

Cultural Métissage – Travel
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Travel on Foot

17th Century

While the **Huron** lived in Huronia, during the summer, they carried baggage and firewood on their backs using a band that was fastened over the forehead.¹

The **Miami** were renowned for being excellent walkers; when the villages went on winter hunts, the women carried the baggage with headbands or pack straps. Dogs were not used as pack animals.²

18th Century

Antoine Denis Raudot was co-Intendant of New France, serving with Jacques Raudot, his father. While he was in New France, he wrote a series of letters about the Native Americans. According to his biography in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, his letters were probably based on memoirs of Louis Laporte, *sieur* de Louvigny, and Charles de Liette. Raudot would have also gained information from missionaries, military officers, and others who travelled to the Great Lakes. There is no evidence that he ever visited the Great Lakes.

Following is his 1709 description of travelling by foot for winter hunting:³

The women carry all the baggage on their backs by means of collars made like a girth and two or three yards long. They place these on the forehead. As for the men, they carry little besides their arms and put the collar over the top of their shoulders. They all leave the woods only when the rivers are thawed.

The savages know the paths of the woods and are acquainted with them as we know the streets of a city. They all have very good sight and distinguish the tracks of men and animals on the grass and on rocks where appears only a very light moss.

They all walk faster than we do and are very good runners, and among the nations there are some who are as much better than others as these others are better than we are. When they are tired or have some indisposition, they make sweat lodges.

¹ W. Vernon Kinietz, *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes 1615-1760* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ann Arbor Paperback and The University of Michigan Press, 1972, 2nd printing), p. 49.

² W. Vernon Kinietz, pp. 176-177.

³ W. Vernon Kinietz, pp. 364-365.



A portion of Bellin's 1755 map of the Great Lakes
The Huron/Wendat lived in the area surrounding Georgian Bay; the Miami lived in the area surrounding the southern end of Lake Michigan

Pierre Pouchot's 1755-1761 description of Native Americans travelling on foot follows:⁴

In the course of journeys on foot, each carries his bundle, which contains all the household utensils. Its strap goes over the shoulders & in the case of women, around their forehead because of their bosom.

Journeys on foot in the summer are more tiring because of the marshes, hollows full of water which are always clogged with fallen pines and cedars. Some of them are a quarter or a half a league in width. As a result, they hardly ever travel in this fashion except to make war.

Sledges or Toboggans

From 1608-1620, **Champlain** described the use of a sledge by Native Americans:⁵

... in order to cross the ice more easily they are in the habit of making a kind of wooden sledge, on which they place their loads and draw them behind them without making any difficulty, and they go along very quickly.

⁴ Pierre Pouchot and Brian Leigh Dunnigan, editor, and Michael Cardy, translator, *Memoirs on the Late War in North America between France and England* (Youngstown, New York: Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., 1994), p. 457.

⁵ Champlain, Vol. IV, p. 277.



Marc Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté – Champlain and his Companions on a Winter Expedition –
Courtesy of Artefacts Canada: <http://www.rcip-chin.gc.ca/bd-dl/artefacts-eng.jsp?emu=en.artefacts:/ws/human/user/www/SearchForm&searchType=advanced&currLang=English>

On 15 May 1684, **Armand Louis Lom d’Arce, baron de La Hontan**, wrote a letter which described how French Canadians travelled during the winter and summer.⁶

The way of travelling in the Winter, whether in Town or Country, is that of **sledges** drawn by Horses; who are so insensible of the Cold, that I have seen fifty or sixty of ‘em in *January* and *February* stand in the Snow up to their Breast, in the midst of a Wood, without ever offering to go near their Owner’s House. In the Winter-time they travel from *Quebec* to *Montreal* upon the Ice, the River being then frozen over; and upon that Occasion there [sic] Sledges will run you fifteen Leagues a Day. Others have their Sledges drawn by two Mastiff Dogs, but then they are longer by the Way. As for their travelling in Summer, I shall transmit you an Account of it, when I come to be better inform’d. I am told that the people of this Country will go a thousand Leagues in Canoes of Bark; a description of which you may expect, as soon as I have made use of ‘em.

Peter Kalm’s 1749 description of the use of dogs with carts and sledges:⁷

The “Poor Man’s Horse”. In many places hereabouts they use their dogs to fetch water out of the river. I saw two great dogs to-day attached to a little cart, one behind the other. They had neat harnesses, like horses, and bits in their mouths. In the cart was a barrel. The dogs were directed by a boy, who ran behind the cart, and as soon as they came to the river they jumped in of their own accord. When the barrel was filled, the dogs drew their burden up the hill again to their house. I frequently saw dogs employed in this manner, during my stay at Québec. Sometimes they put but one dog before the watercart, which was made small on purpose. The dogs were not very large, hardly of the size of our common farmer’s dogs. The boys that attended them had great whips with which they urged them on occasionally. I have seen them fetch not only water but also wood and other things. In winter it is customary in Canada, for travelers to put dogs before little sledges, made on purpose to hold their clothes, provisions, etc. Poor people commonly employ them on their winter journeys, and go on foot themselves. Almost all the wood, which the poorer people in this country fetch out of the woods in winter, is drawn by dogs,

⁶ Armand Louis Lom d’Arce, *baron de La Hontan* and Reuben Gold Thwaites (editor) *New Voyages to North America* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1905), Vol. I, pp. 14-15.

