

Almost Shipwrecked in Put-in-Bay in 1797
Edited by Michael Gora

Isaac Weld was born in Dublin, Ireland on March 15, 1774 and got most of his education in England. In the early 1790s he thought that the time was approaching when the Irish people would be led to emigrate in large numbers. He thought that the newly independent United States, as well as the provinces of Canada, would provide "the surest and safest homes of refuge." With those ideas in view, Mr. Weld embarked for Philadelphia in September, 1795, having then just reached his 21st birthday. He then spent two years on a tour of the U.S. during which he met both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. He returned to Dublin in late 1797 and published the story of his travels in 1799. They passed through many editions and versions in England, and were popular in French, German, Dutch and other versions, many of which don't contain his maps and diagrams. It has been stated that the colonization of Canada was heavily promoted and influenced by this popular book, which Weld made no money off, all proceeds going to the publisher. This is one of the earliest stories by a visitor to Put-in-Bay, Ohio. It appeared in two parts in the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society newsletter in the summer of 2011.

(Excerpted from **WELD'S TRAVELS in America** during the years 1795 - 1797, by Isaac Weld, Jr. The first part of this story describes Weld's journey west across Lake Erie to Fort Malden on the Detroit River. He wrote this part in Malden in October, 1797. The second part below describes his return journey in the same month, which came very close to ending in disaster.)

On returning from our ramble in the woods to the margin of the lake, we were agreeably surprised to find the wind quite favourable for prosecuting our voyage and in a few minutes afterwards heard the signal gun, and saw the ship's boat coming for the purpose of taking us from shore. We got on board in time for dinner, but did not proceed on our voyage until midnight; so high a sea still continued running in the lake, that the captain thought it imprudent to venture out of the bay before that time. In the morning we found ourselves under the rich bold lands on the southern side of the lake; the water was smooth, the sky serene, and everyone felt pleased with the voyage. It was on this day that we beheld the cloud over the Falls of Niagara, as I before mentioned, at the great distance of fifty-four miles.

Lake Erie is of an elliptical form; in length about three hundred miles, and in breadth, at the widest part, about ninety. The depth of water in this lake is not more than twenty fathoms, and in calm weather vessels may securely ride at anchor in any part of it; but when stormy, the anchorage in an open part of the lake is not safe, the sands at bottom not being firm, and the anchors apt therefore to lose their hold. Whenever there is a gale of wind, the waters immediately become turbid, owing to the quantity of yellow sand that it is washed up from the bottom of the lake; in calm weather the water is clear, and of a deep greenish colour. The northern shore of the lake is very rocky, as likewise are the shores of the islands, of which there are several clusters towards the western extremity of the lake; but along most parts of the southerly shore is a fine gravelly beach. The height of the land bordering on the lake is very unequal; in some places long ranges of steep

mountains rise from the very edge of the water; in others the shores are so flat and low, that when the lake is raised a little above its usual level, in consequence of a strong gale of wind setting in towards the shore, the country is deluged for miles.

A young gentleman who was sent in a bateau¹ with dispatches across the lake, not long before we passed through the country, perished, with several of his party, owing to an inundation of this sort that took place on a low part of the shore. I must here observe, that when you navigate the lake in a bateau, it is customary to keep as close as possible to the land; and whenever there is any danger of a storm, you run the vessel on shore, which may be done with safety, as the bottom of it is perfectly flat. I before mentioned the peculiar advantage of a bateau over a keel boat in this respect. The young gentleman alluded to was coasting along in this manner when a violent storm suddenly arose. The bateau was instantaneously turned towards the shore; unfortunately, however, in running her upon the beach some mismanagement took place, and she overset. The waves had already begun to break in on the shore with prodigious impetuosity; each one of them rolled farther in than the preceding one; the party took alarm, and instead of making as strenuous exertions as it was supposed they might have made, to right the bateau, they took a few necessaries out of her, and attempted to save themselves by flight; but so rapidly did the water flow after them, in consequence of the increasing storm, that before they could proceed far enough up the country to gain a place of safety, they were all overwhelmed by it, two alone excepted, who had the presence of mind and ability to climb a lofty tree. To the very great irregularity of the height of the land on both sides of it, is attributed the frequency of storms on Lake Erie. The shores of Lake Ontario are lower and more uniform than those of any of the other lakes, and that lake is the most tranquil of any, as has already been noticed.

