Library
of the University of
British Columbia
This book is the gift of
Mrs. C. O. Scott,
Date Jan. 16th, 1948.

THE SEARCH FOR THE
WESTERN SEA

THE SEARCH FOR THE WESTERN SEA

THE STORY OF THE EXPLORATION OF NORTH-WESTERN AMERICA

BY

LAWRENCE J. BURPEE

New and Revised
Edition

VOLUME II

TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF
CANADA, LIMITED, AT ST. MARTIN'S HOUSE
1935

Copyright, Canada, 1935

by

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA LIMITED

All rights reserved—no part of this book
may be reproduced in any form without
permission in writing from the publishers.

Printed in Canada

Press of the Hunter-Rose Company, Limited, Toronto.

CONTENTS

PART II (cont.)

CHAPTER

VI. British Traders Invade the West 305
VII. Peter Pond and his Maps 325
VIII. Overland to the Missouri and the Mandan Villages 354

PART III

THE ROAD TO THE SEA

I. Alexander Henry, Fur Trader and Traveller 389
II. Alexander Mackenzie Reaches the Arctic Coast 415
III. First Overland Journey to the Pacific 449
IV. Nineteen Years in the West 492
V. Exploring the Canyon of the Fraser 513
VII. David Thompson, Astronomer, Geographer and Explorer 536
VII. The Aftermath 567

Appendix 587
Index 605

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA LIBRARY

THE NATIONAL MEDICAL LIBRARY

ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

The Fraser River .... *Frontispiece*
Loose Ice in Hudson Strait .... *Facing page* 3
Homathico River .... " 18
Indian Bridge over Watsonqua River .... " 19
Cariboo Bridge, Fraser River .... " 34
Kananaskis Falls, Rocky Mountains .... " 35
Tracking on Athabaska River .... " 50
Daniel Williams Harmon .... " 51
Waddington's Bridge .... " 66
Indians of the Great Plains .... " 67
Fur Trader coming in from the Far North .... " 82
Carrying Furs overland from Fort Smith .... " 83
Eskimo at Fisher Bay, Hudson Strait .... " 98
On the first portage, Slave River .... " 99
A New Map of North America. H. Moll " 106
Fort Good Hope, Mackenzie River .... " 114
Old Battleford, North Saskatchewan .... " 115
Fall on Spray River, White Man's Pass .... " 130
Dog Trains at Jasper House .... " 131
A South-West View of Prince of Wales's Fort, Hudson's Bay .... " 146
Indians of Northern British Columbia .... " 147
Samuel Hearne .... " 162
"The Last of a Noble Race." (In Banff National Park) .... " 163
Map of Hudson's Bay Country. Turner, 1790 " 170
Map, by Peter Fidler .. .. " 174
Fort McLeod, McLeod Lake, B.C. .... " 178
Fon du Lac, Lake Athabaska .... " 178
Ruins of Fort Prince of Wales, Fort Churchill " 179
Fort Saskatchewan .... " 179
Map of Hudson's Bay Country. Peter Pond, 1785 " 186

A Winter View in the Athapuscow Lake, by Samuel Hearne, 1771 .... *Facing page* 194
Map of Lake Superior, from the "Relation" of 1670-71 .... " 202
Jasper House, Rocky Mountains .... " 226
Fort Pelly, Assiniboine River .... " 227
A North-West View of Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson Bay, North America, by Samuel Hearne, 1777 .... " 242
Alexander Henry .. .. " 243
A new Map of North America. From Carver's *Travels*, 1778 .. .. " 290
Peace River, near Fort Dunvegan .... " 326
Fort St. John, Peace River, 1875 .... " 326
Fort McPherson, the most northerly post of the H.B. Co. .... " 327
Fort Resolution, Great Slave Lake .... " 342
Athabaska River .. .. " 343
A Map of the Copper-Mine River. Samuel Hearne, 1771 .... " 350
An exact reproduction of the Western portion of David Thompson's Manuscript Map of North-Western America, 1813-14 .... " 366
Indian Teepees, near Elbow of Saskatchewan " 374
Down Columbia River, Revelstoke, B.C. .... " 375
Fort Chipewyan, Lake Athabaska .... " 390
The Mountain Portage, Slave River .... " 391
Eskimo Encampment, Chesterfield Inlet, Hudson Bay .... " 422
Fort Simpson, Pacific Coast .... " 422
Ramparts of the Mackenzie River .... " 423
Eskimo in Kayaks, mouth of Mackenzie River " 438
Dogrib Indians on Great Slave Lake .... " 439
Alexander Mackenzie .. .. " 454
Bella Coola Bay, Pacific Coast .... " 470
Mackenzie's Track .... " 478
Canyon of the Fraser River .... " 502
Simon Fraser .... " 503
Yale, B.C., Fraser River .... " 518
Ruins of Rocky Mountain House, Saskatchewan River .... " 519
Fort St. James, 1885 .. .. " 519
Fort Edmonton .... " 582
Fort Ellice, 1879 .. .. " 582

PART II

THE SOUTHERN GATEWAY

(Continued)

CHAPTER VI

BRITISH TRADERS INVADE THE WEST

CANADA had scarcely been handed over to England before British traders began to make their way into the west by way of the Great Lakes, to reap the harvest of peltries for which French explorers and traders had sown the seed. Alexander Henry (the elder) reached Fort Michilimakinac on a trading expedition as early as 1761, and remained there long enough narrowly to escape death in the massacre of 1763. He tells the story of his dramatic escape and subsequent adventures in his *Travels,* and Parkman relates the same story, in his own inimitable way, in the *Conspiracy of Pontiac.* As Michilimakinac does not come within the scope of this book, however, it would be unnecessary to repeat the story here, even if it were not already so familiar. Some years later Alexander Henry will again be met on the Saskatchewan, but before he reached the banks of that then remote river, other English traders had already penetrated beyond Lake Winnipeg.

Who the first British traders were that reached Lake Winnipeg from Lake Superior there is no certain means now of knowing. In a letter from Benjamin and Joseph

Frobisher to General Haldimand—which will be referred to again—it is stated that the first adventurer went from Michilimakinac in the year 1765; that the Indians of Lake La Pluye or Rainy Lake, having been long destitute of goods, owing to the disorganization of French trade in the west after the surrender of Canada, stopped this adventurer and plundered his canoes, and would not suffer him to proceed further; that he attempted it again the year following, and met with the same bad fortune; that another attempt was made in 1767, goods being left at Rainy Lake to be traded with the natives, who permitted the adventurers to proceed with the remainder; and that the canoes on this occasion penetrated beyond Lake Winnipeg—how far, or in what direction, or who the traders were, the Frobishers do not say. Carver says that he met the traders at Grand Portage in the summer of 1767, and that these traders had already penetrated as far as Fort La Reine on the Assiniboine, where they traded with the Assiniboines and Crees.

Hitherto it has been supposed that none of the British traders from Montreal penetrated to the Saskatchewan before 1770, when Thomas Curry is said to have wintered on the shores of Cedar Lake, somewhere in the vicinity of La Vérendrye's Fort Bourbon. Mathew Cocking's journal of 1772, however, throws new light on the subject. In his journey of that year from York Factory to the Saskatchewan and the western plains, Cocking says under date of August 9th: "One Mr. Finley from Montreal resided in it [an old trading

post on the banks of the Saskatchewan which he had passed that day] five years ago." This is no doubt the James Finlay mentioned by Mackenzie in his *Account of the Rise and Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade;* but Mackenzie makes Curry the pioneer on the Saskatchewan, and dates Finlay's arrival the following year. "Mr. James Finlay," he says, "was the first who followed Mr. Curry's example, and, with the same number of canoes, arrived, in the course of the next season, at Nipawee, the last of the French settlements on the bank of the Saskatchiwine River, in latitude nearly 43½° north [evidently a misprint for 53½°] and longitude 103° west; he found the good fortune, as he followed in every respect the example of, his predecessor." If Cocking is correct, and there is no reason for doubting his statement, James Finlay reached the Saskatchewan not later than 1767. Taken in conjunction with the statements of the Frobishers and Carver, it is evident that one at least of the unnamed adventurers who are said to have "penetrated beyond Lake Winnipeg" was James Finlay. It is quite possible that Thomas Curry accompanied Finlay on this expedition, as the Frobishers' letter speaks of more than one adventurer. These men, with the courage and enterprise that made Montreal traders such formidable competitors of the Hudson's Bay Company, broke down the barriers of native hostility, and made their way not only to the Assiniboine but also to the banks of the Saskatchewan. How formidable their competition became may be seen from a note

appended to Cocking's journal, by Andrew Graham, at that time factor at York Factory. "Mr. Currie's encroachments," he says, "was the reason I sent Mr. Cocking inland." When Cocking reached the Saskatchewan, by way of Moose Lake, July 23rd, 1772, he notes in his journal: "The Pedlar Mr. Currie, who intercepted great part of York Fort trade this year, is one day's paddling below this river, at Cedar Lake." It was the amiable custom of the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company to refer to the Montreal traders as "pedlars."

As to the whereabouts of Finlay's trading establishhouse a few miles below the Forks, James Bain said that Finlay's house was two or three miles west of the 104th degree west, at the site of the old French fort of Nipawi. J. B. Tyrrell locates it on the north side of the river, in about Lat. 53° 19′. Alexander Henry passed the site of Finlay's fort in 1776, and mentions in his narrative that Finlay was now stationed at Fort des Prairies, immediately below the Forks. Finlay is reputed to have made a small fortune in the fur trade, and finally returned to Montreal about 1785, to enjoy the fruits of his labours.

In June, 1775, Alexander Henry, the elder (as he is generally called, to distinguish him from his nephew of the same name, whose voluminous journals the late Dr. Coues edited with such painstaking skill), reached Grand Portage. It is regrettable that neither Carver nor Henry has left any description of this famous rendezvous of the fur traders as it was in their day.

Carver, in fact, applies the name only to the formidable nine mile portage, and to all appearances no permanent establishment had been made at the landing-place until after 1767. It is probable, however, that when Henry visited the place in 1775 a fort of some description had been built. Grand Portage was already recognized as not only an important trading post, but as the distributing point for the inland trade. Henry says that when he visited the place he found the traders in a state of extreme reciprocal hostility, each pursuing his interests in such a manner as might most injure his neighbour. Beyond this significant touch he leaves one completely in the dark as to the fort itself and the life of those who made it their temporary home. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, however, has been more thoughtful, for in his *History of the Fur Trade* he describes both the fort and the life; and in an anonymous narrative among the Masson papers in the McGill University Library an even fuller and more intimate picture is given of the place and its inhabitants in 1793.

"The Grand Portage," says the writer, "is situated at the bottom of a shallow bay, perhaps three miles deep and about one league and a half wide at its mouth from Pointe aux Chapeaux to Pointe à la Framboise. The pickets are not above fifteen to twenty paces from the water's edge. Immediately back of the fort is a lofty round sugar-loaf mountain, the base of which comes close to the picket on the north-west side.

"The gates are always shut after sunset, and the Bourgeois [corresponding to the Factor at Hudson's

Bay Company forts] and clerks lodge in houses within the palisades, where there are two sentries keeping a lookout all night, chiefly for fear of accidents from fire. A clerk, a guide and four men are considered watch enough. These are Montreal *engagés* [known to the western traders as 'pork-eaters']. The North men—that is, the men engaged in the interior trade—while here live in tents of different sizes, pitched at random, the people of each post having a camp to themselves. Within the fort are sixteen buildings, with cedar and white spruce floors, squared timber frames, and shingle roofs. Six of these buildings are store-houses for merchandize and furs, etc. The rest are dwelling-houses, shops, compting-house, and mess-house. They have also a wharf for their vessel to load and unlode." This vessel, the first on Lake Superior, was built this same year, 1793.

George Bryce, in his *Mackenzie, Selkirk, Simpson,* gives a graphic picture of the site of Grand Portage as it appeared a few years ago: "A few sunken timbers only are left in the water to represent the warehouses and wharves of this once thronged and important place. A solitary French fisherman is the only white inhabitant." In 1931 representatives of a number of American and Canadian historical societies met at Grand Portage and celebrated the centenary of the first visit of La Vérendrye to Grand Portage.

But to return to Henry and his western travels. In 1775 he entered what is now the Canadian North-West, crossing the height of land between Lake Su-

perior and the Lake of the Woods by way of Grand Portage and the River au Groseilles,[1] as he calls it—now known as Pigeon River. The difficulties of the Grand Portage may be gathered from the fact that it took seven days of severe and unremitting toil to transport Henry's trading goods and canoes from Lake Superior across the portage to Pigeon River, the portage being designed to overcome the formidable series of rapids which mark the lower waters of that river. From Pigeon River their way lay through numerous small lakes, over the height of land, to Rainy Lake; thence by way of Rainy River to the Lake of the Woods. Fort St. Charles, built by La Vérendrye in 1732, seems to have been still standing when Henry passed, or at least some portion of it, as he speaks of an old French fort or trading house on the west side of the lake.

Leaving Lake of the Woods, Henry descended the Winnipeg River for about one hundred miles, where the canoe route turns into the Pinawa River to avoid the series of rapids that break this portion of the Winnipeg. At Lac du Bonnet he rejoined the main stream, and followed it to its outlet into Lake Winnipeg. Henry must have passed the site of La Vérendrye's post, Fort Maurepas, shortly before entering the lake, but makes no mention of it. The anonymous writer quoted above was more observant. On the 30th August, 1793, he notes in his journal that upon a high round knoll near the last rapid and on the north-east

[1] This name is supposed to have been given after Medard Chouart, the Sieur des Groseilliers, whose explorations with his brother-in-law Pierre Esprit Radisson are elsewhere mentioned.

shore of the river stood a French fort, of which there was now (1793) not a vestige remaining except the clearing.[1]

Coasting along the east side of Lake Winnipeg, Henry reached the mouth of the Saskatchewan on the 1st of October. On the way north he had been overtaken by Peter Pond, and later by Joseph and Thomas Frobisher, all notable fur traders, of whom more will be heard presently. Pond had preceded Henry into the west. He was already in fact, in Henry's words, "a trader of celebrity in the north-west." It is clear from one of his maps that he had been on St. Peter's (Minnesota) River in 1772; and it appears from a statement of St. John de Crèvecoeur, who made a copy of this map for La Rochefoucauld, that Pond had gone into the west as early as 1768. The Frobishers too were no new-comers. Joseph having spent the previous year in a trading and exploring expedition north of the Saskatchewan. He had penetrated to the banks of the Churchill, by way of Sturgeon or Cumberland Lake, Sturgeon-Weir River, and Frog Portage, or as it was called in the early days of the fur trade, Portage de Traite. Near the portage he built a temporary post, and had been extraordinarily successful in intercepting the Indians on their way down to the bay, and persuading them to exchange their peltries for his goods.

---

[1] Thomas Jefferys, in his *Natural and Civil History of the French Dominions*, gives a list of the French posts in the west at the time of the conquest. Fort Maurepas is described as one hundred leaques distant from Fort St. Charles, on Lake of the Woods, and near the head of the Lake of Quinipigon.

On the 26th October Henry reached Cumberland House, built, as he says, by Samuel Hearne, in the previous year. Hearne "was now absent on his well-known journey of discovery"—which of course was entirely a mistake on Henry's part, Hearne having returned from his third and last journey to the far north in June, 1772, three years and more before Henry reached Cumberland House. It is rather singular that Dr. Coues, usually extremely accurate, should not only have allowed this statement to pass unchallenged, but should have repeated it, in his edition of the Henry and Thompson Journals. Henry found Cumberland House garrisoned by Scotchmen from the Orkney Islands, under the command of a Mr. Cockings,[1] by whom, though unwelcome guests, he and his men were treated with every civility.

On their way up the Saskatchewan the fur traders had stopped at a Cree encampment, at the mouth of the Pasquia River. The village consisted of thirty families, lodged in conical teepees of buffalo hide stretched upon poles twelve feet in length. On their arrival the chief, Chatique, came down to the shore attended by thirty followers, all armed with bows and arrows and spears. Chatique is described as a man of striking appearance, over six feet tall, somewhat corpulent, and, as Henry naïvely puts it, "of a very doubtful physiognomy." He invited the traders to his tent, and it was observed that he seemed particularly anxious to bestow his hospitali-

[1] No doubt the Mathew Cocking whose 1772 journey has been previously mentioned.

ties on those who were the owners of goods. Henry suspected some evil design, but thought it wiser to go forward than to discover fear. They entered the lodge accordingly, where they were almost immediately surrounded by armed warriors.

Chatique arose with the gravity and dignity of his race. He was glad, he said, to see the white men. The young men of his village, as well as himself, had long been in want of many things of which he perceived the traders were possessed in abundance. He was sure they must be well aware of his power to prevent their going further; that if they passed now, he could in any event put them to death on their return; and under all the circumstances, he expected them to be exceedingly liberal in their presents. He added, to avoid any misunderstanding, that the presents must consist of three casks of gunpowder, four bags of shot and ball, two bales of tobacco, three kegs of rum, and three guns, together with knives, flints, and some smaller articles. He went on to say that he had met white men before, and knew that they promised more than they performed; that with the number of men he had, he could take the whole traders' property without their consent, and that therefore his demands ought to be regarded as very reasonable. He was, he said, a peaceable man, and one of moderate views. He always preferred to avoid quarrels. Finally he told the traders that they must agree to his terms before they quitted their places.