⁷ Peter Kalm, pp. 475-476.

which have therefore got the name of “the poor man’s horse”. They commonly place a pair of dogs before each load of wood. I have likewise seen some neat little sledges for ladies to ride in, in winter. They are drawn by a span of dogs, and go faster on a good road than one would think. A middle-sized dog is sufficient to draw a single person when the roads are good. I have been told by old people that horses were very scarce here in their youth and almost all of the transportation was then effected by dogs. Several Frenchmen who have been among the Esquimaux on Terra Labrador have assured me that they not only make use of dogs for drawing drays, with their provisions and other necessaries, but are likewise employed for pulling the men themselves in little sledges.

Pierre Pouchot’s 1754-1761 description of the use of toboggans:⁸

They [Indians] also make toboggans, very practical ones to carry their equipment. They consist of two runners, made of hard but flexible wood, 10 to 12 feet long. They are used as the framework of a type of sledge, between a foot and a foot & a half in width. The base is made up of birch bark or elm wood & the front curves up in a semi-circle to pass easily over the snow. They tie their gear onto it. With straps over both their shoulders, they pull it or have it pulled by a dog. This sledge can carry 80 pounds.

Snowshoes

Prior to 1607, **Champlain** described the snowshoes used by the Algonquin:⁹

In the winter when the snows are heavy they make a kind of racket twice or thrice as big as ours in France, which they fasten to their feet, as so walk on the snow without sinking; for otherwise they could not hunt or make their way in many places.

In 1623-1624, **Gabriel Sagard** described snowshoes. In the passage, Sagard described hunting and stated that the French Canadians had adopted the use of snowshoes:¹⁰

When snow had fallen, **we as well as the savages were forced to fasten rackets under our feet** in order to go and fetch wood for keeping ourselves warm; these are an excellent invention, for wearing them you do not sink into the snow, and also you cover a good distance in a short time. These rackets, which the Hurons call *Agnonra*, are twice or three times as large as ours.

In 1661, **Pierre Boucher** described the use of snowshoes by French Canadians:¹¹

We go all about on the snow, by the aid of certain foot gear, made by the Indians, which we call snow-shoes, and which are very convenient.

During January 1666, the 200 Canadian volunteers who participated in **Daniel Rémy de Courcelle’s** failed expedition against the Iroquois were supplied with snowshoes. Unfortunately, Courcelle refused an offer of a Québec merchant to supply 50 pairs of snowshoes for his soldiers.¹²

⁸ Pierre Pouchot, pp. 457-458.

⁹ Samuel de Champlain and H.P. Biggar, editor, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain in Six Volumes* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, Vol. I – 1922; Vol. III – 1929; Vol. IV – 1932), Vol. I, p. 119.

¹⁰ Gabriel Sagard and H.H. Langton (translator), pp. 83-84

¹¹ Pierre Boucher, *seigneur de Boucherville*, and Edward Louis Montizambert (translator), *True and Genuine Description of New France, commonly called Canada, and of the Manners and Customs and Productions of that Country* (Montréal: George E. Desbaretts and Company, 1883), p. 20.

¹² Diane Wolford Sheppard, *17th Century Great Lakes Timeline, Part 4*, pp. 14-15: <http://www.habitantheritage.org/french-canadian-resources/history-of-new-france> . Courcelle had arrived the previous June with the Carignan Salières Regiment.



Claude Charles Bacqueville de La Potherie's illustration of a Canadian soldier wearing leggings, moccasins, and snowshoes during the latter part of the 17th century¹³

Pierre Pouchot's 1754-1761 description of the use of snowshoes:¹⁴

Although the weather is harsher in the winter, nonetheless there is much advantage in the rivers being frozen & the forest covered in snow, which covers over these obstacles. By means of their snowshoes, however awkward they may appear at first when one is not used to them, the Indians overcome all these difficulties. The snowshoes are 4 to 5 feet long & about two feet wide at the bulges, which are strung with animal gut. They place the front of the foot in a slot which is about two thirds of the way along the snowshoe, made up straps passed behind the heel and over the foot. They adjust it so that the heel can be raised. You have to walk with a swinging motion & with foot pointing well inwards, otherwise you would get tangled up. If you fall, you have great difficulty standing up again. The Indians do not have to feat that. The elasticity of the snowshoe carries you forward & makes movements easier, which compensates for its awkwardness. It does not sink more than 4 or 5 inches into the finest snow.

Canoe

Prior to 1607, **Champlain** described canoes used by the Native Americans:¹⁵

At daybreak their grand Sagamore came out of his lodge, going round all about all the other lodges, and crying with a loud voice that they should break camp to go to Tadoussac, where there

¹³ LAC, Mikan # 2945957. Although published in 1722, the illustration was based on the time that La Potherie spent in North America. See his biography in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le_roy_de_la_potherie_claude_charles_2E.html

¹⁴ Pierre Pouchot, p. 457.

