

security from false reports, given out by its possessors, and might have been battered down with a few four pounders. Even its situation, which was represented to be so very advantageous, was found to owe its advantages to the same source. It cannot be denied but that some Maps of these countries have been published by the French with an appearance of accuracy; but these are of so small a size and drawn on so minute a scale, that they are nearly inexplicable. The sources of the Mississippi, I can assert from my own experience, are greatly misplaced; for when I had explored them, and compared their situation with the French Charts, I found them very erroneously represented, and am satisfied that these were only copied from the rude sketches of the Indians.

Even so lately as their evacuation of Canada, they continued their schemes to deceive; leaving no traces by which any knowledge might occur to their conquerors; for although they were well acquainted with all the Lakes, particularly with Lake Superior, having constantly a vessel of considerable burden thereon, yet their plans of them are very incorrect. I discovered many errors in the descriptions given therein of its islands and bays, during a progress of eleven hundred miles that I coasted it in canoes. They likewise, on giving up the possession of them, took care to leave the places they had occupied, in the same uncultivated state they had found them; at the same time destroying all their naval force. I observed myself part of the hulk of a very large vessel, burnt to the water's edge, just at the opening from the Straits of St. Marie into the Lake.

These difficulties, however were not sufficient to deter me from the undertaking, and I made preparations for setting out. What I chiefly had in view, after gaining a knowledge of the manners, customs, languages, soil and natural productions of the different nations that inhabit the back of the Mississippi, was to ascertain the breadth of that vast continent, which extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, in its broadest part between 43 and 46 degrees northern latitude. Had I been able to accomplish this, I intended to have proposed to government to establish a post in some of those parts a

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