With Henry in the lodge were the Frobishers, Peter Pond, a trader named Cadotte, and one or two others.

They were hopelessly outnumbered, and there was nothing for it but to comply with Chatique's demands. As soon as the Indians had been assured that the "presents" would be forthcoming the ceremonial pipe was produced and handed round. The omission of this ceremony when the traders first entered the lodge had indeed, as Henry observes, been sufficient proof that Chatique's intentions were not friendly, for according to the Indian code of honour nothing would be more unforgivable than treachery to a guest who had smoked the pipe of peace.

Having handed over the tribute demanded by Chatique, the traders departed. They had made but two miles, however, when they saw a canoe rapidly approaching from the village. It proved to be the insatiable Chatique. Pushing his canoe into the midst of the traders' fleet, he boarded one of the canoes, spear in hand, and demanded another keg of rum, threatening to put to death the first that opposed him. "We saw," says Henry, "that the only alternative was to kill this daring robber, or to submit to his exaction. The former part would have been attended by very mischievous consequences; and we therefore curbed our indignation, and chose the latter." On receiving the rum Chatique saluted them with the Indian cry, derisive enough as one may imagine, and departed.

On the face of it it seems monstrous that a party of white men should tamely submit to such an outrageous piece of extortion. It must not, however, be forgotten that the traders were but a handful of men in the midst

of thousands of Indians, who only tolerated them for the sake of their tempting commodities. Had they killed a prominent chief like Chatique, it is doubtful whether any of their number would have got out of the country alive.

At Cumberland House the traders separated, Cadotte proceeding up the Saskatchewan to Fort des Prairies; Peter Pond returning down the river on his way to Fort Dauphin, on the lake of the same name, where he proposed to winter; and Henry with the Frobishers and forty men in ten canoes paddling across Cumberland Lake and up the Sturgeon-Weir River to Beaver Lake, where they decided to build a fort and spend the winter. It seems extraordinary that Pond, after travelling all the way from the lower end of Lake Winnipeg to Cumberland House, should immediately retrace his steps. To reach Lake Dauphin he would have to return down the Saskatchewan to Cedar Lake, cross what was afterwards known as Mossy Portage to Lake Winnipegosis, and ascend Mossy River to Dauphin Lake. Whatever the reason, there can be no doubt that Pond did go from Cumberland House to Lake Dauphin. Henry explicitly says that he did, and Pond's own map shows that he wintered there in 1775. One wonders what further tribute the insatiable Chatique imposed on the way down.

On the first day of the new year, 1776, Henry set out on a hunting and exploratory trip to the western prairies. His way lay down to Cumberland House, and thence up the Saskatchewan to Fort des Prairies. At

Fort des Prairies he found James Finlay, the pioneer trader in this part of the west. Finlay and his men were living on the fat of the land, or, to be more literal, on the fat of the cattle that lived on the land. The buffalo roamed in countless herds up and down the vast continental plain, extending north and south for several thousand miles, and the table at Fort des Prairies was loaded every day with the tongues and marrows of "wild bulls," as the buffaloes were called in Henry's day. Henry was amazed at the quantity of provisions which he found collected here. It exceeded everything of which he had previously formed a notion. "In one heap," he writes, "I saw fifty tons of beef, so fat that the men could scarcely find a sufficiency of lean." Henry's astonishment was accentuated by the fact that he had lately left Cumberland House, where the traders were living on a meagre diet of fish, and he and his men had narrowly escaped starvation on their journey up the river.

At Fort des Prairies Henry joined a party of Assiniboines who were setting out across the plains to their winter camp. The Indians travelled swiftly on snowshoes, and Henry had no little difficulty in keeping up with them. The baggage was drawn by dogs, and these with the women broke the trail in front. At night they encamped in one of the numerous clumps of trees — "bluffs" as they are now called in the west — which everywhere dot the plains. The women cleared away the snow, put up the tents, and prepared the evening meal. They feasted royally on buffalo tongues, boiled

in Henry's kettle, which was the only one in the camp.

Before daybreak the camp was astir, tents struck and loaded on the dog-sleds, and the whole party off again on their journey. Day after day they travelled at the same rapid pace. One morning Henry awoke to find the prairie covered with an immense herd of buffalo. The herd extended for a mile and a half — a dense mass, too numerous to be counted. They travelled, not one after the other, as in the snow other animals do, but in a broad phalanx, slowly, and stopping occasionally to feed on the coarse grass uncovered by their hoofs.

A few days later the Assiniboine village was reached. Messengers from the great chief of the tribe had met them on their way, and they were escorted to the village by a guard of Indians, who formed themselves in regular file on either side, keeping the curious onlookers at a distance. They were taken to a large lodge set apart for their use, and after resting a messenger invited them to the tent of the great chief, where a feast had been provided.

The following day the traders were invited to a buffalo hunt. Buffalo massacre would perhaps more correctly describe the method adopted. It consisted of an enclosure or pound, formed of birch stakes four feet high, wattled with small branches. From the entrance to the pound two lines of stakes extended out diagonally for a considerable distance, so as to form an immense funnel. The hunters, dressed in buffalo skins, with head and horns, and so cleverly

imitating the motions and bellowing of the animals that Henry confesses he could hardly distinguish the imitation from the real animal, decoyed the herd to the mouth of the funnel, and down to the pound, where they were shut in and slaughtered. This method of hunting buffalo seems to have been practised by all the tribes of the western plains, from the earliest times. It has been described, with minor variations, by many travellers since Henry's day.[1] Hearne describes a similar pound or park utilized by the Chipewyans in the Barren Grounds in hunting the caribou.

Henry returned to Fort des Prairies, and from thence down to Cumberland House, and north to his own fort on Beaver Lake. The following April (1776) Thomas Frobisher went with several men north to the Churchill, by way of Frog Portage, erected a fort on the Churchill, and made preparations for intercepting the western Indians on their way down to Hudson Bay. In June Henry joined Frobisher at the new post. Pond has on his map at this place a Fort de Trait, said to have been erected in 1774, but this must have been the temporary post built by Joseph Frobisher, not the more permanent establishment erected by Thomas Frobisher two years later.

The adventurous Canadians had now reached a place of strategical importance, from the point of view of either trade or exploration. Their way thither from Cumberland House had been through Cumberland

[1] See description and illustration in Umfreville's *Hudson's Bay*, p. 160.

Lake and its north-eastern extension Namew Lake, thence up the Sturgeon-Weir River to Amisk Lake, or Beaver Lake as it was then called, where they wintered. From Amisk Lake they continued up the Sturgeon-Weir River to the long lake or series of lakes now known as Heron, Pelican, and Woody lakes, but which in Henry's day were grouped together under the general name Lake Mineront. From the northern extremity of this lake Frog Portage carried them to the waters of the Churchill.

Frog Portage was the doorway that led from the Saskatchewan and the known east, to the unknown west, to that limitless land of forest and plain, mountain, lake, and stream that lies beyond the Saskatchewan. The explorer crossing this portage had before him the whole vast field of the north-west. The Churchill would lead him to Ile à la Crosse Lake, Peter Pond Lake, and Lake La Loche, and from this latter lake Methye Portage would carry him over the height of land dividing the waters that flow into Hudson Bay from those flowing into the Arctic Ocean, and into the Clearwater River, a branch of the Athabaska. By the Clearwater and the Athabaska a road lay to Athabaska Lake. From this lake the Peace River offered an ideal route, not only to the mountains, but beyond the mountains; and the Slave River invited the explorer to discover the gigantic lakes and rivers of the far north. All this great field, at least in its broad features, was in time to be explored, but it was not done in a single year, neither was the work confined to a single explorer.

The first step in opening up this field was taken by Alexander Henry and the Frobishers, when they turned up the Churchill in search of a certain band of Indians whose home was said to lie about Lake Arabuthcow, or Athapuscow, or Athabaska. They purposed exploring the country as far as Lake Athabaska, should the Indians not turn up; and actually got as far as Ile à la Crosse Lake, when they encountered the Indians, who proved to be Chipewyans. Henry gives an interesting account of the Chipewyans, which, however, differs in no important particular from that written by Hearne a few years earlier.

The Chipewyans were, generally speaking, a peaceable, simple, inoffensive tribe. A little incident described by Henry throws an instructive light on their character. The chiefs of the Chipewyans visited the traders' camp, and inquired whether or not they had any rum. Being answered in the affirmative, they observed that several of their young men had never tasted the liquor, and that if it was too strong it would affect their heads. The rum was in consequence submitted to their judgment, and after tasting it several times, they pronounced it too strong, and requested that Henry would *order a part of the spirit to evaporate*. This was done, by adding more water to the already weak mixture, when the chiefs expressed themselves as satisfied.

From the Chipewyans Henry secured a good deal of information as to the topography of their country. They told him of a river, which apparently then bore

THE PRINCE ALBERT CANADA CULTURAL LIBRARY

the name it has ever since been known by — Peace River. This stream, they said, descended from the Stony or Rocky Mountains. From these mountains the distance to the Salt Lake (Pacific Ocean) was not great. They told Henry that Lake Athabaska emptied itself by a river running to the northward which they called Kiratchinini Sibi, Slave River. This name also remains to the present day, although, as before mentioned, the river bore for a short time the name given it by Hearne of Great Athapuscow. The Indians said that Slave River flowed into another lake called by the same name; all of which was strictly accurate. They were somewhat hazy as to what lay beyond Great Slave Lake. They were not sure whether this might not itself be the sea; or if not, whether it did or did not empty into the sea. All these points were eventually to be made clear, though not by Alexander Henry, who now turned back to the civilized east after an absence of fifteen years and two months. With him went Joseph Frobisher.

Meanwhile Thomas Frobisher had packed his merchandise in canoes and was making a second attempt to reach Lake Athabaska. He got only as far as Ile à la Crosse Lake, and spent the winter of 1776-77 on a peninsula on the western side of the lake, where Ile à la Crosse House was afterward built. In the spring he returned, his canoes riding deep with their rich cargo of furs. He had intercepted the western Indians on their way down to York Factory, and found them willing enough to trade with him in their own country in preference to making the long, hazardous voyage down

to the bay. Frobisher's wintering-place is clearly shown on Peter Pond's map. The fur traders from Montreal had now gained another strategic point, and from the time that Thomas Frobisher intercepted the Indians on their way down to York Factory from the Athabaska country, and built the first rude post on the long point that runs out into the middle of Ile à la Crosse Lake and commands so effectively the approaches from every direction, numerous trading forts were built here both by the North West Company and by their rivals of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Henry left Frobisher at Grand Portage, and went on to Montreal, where he arrived on October 15th, 1776. He sailed for Europe the same year, returning in the spring of 1777. Both in England and France he made many friends, notable among whom were Sir Joseph Banks,[1] President of the Royal Society, to whom he afterward dedicated his book, and Abbé La Corne, through whose influence he was introduced to the French Court, and found an interested listener in Marie Antoinette to his tales of the far west. There is extant a letter or memoir of Henry's addressed to Sir Joseph Banks, dated October 18th, 1781, and bearing the title: "A proper Rout, by land, to cross the Great Continent of America, from Quebec to the Westernmost extremity, by Alex. Henry, founded on his observations and experience during the space of sixteen years' travelling

[1] It is a curious fact that both Alexander Henry and Jonathan Carver dedicated their books to Sir Joseph Banks.

with the natives, in least known, and before unknown parts of that extensive country."

Before his departure for England he had prepared for Lord Dorchester, then Governor of Canada, a chart of the western country so far as he was familiar with it. Unfortunately no trace can now be found of this chart, but one who was apparently familiar with it praised its accuracy, which he said had been confirmed in nearly every particular by subsequent surveys. After his return to Canada Henry went west on a brief visit, and returning to Montreal, sailed again for England the same year. He crossed once more in 1780, and upon his return to Montreal settled down there to a quiet life of business. He died at Montreal, April 4th, 1824, in his eighty-fifth year, having some time before disposed of his share in the North West Company to his nephew, Alexander Henry the younger.

CHAPTER VII

PETER POND AND HIS MAPS

THE meagre details of Peter Pond's life in the west up to 1775 have been given in the preceding chapter. He was left on his way down to Fort Dauphin, near the north-west angle of Dauphin Lake, where he spent the winter of 1775-76. Pond was one of the most singular of the many remarkable men engaged in the western fur trade, and incidentally in the exploration of the immense region that now constitutes Western Canada. Born at Milford, in the State of Connecticut, in 1740, the particulars of his early life are found in a manuscript journal[1] discovered in a Connecticut farm-house several years ago. From this journal, the spelling of which is so eccentric that doubt

[1] The Journal of Peter Pond, or a portion of what remained, was published in the *Journal of American History,* vol. I, 358-65. The complete remnant appeared in the *Connecticut Magazine,* vol. x. 239-59; and, with notes, in the *Wisconsin Historical Collections,* vol. xviii, 314-54. The most complete treatment of the man and his achievements will be found in H. A. Innis' *Peter Pond, Fur Trader and Adventurer,* Toronto, 1930. See also Gordon Charles Davidson, *The North West Company,* Berkely, 1918; *David Thompson's Narrative,* edited by J. B. Tyrrell, Toronto, 1916; and Alexander Mackenzie, "General History of the Fur Trade" in his *Voyages;* also the *Diary of Ezra Stiles* and other sources mentioned by Innis in the bibliography to his *Peter Pond.*

was for a time cast upon its authenticity, it appears that Pond enlisted in the colonial army the year after Braddock had been killed on the banks of the Monongahela.

"Toward spring," he says, "government began to rase troops for the ensewing campaign aganst Crown Point under the comand of General Winsloe. Beaing then sixteen years of age I gave my parans to understand that I had a strong desire to be a solge. That I was detarmind to enlist under the Oficers that was going from Milford and joine the army, — the same inklanation and sperit that my ancestors profest run thero my vanes, — and indead so strong was the propensatey for the arme that I could not with stand its Temtations. One Eaveing in April the drums and instraments of Musick were all imployed to the degrea that they charmed me. I found miney lads of my acquantans which seamd detarmined to go into the Sarvis. I talkt with Capt. Baldwin and ask him weather he would take me in his companey as he was the recruiting offeser. He readealey agread and I set my hands to the orders."

Pond served through 1756, spent the following year at home in Milford, enlisted again in 1758, and gives an interesting account of the disastrous attempt to capture Ticonderoga. He continued in the service, was given a commission in 1760, and was present at the surrender of Montreal. The following year he went on a voyage to the West Indies. The years 1762-64 were spent in Milford, and in 1765 he went west to engage in the fur trade at Detroit. He traded in that part of the

Peace River, Near Fort Dunvegan

Fort St. John, Peace River, 1875

Fort McPherson, the Most Northerly Post of the H.B. Co.

west for six years; then returned to Milford and made another voyage to the West Indies. In 1773 he entered into partnership with a trader named Graham, at Michilimackinac, going west by way of Montreal and the Ottawa River canoe route. The following years were spent in the country about the upper Mississippi. In the course of one of his journeys Pond says that he came across the hut in which Carver had wintered in 1766-67.

In 1775 he decided to enter the country west of Lake Superior, where he was to identify himself with Alexander Henry, the Frobishers, and others who saw the possibilities of the western fur trade and had made up their minds to exploit it at all hazards. That the hazards were not imaginary the history of the fur trade bears ample evidence.

Pond was in many ways admirably fitted for the arduous work of a trader in the wilderness, and it may also be said of him that he was, in a truer sense than many of his contemporaries, an explorer. The Frobishers and Henry looked upon exploration solely as a means to an end. First and always they were fur traders. They penetrated the unknown west, paddled over unexplored waterways, discovered portages that led them into new river systems, but all with an eye to the possibilities that each new field offered in the way of peltries. Pond, too, was a fur trader, but he seems to have been equally, or even more, a pathfinder. He was possessed by that *Wanderlust* that after all has been at the bottom of most of the world's

exploration—the passion for discovering what may lie beyond the uttermost bounds of the known, that has carried men across untravelled seas to the shores of unknown lands, to the heart of great continents; and that neither arctic cold nor tropic heat could dampen. Pond lacked the finer courage, the resourcefulness, the steadfast purpose of an Alexander Mackenzie, and he therefore achieved comparatively little as an explorer, but that he did accomplish something, and enough to entitle him to a place in the history of western exploration, will be seen from the following pages.

Pond having wintered at Fort Dauphin, set out in the spring of 1776 for the Saskatchewan, by way of Lake Winnipegosis, or Little Lake Winipique as he calls it on his map, and portaged from thence into what is now Cedar Lake, but which in Pond's day was known as Lake Bourbon. Here he passed the site of La Vérendrye's Fort Bourbon, long since fallen into decay, and ascended the Saskatchewan, which he says the natives called the Pasquia, to, or a little above, the forks, where he built a temporary post and remained until the following spring. The year 1777 was spent in trading along the Saskatchewan, and Pond again wintered at the forks. In the spring of 1778 he descended the river to Sturgeon Lake, where a number of the traders had gathered to plan future operations.