¹⁵ Samuel de Champlain and H.P. Biggar, editor, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain in Six Volumes* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, Vol. I – 1922; Vol. III – 1929; Vol. IV – 1932), Vol. I, pp. 104-105.

good friends were. Immediately every man in a trice took down his lodge, and the said grand Captain was the first to begin to take his canoe and carry it to the water, wherein he embarked his wife and children, and a quantity of furs; and in like manner were launched well nigh two hundred canoes, which go extraordinarily well; for though our shallop was well manned, yet they went more swiftly than we. There are but two that paddle, the man and the wife. Their canoes are some eight or nine paces long, and a pace or a pace and a half broad amidships, and grow sharper and sharper toward both ends. They are very liable to overturn, if one know not how to manage them rightly; for they are made of a bark of trees called birch-bark, strengthened within by little circles of wood strongly and neatly fashioned, and are so light that a man can carry one of them easily; and every canoe can carry the weight of a pipe.¹⁶ When they wish to go overland to get to some river where they have business, they carry them with them.

In 1623-1624, **Gabriel Sagard** described canoes:¹⁷

Their canoes are from eight to nine paces in length and about a pace or a pace and a half wide at the middle, tapering off to both ends like a weaver's shuttle, and these are the largest they make. They have also others smaller, which they use on occasion requires and according to the difficulty of the journeys they have to make. The canoes are very liable to turn over if one does not understand how to manage them, being made of birch-bark strengthened within by little hoops of white cedar, very neatly placed, and they are so light that a man can easily carry one on his head or on his shoulder. Each can support the weight of a hogshead, more or less according to its size. Every day as a rule when they are in a hurry they do twenty-five or thirty leagues in these canoes provided that there is no rapid to pass and that wind and water are favourable; for they go at such speed and with such lightness as astonished me, and I do not think the mail can go more quickly than these canoes when they are driven by good paddler.

In 1670, **René Bréhant de Galinée** described canoes. In 1669, François Dollier de Casson and René Bréhant de Galinée embarked on a missionary voyage to the Great Lakes via Lake Ontario. While they were on Lake Ontario, they met Adrien de Jolliet who had rescued an Iroquois prisoner at Sault Ste. Marie and who travelled through Lakes Huron and Lake Erie to reach Lake Ontario. Jolliet told Dollier de Casson and Bréhant de Galinée about the route he had taken. The two missionaries decided to visit Sault Ste. Marie and follow the route and rough map that Jolliet had drawn for them. Following is Bréhant de Galinée's description of canoes:¹⁸

. . . immediately above Montreal one is confronted with a rapid or waterfall amidst numerous large rocks, that will not allow a boat to go through, so that canoes only can be used. These are little birch-bark canoes, about twenty feet long and two feet wide, strengthened inside with cedar floors and gunwales, very thin, so that one man carries it with ease, although the boat is capable of carrying four men and eight or nine hundred pounds' weight of baggage. There are some made that carry as many as ten or twelve men with their outfit, but it requires two or three men to carry them.

This style of canoes affords the most convenient and commonest mode of navigation in this country, although it is a true saying that when a person is in one of these vessels he is always not a finger's breadth, but the thickness of five or six sheets of paper, from death. These canoes cost

¹⁶ A measure of capacity applied to wines which varied according to the district and the kind of wine, Champlain, Vol. I, p. 105.

¹⁷ Gabriel Sagard and H.H. Langton (translator), *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons* (Toronto, Ontario: The Champlain Society, 1939), pp. 100-101.

¹⁸ René Bréhant de Galinée, "The Journey of Dollier and Galinée" in Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ph.D., editor, *Early Narratives of the Northwest* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917, reprinted 1959 by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin), pp. 172-173.

Frenchmen who buy them from Indians nine or ten crowns in clothes, but from Frenchmen to Frenchmen they are much dearer. Mine cost me eighty livres.

You do not row in these canoes as in a boat. In the latter the oar is attached to a rowlock on the boat's side; but here you hold one hand near the blade of the oar and the other at the end of the handle, and use it to push the water behind you, without the oar touching the canoe in any way. Moreover, it is necessary in these canoes to remain all the time on your knees or seated, taking care to preserve your balance well; for the vessels are so light that a weight of twenty pounds on one side more than the other is enough to overturn them, and so quickly that one scarcely has time to guard against it. They are so frail that to bear a little upon a stone or to touch it a little clumsily is sufficient to cause a hole, which can, however, be mended with the resin.

The convenience of these canoes is great in these streams, full of cataracts or waterfalls, and rapids through which it is impossible to take any boat. When you reach them you load canoe and baggage upon your shoulders and go overland until the navigation is good; and then you put your canoe back into the water, and embark again. . . . There is no conveyance either better or swifter than that of the canoe; for four good canoe-men will not be afraid to bet that they can pass in their canoe eight or ten rowers in the fastest launch that can be seen.

I have made a long digression here upon canoes because, as I have already said, I have found nothing here more beautiful or more convenient. Without them it would be impossible to navigate above Montreal or in any of the numerous rivers of this country. I know none of these without some waterfall or rapid, in which one would inevitably get wrecked if he wished to run them.

