

A Journey from Montreal to Kingston in 1791

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The following paper contains a transcript from a tolerably rare volume bearing the formidable title of "Travels in the Interior Inhabited Parts of North America. In the Years 1791 and 1792. In which is given an account of the manners and customs of the Indians, and the present war between them and the Federal States; the mode of life and system of farming among the new settlers of both Canadas, New York, New England, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia; interspersed with anecdotes of people, observations on the soil, natural productions, and political situation of those countries. Illustrated with Copper-Plates. By P. Campbell. Edinburgh, Printed for the Author, and sold by John Guthrie, No. 2, Nicholson Street, Edinburgh. MDCCXCIII."

The author had been an officer in the Forty-second Regiment, and had a number of acquaintances in various parts of the British provinces and the United States, and a relative, Lieutenant Dugald Campbell, was employed as assistant engineer in New Brunswick. In his preface he states that he took with him "an old faithful servant, a Dog, and gun only." By way of apology he adds:

"As he travelled much in wildernesses, and in birch bark canoes, through lakes and rapid streams, where the mind could not at all times be inattentive to safety, and wrote in these canoes, and on the stumps of trees occasionally as he went along, it is not to be supposed under these circumstances that arrangement of composition, the polish of language, and elegance of style could be much attended to; and as these were, was he more at leisure, beyond his reach, he made no attempt afterwards to attain."

He was, however, an acute and careful observer and recorded his impressions in a very simple and direct manner. His book is accordingly a document of more than ordinary value.

Leaving his residence at Fort William on June 11, 1791, he sailed from Greenock on July 2, and arrived at St. John, New Brunswick, fifty-six days later. On September 1 he embarked in a schooner for Fredericton and, meeting with contrary winds, transferred into the post-boat, but walked a great part of the way and actually reached his destination three hours in advance of the boat. From Fredericton, he made excursions to visit the Highland settlements on the Nashwack and Miramichi. On October 7 he began the overland journey to Quebec, ascending the Saint John river as far as the Grand Falls in a canoe and thence walking by the Temiscouata portage to Kamouraska, where he took a calash to Quebec. The journey to Montreal was accomplished in four days in a carrieole. He then went to Kingston by bateau or on foot and obtained a