There is a great deficiency of good harbors along the shores of this Lake. On its northern side there are but two places which afford shelter to vessels drawing more than seven feet water, namely, Long Point and Point Abineau; and these only afford a partial shelter. If the wind should shift to the southward whilst vessels happened to be lying under them, they are thereby exposed to all the dangers of a rocky lee shore. On the southern shore, the first harbour you come to in going from Fort Erie, is that of Presqu' Isle. Vessels drawing eight feet water may there ride in perfect safety; but it is a matter of no small difficulty to get into the harbour, owing to a long sand bar, which extends across the mouth of it. Presqu' Isle is situated at the distance of about 60 miles from Fort Erie. Beyond this nearly midway between the eastern and western extremities of the lake, there is another harbour, capable of containing small vessels at the mouth of Cayhega River, and another at the mouth of Sandusky River, which falls into the lake within the north-western territory of the States. It is very seldom that any of these harbours are made use of by the British ships; they, indeed, trade almost solely between Fort Erie and Detroit River; and when in prosecuting their voyages they chance to meet with contrary winds, against which they cannot make head, they for the most part return to Fort Erie, if bound to Detroit River; or to some of the bays amidst the clusters of islands situated towards the

¹ A long, light, flatbottom boat with a sharply pointed bow and stern, usually powered/pushed by a pole.

western extremity of the lake, if bound to Fort Erie. In going up the lake, it very often happens that vessels, even after they have got close under these islands, the nearest of which is not less than two hundred and forty miles from Fort Erie, are driven back by storms the whole way to that fort. Just as we were preparing to cast anchor under Middle Island, one of the nearest of them, a squall suddenly arose, and it was not without very great difficulty that we could keep our station; the captain told us afterwards, that he really feared at one time, that we should have been driven back to our old quarters.

It was about two o'clock on the third day from that of our quitting Point Abineau, that we reached Middle Island. We lay at anchor until the next morning, when the wind shifted a few points in our favour, and enabled us to proceed some miles farther on, to a place of greater safety, sheltered by islands on all sides; but beyond this, the wind did not permit us to advance for three days, It is very seldom that vessels bound from Fort Erie to any place on Detroit River accomplish their voyage without stopping amongst these islands; for the same wind favourable for carrying them from the eastern to the western extremity of the lake, will not waft them up the river, The river runs nearly in a south-west direction; its current is very strong; and unless the wind blows fresh, and nearly in an opposite direction to it: you cannot proceed. The navigation of Lake Erie, in general, is very uncertain; and passengers that cross it in any of the King's, or principal merchant vessels, are not only called upon to pay double the sum for their passage, demanded for that across Lake Ontario, but anchorage money besides, that is, a certain sum per diem, as long as the vessel remains windbound at anchor in any harbour. The anchorage money is about three dollars per day for each cabin passenger.

The islands at the western end of the lake, which are of various sizes, lie very close to each other; and the scenery amongst them is very pleasing. The largest of them are not more than fourteen miles in circumference, and many would scarcely be found to admeasure as many yards round. They are all covered with wood of some kind or other, even to the very smallest. The larger islands produce a variety of fine timber, amongst which are found oaks, hiccory trees, and red cedars; the latter grow to a much larger size than in any part of the neighbouring country, and they are sent for even from the British settlements on Detroit River, forty miles distant. None of these islands are much elevated above the lake, nor are they diversified with any rising grounds; most of them indeed, are as flat as if they had been overflowed with water, and in the interior parts of some of the largest of them, there are extensive ponds and marshes. The fine timber, which these islands produce, indicates that the soil must be uncommonly fertile. Here are found in great numbers, amongst the woods, raccoons and squirrels; bears are also at found upon some of the islands during the winter season, when the lake is frozen between the main land and the islands; but they do not remain continually, as the other animals do. All the islands are dreadfully infested with serpents, and on some of them, rattlesnakes are so numerous, that in the height of summer it is really dangerous to land: it was now late in September; yet we had not been three minutes on shore on Bass Island, before several of these noxious reptiles were seen among the bushes, and a couple of them, of a large size, were killed by the seamen.