Peter Kalm's 1749 description of birch-bark canoes:¹⁹

Birch-bark Canoes. All the strips and ribs in them are made of white cedar . . . ; the space between the latter varying in breadth between that of a palm and the width of three digits. The strips are placed so close to one another that one cannot see the birch-bark between them. All seams are held together by spruce roots or ropes made of the same material split. In all seams the birch bark has been turned in double. The seams are made like a tailor's cross-stitch. In place of pitch they use melted resin on the outside seams. If there is a small hole in the birch-bark, resin is melted over it. The inner side of the bark or that nearest the tree always becomes the outer side of the boat. The whole canoe consists entirely of six pieces of birch-bark only, of which two are located underneath and two on either side. The bark strip directly underneath is sometimes so long that it covers three fourths of the canoe's length. I have not yet seen a boat whose bottom consisted on one piece only. Birch-bark canoes are dangerous to navigate, because if the sail is forced down in stormy weather, it may splinter the bottom of the boat. If one knocks against a sharp or rough stone, a large piece of the bottom of the canoe may be ripped out. It is therefore evident that these boats continually subjected to adventures and must often be repaired. On that account no one should set out in them without bringing resin and even birch-bark along, though the latter can generally be procured wherever one goes. Likewise it is possible to procure the spruce roots nearly everywhere, and, lacking those, pine roots are said to be equally serviceable.

The canoes were not allowed to remain in the water or near the river banks during the night; instead everything was taken out of them, they were carried up on the shore, turned upside down and left there until they were needed. The reason for this was that if a storm should come up during the night, they might be dashed to pieces against the rocks in the river; also this precaution prevented water from entering them and thus bring about rotting.

¹⁹ Peter Kalm, pp. 551, 564, 568.

The oars used in Canada were as a rule made of maple. This wood was preferred to all others. Lacking this they made the oars of Norway maple or ash. They did not propel the canoes in the same fashion as we do, turning our back in the direction we desired to go, and drawing the oars toward us, for they paddled forwards. In the same fashion they paddled the small canoes which were hollowed out of a part of a tree, but they rowed the boats in the same way as we.

Pierre Pouchot was a French Officer who lived in New France between 1755 and 1761 during the French and Indian War. Pierre Pouchot's description of birchbark canoes follows:²⁰

The canoes made of birch bark are far more solid & more artistically contrasted [than elm-bark canoes]. The shell of these canoes is made with strips of cedar wood, which is very soft & which they make as thin as the straps of a scabbard, three to four fingers wide. They all abut one another and join up in a point between two ribbands. This shell is covered with pieces of birch bark sewn together like furs, fastened between the two ribbands & tied up along the ribbands with the second layer of bark from the root of the cedar tree, in the same way as we twist wicker around the hoops of barrels. All the stiches & holes are covered over with a mash of resin, just as they do with canoes made of elm wood [see below]. They fit cross pieces into them to retain their shape and to act as benches & also, in heavy weather, a long pole running from bow to stern to stop the vessel being broken up by shuddering when the vessel pitches. There are canoes of 3, of 6, of 12, and even of 24 places, indicated by the number of benches. The French are almost the only people to use these canoes for long journeys. They can carry up to three thousand pounds. Four men can take them over the portage and two are sufficient for other occasions. These little vessels can survive squalls that would cause real difficulties for many ships. One only has to make sure that they do not run aground. If they are holed, square pieces of bark are carried to effect the repairs. The vessel is also used as a hut. A side of it is lifted and rested on one or two oars and one then stretches out beneath it out of the wind. This is the normal form of shelter during voyages & when one is hunting.

From the description of elm bark canoes: They smear his [the resin] over the splits and heat it with a burning brand from the fire. The bark as well as the ribbands are held in place with these straps. They then add a mast cut from a piece of wood & a spar to act as a yard. They use their blankets as sails.

Alexander Henry was a trader who travelled to the Great Lakes starting in 1761. Following is his description of **birch-bark canoes**:²¹

The canoes which I provided for my undertaking were, as is usual, five fathoms and a half in length and four feet and a half in their extreme breadth, and formed of birch-tree bark, a quarter of an inch in thickness. The bark is lined with small splints of cedar-wood; and the vessel is further strengthened with ribs of the same wood, of which the two ends are fastened to the gunwales; several bars, rather than seats, are also laid across the canoe, from gunwale to gunwale. The small roots of the spruce tree afford the wattap, with which the bark is sewed; and the gum of the pine tree supplies the place of tar and oakum. Bark, some spare wattap, and gum are always carried in each canoe for the repairs which frequently become necessary.

The canoes are worked, not with oars but with paddles, and occasionally with a sail. To each canoe there are eight men; and to every three or four canoes, which constitute a brigade, there is a

²⁰ Pierre Pouchot, pp. 459-460.

²¹ Alexander Henry and Milo Milton Quaife, editor, *Alexander Henry's Travels and adventures in the years 1760-1776* (Chicago, R. R. Donnelley & sons company, 1921), pp. 15-16. You can read his biography in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/henry_alexander_1739_1824_6E.html.

guide or conductor. Skillful men, at double the wages of the rest, are placed in the head and stern. They engage to go from Montreal to Michilimackinac and back to Montreal again, the middle-men at one hundred and fifty livres and the end-men at three hundred livres each. The guide has the command of his brigade and is answerable for all pillage and loss; and in return every man's wages is answerable to him. This regulation was established under the French government.