As a good deal of misunderstanding has arisen owing to the fact that both the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company had forts on Cumberland Lake, a few words may not be out of place. The first

trading establishment here was that made by Joseph Frobisher about 1772. In 1774 Hearne built Fort Cumberland for the Hudson's Bay Company. While the Canadian traders could therefore claim priority, it seems clear that Frobisher's house must have been a very temporary structure, for when the elder Henry reached Cumberland Lake on the 26th October, 1775, he makes no mention of Frobisher's post, but states explicitly that the house at which they stopped was Cumberland House of the Hudson's Bay Company. It does not appear that anything like a permanent establishment was built here by the Canadian traders until several years later. Pond shows a Cumberland House on his map, but does not say whether it was the Hudson's Bay post, or an establishment of the Canadian traders.

Hereabouts, at any rate, the fur traders forgathered in the spring of 1778, and finding that they had a quantity of goods to spare, as Mackenzie tells in his *Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade*, agreed to pool their stock, and placed it in the hands of Peter Pond, who was to make his way into the heart of the Athabaska country, and establish a post there in the most advantageous place he could find.

Pond loaded his venture in four canoes, and, following the waterways already explored by the Frobishers and Alexander Henry, reached the Churchill and ascended it to Ile à la Crosse Lake. He had now gained the farthest point to the north-west yet reached

by the fur traders, and was about to explore a country that had hitherto been known to Europeans only by the report of the Indians.

Pond's course from Ile à la Crosse Lake may be clearly traced by a reference to the map. It lay along a route which for generations had been used by the Indians of the Athabaska country, and which for many years after Pond's journey was the recognized road from the Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan country to the Athabaska country. Mackenzie, a contemporary of Pond's, describes the route as it was known in his day. Following a north-westerly course, Pond and his men paddled for about twenty miles up a long arm of the lake to a point where it contracts into a waterway about two miles broad, which after a course of ten miles opens into Lake Clear. Rounding a narrow neck of land, the traders found themselves in what was known for many years as Buffalo Lake, and has since been renamed Peter Pond Lake, running to the north-west for a distance of about thirty-six miles. Into the north-west end empties the shallow La Loche. Entering this stream, at the mouth of which a Hudson's Bay post now stands, or did not many years ago, Pond dragged his heavily laden canoes with difficulty up its rock-encumbered channel for twenty-four miles, when he found himself in the long, narrow lake which bears the same name as the river just mentioned. Lake La Roche is only a few miles from the height of land, a high, rocky ridge dividing the waters which flow into Hudson Bay from those which find their way into the Arctic Ocean.

After leaving the lake the way lay up a small stream for about a mile and a half, when the canoes and their lading had to be carried for a distance of thirteen miles, over extremely difficult ground, to the Clearwater River, a tributary of the Athabaska.

This portage, variously known as Portage La Loche and Methye Portage, first crossed by Pond, was to be made famous in later years, not only as the gateway to the immense water systems of the far northwest, but as containing one of the most charming bits of scenery on the continent. One wonders whether the beauty of the scene made any particular appeal to Pond. It certainly has never lacked admirers among those who came after him. Alexander Mackenzie, Back, Harmon, Franklin, every man, in fact, who passed this way and left any account of his journey, has been loud in praise of the beautiful valley that lies at the foot of Methye Portage. The scene, so charmingly caught by Back in one of his illustrations to Franklin's *Polar Sea,* had been described many years before by Alexander Mackenzie. Standing at the summit of the portage, the valley of the Clearwater lay beneath him a thousand feet below. "The valley," he says, "is about three miles in breadth, and is confined by two lofty ridges, displaying a most beautiful intermixture of wood and lawn, and stretching on till the blue mist obscures the prospect." The twin heights were covered with stately forests, broken by patches of emerald lawn, on which herds of buffalo and elk were feeding. It was the month of September, the rutting season of the elk,

whose whistling mingled with the cry of birds and the myriad voices of the wilderness.

Descending the precipice, Pond found himself on the banks of a stream, sometimes called the Pelican, sometimes Swan River, but now known as the Clearwater. For the first time in the history of exploration in North-Western America, that which had been talked of for so many years and been the subject of so many geographical theories, was discovered — a river flowing to the westward, toward the Western Sea. Pond was probably quite aware, from Indian report, that the Clearwater did not itself empty into the Pacific, but he was not without hope that by following it he might find waterways which would lead to the long-sought ocean.

Paddling down the Clearwater, through the heart of the beautiful valley first seen from the heights above, for a distance of eighty odd miles, the canoes at last swept out on to the waters of the Athabaska, at this point and for the remainder of its course a considerable river averaging three-quarters of a mile in width. Continuing down the Athabaska, Pond at length reached a spot about thirty miles above the mouth of the river, admirably suited to the requirements of a trading post. Unloading his canoes, therefore, he and his men set to work to build a rude fort, which was ready for occupation before winter set in. This post he made his headquarters for the next six years, during which time he wandered back and forth throughout all this western country, from the Saskatchewan to Lake Athabaska, and probably as far as the Peace River. That Pond

was the first white man to stand on the shores of Lake Athabaska there can be no question. No record exists of the exact date of his discovery, but doubtless it was soon after the building of his fort on the Athabaska River.

In 1782 he is found encamped on the shores of Lake la Ronge, south of the Churchill, and west of Frog Portage. The following year he is back at Ile à la Crosse, and then again at his post on the Athabaska. This latter post is constantly mentioned in the narratives of later explorers and traders as "The Old Establishment." "Old Pond Fort," etc. David Thompson, of the North West Company, passed it in 1804 and found its position to be in lat. 58° 25′ N., long 111° 23′ W. We learn from Mackenzie that Pond's fort was the only one in this part of the country up to the year 1785. It was the father of Fort Chipewyan, built in 1788 on the south side of Lake Athabaska, and for many years one of the most important establishments of the North West Company.

Before considering some interesting points in connection with Peter Pond's maps, it may be well to give a brief account of his stormy and not over-creditable career subsequent to the establishment of the Athabaska fort. It has already been mentioned that Pond was at Lake la Ronge in 1782, as appears by his map, but it is evident that this was not his first appearance at the lake. There were reasons, however, why he preferred to forget some of the incidents of his earlier visit. In 1779 one Wadin went to Lake la Ronge, and

the following year he was joined by Pond, the two representing the joint interests of a number of partners at Grand Portage. In character the two men had almost nothing in common, and sooner or later there was bound to be trouble. Pond was, in fact, a man whom it was impossible to get along with, as we find abundant evidence of in the narratives of his contemporaries among the fur traders. He appears to have been a morose, unsociable man, suspicious, scenting offence where none was intended. He seems never to have found happiness in the company of men of his race, but preferred the wilderness and its savage inhabitants, with which and with whom he had a great deal in common. Finally, the ill-will and bickering at Lake la Ronge ended in a tragedy. Pond had been dining with Wadin and one of his clerks, and during the night Wadin was shot through the thigh. He died before morning. Pond and the clerk were tried for murder at Montreal and acquitted, mainly, it seems, through a technicality. "Nevertheless," dryly remarks Mackenzie, "their innocence was not so apparent as to extinguish the original suspicion." Pond was afterwards implicated in the death of another trader, John Ross.[1]

how can he say its a tech when there is no record of the trial.

Some time after his acquittal Pond is found at Quebec (18th April, 1785), joining with the Frobishers in an effort to secure from the Government a monopoly of the fur trade from Lake Superior to the interior country

[1] For an account of the Wadin incident much more favourable to Pond, see H. A. Innis, *Peter Pond*.

for ten years, in consideration of certain explorations which the petitioners allege to have been performed on behalf of the North West Company, and of other and much more ambitious explorations which they had in contemplation.

From the memorial of Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher it is learned that the North West Company, knowing that as a result of the stipulations of the Treaty of Peace with the United States, Grand Portage would fall in American territory, and fearing that they might thereby be deprived of their one and only route into the north-west, had at their own expense, and with the approval of Governor Haldimand, sent out two competent men to search for another water route from Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg entirely within British territory.

These two men were Edouard Umfreville, who had lately left the Hudson's Bay Company after a service of eleven years, and Venance St. Germain. They were accompanied by six or eight French-Canadians, and travelled in light canoes, equipped only with provisions. Umfreville's instructions were to proceed to Lake Alempigon (Nipigon), and from thence to search to the westward for a water route suitable to the requirements of the fur trade. From the journal of his voyage, found not in his *Hudson's Bay,* but in a manuscript among the Masson papers in the McGill University Library, it appears that he succeeded in his task, discovering and surveying a canoe route from Lake Superior by way of Lake Nipigon, Sturgeon

Lake, and English River to Portage de l'Isle on the Winnipeg River. This route, however, was so difficult and inconvenient that it was never adopted by the traders, and as a matter of fact, owing to disputes between the British and United States Governments as to some of the terms of the treaty, Grand Portage remained in British hands for some time thereafter, and the traders continued to use the old route. When finally compelled to abandon it they found a more convenient substitute in the Kaministikwia route, only a few miles north of the international boundary.

That this Kaministikwia route should have remained so long unknown to the English fur traders from Canada, although discovered and used by the French traders before the conquest, is curious enough. One would have thought that among the many French-Canadians employed by the North West Company, and the independent traders who preceded the Company, some at least must have traversed or heard of the Kaministikwia route. Yet when Umfreville is sent to look for a new channel in 1784 there is no word, no suggestion even, of a thoroughfare by way of the Kaministikwia. He is sent direct to Lake Nipigon to search for a passage. It is not, in fact, until 1798 that we hear of this route. In that year it was rediscovered by one of the partners of the North West Company, Roderick McKenzie. On his way from Grand Portage to Rainy Lake, McKenzie accidentally learned from a party of Indians of the existence of a water communication a short distance north of the Grand Portage. Finding the

entrance to this new route in Lake St.Croix, he followed it to the mouth of the Kaministikwia, and then made his way around to Grand Portage, with this very satisfactory news for the partners. As a result of his discovery, or rediscovery, of the Kaministikwia route, steps were taken by the North West Company for the removal of their establishment from Grand Portage to the mouth of the Kaministikwia, and in 1801 the post, afterward known as Fort William, was built there.

From the memorial of the Frobishers, already alluded to, it appears that in addition to the exploration conducted by Umfreville the North West Company had in view, or at any rate professed to have in view, a much more ambitious project. This was nothing less than the exploration at their own expense, and with their own men, of the country lying between the 55th and 65th degrees of latitude, from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Ocean. Of this immense territory surveys were to be made as far as practicable, and such surveys, with remarks thereupon respecting the nature of the country and the rivers which should be found to discharge into the Pacific, together with such additional information as might be collected from the natives, were to be laid before the Governor, for transmission to the home Government. As already mentioned, the traders asked in return for these discoveries, the value and importance of which could not be disputed, that the Company should be granted "an exclusive right to the passage they may discover from the North side of Lake Superior to the River Ouinipique; and also of the trade to the

North-West either by that passage or by the present communication of the Grand Portage for ten years only."

In a further memorial, signed by Peter Pond, Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton is assured that the North West Company were able and willing to accomplish the important discoveries proposed by them, provided they met with due encouragement from the Government, having "men among them who have already given proof of their genius and unwearied industry, in exploring those unknown regions as far as the longitude of 128 degrees West of London, as will appear by a map with remarks upon the country therein laid down, which your Memorialist had lately the honour of laying before you, for the information of Government." Pond adds that he "has had positive information from the Natives, who have been on the coast of the North Pacific Ocean, that there is a trading Post already established by the Russians," and that he is "credibly informed that ships are now fitting out from the United States of America, under the command of experienced seamen (who accompanied Captain Cook in his last voyage), in order to establish a Fur trade upon the North-West Coast of North America, at or near to Prince William's Sound; and that if the late Treaty of Peace is adhered to respecting the Cession of the Upper Posts, the United States will also have an easy access into the North-West by way of the Grand Portage." Pond finally urges the necessity of protection and encouragement being afforded the North West Company in the early

prosecution of their proposed discoveries in order that trading posts may be built, and connections made with the far western tribes, to the shores of the Pacific; by which means "so firm a footing may be established as will preserve that valuable trade from falling into the hands of other Powers."

In a Memorandum, dated the same year (1785), from Haldimand to Lord Sydney, the granting of the exclusive privileges asked by the North West Company is recommended, in view of the advantages which would accrue to the nation from the explorations which the Company were prepared to undertake. The home Government seem to have taken a different view of the matter. At any rate, there is no record of such exclusive privileges ever having been granted to the North West Company. The influence of the Hudson's Bay Company would probably be sufficient to ensure the rejection of the request. In the meantime, the discovery of the old Kaministikwia route removed the immediate cause of anxiety, so far as the North West Company was concerned, and they were probably content to let things rest as they were.

As to their ambitious project of exploring the far north-west, that was, as we shall presently see, fully carried out. How far the North West Company as a company is entitled to the credit of these explorations is a nice point. It is perhaps safe to say, however, that, as the merit of Hearne's achievement and Hendry's is due much more to their own courage and perseverance than to any act of the Hudson's Bay Company, so the

credit for the explorations of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, Simon Fraser, and other partners or employees of the North West Company, belongs primarily to the men themselves, and only in a very secondary sense to the Company. There is no evidence that these explorations were the result of any settled policy on the part of the Company. The evidence, in fact, points the other way. Mackenzie, for instance, refers in one of his letters to the indifference shown by the partners at Grand Portage toward his projected journey to the Pacific. The explorations were, it may be repeated, due rather to the enterprise and enthusiasm of the individuals, who achieved such splendid and lasting results under most discouraging and difficult conditions, than to any initiative on the part of the North West Company.

Peter Pond returned to the west in 1785, and from contemporary evidence it appears that he remained there until 1788, when he again turns up at Quebec. In 1786 he is said to have sent Cuthbert Grant and one Laurent Leroux to establish a trading post on Great Slave Lake. Roderick McKenzie says that Pond retired from the North West Company in 1788. "He thought himself," says McKenzie, "a philosopher, and was odd in his manners. I understood he published something of the North-West." It is not clear whether McKenzie meant a book or a map. So far as is known, Pond never published one or the other. His manuscript maps will be described presently. The following letter from Dorchester to Grenville, dated Quebec, 23

November, 1790, indicates that Pond did intend to publish both his map and a narrative of his explorations: "I transmit," writes Dorchester, "a sketch of the north-western parts of this continent communicated by Peter Pond, an Indian Trader from this Province, showing his discoveries, the track pursued, and the stations occupied by him and his party during an excursion of several years, from which he returned in 1788 after having penetrated as far as the Great Slave Lake. Mr. Pond proposing some advantage to himself from publishing it hereafter with a detailed account has requested care may be taken to prevent its getting into other hands than those of the King's Ministers. I am told he has quitted this Province somewhat dissatisfied with the Trading Company whom he served and with a view of seeking employment in the United States, of which he is a native."

Pond returned to Milford in March, 1790. Charles Lindsey, in his *Investigation of the Unsettled Boundaries of Ontario,* says that Pond was very useful to the United States Commissioners who were dealing with the boundary question. "The British Commissioners," says Lindsey, "were ignorant of the geography of the country beyond Lake Ontario; and they had but wretched assistance for their guidance in the shape of maps; one of them by Farren,[1] dated 1773, stopped

[1] The map by Farren is not known at Ottawa; neither is there any such map either in the British Museum or the Library of Congress. The name is probably a misprint for Faden. There are several maps by William Faden; and the one dated 1777 in his *North American Atlas,* though it does not agree exactly with the description, and the date is different, is probably that to which Lindsey refers.

short in any actual information at Toronto; the whole country to the west being represented as alternations of rock and swamp, and uninhabitable. Mitchell's was somewhat better, and was the best to which they had had access. The American Commissioners had Pond at their elbow; and though his knowledge of the true position of the places was extremely inaccurate, he had much knowledge of the value of the interior countries. Pond is said to have designated to the American Commissioners a boundary line through the midde of the Upper St. Lawrence and the lakes, and through the interior countries to the northwest corner of the Lake of the Woods, and thence west to the Mississippi; a line that was accepted by the British Commissioners."

Mr. Lindsey seems to have been at fault in one particular. The ignorance of the British Commissioners did not arise from the actual lack of suitable maps, so much as from indifference to the territorial interests of British North America which has been apparent in most of the boundary disputes with the United States; for the British Commissioners must have had at the time of the negotiations, and for some time before, access to a map of the western country, with remarks upon its character, prepared by Peter Pond himself. Possibly this map was at the time it was needed tucked away in some pigeon-hole in London.

Now as to Peter Pond's map, or rather maps, for there were at least two, and probably more, distinct manuscript maps. In a letter from Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton to Lord Sydney, dated 9th of April, 1785, he

Fort Resolution, Great Slave Lake

Athabaska River

writes: "This gentleman [Pond] has communicated to me the map on which his route is traced; he has also without difficulty entrusted me with the remarks he has made." In Pond's memorial, dated the same month and year, the map is referred to as having been submitted to Hamilton, "for the information of Government." The map was sent to Lord Sydney under cover of Hamilton's letter of the 6th June, 1785.