Two kinds of rattlesnakes are found in this part of the country; the one is of a deep brown

colour, clouded with yellow, and is seldom met with more than thirty inches in length. It usually frequents marshes and low meadows, where it does great mischief amongst cattle, which it bites mostly in the lips as they are grazing. The other sort is of a greenish yellow colour, clouded with brown, and attains nearly twice the size of the other. It is most commonly found between three and four feet in length, and as thick as the wrist of a large man. The rattlesnake is much thicker in proportion to its length than any other snake, and it is thickest in the middle of the body, which approaches somewhat to a triangular form, the belly being flat, and the back bone rising higher than any other part of the animal. The rattle, with which this serpent is provided, is at the end of the tail; it is usually about half an inch in breadth, one quarter of an inch in thickness, and each joint about half an inch long. The joint consists of a number of little cases of a dry horny substance, inclosed one within another, and not only the outermost of these little cases articulates with the outermost case of the contiguous joint, but each case, even to the smallest one of all, at the inside, is connected by a sort of joint with the corresponding case in the next joint of the rattle. The little cases or shells lie very loosely within one another, and the noise proceeds from their dry and hard coats striking one against the other. It is said, that the animal gains a fresh joint to its rattle every year; of this, however, I have great doubts, for the largest snakes are frequently found to have the fewest joints to their rattles. A medical gentleman in the neighborhood of Newmarket, behind the Blue mountains in Virginia, had a rattle in his possession, which contained no less than thirty-two joints; yet the snake from which it was taken scarcely admeasured five feet; rattlesnakes, however, of the same kind, and in the same part of the country, have been found of a greater length with not more than ten rattles. One of the snakes, which we saw killed on Bass Island, in Lake Erie, had no more than joints in its rattle, and yet it was nearly four feet long.

The skin of the rattlesnake, when the animal is wounded, or otherwise enraged, exhibits a variety of beautiful tints, never seen at any other time. It is not with the teeth which the rattlesnake uses for ordinary purposes, that it strikes its enemy, but with two long crooked fangs in the upper jaw, which point down the throat. When about to use these fangs, it rears itself up as much as possible, throws back its head, drops its under jaw, and springing forward upon its tail, endeavours to hook itself as it were upon its enemy. In order to raise itself on its tail, it coils itself up previously in a spiral line, with the head in the middle. It cannot spring farther forward than about half its own length.

The flesh of the rattlesnake is as white as the most delicate fish, and is much esteemed by those who are not prevented from tasting it by prejudice. The soup made from it, is said to be delicious and very nourishing.

In my rambles about the islands under which we lay at anchor, I found many specimens of the exuvia of these snakes, which, in the opinion of the country people of Upper Canada, are very efficacious in the cure of the rheumatism, when laid over the part afflicted, and fastened down with a bandage. The body of the rattlesnake dried to a cinder over the fire, and then finely pulverized, and infused in a certain portion of brandy, is also said to be a never-failing remedy against that disorder. I conversed with many people who had made use of this medicine, and they were firmly persuaded that they were indebted to it for a speedy cure. The liquor is taken inwardly in the quantity of a wine-

glass full at once, about three times a day. No effect, more than from taking plain brandy, is perceived from taking this medicine on the first day; but at the end of the second day, the body of the patient becomes suffused with a cold sweat, every one of his joints grow painful and his limbs become feeble, and scarcely able to support him; he grows worse and worse for a day or two; but by persevering in the use of the medicine for a few days, he gradually loses his pains, and recovers his wonted strength of body.