The freight of a canoe of the substance and dimension which I have detailed consists in sixty *pieces*, or packages of merchandise, of the weight of from ninety to a hundred pounds each, and provisions to the amount of one thousand weight. To this is added the weight of eight men and of eight weighing forty pounds each, one of which every man is privileged to put on board. The whole weight must therefore exceed eight thousand pounds, or may perhaps be averaged at four tons.

Alexander Henry also described two **customs** that had developed among the *voyageurs*.²²

In a short time we reached the rapids and carrying-place of St. Anne, two miles below the upper end of the island of Montreal; and it is not till after passing these that the voyage may be properly said to be commenced. At St. Anne's the men go to confession, and at the same time offer up their vows; for the saint from whom this parish derives its name and to whom its church is dedicated, it is the patroness of the Canadians in all their travels by water.

There is still a further custom to be observed on arriving at St. Anne's, and which is that of distributing eight gallons of rum to each canoe (a gallon for each man) for consumption during the voyage; nor is it less according to custom to drink the whole of this liquor upon the spot. The saint, therefore, and the priest were no sooner dismissed than a scene of intoxication began in which my men surpassed, if possible, the drunken Indian in singing, fighting, and the display of savage gesture and conceit.

Alexander Henry's description of a **portage**:²³

The method of carrying the packages, or *pieces*, as they are called, is the same with that of the Indian men, and which indeed is not peculiar even to them. One piece rests and hangs upon the shoulders, being suspended in a fillet, or forehead-band; and upon this is laid a second, which usually falls into the hollow of the neck, and assists the head in its support of the burden.

Henry Schoolcraft was a geologist who was assigned to Lewis Cass's expedition which explored Lake Huron, Lake Superior, the source of the Mississippi River, and Lake Michigan in 1820. In 1822, Schoolcraft became the Indian Agent at Sault Ste. Marie and married Jane Johnston, the métis daughter of John Johnston, a Scottish trader, and Susan, his wife who was the daughter of an Ojibwa chief. Following is his description of a birch-bark canoe.²⁴ I have divided long entries into shorter paragraphs to increase readability.

The northwest canoe, is . . . constructed wholly of bark, cedar splints, the roots of the spruce, and the pitch of the yellow pine, . . . and these articles are fabricated in a manner uniting such an astonishing degree of lightness, strength, and elegance, and with perfect adaptation to the country, and the difficulties of northern voyage, as to create a sentiment of mixed surprise and admiration.

²² Alexander Henry, pp. 17-18.

²³ Alexander Henry, p. 26.

²⁴ Henry Schoolcraft and Mentor L. Williams, editor, *Schoolcraft's Narrative Journals of Travels through the Northwestern Regions of the United States extending from Detroit through the Great Chain of American Lakes to the Sources of the Mississippi River in the Year 1820* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1992), pp. 56-57; see Wikipedia.org for Schoolcraft's biography.

Those of the largest size, such as are commonly employed in the fur trade of the north, are thirty-five feet in length, and six feet in width, at the widest part, tapering gradually towards the bow and stern, which are brought to a wedge-like point, and turned over, from the extremities, towards the centre, so as to resemble, in some degree, the head of a violin. . .

They are constructed of the bark of the white birch tree . . . which is peeled from the tree in large sheets, and bent over a slender frame of cedar ribs, confined by gunwales, which are kept apart by slender bars of the same wood. Around these the bark is sewed, by the slender and flexible roots of the young spruce tree, called *wattap* [watape], and also where the pieces of bark join, so that the gunwales resemble the rim of an Indian basket. The joinings are afterwards luted, and rendered water tight, by a coat of pine pitch, which, after it has been thickened by boiling, is used under the name of *gum*. In the third bar from the bow, an aperture is cut for a mast, so that a sail can be employed, when the wind proves favourable.

Seats for those who paddle, are made by suspending a strip of board, with cords, from the gunwales, in such a manner, that they do not press against the sides of the canoe. The Fur Companies have lately introduced the use of oars, in propelling the canoe, but the natives employ the cedar paddle, with a light and slender blade In either case, they are steered with a larger paddle, having a long handle, and a broad blade

A canoe of this size, when employed in the fur trade, is calculated to carry sixty packages of skins, weighing ninety pounds each, and provisions to the amount of one thousand pounds. This exclusive of the weight of eight men, each of whom are allowed to put on board, a bag or knapsack, of the weight of forty pounds. In addition to this, every canoe, has a quantity of bark, wattap, gum, a pan for heating the gum, an axe, and some smaller articles necessary for repairs. The aggregate weight of all this, may be estimated at about four tons.

Such a canoe, thus loaded, is paddled by eight men, at the rate of four miles per hour, in perfect calm – is carried across portages by four men – is easily repaired at any time and any place, and is altogether one of the most eligible modes of conveyance, that can be employed upon the lakes, while in the interior of the northwest – for river navigation, where there are many rapids and portages, nothing that has been contrived to float upon water, offers an adequate substitute.

Every night the canoe is unloaded, and, with the baggage, carried ashore; and, if, during the day, a storm should arise, such is the activity of the Canadian voyageurs, that ten minutes time is sufficient to effect a landing, and secure both vessel and cargo.