In the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company at London there is a map bearing the following inscription: "Copy of a map presented to the Congress by Peter Pond, a native of Milford in the State of Connecticut. This extraordinary man has resided seventeen years in those countries, and from his own discoveries as well as from the reports of the Indians, he assures himself of having at last discovered a passage to the North Sea. He is gone again to ascertain some important observations. New York, 1st March, 1785, copied by St. John de Crèvecoeur for his Grace of La Rochefoucault." This map is noted in the *Kohl Collection of Maps Relating to America,* edited by Justin Winsor.

There is reason to believe that St. John de Crèvecoeur's copy was made from the map submitted by Pond to Hamilton; that the former met Pond, probably at Quebec, and obtained permission to copy the map for the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, who, it will be remembered, travelled through the Eastern States, the Iroquois country, and Upper Canada in 1795–7 (an account of which he published in

1799); and that the original was subsequently sent by Hamilton to Lord Sydney.

In the Report on Canadian Archives for 1890 there is a reproduction of a map by Pond, which Dr. Brymner refers to as the one presented to Hamilton. This can hardly be the case, if the assumption is correct that de Crèvecoeur's copy was taken from the Hamilton map. A comparison of the Kohl copy with the Canadian Archives reproduction makes it clear that they could not have come from the same original. It is said that Kohl's drawings frequently differ from the originals, and it has, of course, to be borne in mind that this particular drawing was taken not from the original, but from a copy of the original; but while this would account for many minor discrepancies, there are vital points of differences that will not bend to such a theory. The Kohl copy, for instance, shows that Pond was on St. Peter's River (the Minnesota) in 1774. The Canadian Archives map does not contain this information. The former dates Pond's post on the Athabaska 1782-3; according to the latter he wintered there 1778-84. The Archives map shows Great Bear Lake, under the name of Red Knife Lake; Kohl's copy carries the river from Slave Lake directly into the "Mer du Nord Ouest." The first carries the north west coast up to Cook Inlet, which is shown as Cook's River; the other only vaguely indicates the coast to about the latitude of Cape Flattery, north of which is blank. There are many other serious differences: the same rivers or lakes appear under different names on the two maps; topographical features of

one are omitted from the other; the dates of trading posts are not always similar. Altogether it does not seem possible to identify the Kohl map, or de Crèvecoeur's map, with the original of which the Canadian Archives map is a reproduction. So far as can at present be ascertained, the map which de Crèvecoeur saw and copied has disappeared, if it ever reached the Colonial Office.

It remains to identify the Canadian Archives map. There does not appear to be any reason for doubting that this was the map sent by Dorchester to Grenville in November, 1790. It bears a strong internal evidence of being of later date than the original of the Kohl map, and several surrounding circumstances help to fix its date as 1789. In a letter dater February 24th, 1788, from Patrick Small,[1] of the North West Company, to Simon McTavish, Pond is said to be "preparing a fine map to lay before the Empress of Russia"—evidently Catherine II. Again, in a letter to David Ogden, of London, of November 7th, 1789, Isaac Ogden, of Quebec, says that he has "had an opportunity of seeing a map or chart of the western country made by a gentleman of observation and science [whom he identifies later as Pond] who has actually traversed it, and made his map in it, and with whom I have this week had several conversations, with the map before

[1] Roderick McKenzie, in one of his manuscript notes, says that Patrick Small was a nephew of General Small, of the 42nd Highlanders. Patrick Small was engaged in the western fur trade, and, it is said, eventually retired to Montreal with a competency.

me." He adds that he could not get a copy of the map, but hopes to send it the following summer.

Briefly to recapitulate, there is the 1785 map, with the de Crèvecoeur and Kohl copies; and there is the 1789 map, mentioned by Small in 1788 as in preparation, seen and described by Ogden in 1789, and sent to the Colonial Office by Dorchester in 1790.

Ogden's letter is important not only in its bearing on the map, but still more because it records the substance of a conversation with Peter Pond in regard to western exploration and the character of the country which Pond had made so especially his own. It reveals a marked increase in knowledge of western topography since the 1785 map. It reveals, too, some curious anomalies, hard to explain on any other hypothesis than a deliberate attempt on Pond's part to mislead.

The map shown to Ogden begins at the upper end of Lake Superior, where "there is a portage of near nine miles before you enter the waters communicating to the North West." This was of course Grand Portage. In view of Roderick McKenzie's statement that the Kaministikwia route was unknown to British traders before his rediscovery of the old French water road in 1798, it is curious to note that that route, as well as the Grand Portage, is distinctly marked on Pond's 1789 map. As Small does not say that he actually saw the map, and as Pond was at the time on unfriendly terms with the partners of the North West Company, it is quite possible that the map was never actually examined by any of the western fur traders, and the knowledge

of this route, so vitally important to their interests, was thus kept from them for another decade. Umfreville, it will be remembered, had been sent out by the North West Company in 1784 to hunt for a route to the westward by the roundabout and inconvenient way of Lake Nipigon, but at that time Pond himself was apparently ignorant of the Kaministikwia route, as it does not appear on his 1785 map, or rather on the extant copies of the map.[1]

To return to Ogden's letter. "From the end of the Portage at the Head of Lake Superior," he says, "all the lakes and waters as high up as Lat. 58 and Long. 124 set first to the North West and North, and then take a South-Easterly and South course, and empty into York River [Hudson's Bay]." The 1789 map shows the connecting waterways between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg with tolerable accuracy, but, as in Carver's map, the distance is greatly exaggerated, and, on the other hand, only a comparatively narrow neck of land separates Lake Superior from James Bay.

Ogden mentions a post of the Hudson's Bay Company — evidently Cumberland House — and continues: "A chain of lakes &c. continue from thence to the Lat. 59 and Long. 124 when with a small portage [Methye Portage] they enter into the rivers and lakes that run a north-west course and empty into other lakes and rivers, which all finally communicate and empty into a great lake called the Slave Lake, which lays between the Lat.

[1] Further particulars as to these and other maps of Peter Pond, or copies of his maps, will be found in G. C. Davidson *The North West Company*, ch. 2.

of 63 and 65, being three degrees in width, and Long. from 125 to 135, and this lake is the last water before you come to the Great Northern Ocean, which lays in Lat. 68½ and in Long. 132 where the water ebbs and flows, of which the Gentleman [Pond] gave me indubitable proofs."

Although Pond is supposed to have reached Great Slave Lake, and from Ogden's letter evidently had at least a general idea of its magnitude, he makes it comparatively small on both his maps. Pond, of course, was not a surveyor, and only a very amateurish cartographer, which explains the fact that on his 1789 map Great Slave Lake is shown as actually smaller than the Lake of the Woods; even smaller than Split Lake; the size of both these latter lakes being much exaggerated. Ogden's statement that Great Slave Lake was "the last water before you come to the Great Northern Ocean" is also hard to explain, on the assumption that he had before him Pond's 1789 map. As previously stated, that map shows a lake north of the Great Slave Lake, evidently intended to represent Great Bear Lake. To the eastward of Great Slave Lake a river is shown taking a north-westerly course and falling into the Ice Sea —apparently the Coppermine, which Hearne had discovered thirteen years before. Pond was evidently familiar with the general results of Hearne's great journey of 1771-72; or may have got his information from the Indians.

After describing the Athabaska and Slave rivers, Ogden says: "From out of the Great Slave Lake runs

a very large river, which runs almost south-west, and has the largest falls on it in the known world; it is at least two miles wide where the falls are, and an amazing body of water. This river leaves the lake in Lat. 64 and Long. 135, and the falls are in Long. 141. The great chain of mountains that extend from Mexico along the Western or Pacific Ocean, and the Northern Pacific Ocean, terminates in Lat. 62½ and Long. 136, so that the Slave River runs to the westward of them and empties into the Ocean by its course in about the Lat. of 59." "When you have proceeded thus far," he continues to his correspondent, "and have looked over your map, you will readily conjecture what river the above Slave Lake River is known by, when it empties into the Ocean. To save you much trouble I will tell you it is Cook's River, which he penetrated upwards of 70 leagues North Eastward, as you will see by his chart."

Ogden—or is it Pond?—proceeds to build up an elaborate argument, proving at least to his own satisfaction that the river emptying out of Great Slave Lake, and Cook's River, are one, and that consequently a continuous waterway exists from Great Slave Lake to the Pacific. Cook's River has been traversed, he says, for seventy leagues north-easterly; the river out of Slave Lake is known as far south-westerly. As Slave Lake, according to Pond's map, is as far west as 134°, only a short gap remains between the known limit of the Slave Lake River and that of Cook's River. Further, argues Ogden, there is no known vent for the river

setting out of Slave Lake, nor any other river in that country to the north or south of Slave Lake to form such a river as Cook's River. Cook, too, had found a great quantity of driftwood on the coast, and this wood is found only on the banks of the river that empties into Slave Lake; or so Pond has told Ogden. Pond professed also to have met two Indians, in 1787, at Great Slave Lake, who had come up a river from the North Pacific Ocean. They brought him a blanket which they had received from vessels trading at the mouth of the river. They told him that the river was large to the place of discharge, and navigable.

From all of which Ogden draws the following conclusions:—

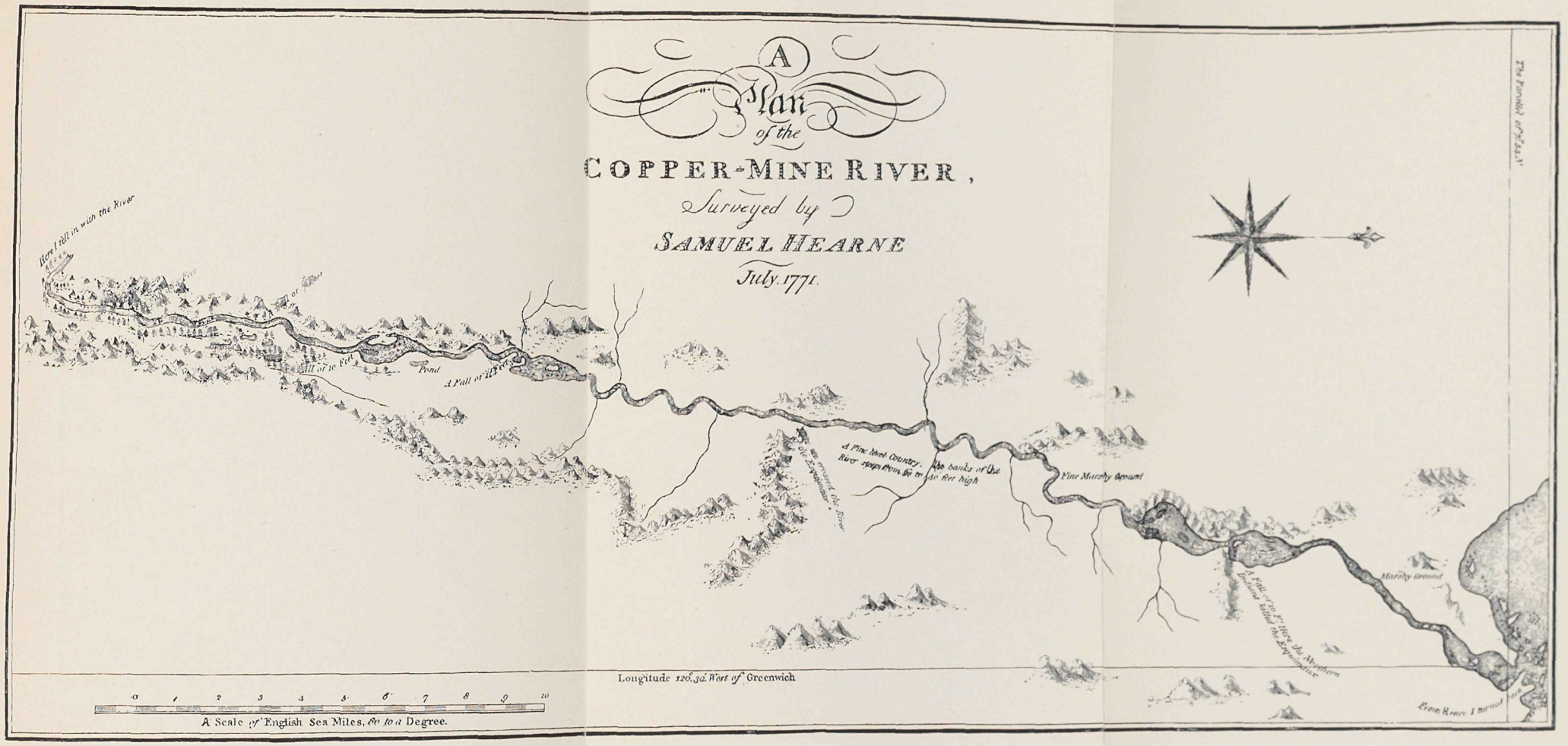
1st. That Lake Superior lies in the first range of high lands between the Atlantic and the Western oceans, in lat. 46° or 47°, and the waters from thence are discharged by the rivers St. Lawrence and Mississippi.

2nd. That the waters to the westward and northward of the lake up as high as lat. 58° and long. 124° discharge themselves by an easterly course into York River, which empties into Hudson Bay.

3rd. That in lat. 58° lies the great height of land from whence the waters divide and run easterly and westerly, the former into the Atlantic and the latter into the Pacific Ocean.

4th. That the Great Slave Lake is the most northerly large piece of water before you arrive at the Northern Ocean, and that the river which rises from the lake

Marshy Ground
From Hence I turned back


A
Plan
of the
COPPER-MINE RIVER,
Surveyed by
SAMUEL HEARNE
July. 1771.
Here I fell in with the River
Pond
A Fall of 12 Feet
A Fine level Country, River keeps Pond 60 in the banks of the 40 Feet high
Fine Marshy Ground
Marshy Ground
Longitude 126°.30'. West of Greenwich
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
A Scale of English Sea Miles, 60 to a Degree.

empties into the Northern Pacific Ocean, and is the river that Cook discovered.

5th. That an easy communication with, and an advantageous commerce, may be carried on by posts established on lakes Slave, Athabaska, Pelican, etc. and to deliver the fruits of their commerce at the mouth of Cook's River, to be then carried to China, etc., and that as Cook's River and the lands on Slave Lake, Athabaska etc., are very fine, some advantageous settlements may be made there which may be beneficial to Government.

It is interesting to find this early vindication of the quality of the lands in the Canadian North-West, though curiously enough as recently as 1905 a fierce dispute raged at Ottawa as to whether or not the Peace River country was fit for settlement, a dispute in which not merely politicians, but men of science who had visited the country, were found ranged on opposite sides. Pond justified his faith in the excellent quality of these lands by planting a vegetable garden at his fort on the Athabaska, and abundantly supplying his table therefrom. But that is not much to the present purpose.

Ogden's theory (or Pond's) of a great river connecting Great Slave Lake with the Pacific is somewhat puzzling. It is susceptible of two different explanations. The large river running out of Great Slave Lake must have been either the Peace River or the Mackenzie. The latter would fit in with the very positive statement made in Ogden's letter that this river ran *out of* Great Slave Lake. Peace River assuredly

does not; and it is certain that Pond knew it did not, for his map of 1789 clearly shows the river—under the name River of Peace—rising in the mountains, toward the south or south-south-west, and flowing *into* Great Slave Lake. At the same time Ogden describes the river as running almost south-west; which, reversing the course, applies to the Peace, but not to the Mackenzie. The 1789 map proves that Pond had then learned, approximately at least, the true course of the Mackenzie, which is shown flowing, not into the North Pacific Ocean as Ogden describes his great river, but into the Ice Sea, by a north-west and north course. It is a nicely balanced question whether Ogden's river was the Peace or the Mackenzie; but in either case Pond's reputation stands to suffer. If it is decided that the river was the Peace, it must be assumed that for purposes of his own Pond misrepresented the course of the river; while if preference is given to the Mackenzie, it is again evident that Pond must have deliberately deceived Ogden.

There is an interesting statement in the last paragraph of Ogden's letter. "Another man," he says, "by the name of McKenzie was left by Pond at Slave Lake with orders to go down the River, and from thence to Unalaska, and so to Kamskatcha and thence to England through Russia, &c. If he meets with no accident you may have him with you next year." Is this another of Pond's ingenious inventions; or is he coolly taking credit for Alexander Mackenzie's expedition to the Arctic? Mackenzie, of course, was in

no sense under Pond's orders, and although he had actually started on his famous voyage to the far north five months before Ogden's letter was written, there is nothing either in his book, or in his correspondence so far as we have it in Masson's *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest,* to indicate that he had the slightest idea of attempting the gigantic task of an expedition from the Mackenzie River across Alaska, thence to Kamchatka, and across Siberia and Russia to England. It is true, he says in a letter to Roderick McKenzie that he is taking money with him "to traffic with the Russians," but this only means that he expected to find Russians traders on the Pacific coast. Apparently the statement must be added to Pond's formidable list of misdeeds.

Pond finally left Canada, as already mentioned, in 1790, having disposed of his share in the North West Company to Simon McGillivray for £800. He died at Milford in 1807,

CHAPTER VIII

OVERLAND TO THE MISSOURI AND THE MANDAN VILLAGES

IN the preceding chapters the story of French exploration has been traced from Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg; from Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg north to Hudson Bay; and from Lake Winnipeg south-west to the Assiniboine, thence to the Missouri on the one hand and north-west to the Saskatchewan on the other. An attempt has also been made to trace the movements of the British traders who followed in the footsteps of the French to and up the Saskatchewan, and who broke entirely new ground north of that river as far as Great Slave Lake, where their explorations connected with the earlier discoveries of Samuel Hearne. The story now moves around to the south-west again, where a number of English traders and explorers are reopening the forgotten route to the Missouri, first discovered by La Vérendrye.