Many different kinds of serpents besides rattlesnakes are found on these islands in Lake Erie, I killed several totally different from any that I had ever met with in any other part of the country; amongst the number, was one which I was informed was venomous in the highest degree: it was somewhat more than three feet in length; its back was perfectly black; its belly a vivid orange. I found it amongst the rocks on Middle Island, and on being wounded in the tail, it turned about to defend itself with inconceivable fury. Mr. Carver¹ tells us of a serpent that is peculiar to these islands, called, the hissing snake²: “It is”, says he, “of the small speckled kind, and about 18 inches long. When any thing approaches it, it flattens itself in a moment and its spots, which are of various dyes, become visibly brighter through rage. At the same time it blows from its mouth with great force a subtle wind, that is reported to be of a nauseous smell, and if drawn in with the breath of the unwary traveller, will infallibly bring on a decline, that in a few months must prove mortal, there being no remedy yet discovered which can counteract its baneful influence.” Mr. Carver does not inform us of his having himself seen this snake; I am tempted therefore. To imagine that he has been imposed on; and that the whole account he has given of it is fabulous. I made very particular enquiries respecting the existence of such a snake, from those persons who were in the habit of touching at these islands; and neither they nor any other person I met in the country, had ever seen or heard of such a snake, except in Mr. Carver’s Travels. Were a traveller to believe all the stories respecting snakes that are current in the country, he must believe that there is such a snake as the whip-snake, which, as it is said, pursued cattle through the woods and meadows, lashing them with its tail, till overcome with the fatigue of running they drop breathless to the ground, when it preys upon their flesh. He must also believe that there is such a snake as the hoop-snake, which has the power of fixing its tail firmly in a certain cavity inside of its mouth, and then of rolling itself forward like a hoop or wheel with such wonderful velocity, that neither man nor beast can possibly escape from its devouring jaws.

The ponds and marshes in the interior parts of the islands abound with ducks and other wild fowl, and the shore swarm with gulls. A few small birds are found in the woods; but I saw none amongst them that were remarkable either for their song or plumage.

At sunset on the last day of September, we left the islands, and the next morning entered Detroit River, The river, at its mouth, is about five miles wide, and continues nearly the same breadth for considerable distance. . . .

² The *hissing snake* mentioned is probably the Eastern Hognose snake, also known as the blow snake, hissing viper or puff adder, which is quite common on Kelleys Island, but not found on the other islands.

(NOW WE ARE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE RETURN TRIP GOING EAST ON LAKE ERIE FROM MALDEN TO FORT ERIE.)

DEPARTURE FROM MALDEN (written in Bath, November, 1797)

Towards the latter end of the month of October, the schooner in which we had engaged a passage to Presqu' Isle made her appearance before Malden, where she was obliged to lay at anchor for three days, the wind not being favourable for going farther down the river; at the end of that time, however, it veered about, and we repaired on board, after having taken a long farewell of our friend Captain E___, whose kindness to us had been unbounded, and was doubly grateful, inasmuch as it was totally unexpected by us young strangers, who had not the slightest acquaintance with him previous to our coming into the country, and had not been introduced to him even by letter.