On 15 August 1831, **Alexis de Tocqueville** wrote to his father while he was at Sault Ste. Marie aboard a steamship:²⁵

Back to Sault Ste. Marie. The river here is no longer navigable. Our boat stopped, but we didn't. The Indians have taught Europeans how to make canoes from bark, which two men can carry on their shoulders. I shall bring home a sample of the bark from which these boats are made. You will agree with me that the first white man to step into such a boat must have been a hardy soul. The savages can build a canoe of this sort in five days. It is terrifying to see such a nutshell darting among the reefs of the Sainte-Marie River and shooting the rapids with the speed of an arrow. Yet the fact is that there is no danger. I have more than once found myself in one of these canoes in the company of ladies, and no one displayed the slightest apprehension. On our journey

²⁵ Oliver Zunz, editor, and Arthur Goldhammer, translator, *Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont in America – Their Friendship and Their Travels* (University of Virginia Press, 2010), pp. 110-111.

the boatmen carried the canoes on their backs to a point upstream of the rapids, then put them in the water, and we lay in the bottom. The entire population of Sainte-Marie is French. These are happy, lively Frenchmen, much as their forefathers were but we are no longer. As they paddled our canoes, they sang old tunes that are all but forgotten at home. What we have found here is the France of a century ago, preserved like a mummy for the edification of the present generation.

The Number of Portages Necessary to Travel between Montréal and Michilimackinac or Sault Ste. Marie

In 1670, **Bréhant de Galinée** described the route from Montréal to Sault Ste. Marie via the Ottawa River.²⁶

In going there [Sault Ste. Marie] from Montréal it is necessary to ascend a river in which thirty portages must be made in order to avoid a like number of falls or rapids, in which, if one ran them, he would incur the danger of losing a thousand lives. From this river [Ottawa], which is as large as the river St. Lawrence, one passes, half by land and half by water, this space of twenty-five or thirty leagues, to get to the lake of the Nipissings, from which one descends by French River, where there are four or five more waterfalls, to the Lake of the Hurons.

The greatest difficulty is in descending; for if one does not know exactly where the landings are, to make the portages, he runs the risk of being swallowed up in the falls and perishing, to say nothing of the difficulty of the portages, which are generally amongst stones and gravel. One often ventures in the less difficult channels, in which if the man who steers the canoe or the man in front were to fail sometimes by the thickness of a silver crown to pass between rocks and whirlpools that are found in these channels, the canoe would be wrecked or filled with water, and one would see himself swallowed up in places that look horrible. This is only too common, and a Jesuit brother who descended after us, wrecked his canoe in one of these channels; and few canoes are seen belonging to the Indians who have made the Montréal trip which are not well patched.

Louis Antoine de Bougainville’s 1756 Description of Lake Ontario

Louis Antoine de Bougainville was Montcalm’s aide-de-camp. He noted in his journal for 31 July 1756:²⁷

The navigation of Lake Ontario is quite dangerous and difficult. The least wind makes it rough, the waves are short and frequent and in heavy weather one gets tireder than on the open sea.

Jonathan Carver’s 1766 Description of Travel on Lake Erie

In 1766, Jonathan Carver travelled through the Great Lakes. Following is his description of travel on Lake Erie:²⁸

²⁶ René Bréhant de Galinée, “The Journey of Dollier and Galinée” in Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ph.D., editor, *Early Narratives of the Northwest* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1917, reprinted 1959 by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin), pp. 207-208.

²⁷ Louis Antoine de Bougainville and Edward P. Hamilton, editor, *Adventure in the Wilderness – The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760* (Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 22.

²⁸ Jonathan Carver and John Parker, editor, *The Journals of Jonathan Carver and Related Documents, 1766 – 1770* (Minneapolis Historical Press, 2004 reprint), p. 62.

This lake [Erie] has in places for several miles together very high banks which make it somewhat dangerous passing with canoes or battoes, as 'tis common for sudden squalls to rise especially in spring and fall whereby many battoes & canoes loaded with goods, and lives are lost.



Frances Anne Beechey Hopkins – *Voyageurs at Dawn* – Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Mikan #2894477

Residents of Detroit Who Supplied Goods or Services for the King between 1739 and 1750
Compiled by Diane Wolford Sheppard

Between 1739 and 1750, the residents of Détroit faced a number of challenges, including the War against the Chickasaw, the cut-off of trade goods as a result of War with Great Britain, the movement of the Huron mission to Bois Blanc and then to the area near present-day Assumption Church, British instigated conspiracies against the garrison and Détroit's residents, and the need to supply Native Americans and their families who were in the area, as well as for the Native Americans who were travelling to Montréal to meet with the governor.