It is difficult, in the absence of journals or other original documents, to say just when the first English traders from Canada ascended the Red River from Lake Winnipeg and turned thence up the Assiniboine. John McDonnell, in his account of the Red River, 1797,[1]

[1] Masson's *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, I, 268.

speaks of a clearing on the banks of the Red River about three leagues below the Sault à la Biche, now St. Andrew's Rapids, as being the place where Joseph Frobisher had wintered, and adds that the place was called "Fort à M. Frobisher." He gives no date for this establishment, but there is reason to believe that it was earlier than 1774, for in that year Frobisher had reached the Saskatchewan and was devoting all his energies to the development of trade to the north-west of Lake Winnipeg. Frobisher's fort was only a temporary affair, but it appears to have been the first English settlement of any kind on the Red River. How far Frobisher ascended the Red River; whether he ascended or even reached the mouth of the Assiniboine; or who among the British traders did first ascend the Assiniboine, and when: these are all questions that with our present knowledge it is impossible to answer.

Curiously enough, the earliest English settlement of which there is any available record, in the Assiniboine country, was not on the main stream, but upon its tributary the Qu'Appelle. It was known as Fort Espérance, and according to John McDonnell was built by Robert Grant about 1783. It is described as being "two short days' march in canoes" up the Qu'Appelle from its junction with the Assiniboine. George Bryce locates it near the mouth of Cut Arm Creek, and according to David Thompson it was in lat. 50° 28′ 58″ and long. 101° 45′ 45″.[1] Dr. Bryce says that the first

[1] See *David Thompson's Narrative*, 206.

English traders from Canada who occupied the valley of the Assiniboine reached that river not by way of the Red River, but from the north through Lake Winnipegosis, up Swan River, and thence by portage to the Assiniboine. This may be perfectly true, but it lacks confirmation beyond the fact already noted that Peter Pond travelled in 1775 from the Saskatchewan south through Lakes Winnipegosis and Manitoba to Lake Dauphin, and the whole question is so shrouded in obscurity that it would be rash to make any very positive statement as to the route by which British traders first reached the Assiniboine. All that is known with any degree of certainty is that they did reach the Assiniboine some time about 1780, and not only explored that river as well as its tributaries the Qu'Appelle and Souris, but crossed the prairie to the Mandan villages on the Missouri.

Half a century elapsed between the expedition of La Vérendrye to the Mandans and the first recorded visit of British traders from the Assiniboine to the Missouri. In McDonnell's Journal, already referred to, mention is made of a party of free traders — that is, traders working on their own account, not attached to any of the existing companies — who left Fort Espérance in December, 1793, for the Missouri; and in May, 1795, McDonnell speaks of another party just returned from the Mandans. There is evidence that the Hudson's Bay Company had also sent men from the Assiniboine to the Missouri about

this time, but neither names nor dates are now extant.

The first expedition of which there is any detailed account is that of David Thompson, astronomer, explorer, and fur trader—one of the most remarkable men in the history of western exploration. Thompson set out from McDonnell's House[1] (also known as Stone Indian River House) on the north bank of the Assiniboine, a little above the mouth of the Souris, on November 28th, 1797, with a party of nine men. His guide and interpreter was René Jussaume, a famous trader frequently mentioned in contemporary and later journals from McDonnell to Lewis and Clark. He had been an independent trader on the Missouri for some years when Thompson first met him, and was familiar with the Mandan language. Alexander Henry the younger describes him in very unflattering terms: "He retains the outward appearance of a Christian, but his principles, as far as I could observe, are much worse than those of a Mandane; he is possessed of every superstition natural to those people, nor is he different in every mean, dirty trick they have acquired from intercourse with the set of scoundrels who visit these parts — some to trade and others to screen themselves from justice." Other travellers on the Missouri are almost equally severe on this unprepossessing character. Yet he was useful as an interpreter, and served Lewis and Clark as well as David Thompson in that capacity. Another of

[1] See *David Thompson's Narrative*, 207.

Thompson's party, Hugh McCracken[1], described as a good-hearted Irishman, had also been to the Mandan villages before. The rest of his party consisted of French-Canadians, who were, however, only nominally of his party; they were travelling to the Missouri as free traders, having obtained at McDonnell's House an equipment of trading goods on credit to the value of forty or fifty skins apiece, to be paid for in kind on their return from the Missouri.

Everything being ready, the expedition set forth from McDonnell's House, Thompson with two horses, Jussaume with one, the goods and supplies being drawn on sleds by thirty dogs purchased from the Assiniboines. It took the party thirty-three days to cover the distance to their destination on the Missouri, two hundred and eighty miles as they travelled. Their course for various reasons was very roundabout, the actual distance in a straight line being only about one hundred and eighty-eight miles. On December 7th Ash House[2] was reached, on Mouse River (the Souris); its position Thompson found to be 49° 27′ 32″ N. Leaving Ash House, Thompson struck boldly over the prairie to that familiar landmark in all the Mandan expeditions, Turtle Mountain; encountered a terrific snowstorm on the 20th; crossed the Souris and followed it for a few miles; then across country a distance of

---

[1] Thompson says he was killed by the Sioux in 1798 but that was evidently a mistake as he is mentioned by Lewis and Clark some years later.

[2] Built in 1795. See *David Thompson's Narrative*, 213.

thirty-seven miles to the Missouri, which he reached on December 29th, at a point six miles above the uppermost of the Mandan villages. It was by no means easy travelling, the thermometer nearly always below zero, sometimes as much as 36° below, high winds and drifting snow, food scarce, fuel practically unobtainable, and always the menace of savage Sioux.

La Vérendrye had found six villages on the Missouri when he visited the Mandans. Thompson now notes five, altogether of 318 houses and seven tents, and of these some were not Mandans, but Willow or Fall Indians (the Gros Ventres of the French),[1] so that the Mandans would seem to have diminished in numbers in the interval between the two visits. When Lewis and Clark reached the Mandan villages in 1804 they found five villages, only two of which were occupied by Mandans, the others belonging to the Minnetarees and the Ahnahaways or Amahami. From the Mandans themselves, Lewis and Clark obtained an interesting account of their origin. "Within the recollection of living witnesses, the Mandans were settled forty years ago in nine villages, the ruins of which we passed about eighty miles below, and situated seven on the west and two on the east side of the Missouri. The two, finding themselves wasting away before the small-pox and the Sioux, united into one

[1] Some confusion here. Thompson evidently means the Minnetarees, who were neighbours of the Mandans. The Fall Indians, or Atsinas, were a Saskatchewan tribe, of entirely different stock. The opprobrious name of Gros Ventres was applied by the western traders to both tribes—for some unexplained reason.

village and moved up the river opposite to the Ricaras. The same causes reduced the remaining seven to five villages, till at length they emigrated in a body to the Ricara nation, where they formed themselves into two villages and joined those of their countrymen who had gone before them. In their new residence they were still insecure, and at length the three villages ascended the Missouri to their present position. The two who had emigrated together still settled in the two villages on the north-west side of the Missouri, while the single village took a position on the south-east side. In this situation they were found by those who visited them in 1796, since which the two villages have united into one. They are now in two villages, one on the south-east of the Missouri, the other on the opposite side and at the distance of three miles across. The first, in an open plain, contains about forty or fifty lodges, built in the same way as those of the Ricaras; the second, the same number; and both may raise about three hundred and fifty men."

Lewis and Clark say that the Ahnahaways occupied a village at the mouth of Knife River; that these people formerly lived about thirty miles farther down the Missouri; that they had been attacked by the Assiniboines and Sioux and the greater number put to death, the few survivors emigrating to the position where they were found in 1804, in order to obtain an asylum near the more powerful and numerous Minnetarees. The Ahnahaways were known to the French as Soulier Noir, and the Mandans called them Wattasoons. There

were only about fifty of them left when Lewis and Clark visited the village. The Minnetaree villages were situated on either bank of Knife River, the one on the south side half a mile, and that on the north side a mile and a half above the junction of Knife River with the Missouri.

Thompson remained with the Mandans until January 10th, trying to induce them to come north to the Assiniboine to trade, but without much success. The tribe was much less dependent upon the traders than any other in the west. They had learned to till the soil, in a rude fashion it is true, yet quite sufficient to supply all their wants and even to leave a considerable surplus for hospitality to strangers and purposes of trade. They were glad to have guns and ammunition, but could get on very well without them. Countless herds of buffalo came periodically to their very doors, and in hunting them bows and arrows were quite as serviceable as guns. On the whole, while willing enough to have the traders come to their villages, they saw no great necessity of going to their forts on the Assiniboine, and were by no means inclined to engage in the unfamiliar and degrading task of beaver hunting merely to satisfy the extraordinary demand of the white traders for these skins.

Thompson did his best to work up trade for the North West Company, but failing in this he turned, no doubt with considerable relief, to the much more congenial task of fixing the astronomical position of the several villages, estimating the distance and position of

the source of the Missouri from such information as he could gather from the Indians, noting points of interest in connection with the Mandans and their neighbours, their manners, customs, and habitations, and preparing a vocabulary of the Mandan language said to contain about three hundred and seventy-five words. On January 10th he left the villages on his homeward journey. The lower village of the Mandans he found to be in lat. 47° 17′ 22″, long. 101° 14′ 24″, variation ten degrees east. Thompson's homeward course was practically identical with that followed on his way to the Mandans. Leaving the Missouri, he travelled north, taking advantage of every little bit of woodland on his course for fuel and shelter. The weather was intensely cold and very stormy, and his progress was correspondingly slow. At fifty miles from the Missouri he reached Dog Tent Hill, passed on the outward journey. The distance from this hill to the elbow of the Souris River was twenty miles, and another fourteen miles brought him to the south end of Turtle Mountain. The distance from Turtle Mountain to Ash House he found to be twenty-four miles, and Ash House to McDonnell's House, forty-five miles. Thus he travelled one hundred and fifty-three miles from the Mandan villages on the Missouri to McDonnell's House on the Assiniboine. He arrived there on February 3rd, having been twenty-three days on his journey—not bad travelling in mid-winter on the western plains. At McDonnell's House he remained for several weeks plotting his work and making preparations for an expedition on foot to the

source of the Mississippi—a journey which he successfully accomplished in spite of the predictions of every one to the contrary. Before leaving McDonnell's house he determined its position by a series of observations to be lat. 49° 40′ 56″, long. 99° 27′ 15″, variation eleven degrees east.

The narratives of two subsequent expeditions to the Mandan villages are contained in Masson's *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*. These are the Missouri Journal of F. A. Larocque, 1804–5, and the Missouri Indians of Charles Mackenzie, 1804–5–6. Both are of interest. Larocque's journal and the narrative of Mackenzie's first expedition to the Missouri (he made four altogether) describe the same journey. Mackenzie, Larocque, and five men left Fort Assiniboine[1] in November, 1804. Mackenzie's account of the way they got away from the fort is instructive as to the rivalries and jealousies of the fur traders. Chaboillez, the local partner of the North West Company, had agreed with his opponents that neither party should add to the existing outposts, within the limits of the district. Finding himself, however, with an inconvenient surplus both of men and goods, he determined to send both to the Mandan country, which lay without the bounds of the

[1] This is the same establishment known in 1797-8, when David Thompson visited it, as McDonnell's House or Stone Indian River House. It was exceptionally well situated for the fur trade, affording easy communications in every direction. Dr. Coues notes the existence at this place in the winter of 1794-5 of no less than five mutually opposing trading houses. C. J. B. Chaboillez was in charge of Fort Assiniboine at the time of Mackenzie and Larocque's journey to the Mandans, and corresponded with Lewis and Clark, who were then at the Mandan villages.

agreement. It was necessary that the rival traders should know nothing of this plan, lest they might adopt the same expedient and perhaps get there first. Preparations were therefore made with the utmost secrecy, and the party waited for an opportunity to steal away without being noticed either by the rival traders or the Assiniboines, who on account of their enmity to the Missouri Indians would do all they could to prevent the expedition. At length a fair opening presenting itself, they took their departure. An independent trader named La France, who had previously been to the Mandans, accompanied the party as guide and interpreter.

Larocque and Mackenzie had successfully eluded their opponents, but it was by no means certain that they were yet clear of the Assiniboines, who were encamped some distance south of the fort. To avoid them the traders swung around on a south-westerly course until they should be clear of the Assiniboine country. But if this was not out of the frying-pan, it was literally into the fire, for as they got into the open country they found themselves almost surrounded by prairie fires. In the course of a few days they passed whole herds of buffaloes all singed with the flames, many maimed, some blind, while half-roasted carcasses strewed their way. Wood and water were unobtainable, and both the men and their horses were well-nigh exhausted by the time they reached the other side of the fire belt. Finally they came to a high hill known as Dog Lodge, between the Souris and the northern edge

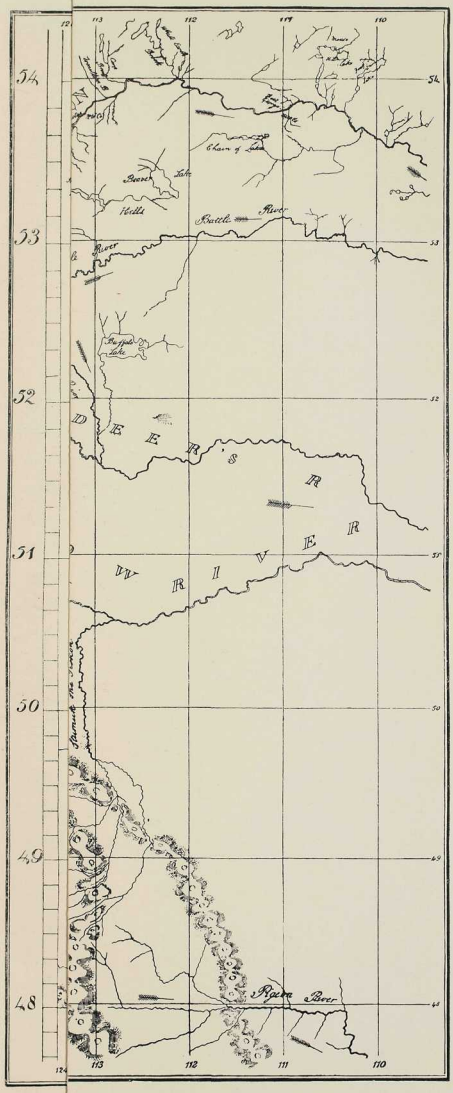
of the Coteau de Missouri. As this was a favourite stopping-place of the Sioux on their war expeditions, the traders advanced with caution, and not without reason, for as they reached the summit of the ridge they suddenly heard the signal cry of Indians in the valley below. As there was no possibility of escape they went boldly on, determined to fight their way through if necessary. On approaching the Indians, however, they found them to be Assiniboines from one of the North West Company's posts on the Souris River. After smoking a pipe together, the traders mounted their horses and were about to proceed on their way, when one of the Assiniboines, who had stood moodily aside and refused to smoke with them, suddenly laid hold of the bridle of one of the horses. Larocque, without a moment's hesitation, snatched the bridle out of his hand. The Indian dropped his robe and put an arrow to his bow as if to shoot the horse, but dropped it hastily as one of the traders levelled his gun. The man would even then have shot the Assiniboine, had not Larocque interfered and compelled him to put up his gun.

