

Robertson, Commandant at Mackinaw, to proceed forthwith to explore for a site for a fort in the vicinity of Ste. Marie's Falls commanding the entrance to Lake Superior. Heretofore, two routes were available to those engaged in the northwestern fur trade from Montreal: one via the Ottawa and Mattawa rivers, across Lake Nippising, thence down the French River into the Georgian Bay; the other, via St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario and Niagara River, involving a seven mile portage round the Falls, Lake Erie and Detroit River into Lake Huron, both converging at the Falls of Ste. Marie, thence into Lake Superior, making the Grand Portage at its northwestern extremity for the distant fur regions of the west. The difficulties and dangers of the Ottawa route from the cataracts, rapid currents and numerous portages, there being upwards of forty between Montreal and Lake Huron, and from the extremely lengthy and roundabout route via the Niagara and Detroit rivers, had long since suggested the discovery, if possible, of a shorter and easier communication between Lakes Ontario and Huron, hence as far back as 1761, four years previous to the adventure from Mackinaw, some person in the interest of the fur trade, had essayed to explore the possibilities of a route from Bay Kentie (Quinte) to Lake La Clie (Lake Simcoe), but nothing came of the project.

In May, 1780, Capt. Mathews, Secretary to Governor Haldimand, in a letter to Col. Bolton, Commandant at Niagara, gave notice of a surveying party to be sent out to explore a communication with "Mackinaw by way of Toronto," which, later, developed into Yonge Street, extending to Holland River, under direction of Governor Simcoe. In July, 1784, we find Messrs. Frobisher and McTavish of the North-West Co., at Mackinaw conferring with Capt. Robertson, "as to the communication between Lakes Ontario and Huron, that by way of Toronto being the only practicable one, greatly shortening the road and avoiding the Niagara Portage and any interference with our neighbors." Again in May, 1785, Benjamin Frobisher, still in expectation of an early delivery of the posts, is urging the claims of Toronto Carrying Place, and in a letter to Governor Hamilton of that date, proposed to avoid the Severn River portages by an overland route of eighteen miles from Lake Simcoe, making the distance from Toronto to Lake Huron, in a direct line, about one hundred miles, doubtless referring to the route from Lake Simcoe to the Coldwater River, known as the Indian Portage. The es-