color of the water they saw, and which of course the aborigines had seen.

During the summer and autumn of 1741 La France canoeed to a lake which he called “the Lake du Siens.” Warren Upham concludes that this lake is probably the present Rice Lake, in Clearwater County, fifteen or twenty miles northwest of Lake Itasca, and on the Wild Rice River, near its source. The Sioux word for wild rice is psin, pronounced as spelled, and Mr. Upham thinks La France corrupted the word into “Siens.” Why he should use a Sioux word in a region peculiarly Chippewa to describe a natural feature cannot here be explained. Moreover La France’s “Siens” may be a corruption of the French “cygnes” (pro. seens), meaning swans. However, Mr. Upham’s theory is rational and quite plausible.

Mr. Upham is also of the opinion that a river which La France called the “River du Siens” is the present Red River; that a “fork” of this river, which he mentions, is at the mouth of the Wild Rice River, and that an “eastern tributary” which he noted would be the Red Lake River. Although the conclusions of Prof. Burpee, in his “Search for the Western Sea,” differ from Mr. Upham’s regarding the lakes and rivers mentioned by La France, Mr. Upham still thinks he has identified these natural features correctly. (See Minn. in Three Cents., Vol. 1, p. 302.)

EARLY WHITE EXPLORERS OF THE REGION WERE NOT NUMEROUS.

After Verendrye and La France the English travelers and explorers were the first to come to what are now northern Minnesota and southern Manitoba. These were first of all fur traders, and their explorations in behalf of development and civilization were secondary considerations and operations. Some of them visited the Red River but others of them never saw it, confining their observations to the country eastward of the river and its valley. Two of them wrote out and committed to print instructive and valuable descriptions of the country they visited and interesting accounts of their experiences therein.

Alexander Henry, the senior, traversed the central route along a portion of the northern boundary of Minnesota in 1775, but did not get as far westward as to the Red River. In 1809 he published in book form a record of his investigations as a traveler, trader, and explorer, and his book “Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories Between 1760 and 1765,” is frequently consulted and quoted from by modern historians.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who, in 1789, discovered the great northern river which still bears his name, came to the Minnesota shore of Lake Superior in 1785 and finally crossed the Rocky Mountains and the Coast Range to the Pacific, going by the way of the Peace River. In his book of “Voyages,” etc., published in 1801, he narrates much concerning the white men and the Indians of northern Minnesota during the latter part of the XVIII Century. But he makes no particular mention of the Red River, which he never saw.

David Thompson, born in London in 1770, entered the service of the Hudson’s Bay Company when he was 19 years old, or in 1789. In 1797 he joined the Northwest Fur Company and in the Spring of 1798 he traveled through the Red River Valley, visiting Red Lake and even Turtle Lake, the latter about seven miles north of Bemidji, in Beltrami County. His other explorations for the Northern Fur Company were important. He became renowned for his maps of the country and his plats, field notes, etc., fill forty large record books of the public surveys department at Toronto. Portions of his records were published by the Canadian Institute in 1888 and by the eminent historian, Dr. Elliott Coues, in 1897. It is unfortunate, however, that his description of the Red River and its region is not very elaborate.

The younger Alexander Henry, as he is called, a nephew of the senior Alexander Henry, spent from 1799 to 1808 in the region of Lake Winnipeg and the Red River. He was engaged in the fur trade and his principal posts were at the mouths of the Park and the Pembina Rivers. His journals, in which he gives many geographic names of Northern Minnesota, were edited and published by Dr. Coues in 1897. Henry’s names of very many of the lakes and rivers of the region are still used.