

contribution to American history being due to the Prince Society of Boston. The manuscript of Radisson's first four voyages, including two journeys to the west in company with Groseilliers, are in the Bodleian Library, while his narratives of subsequent experiences at Hudson Bay are in the British Museum. Before they were lodged in these secure places, the Radisson manuscripts were nearly lost at one time, being treated as worthless, but they were finally rescued by collectors.⁶

Radisson's first voyage was as a captive into the country of the Mohawks, by whom he was captured during the year following his arrival in New France, while he was hunting along the St. Lawrence River; his second voyage, also an individual experience, was as a member of the French colony among the Onondagas, another Iroquois nation; his third voyage was a journey that he says that he and Groseilliers made to the west, including a descent far down the Mississippi River, and his fourth voyage was a journey that he and Groseilliers made along the south shore of Lake Superior to northern Wisconsin and northeastern Minnesota.

Our interest naturally centers in the two western voyages. It is a peculiar fact that Radisson does not give the year in which he and Groseilliers started upon or returned from either of their western journeys. But in his account of the second western voyage, he makes allusions to contemporaneous events, and with these guides, and some other evidence which is at hand, the exact day that his second western voyage, the one to Lake Superior, came to an end, can be established with absolute certainty. It becomes necessary to consider this second voyage before taking up the Mississippi River narrative.

There is a conflict of authority as to the route that Radisson and Groseilliers took in coming west the second time. Two French-Canadian writers,⁷ one of them⁸ the most recent contributor to the literature of the subject, state that they followed the lower lakes, visiting Niagara Falls, navigating Lake Erie and passing the spot where now stands the city of Detroit. These writers base their theory upon an exaggerated description by Radisson of a waterfall that they passed in coming west. It is plain, however, that Radisson means to state that he and Groseilliers came west both times by the Ottawa River route. Radisson says that they ascended the "river of the meadows," crossed "the lake of the castors" and descended the "river of the Sorcerers" to the "first great lake." In the Jesuit Relations we find that the Ottawa River was in those days called the River of the Prairies,

6. See Wis. Hist. Colls., Vol. XI., pp. 64 and 65, for an account of the history of these MSS.

7. Dionne; L. A. Prud'homme, St. Boniface, Manitoba, "Notes Historiques sur la vie de P. E. Radisson," published in 1892.

8. Dionne.