

DIARY OF MRS. SIMCOE

Mon. 23rd—I rode on the peninsula. My horse has spirit enough to wish to get before others. I rode a race with Mr. Talbot to keep myself warm. I gathered wild grapes. They were pleasant, but not sweet. Capt. Smith is gone to open a road, to be called Dundas Street, from the head of the lake to the River La Tranche. He has 100 men with him.

Tues. 24th—I hear that they kill rattlesnakes every day, yet not a man has been bitten, altho' they have been among them for six weeks. Capt. Smith sent two of the snakes in a barrel, that I might see them; they were dark and ugly, and made a whizzing sound in shaking their rattles when I touched them with a stick. We dine in a marquee to-day. It has become too cold in the arbour; the canvas house we use as a bedroom, but the other is going to be erected for a winter dining-room. I have gathered most beautiful white berries, with a black eye, from red stalks. I cannot find out its name.

Wed. 25th—The Governor set out, with four officers, a dozen soldiers and some Indians, to visit Lake Huron.

Sun. 29th—I walked on the sand bank and gathered seeds of Toronto lilies.

Wed. Oct. 2nd—The Governor's horses returned from the Mississauga Creek, now the Holland River, from whence he sent me some seeds. I received the outside garment sent from England by Mr. G. Davison. The ground mice are innumerable and most troublesome here. We want the edict published in Spain to excommunicate and banish them. I send you a bat remarkable for its size, and a beautiful black and yellow bird.

Fri. 25th—I send a map to elucidate the Governor's journey, which was attended with danger as well as with many pleasant circumstances. The western side of the lake is drawn from Mr. Pilkington's sketches, the eastern from former accounts. Mr. Pilkington, who was one of the party, says the scenery was fit for pictures the whole way, and from his drawings I should suppose so. They rode 30 miles to the Micigaguean—Mississauga—Creek, then passed a terrible bog of liquid mud.

The Indians with some difficulty pushed the canoe the Governor was in through it. The Governor went to the habitation of Canise, the Indian who held Francis in his arms during the firing when "York" was named. Canise and his eldest son were lately dead, and their widows and children were lamenting them. Young Canise gave the Governor a beaver blanket, and made speeches of excuse for not sooner having made his bed. The Governor went to see a very respectable Indian named "Old Sail," who lives on a branch of Holland's River. He advised him to return by the eastern branch of it to avoid the swamp. They proceeded about thirty miles across Lac aux Claires, now named Simcoe, in which are many islands, which Coll. Simcoe named after his father's friends and those gentlemen who accompanied him. The river from thence to Matchedash Bay afforded the most picturesque scenery, from the number of falls and rapids upon it. Some of them were avoided by carrying the canoes on the shores; others they risked going down.

NOTE.—There have been great changes in recent years on the Severn River owing to the placing of dams at the various waterfalls. McDonald's Rapids have been almost obliterated by blasting, done by the Dominion Government and by the Town's power dam at the Ragged Rapids, but in the recollection of Mr. C. H. Hale of Orillia, who has kindly furnished me with information regarding the Severn pictures, the principal cascade of McDonald's Rapids was as shown in the sketch made by Lieutenant Pilkington in 1793.

Holland's River is named after Surveyor-General Samuel Holland. The town of Holland Landing, thirty-eight miles from Toronto, is situated on this river.