

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY IN 1890, FROM GREAT  
SLAVE LAKE TO BEECHY LAKE, ON THE  
GREAT FISH RIVER.

From the Journal of Mr. James McKinley, officer in charge at Fort Resolution, H. B. Co.

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The "Barren Ground of Northern Canada," is the title of a book recently issued by Mr. Warburton Pike. It contains a popular description of his experience of travelling and hunting in the country north of Great Slave Lake, and on the Peace River. A few notes from the diary of his sometime fellow traveller, Mr. James McKinley, may be of interest, as supplementing in a somewhat more detailed way the description there given of the country between Fort Resolution, on the Great Slave Lake, and Beechy Lake, on the Great Fish River. A part of their route was through the hitherto unexplored region immediately north of the Great Slave Lake,—a very rugged tract, dotted with lakes, followed further north by a more even though somewhat hilly country, almost barren, extending to Aylmer Lake.

Of previous explorations in the region to the north-eastward of Slave Lake brief mention will be made.

The earliest we find was that of Samuel Hearne, commissioned by the Hudson Bay Company to undertake an overland expedition, to make explorations to the north west of the inland sea on which they had their posts, and also to search for a large river, on which a copper mine was said to exist. Leaving Prince of Wales Fort, on the Churchill, he made two unsuccessful attempts to reach this river and copper mine, but in the fall of 1770 he again started, and by the middle of July, 1771, had reached the Coppermine River. The map of his route, with the latitudes of points of interest, are inaccurate and untrustworthy, but it is quite certain that in the spring of 1771 he passed near, if not over, Artillery and Clinton Golden Lakes. Returning in the fall of the same season, he arrived at some point on the north shore of Great Slave Lake, and crossed through a chain of islands to the south shore, where he arrived about the beginning of 1772.

Other expeditions, including Franklin's two, have since passed by the more western route. These seem to have passed to the west of the district under consideration.