During this period, the commandants asked the residents of Détroit to supply transportation related goods or services. See the detailed timeline for this period and the complete list of Détroit's residents who supplied goods and services during this period on the Military Page on the French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan's website: http://www.habitantheritage.org/french-canadian_resources/military

The Mikan # refers to the number used by Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to identify documents that are online. You can download the original images of these documents by using the advanced search form at LAC, choosing Mikan # from the drop down box, and entering the number into the blank space. The LAC advanced search page is located at: http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/lac-bac/search/arch_adv

Occupations have been added if known.

d'Ailleboust de Mantet – probably a reference to Pierre Joseph d'Ailleboust de Mantet or Nicolas Marie d'Ailleboust

- 10 April 1745 – Mantet paid 100 *livres* to an Indian who brought letters from the Mississippi to Fort Frontenac – Mikan # 3069412
- 27 May 1746 – Mantet supplied a bark canoe for the Sac who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074822

Unknown Ausson

- 4 August 1739 – Ausson carried letters to the Miami regarding the route that the army should take – Mikan # 3067901

Joseph Bénard dit Carignan – probably the brother of Jean Baptiste Bénard *dit* Carignan

- 4 August 1739 – Joseph Carignan's contributions included 202 pounds of deerskins for the voyage the Shawnee made the previous winter, 88 cats skins worth 22 beavers that was paid to an Onondaga who was sent to Niagara the previous winter, and 25 ells of canvas that was used to make the flag for the fort – Mikan # 3074874

Alexis Bienvenu dit Delisle

- 1739 – Alexis Bienvenu transported letters to the governor and intendant from the Ouiatanon post – Mikan # 3068759

Antoine Bousquet

- 23 May 1740 – Antoine Bousquet supplied two bark canoes for 18 Abenaki who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3067496
- 26 May 1740 – Antoine Bousquet supplied a bark canoe for the Iroquois from Sault-Saint-Louis who were returning from the war against the Chickasaw and who were returning to Montréal – Mikan # 3067495
- 27 June 1740 – Antoine Bouquet paid local Indians with merchandise worth 27 *livres* to repair the canoes of the army that was returning to Montréal – Mikan # 3067491

Jacques Campeau – probably a reference to Jacques Campeau, *père*. He was a merchant who initially came to Detroit in 1703 as a blacksmith

- 3 June 1746 – Jacques Campeau supplied a bark canoe to the Chippewa/Ojibwa who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074818

Cardinal – possibly a reference to Jacques Cardinal – see below

- 22 August 1746 – Cardinal brought the Wea Indians to Détroit – Mikan # 3074689

Jean Baptiste Chapoton – Jean Baptiste Chapoton was a surgeon

- 5 June 1747 – Jean Baptiste Chapoton contributed 100 *livres* that was used to cover the cost of leading the Miami to Détroit – Mikan # 3074850

Chesne – the references to a Chesne without a first name could refer to Charles Chesne or to Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte, his younger brother. I have noted how the individual or Company is referred to in the LAC document.

- 6 June 1747 – *Sieur* Chesne supplied a bark canoe that was given to the Potawatomi who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074824
- 15 June 1747 – *Sieur* Chesne supplied a bark canoe to the Indians who were returning to Montréal with *M^r*. Picoté de Belestre – Mikan # 3074833

Charles Chesne – Charles Chesne was a merchant

- 3 June 1742 – Charles Chesne and Pierre Chesne, *frères*, supplied two large canoes for the Kickapoo, Mascouten, and Wea who were going to Montréal to meet with Beauharnois – Mikan # 3068994

Pierre Chesne dit Labutte – Pierre Chesne *dit* Labutte was a merchant and an interpreter; his first wife was *métis*

- 3 June 1742 – Charles Chesne and Pierre Chesne, *frères*, supplied two large canoes for the Kickapoo, Mascouten, and Wea who were going to Montréal to meet with Beauharnois – Mikan # 3068994

François Chevalier

- 4 August 1749 – *Sieur* Chevalier supplied a bark canoe – Mikan # 3075018
- 11 August 1749 – François Chevalier supplied a bark canoe – Mikan # 3075278

Pierre Cosme dit Saint-Cosme – Pierre Cosme *dit* Saint Cosme was a merchant

- 7 August 1744 – Pierre Cosme supplied a six-place canoe – Mikan # 3074698

Antoine Cuillierier – the references below without a first name probably refer to Antoine Cuillierier, although his brother Jean Baptiste Cuillierier also lived in Detroit. Jean Baptiste Cuillierier was usually referred to as Jean Baptiste Cuillierier *dit* Beaubien; he was a merchant. Antoine Cuillierier was an interpreter and a merchant. In his role as a merchant, he acted as a *commis* [agent] for Jacques Charly.

- 7 June 1740 – Cuillierier supplied a canoe – Mikan # 3067483
- 13 June 1740 – Cuillierier supplied a canoe for the Indians from Sault-au-Recollet who were returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067484
- 5 June 1746 – *Sieur* Cuillierier supplied a bark canoe to the Miquinac who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074694
- 25 July 1746 – Antoine Cuillierier supplied two large bark canoes to the Miquinac and Sac who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074820
- 26 July 1746 – Antoine Cuillierier supplied a bark canoe to the Huron from Détroit who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074693
- 6 April 1747 – *M^r*. Cuillierier supplied a horse to François Josue La Corne who was going to deliver a message from the governor to Fort St. Joseph – Mikan # 3074614
- 11 July 1747 – Antoine Cuillierier's contribution included equipment for a canoe and three bushels of Indian corn – Mikan # 3074613
- 2 October 1747 – *Sieur* Cuillierier as *commis* for the deceased Jacques Charly supplied the following for the Miami – two canoes, 30 *livres* pay for an interpreter, 50 pounds of tobacco, *eau-de-vie*, one pair of *mitasses* for a chief, one two-point blanket, and a shirt – Mikan # 3074592

