them of the source from which they were obtained; but many of them possess internal evidence of their origin, and of the period to which they relate; and I have selected for copying, those which are of the most general interest, especially for us Upper Canadians, which I