The wind, though favourable, was very light on the morning of our embarkation, but the current being strong we were soon carried down to the lake. In the afternoon we passed the islands, which had the most beautiful appearance imaginable. The rich woods with which the shores were adorned, now tinged with tile hues of autumn, afforded in their decline a still more pleasing variety to the eye than when they were clothed in their fullest verdure; and their gaudy colours, intermingled with the shadows of the rocks, were seen fancifully reflected in the unruffled surface of the surrounding lake. At daybreak the next morning we found ourselves entirely clear of the land; but instead of the azure sky and gentle breezes which had favoured us the preceding day, we had thick hazy weather, and every appearance of the heavens indicated that before many hours were over we should have to contend with some of those dangerous storms that are so frequent on Lake Erie. It was not long indeed ere the winds began to blow, and the waves to rise in a tremendous manner, and we soon became spectators of a number of those confused disgusting scenes which a gale of wind never fails to occasion in a small vessel crowded with passengers. A number of old French ladies, who were going to see their grandchildren in Lower Canada, and who now for the first time in their lives found themselves on the water, occupied the cabin. The hold of the vessel, boarded from end to end, and divided simply by a sail suspended from one of the beams, was filled on one side with steerage passengers, amongst which were several women and children; and on the opposite one with passengers who had paid cabin price, but were unable to get any better accommodation, amongst which was our party. Not including either the old ladies, or the steerage passengers, we sat down to dinner each day, twenty-six in number, which circumstance, when I inform you that the vessel was only seventy tons burden, will best enable you to conceive how much we must have been crowded. The greater part of the passengers, drooping under sea-sickness, begged for heavens sake that the captain would put back; but bent upon performing his voyage with expedition. Which was a matter of the utmost consequence indeed. Now that the season was so far advanced, and there was a possibility that he might be blocked up by the ice on his return, he was deaf to their entreaties. What the earnest entreaties, however of the passengers could not effect, the storm soon compelled him to. It was found absolutely necessary to seek for a place of shelter to avoid its fury; and accordingly the helm having been ordered up. We made the

best of our way back again to the islands, in a bay between two of which we cast anchor. This bay, situated between the Bass Islands, which are among the largest in the cluster, is called, from its being so frequently resorted to by vessels that meet with contrary winds in going down the lake, Put-in-Bay, vulgarly termed by the sailors Pudding Bay.

Here we lay securely sheltered by the land until four o'clock the next morning, when the watch upon deck gave the alarm that the vessel was driving from her anchor, and going fast towards the shore. The captain started up, and perceiving that the wind had shifted, and the land no longer afforded any protection to the vessel, he immediately gave orders to slip the cable, and hoist the jib, in order to wear the vessel around, and thus get free, if possible, of the shore. In the hurry and confusion of the moment, however, the mainsail was hoisted at the same time with the jib, the vessel was put aback, and nothing could have saved her from going at once on shore but the letting fall another anchor instantaneously. I can only account for this unfortunate mistake by supposing that the men were not sufficiently aroused from their slumbers, on coming upon deck, to hear distinctly the word of command. Only one man had been left to keep the watch, as it was thought that the vessel was riding in perfect safety, and from the time that the alarm was first given until the anchor was dropped, scarcely four minutes elapsed.

The dawn of day only enabled us to see all the danger of our situation. We were within one hundred yards of a rocky lee shore, and depending upon one anchor, which, if the gale increased, the captain feared very much would not hold. The day was wet and squally, and the appearance of the sky gave us every reason to imagine that the weather instead of growing moderate, would become still more tempestuous than it either was or had been; nevertheless, buoyed up by hope, and by a good share of animal spirits, we eat our breakfasts regardless of the impending danger, and afterwards sat down to a game of cards. But scarcely had we played for one hour when the dismal cry was heard of, "All hands aloft," as the vessel was again drifting toward the shore. The day being very cold, I had fastened a blanket over my shoulders and had thrown it round my waist with a girdle, in the Indian fashion; but being incapable of managing it like an Indian, I stopped to disencumber myself of it before I went on deck, so that as it happened, I was the last man below. The readiest way of going up was through the hatchway, and I had just gotten my foot upon the ladder, in order to ascend, when the vessel struck with great force upon the rocks. The women shrieking now flocked round me, begging for God's sake that would stay by them; at the same time my companions urged me from above to come up with all possible speed. To my latest hour I shall never forget my emotions at that moment; to have staid below would have been useless; I endeavored, therefore, to comfort the poor creatures that clung to me, and then disengaging myself from them, forced my way upon deck, where I was no sooner arrived than the hatches were instantly shut down upon the wretched females, whose shrieks resounded through the vessel, notwithstanding all the bustle of the seamen, and the tremendous roaring of the breakers amongst the adjacent rocks.