After this disagreeable incident, which might have turned out much more seriously than it did, the party proceeded on its way. This was but an advance party of a large band of Assiniboines who were on their way back from a trading expedition to the Mandan villages, which accounted for the fact that they had not seriously opposed the passage of the white men. A peace had

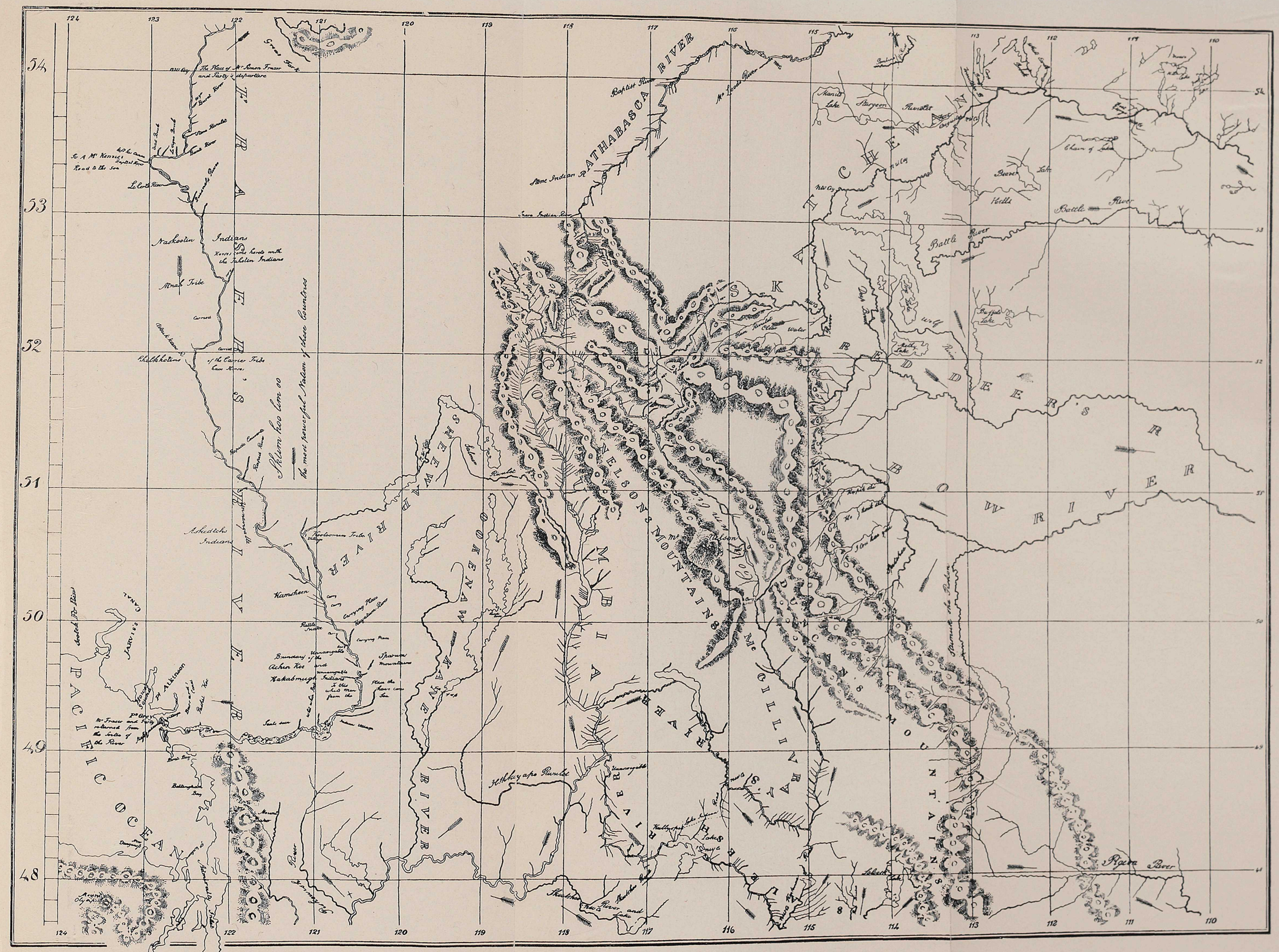
been patched up and now the two tribes were, temporarily at least, on friendly terms.

That night they camped by the side of a small creek, and not only picketed their horses, but took turns in sentinel duty throughout the night. Nothwithstanding all their precautions, however, the Assiniboines —the most skilful horse-thieves in the world—carried off two. The following morning they found the Assiniboine road leading to the Missouri, and travelled rapidly south; passed an Indian encampment at noon and counted seventy-five fire-places; passed two more encampments in the evening, and camped by the side of a small lake, the only spot they could find that afforded any grass for their horses.

Setting out at sunrise the next morning, they had not travelled two hours before they met a couple of Minnetarees out hunting. They smoked a pipe together and went their several ways. At midday they saw the smoke of one of the Minnetaree villages, and at two in the afternoon arrived at another, where, says Mackenzie, "the natives flew in crowds to meet us, wishing us joy, and congratulating themselves upon our appearance as traders amongst them." Here they found four Hudson's Bay Company men, also on a trading expedition, who, having lost their way a few days before and fallen in with a party of Assiniboines, were made to pay handsomely for their liberty. They had reached the village with a very much diminished stock of goods, and expecting no opposition had endeavoured to recoup themselves by doub-



NORTH-WESTERN AMERICA, 1813-14


ATHABASCA RIVER
Stone Indian R.
Sarcee Indian River
Baptist River
McLeod River
Battle River
Beaver Hills
Sturgeon River
Nashoolin Indians
Shalkhotins
Shuswap
Kamloops
Okanagan
Kakabmugh Indians
Spokane Mountains
Okanagan River
Columbia River
Okanogan River
Kootenay River
Kootenay Indians
Flathead River
Kalispel Indians
Pend d'Oreille Lake
Spokane River
Clark's River
Lewis River
Columbia River
Rocky Mountains
Nelson Mountains
McGillivray's Mountains
Nelson
Nelson River
Saskatchewan River
Red River
Winnipeg
Lake Winnipeg
Lake Manitoba
Lake Dauphin
Lake Winnipeg
Pacific Ocean
Nootka Sound
Fort Alexander
Fort Chipewyan
Fort Vancouver
Fort Astoria
Fort Nelson
Fort Simon Fraser
Fort Kamloops
Fort Kootenay
Fort Colville
Fort Spokane
Fort Pend d'Oreille
Fort Flathead
Fort Kootenay
Fort Nelson
Fort Simon Fraser
Fort Alexander
Fort Chipewyan
Fort Vancouver
Fort Astoria
Fort Nelson
Fort Simon Fraser
Fort Kamloops
Fort Kootenay
Fort Colville
Fort Spokane
Fort Pend d'Oreille
Fort Flathead
Fort Kootenay

ling the prices of the remainder. Hence the joy of the Minnetarees on the appearance of the rival traders.

Leaving Mackenzie here to secure all the furs that the Hudson's Bay men had not already purchased, Larocque went on to the Mandan villages, meeting on the way Captain Meriwether Lewis, of the Lewis and Clark expedition, who invited him to the fort which they had just completed and in which they were to pass the ensuing winter. A few days later Captain Lewis sent for Larocque, having heard that he was distributing flags and medals to the Indians, which he forbade him to do in the name of the United States. "As I had neither flags nor medals," dryly remarks Larocque, "I ran no risk of disobeying those orders." On another occasion Lewis, who was inclined to be overbearing in his attitude toward the Indians, harangued them on the objects of his expedition, but Mackenzie thought the Indians did not seem to be very deeply impressed. "Had these Whites come among us," said one of the warriors, "with charitable views, they would have loaded their Great Boat with necessaries. It is true they have ammunition, but they prefer throwing it away idly to sparing a shot of it to a poor Mandan." One of the chiefs of the Minnetarees remarked contemptuously that if he had these white warriors on the upper plains, his young men on horseback would soon do for them as they would do for so many wolves, for, said he, there are only two sensible men among them, the worker of iron (blacksmith) and the mender of guns.

The Mandan villages were revelling in plenty, buffalo having paused an unusually long time around the Missouri on their great annual migration to the south. The Indians, with characteristic prodigality and lack of foresight, surrounded whole herds, killing them all, old and young, and taking nothing but the tongues. Wolves feasted on the carcasses until they could no longer run, and became an easy prey to the hunters. Though beaver were plentiful along the Missouri, the Mandans and Minnetarees could not be induced to hunt them. "White people," said they, "do not know how to live. They leave their houses in small parties; they risk their lives on the great waters, among strange nations who will take them for enemies. What is the use of beaver? Do they make gunpowder of them? Do they preserve them from sickness? Do they serve them beyond the grave?"

Mackenzie remarked to one of the Missouri Indians that the Assiniboines and Crees were very industrious, and great friends to the white people. "We are no slaves!" he replied scornfully. "Our fathers were not slaves! In my young days there were no white men, and we knew no wants. We were successful in war; our arrows were pointed with flint, our lances with stone, and their wounds were mortal. Our villages rejoiced when the men returned from war, for of the scalps of our enemies they brought many. The white people came; they brought with them some good, but they brought the small-pox, and they brought evil liquors. The Indians since diminish, and they are no longer

happy." What an indictment, from savagery, of civilization!

Mackenzie has much to say as to the primitive agriculture of the Mandans, and his account is worth comparing with those of Lewis and Clark, Catlin, Alexander Henry, and Prince Maximilian. "In the spring," he says, "as soon as the weather and the state of the ground will permit, the women repair to the fields, when they cut the stalks of the Indian corn of the preceeding year and drop new seed into the socket of the remaining roots. A small kind of pumpkins which are very productive they plant with a dibble, and raise the ground into hillocks the same as those about Indian corn. Their kidney beans they plant in the same manner.

"They cultivate a tall kind of sunflower, the seed of which is reckoned good eating, dry and pounded with fat and made into balls of three or four ounces. They are found excellent for long journeys. One of these balls, with the addition of a few roots gathered occasionally in their way, is considered sufficient for a whole day. Warriors who generally travel great distances in quest of an enemy, and who dare not raise a smoke or fire a shot for fear of discovery, find these balls useful, light, and convenient.

"The only implement used among the Mandans for the purpose of agriculture is a hoe made from the shoulder-blade of a buffalo, and which is ingrafted on a short crooked handle. With this crooked instrument

they work very expeditiously, and soon do all that is required for their supplies.

"The men never trouble their heads about the labours of the field unless to reprimand the women for some noted neglect, and to sow a few squares of tobacco, which, being a sacred plant, the women, who are considered unclean, must not interfere with, except in preparing the ground for its reception. The tobacco squares are carefully kept clear of weeds. The blossoms are cautiously collected and, dried in the sun, are reckoned the very best of tobacco. The plants do not exceed a foot in height; they resemble spinage, and are dried the same as the flowers, then pounded and mixed with grease for use. This kind of tobacco is weak, tastes differently from ours, and the smell which the smoke emits is very disagreeable to strangers."

Larocque records the fact that the observations of Lewis and Clark for the longitude of the Mandan villages differed materially from those of David Thompson. Lewis and Clark asserted that Thompson had placed the villages and this part of the Missouri a great deal too far to the westward, and expressed the opinion that this was the case with all his observations for longitude. On the other hand, Elliott Coues has stated that Thompson's longitude was remarkably accurate, differing only slightly from the latest official observations; and this is confirmed by J. B. Tyrrell.

On April 2nd, having spent the winter among the Mandans, Mackenzie and Larocque left the Missouri for Fort Assiniboine, which they reached after an un-

eventful journey on May 22nd, 1805. On June 3rd of the same year, accompanied by three men with thirteen horses, they again left Fort Assiniboine for the Mandan villages, intending to proceed from thence on a tour of discovery toward the Rocky Mountains, and if possible open up a trade with the Rocky Mountain Indians or Crows. Arrived at the Missouri, they found a number of the young men in one of the Minnetaree villages dressed in clothing which they recognized as that of Canadian *voyageurs*. They could get nothing but evasive answers to their questions, until at last the truth came out. A war party had been to the banks of the South Saskatchewan, and coming upon an encampment in the night, fired on what they supposed to be Blackfeet, but which turned out to be a party of white traders. The traders fled to their canoes, and the warriors plundered the tent and returned with the spoils. This at least was the tale the Indians told. The other side of the story is found in the Autobiographical Notes of John McDonald of Garth.[1] McDonald on his way down the Saskatchewan had ordered his guide Bouché with several men to camp at a certain place where buffalo was plentiful, while he went on to meet some Indians who had promised to bring him a quantity of furs. He told Bouché the day he was to leave camp, and when he would be expected at the next fort down the river. That night, while some of the party were sleeping under their canoes on the beach, and others in the tent some little distance back

[1] Masson, II, 33-4.

from the water at the foot of a high sloping bank, one of the men came to Bouché and told him that he had gone to the top of the bank and seen in the distance what looked like a band of horsemen, and he urged Bouché to break camp and move to a safer spot. Bouché, however, with rare fidelity, would not disobey his instructions. "My orders are to stay here," he replied; "the time will be out to-morrow morning, and then we shall all leave this; all is ready as ordered." Next morning at daybreak they were attacked by the Minnetarees; Bouché and two of his men were shot down in their tent; those on the shore managed to get out in their canoes and drove off the Indians[1].

Some time before, while McDonald was at Chesterfield House, at the confluence of Red Deer River with the South Saskatchewan, trading with the Blackfeet, a horseman was seen by the watch riding at full speed toward the fort. He was superbly mounted and dressed in a richly ornamented suit of deerskin; a very handsome man and a perfect rider. In an instant he was off his horse, which he gave in charge to one of the men standing by idle, and stalked into McDonald's tent. "I am of the Missouri Indians," he said to McDonald. "We have made peace with the whites, but we are at war with the Blackfeet; they surround you, and are also your friends. I come from a small band; we are but few; but if you receive us as friends, we will fight

[1] Thompson describes an earlier raid by these same Indians in 1794, on the South Saskatchewan, when they plundered and burnt South Branch House, having plundered Manchester House the previous autumn.

our way in, and trade or fall." McDonald smoked a pipe with him, and told him that he had nothing to do with their quarrel. With this he mounted his fiery steed, and made off at full gallop through the astonished Blackfeet. Next day about noon the band of Minnetarees appeared and attacked the Blackfeet. The battle raged all the afternoon, when the remnant of the Minnetarees were surrounded and captured. During the night, however, in spite of the vigilance of the Blackfeet, they managed to escape, carrying their wounded and dead with them. It was no doubt this small party of Minnetarees that afterward attacked Bouché and his men. That they mistook the traders for Blackfeet is improbable. More likely the attack was premeditated in retaliation for McDonald's refusal to side with the Minnetarees against the Blackfeet. It must be remembered that McDonald had left Chesterfield House with Bouché, and it was only by a mere accident that he was not in camp when the Minnetarees made their attack.

Returning to Larocque and Mackenzie, when they broached their project of an expedition to the Rocky Mountains they found the Minnetarees bitterly opposed. The burden of their opposition was that if the traders opened communications with the Crows and other tribes toward the mountains they "not only would lose all the benefit which they had hitherto derived from their intercourse with these distant tribes, but that in measure as these tribes obtained arms they

would become independent and insolent in the extreme."

This put the traders in a quandary, and they decided to consult the head chief of the tribe, Le Borgne, a man of very superior character, who wielded an extraordinary influence over his wild followers. Le Borgne was ill, but at once reassured them. "The Chief of the white people wishes you to visit the Rocky Mountains," said he, "and you shall visit them. When I shall be well, no one dare hinder you." And he was as good as his word.

About the middle of June a large party of Crows arrived on the banks of the Missouri. "They consisted," says Mackenzie, " of more than three hundred tents, and presented the handsomest sight that one could imagine; all on horseback, children of small size were lashed to the saddle, and those above the age of six could manage a horse. The women had wooden saddles; most of the men had none. There were a great many horses for the baggage, and the whole, exceeding two thousand, covered a large space of ground and had the appearance of an army. They halted on a rising ground behind the village, and, having formed a circle, the chief addressed them. They then descended at full speed, and rode through the village exhibiting their dexterity in horsemanship in a thousand shapes. I was astonished to see their agility and address, and I do believe they are the best riders in the world."

The Crows remained for a few days trading, and then prepared to return to their homes. A dramatic

Indian Tepees, Near Elbow of Saskatchewan

Down Columbia River, Revelstoke, B.C.

scene followed. Le Borgne sent word to Larocque to make ready for the journey. The Minnetarees, "perceiving the intention of the preparations, crowded into our quarters and threatened Mr. Larocque with their displeasure should he persist in his design. At this moment the Great Chief entered with a battle-axe in his hand. Staring around him with an imperious air, he asked in a thundering tone why so many Indians were assembled there? They answered that they came to take their last farewell of the white men, who they expected never to see again.

" 'Why,' asked the chief, with a sneer, 'should you feel so much concern if the white men are inclined to risk their lives in a strange land? That is no business of yours. You have warned them sufficiently of the danger, yet they will go on.' By this time the Indians, one by one, went sneaking out of the way."

Larocque accompanied the Crows to their far western home, while Mackenzie remained with the Minnetarees and Mandans. Mackenzie notes his return on the 18th November, in his journal, but adds: "It is not necessary that I should give the particulars of his journey, as Mr. Larocque himself has kept an account of it. I shall merely observe that he was disappointed in his expedition [presumably so far as working up a trade with the Crows was concerned], suffered great hardships, and took no less than thirty-six days on his return to our establishment."

In 1806 Alexander Henry the younger made a journey to the Mandans. He left Fort Assiniboine on

July 14th. His party consisted of seven men. The guide was the same Hugh McCracken who had accompanied Thompson. From Henry's narrative it appears that he had formerly been in the artillery. Ammunition, tobacco, knives, beads, etc., were taken to trade with the Mandans; half a bag of pemmican and three pieces of dried meat formed all their stock of provisions. They expected to encounter buffalo and antelope, and could always fall back on wild duck and other small game. Each man rode on horseback, and the horses had to carry also fifty pounds of provisions and equipment, as well as arms, blankets, and ammunition —altogether a pretty heavy burden. Their course was at first through a hilly country. Herds of antelope were always in sight. They had left the fort early in the morning, and by the middle of the afternoon crossed the Souris River at Plum Creek, where the town of Souris now stands. Keeping along the north side of the river, at sunset they reached the site of Ash House, where they camped. Fearing the Assiniboines, who were inveterate horse-thieves, they fettered their horses around the fire. A strong breeze kept the mosquitoes down in the grass, and the tired travellers sat around contentedly until eleven o'clock, when suddenly the wind came about from the north-west, bringing a terrible thunderstorm. The rain fell in torrents, the weather became excessively sultry, and the mosquitoes were upon them in clouds. They passed a miserable night, having but one small tent, into which was

crowded all the baggage besides the seven members of the party.

