

Dailion, like every other traveler, was charmed with the Neutral country, which he pronounces incomparably greater, more beautiful and better than any other "of all these countries." He notes the incredible number of deer, the native mode of taking them by driving them into an enclosure, and their practice of killing every animal they find, whether they needed it or not. The reason alleged was that if they did not kill all, the beasts that escaped would tell the others how they had been chased, so that afterwards when the Indians needed game they would not be able to get near it. He enumerates moose, beaver, wild cats, black squirrels, larger than squirrels in France, bustards, turkeys, cranes, etc., as abundant, and remaining in winter. The winter was shorter and milder than "in Canada." No snows had fallen by the 22nd November. The deepest was not more than two and a half feet. Thaws set in on the 26th January. On the 8th March the snow was gone from the open places, but a little still lingered in the woods. The streams abounded in very good fish. The ground produced more corn than was needed, besides pumpkins, beans and other vegetables in abundance, and excellent oil. He expresses his surprise that the Merchants' Company had not sent some Frenchman to winter in the country, for it would be very easy to get the Neutrals to trade, and the direct route would be much shorter than that by way of French River and the Georgian Bay. He speaks of the Neutrals' country as being nearer than the Huron to the French, and as being on one side of the lake of the Iroquois (Lake Ontario), whilst the Iroquois were on the other. The Neutrals, however, did not understand the management of canoes, especially in the rapids, of which there were only two, but long and dangerous. Their proper trade was hunting and war; they were lazy and immoral; their manners and customs were very much the same as the Hurons; their language was different, but the members of the two nations understood one another; they went entirely unclad.

Sagard adds that "according to the opinion of some" the Neutrals' country was eighty leagues in extent, and that they raised very good tobacco which they traded with their neighbors. They were called Neutrals on account of their neutrality between the Hurons and the Iroquois; but they were allies of the Cheveux Relevés against their mortal enemies of the Nation of Fire. Sagard was dissuaded by some members of the French trading company from attempting to bring about a peace between the Hurons and the Iroquois. It was supposed that this would divert the trade of the Hurons from Quebec through the Iroquois country to the Dutch of the Hudson River. At so early a date did the question of trade relations between the territories north and south of the lakes agitate the minds of statesmen and men of commerce.

In the winter of 1640-1, the Jesuit missionaries, Brebeuf and Chaumonot, traversed the country of the Neutrals. The former composed a dictionary showing the differences between the kindred dialects of the Hurons and Neutrals. Chaumonot made a map of the country, which is not extant; but it was no doubt the authority for the delineation of the territory on Sanson's map of 1656, and Ducreux's Latin map of 1660. It is highly probable that they reached the Detroit River, and that they visited and named the Neutral village, of which the Southwold earthwork is the memorial. The reasons for thinking so will appear in the course of this paper.

What is probably the first printed map in which Lake Erie is shown was made by N. Sanson d'Abbeville, Geographer in Ordinary to the King, and printed in Paris, with "privilege du Roy" for 20 years, in the year 1656. It is a map of the northern part of America. The sources of information are stated in general terms, which may be translated as follows: "The most northerly portion is drawn from the various Relations of the English, Danes, etc. Towards the