Before two minutes had passed over, the vessel struck a second time, but with a still greater shock; and at the end of a quarter of an hour, during which period she had gradually approached nearer towards the shore, she began to strike with the fall of every

wave.

The general opinion now seemed to be in favour of cutting away the masts, in order to lighten the vessel; and the axes were actually upraised for the purpose, when one of my companions who possessed a considerable share of nautical knowledge from having been in the navy, opposed the measure. It appeared to him, that as the pumps were still free, and as the vessel had not yet made more water than could be easily got under, the cutting away of the masts would only be to deprive ourselves of the means of getting off the rock if the wind should veer about; but he advised the captain to have the yards and topmasts cut away. The masts were spared, and his advice was in every other respect attended to. The wind unfortunately, however, still continued to blow from the same point, and the only alteration observable in it was its blowing with still greater force than ever.

As the storm increased the waves began to roll with greater turbulence than before, and with such impetuosity did they break over the bows of the vessel, that it was with the very utmost difficulty that I and a half dozen more who had taken our station of the forecastle, could hold by our hands fast enough to save ourselves from being carried overboard. For upwards of four hours did we remain in this situation, expecting every instant that the vessel would go to pieces, and exposed every three or four minutes to the shock of one of the tremendous breakers which came rolling towards us. Many of the billows appeared to be half as high as the foretop, and sometimes, when they burst over us, our breath was nearly taken away by the violence of the shock. At last, finding ourselves so benumbed with cold that it would be impossible for us to make any exertions in the water to save ourselves if the vessel was wrecked, we determined to get below, there to remain until we should again be forced up by the waves.

Some of the passengers now began to write their wills on scraps of paper, and to inclose them in what they imagined would be most likely to preserve them from the water; others had begun to take from their trunks what they deemed most valuable; and one unfortunate thoughtless man, who was moving with his family from the upper country, we discovered in the very act of loading himself with dollars from head to foot, so that had he fallen into the water in the state in which we found him, he must inevitably have been carried to the bottom.

Words can convey no idea of the wildness that reigned in the countenance of almost every person as the night approached; and many, terrified with the apprehensions of a nightly shipwreck, began to lament that the cable had not been at once cut, so as to have let the vessel go on shore whilst daylight remained; this indeed had been proposed a few hours after the vessel had begun to strike; but it was over-ruled by the captain, who very properly refused to adopt a measure tending to the immediate and certain destruction of his vessel, whilst a possibility remained that she might escape.

Till nine o'clock at night the vessel kept striking every minute, during which time we were kept in a state of the most dreadful suspense about our fate; but then happily the wind shifted one or two points in our favour, which occasioned the vessel to roll instead of striking. At midnight the gale grew somewhat more moderate; and at three in the

morning it was so far abated, that the men were enabled to haul on the anchor, and in a short time to bring the vessel once more into deep water, and out of all danger. Great was the joy, as may well be imagined, which this circumstance diffused among the passengers; and well pleased was each one, after the fatigue and anxiety of the preceding day, to think that he might securely lay himself down to rest.

The next morning the sun arose in all his majesty from behind one of the distant islands. The azure sky was unobscured by a single cloud, the air felt serenely mild, and the birds, as if equally delighted with man that the storm was over, sweetly warbled forth their songs in the adjacent woods; in short, had it not been for the disordered condition in which we saw our vessel, and everything belonging to us, the perils we had gone through would have appeared like a dream.

The first object of examination was the rudder. The tiller was broken to atoms; and the sailors who went over the stern reported that of the four gudgeons or hooks on which the rudder was suspended, only one was left entire, and that one was much bent. On being unshipped, the bottom of it was found to be so much shivered that it actually resembled the end of a broom. The keel, there was every reason to suppose, was in the same shattered condition; nevertheless the vessel, to the great astonishment of every person on board, did not make much water. Has she been half as crazy as the King's vessel in which we went up the lake, nothing could have saved her from destruction.

