

(C)

1st subject

A+ Very well written & interesting.

Bayner Best Prize

Commended

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Birth: [REDACTED]

Pierre Radisson

One fine spring morning, nearly fifty years after Champlain had first come to Canada, three boys slipped out of the little French fort at Three Rivers, Quebec. The young lads wanted to go duck-shooting, but their parents had forbidden it because the Iroquois were in the neighborhood.

They wandered some distance and at last two of them decided to return home. The third, a reckless youth, went on alone. After shooting as many geese and ducks as he could carry he began to think of returning. When he got back near the spot where he had parted from his companions, he came upon their dead bodies lying in the grass. At the same moment twenty or more Iroquois sprang out and rushed at him. Bravely he stood his ground and fired at them, and this saved his life, for Iroquois respected bravery more than anything else.

That night two Indians covered him with a blanket, and lay down upon the ends so that he could not escape. The next day he was taken away to a village on Lake Champlain. Here he was adopted by a chief who had lost one of his own sons. He lived with this tribe for some months,

learning their customs, speech and sign language, but always watching for a chance to escape.

At last he did get away. The Iroquois made a raid on a Dutch village to the south, not hurting anyone, but stealing food. With this raiding party went the young French lad, and in this way he once more saw white men. One of them helped to hide him, and when the Indians had gone he made his way to New York. There he got on a ship which was sailing to Holland. From Holland he went to Paris, where his father had lived before going to Canada, and next summer he was back at Three Rivers after an absence of two years.

Such was the first adventure of Pierre Radisson.

Radisson's sister had married a young fur-trader named Grosseillers. The two young men were anxious to explore the country beyond the Great Lakes. Europeans had by this time found Lake Superior. Beyond that was the unknown land. A large expedition was arranged and they set out. Before long a band of Iroquois attacked them and several were killed. With a few friendly Indians

belonging to the party, they pushed on up the Ottawa, across to Lake Nipissing and then to Lake Huron. Champlain had once gone this far, but the young explorers kept on. Far to the west they came to a great lake opening to the south which today is called Lake Michigan.

Radisson thought it "The delight-fullest lake in the world," and here they stayed until the following year, hunting and exploring.

On the autumn they passed out of the northern end of Lake Michigan and turned toward the west into Lake Superior. Another winter and spring were spent in this new region, and then they returned to Three Rivers with a stock of valuable furs.

After a year at home they began a new adventure. Upon Lake Superior they had met Indians who had spent the summer on the shores of an inland salt water sea. This was Hudson Bay, of course, but as yet no one, except the Indians, had been there overland from Canada. So the two friends decided to make the trip.

Now, anyone wishing to go on a trading expedition must first ask permission of the Governor at

Quebec. The Governor wanted a very large share of the profits for himself. Radisson and his brother-in-law refused his demands. So they were forbidden to leave Three Rivers. The two young men slipped away at night and soon were speeding up the Ottawa.

Travelling the same route as before they came to Lake Superior and spent the winter near its north-western end.

In the spring Radisson travelled through part of what is now Manitoba, Minnesota and North Dakota. Then with a large party of Indians, the two Frenchmen set out northward for Hudson Bay.

The next spring they started back home with three hundred and sixty canoes full of furs. The Governor had not forgotten that they had gone away without his permission, and he now punished them by taking away most of their furs. Out of a large fortune they had scarcely enough left to pay the expenses. Disappointed, and very angry, Radisson went to Paris to ask the French king for justice. The king would not listen to him, and so the two men decided to go to England for help.

The English king gave them money

and his cousin, Prince Rupert, gave them two ships, and away they sailed for Hudson Bay. A wild storm blew up, and Radisson's ship was so badly damaged that he had to turn back. Groseillers, however, reached Hudson Bay, and named a river after Rupert. After a time he returned with so rich a cargo of furs that the English king was delighted, and in 1670, a company was formed for trading into Hudson's Bay.

Radisson was employed by the new company for some time. Then the French asked him to return to their service, and for many years he shifted back and forth, now working for the English and again serving the French.

Of his last years we know almost nothing, except that he was left to die in great poverty, a most unworthy fate for so daring and active an explorer.

References.- The Book of Knowledge
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