Dagneau

- 7 June 1740 – Dagneau supplied a canoe and 171 pounds of grease to the detachment that was going to the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067490

Jacques Dupont

- 17 May 1740 – Jacques Dupont furnished a bark canoe for the Indians who had gone to war against the Chickasaw and who were returning to Montréal – Mikan # 3067493

Laurent Eustache Gamelin – he was referred to as Eustache Gamelin; he was a merchant

Gauché / Gauchet

- 18 June 1748 – Gauché supplied 19 bushels of wheat and a six-place canoe that Kikimek would use to travel to Montréal for its defense – Mikan # 3974964

Jacques Godé / Gaudet

- 25 July 1746 – *Sieur* Godé supplied a large bark canoe for the Huron who were going to Montréal – Mikan # 3074826

Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont was a merchant

- 26 July 1749 – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont’s contributions included a pirogue, calumets, and deerskins – Mikan # 3075256
- 2 October 1749 – Jean Baptiste Godefroy de Vieuxpont supplied a pirogue – Mikan # 3075253

Pierre Godefroy dit Roquetaillade – Pierre Godefroy dit Roquetaillade was a merchant

- 23 May 1740 – Pierre Godefroy dit Roquetaillade supplied gum [used to repair canoes] for 18 Abenaki who were returning home from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3068817
- 25 May 1740 – Pierre Godefroy dit Roquetaillade supplied a bark canoe to the Iroquois from Sault-St-Louis who were returning home after they had gone to war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067498
- 7 June 1740 – Pierre Godefroy dit Roquetaillade paid to have the canoes repaired for the military who were returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067499

Claude Gouin – Claude Gouin was a merchant

- 17 May 1744 – Claude Gouin provided a canoe to the Iroquois from Sault-St-Louis who were returning home from participating in a campaign against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3068143
- 17 May 1744 – Claude Gouin provided a canoe to the Iroquois from Sault-St-Louis who were returning home from participating in a campaign against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3068142
- 5 August 1749 – Claude Gouin supplied a pirogue for Raymond, a captain who was detached from the troops in Niagara and who was on his way to assume command of the Miami Post – Mikan # 3075036

Pierre Hubert dit Lacroix

- 7 June 1740 – Pierre Hubert dit Lacroix’s contribution included a canoe, sail, and sponge for some of the individuals who were returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067485
- 7 June 1740 – Pierre Hubert dit Lacroix’s contribution included grease and equipment for a canoe for some of the individuals who were returning from the war against the Chickasaw – Mikan # 3067486

Claude Landry dit Saint-André

- 7 August 1744 – Corporal Claude Landry/Andry dit Saint-André supplied a bark canoe to the chief of the *Rivière Blanche* – Mikan # 3068193

Marsac

- 22 April 1740 – Marsac contributed a canoe that was used to bring letters to Beauharnois – Mikan # 3068818
- 28 May 1746 – Marsac contributed a bark canoe – Mikan # 3074819

François Marsac – François Marsac was a merchant

- 7 June 1740 – François de Marsac, a merchant, supplied 378 pounds of bread, beef, two large bark canoes, and a smaller canoe – Mikan # 3067497
- 26 July 1745 – François de Marsac provided a bark canoe – Mikan # 3069399
- 6 April 1747 François de Marsac supplied a horse – Mikan # 3074620
- 7 April 1747 – François de Marsac supplied a large bark canoe – Mikan # 3074686
- 28 September 1747 François de Marsac’s contributions included wheat, grease, a large bark canoe, a sail, a sponge, a sack of flour, bread, and lard – Mikan # 3074680

Métivier

- 8 July 1750 – Métivier supplied wheat and a bark canoe – Mikan # 3075294

Charles Morand

- 18 September 1749 – Charles Moran brought eight ill members of the garrison of Fort Miami to Détroit – Mikan # 3075183

Laurent Parent – he was a carpenter

- 5 August 1749 – *Sieur* Parent supplied a pirogue that would transport the garrison to Fort Miami – Mikan # 3075

Porlier de la Grossardière

- 13 March 1748 – Porlier de la Grossardière led the Indians to Détroit – Mikan # 3074938

Jean Baptiste Poupard / Poupard – Jean Baptiste Poupard was a merchant

- 6 October 1749 – Jean Baptiste Poupard supplied a bark canoe to Pierre Joseph Céleron de Blainville – Mikan # 3075275

Pierre Réaume – Pierre Réaume was a merchant

- 13 June 1750 – Pierre Réaume, as *commis* for Claude Marin, supplied a bark canoe and wheat – Mikan # 3075280

Alexis Trottier, *sieur* DesRuisseaux – Alexis Trottier, *sieur* DesRuisseaux, was a merchant

- 15 July 1748 – *Sieur* DesRuisseaux provided two canoes to the Indian residents of Sault-Saint-Louis and Lorette who were returning with *Messieur* Picoté de Belestre to Montréal – Mikan # 3074906
- 18 August 1750 – *Sieur* DesRuisseaux provided two canoes, 38 grains of porcelain, and 18 deerskins – Mikan # 3075245 – DesRuisseaux