In the morning they had much difficulty in saddling the horses, who were dancing mad with the mosquitoes. Finally they mounted, wet to the skin, and proceeded along the bank of the river, here very high. Antelope were still in sight, but so shy that they could not get a shot. From the top of a sand-hill on the Assiniboine trail they could see Turtle Mountain bearing south-east, distant about seven leagues. The heat was intolerable, without a breath of air, and the mosquitoes tormented them continually. They camped that night in comparative comfort on a high hill near the banks of the Souris. It was the rutting season, and the buffalo, who were in immense numbers to the westward, kept up a terrible bellowing all night long. They were now some distance to the westward of Turtle Mountain, having made a wide circuit to avoid the Assiniboines who were camped thereabout.

At daybreak they saddled and continued their journey. The level plains were covered with buffalo, all in motion, bellowing and tearing up the ground as they went. Henry killed a bull, and took a few slices of the flesh for the noon meal. That day they made good progress, sometimes travelling at a gallop, never slower than a trot, and camped for the night out on the open prairie. The following day they again crossed the Souris and journeyed south toward the Coteau du Missouri, the tableland which separates the waters of the Missouri basin from those of the Assiniboine. This

was Sioux territory, and a watch was kept each night to guard against surprise. Finally, ascending a range of high hills, they discerned through a spyglass the high red banks of the Missouri about six leagues distant. The question was, however, where were the Mandan villages? Some of the party were confident that they were many leagues below; others, including the guide, were equally sure that they were above the villages. The situation was rather critical. If they were below the Mandans, and persisted in following the river downward, they would fall in with the Pawnees and Tetons, both of whom were supposed to be at war with the Mandans, and would have no mercy on the traders. On the other hand, if they were too high up their situation would be equally dangerous, for they might travel as far as the south branch of the Saskatchewan, where they would be very likely to fall victim to the Blackfeet.

In this dilemma Henry thought it best to trust to McCracken, the guide, who at least was more familiar with the Missouri country than any one else in the party. McCracken was convinced that they were some distance above the Mandans, and so the sequel showed. Under his guidance they made straight for the bends of the river, and on ascending a high hill he pointed out a prominent landmark then called the Loge de Serpent, and still well known as the Snake's Den. This at once fixed their position, for the Loge de Serpent was familiar to every one who had visited the Missouri. About noon they reached the river, and des-

cending the high banks at the mouth of the Rivière Bourbeuse, now Snake Creek, followed down to the winter village of the Minnetarees. Leaving this behind, they travelled for a few miles through a rough country, and with much difficulty got their horses up a steep bank, from which they obtained a delightful and extensive prospect of the river in both directions. Its borders were well lined with several varieties of trees, and the valley, about two miles wide, was hemmed in on either side by stupendous banks on which nothing grew but a short grass. They had now a clear road before them with good travelling. About the middle of the afternoon they descended a long sloping hill, and arrived opposite the upper Minnetaree village. They shouted to the natives to come and ferry them across, but, no notice being taken of the request, they mounted and rode down about five miles to the Mandan village on the north side, having noticed as they passed another Minnetaree village, as well as a village of "Saulteurs," as Henry calls them, the small tribe which Lewis and Clark call Ahnahaways.

As they approached the village they met one of the Mandans armed with his gun guarding a party of women who were hoeing corn. On perceiving them he came forward in a friendly manner and requested by signs that they would put up at his village. As they neared the village the chief, Le Chat Noir, came out to meet them and bade them welcome. He conducted them to one of his lodges set apart for the reception of

strangers and sent one of his wives to wait on them. On going into the hut they found buffalo skins spread out on the ground, a good fire burning in the centre, and presently two large dishes of boiled corn and beans were brought in, with boiled venison.

When Henry and his party had satisfied their hunger, the Mandans brought buffalo robes, corn, beans, dried squashes, etc., to trade, but he informed them that he had come merely to visit them and see the country. They could not comprehend why he had come so far out of mere curiosity and told him that all white people who came to their villages did so with a view to trade. Finally they went away disappointed and incredulous.

Henry, with that generous curiosity which makes his journal so extremely valuable as an exact record of native life on the western plains at the beginning of the nineteenth century, examined every nook and corner of the Mandan village, and recorded what he found there with a frankness that is sometimes rather startling. It is interesting to see that the habits and customs of this noteworthy tribe were practically the same as La Vérendrye had found them in 1738. Henry's description of the Mandan huts is exceptionally minute. "I examined," he says, "the one I lodged in, and found it ninety feet from the door to the opposite side. The whole space is first dug out about one and a half feet below the surface of the earth. In the centre is the square fireplace, about five feet on each side, dug out about two feet below the surface of the

ground flat. The lower part of the hut is constructed by erecting strong posts about six feet out of the ground, at equal distances from each other, according to the proposed size of the hut, as they are not all of the same dimensions. Upon these are laid logs as large as the posts, reaching from post to post to form the circle. On the outer side are placed pieces of split wood seven feet long, in a slanting direction, one end resting on the ground, the other leaning against the cross-logs or beams. Upon these beams rest rafters about the thickness of a man's leg, and twelve to fifteen feet long, slanting enough to drain off the rain, and laid so close to each other as to touch. The upper ends of the rafters are supported upon stout pieces of squared timber, which last are supported by four thick posts about five feet in circumference, fifteen feet out of the ground and fifteen feet asunder, forming a square. Over these squared timbers others of equal size are laid, crossing them at right angles, leaving an opening about four feet square. This serves for chimney and windows, as there are no other openings to admit light, and when it rains even this hole is covered over with a canoe to prevent the rain from injuring their gammine [*sic*] and earthen pots. The whole roof is well thatched with the small willows in which the Missourie abounds, laid on to the thickness of six inches or more, fastened together in a very compact manner and well secured to the rafters. Over the whole is spread about one foot of earth, and around the wall, to the height of three or four feet, is commonly laid up earth to the thickness of

three feet for security in case of an attack and to keep out the cold. The door is five feet broad and six high, and a covered way or porch on the outside of the same height as the door, seven feet broad and ten in length. The doors are made of raw buffalo hide stretched upon a frame and suspended by cords from one of the beams which form the circle. Every night the door is barricaded with a long piece of timber supported by two stout posts set in the ground in the inside of the hut, one on each side of the door.

"On entering the hut, the first thing that strikes the view is a kind of triangular apartment, always on the left hand and fronting the fire, leaving an open space on the right; this is to hold firewood in winter. . . . Between this partition and the fire is commonly a distance of about five feet which the master of the hut occupies during the day, seated on a mat made of small willows of equal size, fastened together by threads of their own manufacture passed through each stick about a foot apart. . . . Over the mat is spread a kind of buffalo skin. Some of these couches are raised a foot off the ground.

"Upon this a Mandane sits all day, receives his friends, smokes, and chats the time away with the greatest dignity. . . . At the bottom of the hut, fronting the master's seat, stands his medicine-stage, which may be called his chief treasure, as it contains everything he values most. The article of most consequence is a pair of bull's horns. . . . There are also laid, or rather hung up, his arms, shield, ammunition, scalps,

and everything else he most values. Next this stage stands the mortar and pestle, fixed firmly in the ground. The rest of the hut, from this place to the door, is vacant during the day, but occupied at night by the horses."

One notable change that had taken place in the life of the Mandans since La Vérendrye's visit sixty-eight years before was the introduction of horses. In La Vérendrye's day they hunted and travelled and went to war on foot. In 1806 they did all this on horseback. Of their horses they were extravagantly fond; many owned from twenty to thirty, but could rarely be induced to part with even an inferior animal. For a trained war horse they demanded fabulous prices; in fact there was but one equivalent for such a horse—the sacred hide of a white buffalo. Henry gives an amusingly graphic account of the manner of offering such a hide for sale.

"The person who has brought it to the Missourie gives out that on such a day he will expose it for sale in a certain hut. That morning he fixes two sticks in the ground with a crotch to support the ends of a pole, about four feet in length, over which he stretches the skin, raised about three feet from the ground, the tail hanging downward. When he takes his station near by, the sale commences by a native bringing a horse, which he ties in the hut. But as this is not a sufficient price, the owner of the hide casts a look at it, and, without saying a word, takes hold of the tail of the hide and gives it a gentle shake, which signifies 'not enough.'

Soon another horse is brought, generally loaded with corn, beans, etc. The owner of the hide again gently shakes the tail, and continues to do so until they have brought in six or eight horses, loaded with corn, beans, robes, garnished leggings, shoes, smocks, etc. Not until he has secured an enormous payment does he cease to shake the tail at every article that the natives bring to add to the price. But when they imagine they have given enough for the hide, they then bring mere trifles, just to keep tally with the tail. The owner, who then perceives there is no prospect of getting anything more of consequence, rises from his seat, and shakes the tail no more, which is considered as the conclusion of the sale. The hide is then taken away, cut into strips, and distributed among those who gave anything towards the purchase, every one receiving according to the value of his contribution."

Henry notes a peculiarity of the Mandans that has attracted the attention of every traveller who has visited this tribe, from La Vérendrye to Maximilian of Wied; that is, the unusual colour of their hair. "These people in general," he says, "have not such strong, coarse hair as other natives of North America; they have it much finer, rather inclining to a dark brown, and I observed some whose hair was almost fair"; but what struck him as most singular was that several children about ten years of age had perfectly grey hair. Their eyes, too, were not jet black, as in most of the Indian tribes, but inclined to a dark brown, some few dark grey.

Toward the end of July Henry returned to the

Assiniboine, following a more direct route than on his outward journey, but on the whole a more dangerous one. As he says, by the more westerly route they had nothing worse to fear than the stealing of their horses by the Assiniboines, while here they were within the borders of the Sioux country, and "should they fall in with us we could expect no mercy, as they have never been known to give any quarter to white people in this country." However, the whole party arrived safely at Fort Assiniboine without serious misadventure.

PART III

THE ROAD TO THE SEA

CHAPTER I

ALEXANDER HENRY, FUR TRADER AND TRAVELLER

ALEXANDER HENRY, nephew of the pioneer fur trader of the same name, entered the service of the North West Company about the year 1792, but there is no record of his movements until the autumn of 1799. In that year he went up, probably by the usual route from Montreal, which followed the Ottawa River, Lake Nipissing, French River, Lake Huron, and Lake Superior, to Grand Portage, and thence to Lake Winnipeg and the Assiniboine country to the westward of Lake Manitoba. His journal opens abruptly, in the autumn of 1799, at Rivière Terre Blanche (White Mud River), about thirty-five or forty miles west-north-west of Portage la Prairie, where he was building a trading post. Here he spent the winter, suffering seriously from lack of provisions. This was a lean year; game was scarce, and "hunger was the general cry at our establishments along the Assiniboine."

In the spring of 1800 Henry returned to Grand Portage with the results of his first winter's trade, and on the 19th July he is again found on his way west by way of Rainy Lake and the Lake of the Woods. From

Lake Winnipeg he turned up Red River and reached the mouth of the Assiniboine on August 18th, where he found traces of an old French trading post, no doubt the Fort Rouge of La Vérendrye's day. Henry speaks feelingly of the clinging character of the black mud or clay along the river's edge, which "the last rain had turned into a kind of mortar that adheres to the foot like tar, so that at every step we raise several pounds of it." Those who knew the streets of Winnipeg some years ago, before they had been paved, will recognize the picture presented by Henry, and conjure up as a companion to it the once familiar sight of a cart sunk to the axle in thick, black, tenacious clay, and successfully resisting the united efforts of horse, driver, and any number of bystanders to drag it out.

Henry continued his way up the Red River, part of the brigade having already been sent up the Assiniboine to Portage la Prairie. A few days' paddling brought the Red River brigade to the borders of the buffalo country, to the delight of all, for this meant an abundance of fresh meat. Henry's narrative gives one an idea of the amazing numbers of the buffalo in his day. "The beach," he says, "once a soft black mud into which a man would sink knee-deep, is now made hard as pavement by the numerous herds coming to drink. The willows are entirely trampled and torn to pieces; even the bark of the smaller trees is rubbed off in places. The grass on the first bank of the river is entirely worn away." The traders had reached the commencement of the great plains of Red River,

Fort Chipewyan, Lake Athabaska

The Mountain Portage, Slave River

"where the eye is lost in one continuous level westward." Again, farther up the river, Henry describes the buffalo as forming "one body commencing about half a mile from camp, whence the plain was covered on the west side of the river as far as the eye could reach. They were moving southward slowly, and the meadow seemed as if in motion."

Traders and Indians alike were in continual dread of the fierce Sioux, across whose war path the party was now travelling. Henry had the utmost difficulty in preventing his men from turning back. Scarcely a day passed but false alarms were raised: horsemen were seen far out on the plains, who gradually resolved themselves into a herd of buffalo; footprints were discovered on the river's bank, which were found to be those of some of their own party; and so the story goes from day to day. A detachment was left behind to build a post, and Henry and the others continued up the river crossing the present international boundary, and so on up to the mouth of Pembina River, where stood a fort built by Chaboillez of the North West Company in 1797, and on the other side of the Red River the remains of an old fort built by Peter Grant four or five years earlier, the first trading post on the upper waters of the Red River ,if we except the French post attributed to La Vérendrye. Still making his way up the Red River, Henry at last reached the mouth of Park River, and about a quarter of mile up the latter found a suitable place for a fort. All hands went energetically to work, by the end of September the stockade was completed.

and before cold weather set in they were under cover. Deadly fear of the Sioux still haunted the men, and this, from Henry's point of view, was not an unmixed evil. "Fear," he remarks dryly, "is an excellent overseer, and the work went on with expedition."

Henry wintered at his Park River post, spending the time trading with the Indians, hunting, and making short journeys into the surrounding country. In May, 1801, he abandoned Park River, and moved down to the Pembina, where he selected a site for a fort at the mouth of the river, on the north side, opposite the old Chaboillez establishment. Leaving some of his men to build the fort, Henry descended the Red River with the proceeds of his winter's trade; learned at the Forks that the people at Portage la Prairie were living on roots; went up on horseback to investigate, and found them at the point of starvation. He remained at Portage la Prairie until June 1st, when he embarked in a light canoe with eight men for Grand Portage.

On August 23rd he was back at the Pembina, where he found the stockades erected and houses and stores nearly finished. His people had been in a constant state of alarm on account of the Sioux. This, however, did not worry Henry nearly so much as the appearance of a party of Hudson's Bay men, and another of the rival Canadian (X Y) Company, who both built posts below him on the Red River. "None of them," he says, "dare build above me for fear of the Sioux." The winter passed in keen rivalry among the various traders, broken by a friendly carouse on New Year's night at

Henry's house. "Before sunrise both sexes of all parties were intoxicated and more troublesome than double their number of Saulteurs." "Liquor," comments Henry elsewhere, "is the root of all evil in the North West." Nevertheless, he bowed to what he conceived to be the inevitable, and distributed it freely to his native patrons.

In June, 1803, Henry went down to head-quarters with the brigade, reaching Lake Superior on the 3rd of July. At Rainy River he procured a guide to conduct the canoes by the new route to the mouth of the Kaministikwia, the head-quarters of the Company having been moved since his last visit from Grand Portage to what was soon to be known as Fort William. They left the old Grand Portage route in Lac la Croix, entered Sturgeon River, and after traversing various small waterways crossed Lac des Mille Lacs, from whence they descended the Kaministikwia. "The Kaministiquia route at the beginning of this [nineteenth] century," says Dr. Coues, "corresponds in most of its extent to the present Dawson route as a practicable waterway, with various portages, from Lac la Croix to Thunder Bay of Lake Superior." "Before 1800," he continues, "the route was an 'old' French waterway, which had been abandoned and in a measure lost sight of by the English, who used the Pigeon River route from Grand Portage." This is scarcely accurate, as, so far as our records go, the Kaministikwia route had never been used by the English traders, and was unknown to them, until Roderick McKenzie

reopened it in 1797, as described in an earlier chapter.

As to the date of the founding of Fort William, Dr. Coues finds it to vary, with different authorities, from 1801 to 1807, the date usually assigned being 1803. The explanation, however, is simple: "The movement from Grand Portage to Kaministiquia appears to have begun in 1801; and building went on in 1802 and 1803, as we see by Henry, but was not expected to be completed till 1804. Moreover, the fort did not receive its present name till 1807, when it was so called in honor of William Macgillivray, then one of the personages of the North West Company."

Henry found great changes when he visited the New Fort in 1803. Fort, store, shop, etc., were all built, and a number of dwelling-houses; building was going on briskly in every corner of the enclosure; brick kilns had been erected and were turning out many bricks; so that everything would be complete and in good order before their arrival the following year.

The 27th of September finds Henry once more at his post on the Pembina, where the fur trade is in full blast. Horses have now become an indispensable part of the fur trader's equipment, somewhat to Henry's disgust, who believes that their introduction has made both his men and the Indians indolent, insolent, and extravagant. To illustrate his argument, he gives an amusing picture of the "bustle and noise which attended the transportation of five pieces of goods" to one of his branch establishments.