A consultation was now held upon what was best to be done. To proceed on the voyage appeared totally out of the question; and it only remained to determine which way was the easiest and readiest to get back to Malden. All was at a stand, when an officer in the American service proposed the beating out of an iron crow bar, and the manufacturing of new gudgeons. This was thought to be impracticable; but necessity, the mother of invention, having set all our heads to work, an anvil was formed of a number of axes laid upon a block of wood; a large fire was kindled, and a party of us acting as smiths in turns. By the end of three hours contrived to hammer out one very respectable gudgeon.

In the mean time others of the passengers were employed in making a new tiller, and others undertook to fish for the cable and anchor that had slipped, whilst the sailors were kept busily employed at the rigging. By nightfall the vessel was so far refitted that no apprehensions were any longer entertained about our being able to reach Malden in safety, and some began to think there would be no danger in prosecuting the voyage down the lake. The captain said that his conduct must be regulated entirely by the appearance of the weather on the following day.

Early the next morning, whilst we yet remained stretched in our births, our party was much surprised at hearing the sound of strange voices upon deck; but our surprise was still greater, when on a nearer approach we recognized them to be the voices of two young friends of ours, who like ourselves had crossed the Atlantic to make a tour of the continent of North America, and whom, but a few days before we had quitted Philadelphia, we had accompanied some miles from that city on the way towards the south. They had travelled, it seemed, from Philadelphia to Virginia, afterwards to

Kentucky, and had found their way from Ohio to Detroit on horseback, after encountering numberless inconveniences. There they had engaged a passage in a little sloop to Fort Erie, the last vessel which was to quit that port during the present season. They had embarked the preceding day, and in the night had run into Put-in-Bay, as the wind was not favourable for going down the lake. The commander of the sloop offered to stay by our vessel, and to give her every assistance in his power, if our captain chose to proceed down the lake with him. The offer was gladly accepted, and it was agreed that the two vessels should sail together as soon as the wind was favourable.

After having breakfasted, we proceeded with our young friends, in the ship's boat, to that part of the island at which we had been exposed to much danger. Here we found the shore strewn with the oars, spars, &c. which had been washed overboard, and from the dreadful manner in which they were shattered, no doubt remained on our minds, but that of the vessel had been wrecked, two-thirds of the passengers at least must have perished amidst the rocks and breakers. We spent the day rambling about the woods, and recounting to each other our adventures since the last separation, and in the evening returned to our respective ships. About midnight the wind became fair, and whilst we lay wrapped in sleep the vessels put to sea.

All hopes of being able to get on shore at Presqu'Isle were now over, for the captain, as our vessel was in such a ticklish condition, was fearful of venturing in there, lest he might lose sight of the sloop; we made up our minds, therefore, for being carried once more to our old quarters, Fort Erie; and after a most disagreeable passage of four days, during which we encountered several squalls not a little alarming, landed there in safety.

Our friends immediately set out for Newark...

ⁱ Carver, Jonathan, "Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America", London, 1781. Carver's book is mostly about the Indians of North America and Weld's quote is verbatim from Carter's short 3-paragraph description of the Lake Erie Islands from his visit there in 1768. The rest of the island description is the following: "Lake Erie receives the waters by which it is supplied from the three great lakes, through the Straits of Detroit that lie at its northwest corner. There are several island near the west end of it so infested with rattle-snakes that it is very dangerous to land on them. It is impossible that any place can produce a greater number of all kinds of these reptiles than this does, particularly the water-snake. The Lake is covered near the banks of these islands with the large pond-lily, the leaves of which lie on the surface of the water so thick as to cover it entirely for many acres together; and on each of these lay, when I passed over it, wreaths of water-snakes basking in the sun, which amounted to myriads." This is followed by the paragraph about the hissing snake and then with the following: "The navigation of this Lake is esteemed more dangerous than any of the others on account of many high lands that lie on the borders of it, and project into the water in a perpendicular direction for many miles together so that whenever sudden storms arise, canoes and boats are frequently lost as there is no place for them to find a shelter."