"Antoine Payet, guide and second in command, leads the van, with a cart drawn by two horses and loaded with his private baggage, cassetetes, bags, kettles, etc. Madame Payet follows the cart with a child a year old on her back, very merry. Charles Bottineau, with two horses and a cart loaded with 1½ packs, his own baggage, and two young children, with kettles and other trash hanging on to it. Madame Bottineau with a squalling infant on her back, scolding and tossing it about. Joseph Dubord goes on foot, with his long pipe-stem and calumet in his hand; Madame Dubord follows on foot, carrying his tobacco pouch with a broad bead tail. Antoine Thellier, with a cart and two horses, loaded with 1½ packs of goods and Dubois' baggage. Antoine La Pointe, with another cart and horses, loaded with two pieces of goods and with baggage belonging to Brisebois, Jasmin, and Pouliot, and a kettle hung on each side. Auguste Brisebois follows with only his gun on his shoulder and a fresh-lighted pipe in his mouth. Michel Jasmin goes next, like Brisebois, with gun and pipe, puffing out clouds of smoke. Nicolas Pouliot, the greatest smoker in the North West, has nothing but pipe and pouch. Those three fellows, having taken a farewell dram and lighted fresh pipes, go on brisk and merry, playing numerous pranks. Domin Livernois, with a young mare, the property of Mr. Langlois, loaded with weeds for smoking, an old worsted bag (madame's property), some squashes and potatoes, a small keg of fresh water, and two young whelps howling. Next goes Livernois' young horse, drawing a travaille

loaded with his baggage and a large worsted mashguemcate[1] [a kind of bag] belonging to Madame Langlois. Next appears Madame Cameron's mare, kicking, rearing, and snorting, hauling a travaille loaded with a bag of flour, cabbages, turnips, onions, a small keg of water, and a large kettle of broth. Michel Langlois, who is master of the band, now comes on leading a horse that draws a travaille nicely covered with a new painted tent, under which his daughter and Mrs. Cameron lie at full length, very sick; this covering or canopy has a pretty effect in the caravan, and appears at a great distance in the plains. Madame Langlois brings up the rear of the human beings, following the travaille with a slow step and melancholy air, attending to the wants of her daughter, who, notwithstanding her sickness, can find no other expressions of gratitude to her parents than by calling them dogs, fools, beasts, etc. The rear guard consists of a long train of twenty dogs, some for sleighs, some for game, and others of no use whatever, except to snarl and destroy meat. The total forms a procession nearly a mile long, and appears like a large band of Assiniboines."

A curiously vivid glimpse this into the lighter side of the life of the western fur trader, whose very environment brought him so close to the simplicity and savagery amid which he moved. And the savagery is never far off. Brutality and murder become commonplace, and Henry gives little more weight to a shooting

---

[1] See Masson, *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-ouest*, II, 447.

affray than he does to the fate of his kitchen garden; rather less, in fact, if only Indians are involved. Note the grim humour of this paragraph, doubly grim because quite unconscious: "Le Boeuf stabbed his young wife in the arm, Little Shell almost beat his old mother's brains out with a club, and there was terrible fighting among them. I sowed garden seed."

In May, 1804, Henry again started out from Pembina for Lake Superior. June 1st he was on Lake Winnipeg, his own brigade joined by another from the Red River making an imposing array as they swept across the lake eighteen craft abreast, all singing and keeping time with their paddles and oars. He reached Kaministikwia on June 25th, and on September 6th was back once more at his fort on the Pembina. New Year's Day brought the welcome news from Montreal of the union of the North West and X Y Companies, which had taken place November 5th, 1804. Another trip was made to Lake Superior in the summer of 1805; and in July of the following year Henry left Pembina for the Assiniboine. Two days' journey brought him to Portage la Prairie, and from there he travelled to the Souris River post, on his way to the Missouri and the Mandans, an account of which expedition has been given in an earlier chapter.

May 8th, 1808, Henry finally left the Red River department and turned his face toward the Saskatchewan, where he was to spend the next three or four years. He reached the mouth of Red River in August, and coasted up the west side of Lake Winnipeg. This

west side of the lake was but little known to the fur traders, the usual route to the Saskatchewan following the east shore. Henry had never been there before, though some of his men may have been over the ground. In any case they made the journey without mishap. August 18th David Thompson was overtaken, on his way from Fort William to the Columbia, and they reached the mouth of the Saskatchewan together on the 20th. August 24th Henry passed the mouth of Pasquia River, where his uncle had been politely pillaged by Chatique in 1775; and two days later reached the N.W.C. post, Cumberland House. As already mentioned, both the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company had forts on Cumberland or Sturgeon Lake, bearing the same name. They stood about one hundred yards apart, and the North West Company's establishment seems to have antedated its rival by a year or two. Henry says that the former post was kept up less for the purpose of trade than as a depot to supply the northern brigades; that the Hudson's Bay post was the more permanent of the two; and that at this particular point the people from the bay had all the trade in their own hands— "I believe," he adds, "the sole instance of the kind in the North West."

Henry only remained at Cumberland House until sunset, and then hastened on to overtake his brigade. September 2nd he was at the Forks of the Saskatchewan, and turned up the north or main branch, where he found the current stronger than below the Forks, rapids

more frequent and some of them dangerous, requiring the utmost exertions of his men at the line and in the canoe with poles. The stream at this point is contracted between high banks on both sides. The following day he passed an old establishment known as Fort Providence, not far from where the town of Prince Albert now stands. Here he had trouble with a party of half-breeds, and expresses his conviction, in vigorous terms, that these people when they live among Indians and abandon themselves to such a life are the worst of savages, given to all kinds of roguery and inciting the natives to every species of mischief.

September 4th Henry passed Hudson House, built by Turnor of the Hudson's Bay Company some years before. The exact date is uncertain, but David Thompson mentions the post in 1794.[1] It stood a few miles below Carlton, where the Hudson's Bay Company still maintains a post. Pursuing his journey, Henry camped at the mouth of Battle River, about where the town of Battleford now stands. Shortly before reaching the Forks he passed the ruins of Fort Montagne d'Aigle.[2] Beaver were very numerous on Battle River in Henry's day, but it was dangerous to ascend the river on account of the treacherous Slave Indians, who lived on its upper waters.

Leaving the Battle behind him, Henry continued his way up the Saskatchewan, following the north bank on horseback, while his men paddled up in their canoes.

---

[1] See *David Thompson's Narrative,* 319.
[2] See *David Thompson's Narrative,* 320.

A short distance below present Fort Pitt he forded a small stream, and the same day reached Fort Vermillion[1] "in a long flat bottom of meadow, directly opposite the entrance of Vermillion river." A large party of Slaves were encamped about the fort, and, despite the unpleasant reputation he had given them, came out whooping and halloing to welcome him as he rode down the hills to the fort. Henry had been there but one day when David Thompson arrived from below, and after a brief rest at the fort continued his way up the river and over the mountains to the Columbia.

Henry wintered at Fort Vermillion, and in the spring of 1809 went down to Fort William. September following he was again in the Saskatchewan country, having spent two months on his upward journey with a brigade of eleven canoes. At Fort Vermillion he found encamped three hundred tents of Blackfeet, most of whom had just returned from an unsuccessful war raid to the Upper Missouri, where they had hoped to find either their Indian enemies or some of the fur traders from the United States, either of whom they considered legitimate prey. They returned in considerable disgust, having been "deprived of their usual spoils in scalps and horses of the former, and missed a supply of beaver and merchandise from the latter, from whom they took considerable booty last year in an expedition of this kind." They had in fact the previous year fallen upon a party of Americans on the Missouri, stripped them of everything, and brought off

[1] See *David Thompson's Narrative*, lxxxviii.

a quantity of beaver skins, which the Nor'Westers on the Saskatchewan, with the easy ethics of the fur trade, had purchased from them on very reasonable terms.

Henry throws some light upon the capacity of the various tribes for the deadly fire-water of the white men. The prescription for a nine-gallon keg of "Blackfoot rum" was four or five quarts of high wine and the balance water; the more sophisticated Crees and Assiniboines must needs have six quarts to the keg; while the hardened Saulteurs were content with nothing weaker than eight or nine quarts.

October 27th Henry set out on horseback for Fort Augustus, passing on his way the ruins of Fort George, built by Angus Shaw of the North West Company in 1792, and abandoned in 1801; passing also old Fort Augustus on the north bank of the Saskatchewan. He reached Fort Augustus, where the city of Edmonton now stands, on October 30th, and was back at Vermillion on November 7th.

On the 31st of May both Fort Vermillion and the neighbouring post of the Hudson's Bay Company were abandoned, the rival traders, who here, as in many other parts of the west, seem to have got on tolerably well together, having mutually decided to move up to White Earth River, where a more satisfactory site had been found for their establishments. The scene, as Henry describes it, is full of animation. All day long the exodus continued. Canoes and boats began to leave the old forts at daybreak, loaded with all the

paraphernalia of the fur trade; bags of pemmican, kegs of grease, packs of furs, kegs of liquor, trading goods of all kinds, powder and ball, household furniture and utensils, lay everywhere on the banks of the river; men and women ran hither and thither, bringing goods and provisions to the water-side, and stowing them on board, with ever a watchful eye on the horses, for fear of thievish Assiniboines. Canoe after canoe left the shore and made upstream, the men breaking into one of the Canadian *chansons* as their paddles dipped into the water; boats and batteaux followed more laboriously, pole and line making slow progress against the swift current of the river. Those who were not on the water made up a cavalcade on land, an imposing array of forty-four horses, some bearing riders, others loaded with packs; here, there, and everywhere were the dogs, sixty of them, getting in everybody's way, and drowning all other noises in their ceaseless clamour. So Fort Vermillion was abandoned by the North West Company, and White Earth House, or White Mud Brook House, reigned in its stead.

A few weeks after Henry had settled down in his new quarters, David Thompson visited him, on his way down to head-quarters from the Columbia by way of Howse Pass. Less welcome visitors were a company of free traders. Henry could stand the opposition of the Hudson's Bay Company, but he had no patience whatever with the unattached traders. His irritation breaks out as he notes their arrival: "Five young vagabonds from Lac la Biche came in to us, on their

way, they said, to the Columbia, where they hoped to find beaver as numerous as blades of grass in the plains. . . . I took much trouble in trying to make a division among these freemen, to prevent them from crossing the mountains, where they will be even a greater nuisance to us than they are here." Apparently his efforts were fruitless, for the next day he breaks out even more violently in his journal: "Troubled with those mongrel freemen all day. No dependence is to be placed upon them; they have neither principles, nor honor, nor honesty, nor a wish to do well; their aim is all folly, extravagance and caprice; they make more mischief than the most savage Blackfeet in the plains."

In September Henry started on horseback for Rocky Mountain House, following the north bank of the Saskatchewan, so as to keep at least the width of the river between himself and roving bands of Blackfeet. He took no provisions with him, relying entirely on what he might kill by the way. Moose, buffalo, and antelope were all plentiful. The fresh tracks of a grizzly bear were found—an enormous fellow, judging by the prints of his feet, which Henry found to be fourteen inches long and seven broad. On reaching Rocky Mountain House he was surprised to find it in the possession of the Columbia brigade. The brigade had been stopped and turned back by the Piegans, who "having been severely defeated last summer by the Flat Heads, were determined to cut off the latter's supplies of arms and ammunition, and had kept a strict watch for that purpose." David Thompson was in

charge of this brigade, and the obstinacy of the Piegans resulted, as we shall find in the following chapter, in his forcing a way overland from the Saskatchewan to the Athabaska, and exploring a new route to the Columbia through Athabaska Pass.

Henry, not knowing for some time of Thompson's changed plans, resorted to strategy to get the goods and supplies for the Columbia past the Piegans. His difficulties were multiplied by the unexpected arrival at the fort of a number of Hudson's Bay men, from whom it was equally necessary to keep any news of the departure of the Columbia brigade. Fortunately, the Hudson's Bay men arrived thoroughly exhausted by a long day's journey, and slept soundly, while a few glasses of rum all round disposed of the Piegans. The Columbia canoes had already been sent downstream as a blind to rival traders and Indians alike, but their instructions were to return about midnight and pole carefully up the other side of the river. This they succeeded in doing without the Piegans or Hudson's Bay men being any the wiser. But, as the sequel shows, their trouble was all for nothing. Thompson had changed his plans, and the men must return down the river again with the same care as before, it being very important to keep from the Indians any hint of the trick that had been played upon them.

On November 9th Henry rode up the river from Rocky Mountain House to a rising ground on the north side, where Peter Pangman had cut his name on a pine in 1790. This spot was then the utmost extent of

discoveries on the Saskatchewan toward the Rocky Mountains. "Of the mountains," says Henry, "we had a tolerable view from this hill. The winding course of the river is seen until it enters the gap of the mountains; a little east of which appears another gap, through which I am told flows a south branch that empties into the Saskatchewan some miles above this place. The mountains appear at no great distance, all covered with snow, while we have none."

Henry describes Rocky Mountain House as standing on a high bank on the north side of the Saskatchewan. The situation, he says, was well adapted to defence, as the blockhouses commanded the fort for some distance. This spot had formerly been covered with aspen and pine, which had been cut down for the use of the place, leaving a large open space, and they now had a grand view of the Rocky Mountains, lying nearly south-west, and apparently running from west-north-west to south-south-east. Up to Rocky Mountain House the course of the river was comparatively clear and unobstructed, but there was a strong rapid almost immediately in front of the fort, and above this navigation even by canoes was slow and tedious by reason of the almost constant succession of rapids. Henry notes the remains of dwellings of the Kootenay Indians, proving that this tribe had formerly lived on the eastern side of the mountains. Thompson had in fact met a party of Kootenays on the eastern side of the mountains in 1800, and induced some of them to return with him to Rocky Mountain House.

In February, 1811, Henry left on a "jaunt in the Rocky mountains." On account of the watchfulness of the Piegans, who were extremely jealous of any movement toward the mountains, being anxious to confine the fur trade as much as possible to their own territory, Henry had once more to resort to strategy. He gave out that he was going down the river, and started out ostentatiously in that direction for about a mile, then turned off from the road and made a circuit behind the fort, until he had reached the river above, without the Indians having suspected his intention. He had left the fort at 5.30 a.m., and travelled briskly all that day toward the mountains. Two men went with him, and each travelled in a sled drawn by three active dogs. Henry himself was in what he describes as a kind of cariole, made by stretching a wet parchment of moose skins over a wooden frame secured to the sled. Wrapped in buffalo robes, this mode of travelling, except in very severe weather, was far from disagreeable. Dogs have been used for winter travel in the west throughout almost the entire period of the fur trade, and are still the only means of conveyance in winter in the far north, if one excepts the aeroplane. They can travel through a country, and under conditions, that would soon exhaust the endurance of any other animal. The narratives of fur traders and explorers, travellers and sportsmen, early and late, whose business or pleasure has taken them over the limitless plains and through the vast forests of the great north-west, all bear witness to

the splendid qualities of the smallest and pluckiest of beasts of burden.

Towards noon the travellers came to a spot where a long reach of the river opening up to the west offered a magnificent view of the mountains, crowned and clothed in glittering snow. In the foreground immense piles of fallen trees lay along the banks of the river, and the yellow and grey banks themselves towered one hundred to two hundred feet above the ice-bound bed of the stream. At 3.30 in the afternoon, after ten hours' steady travelling, Henry and his men camped for the night under a clump of spreading pines.

At 4.30 the next morning they were again on their way. As they travelled up the river the banks rose ever higher above them, presenting faces of perpendicular rock rising sheer from the river on either side. After passing through a gap in an outlying ridge of mountains, the river was found to open out to a width of nearly a mile—it was but sixty yards wide where it broke through the ridge. They were now in full view of the mountains—"the main body of the Rocky mountains ahead of us, upheaved in all shapes and directions." The channels became more numerous and tortuous; open meadow-lands appeared her and there, and tracks of the buffalo.

The following day Henry overtook a party of hunters whom he had sent ahead, and who had been fortunate enough to kill three mountain sheep and three cow buffaloes. He was glad to rest here for a day, having run on foot the greater part of the way since entering

the mountains, there not being sufficient snow on the ground to enable the dogs to draw him in the sled. Buffalo were numerous. They were not the kind found on the prairie, but wood buffalo, "as wild as moose"; they "never resort to the plains, but delight in mountain valleys, where they feed on a short grass which seems to be of an excellent quality."

Refreshed by his day's rest, Henry set out at daybreak the next morning. The river now became narrow and winding again, the mountains closing in upon its banks. Tracks of mountain sheep could be seen on crags and precipices, where there seemed scarcely sufficient hold for their hoofs. They were so numerous that the snow on the hills was beaten hard by their frequent passing. A herd of thirty rams was discovered feeding among the rocks, and as the hunters chased them they set off at full speed up the side of the mountain. "At one time," says Henry, "I thought them hemmed in by rocks so steep and smooth that it seemed impossible for any animal to escape being dashed to pieces below, but the whole herd passed this place on a narrow horizontal ledge without a single misstep, and were soon out of sight."

On the fourth day after leaving the fort Henry reached the upper end of the Kootenay plain, a level meadow several miles in length, which attracted the particular attention of explorers and fur traders who went this way through the mountains, by the striking contrast it presented to the wild and rugged mountains that surround it on nearly every side. Henry was now

following the same road which Thompson had travelled four years before; he had crossed what are now known as the Palliser and Sawback ranges, and passed Mount Murchison and other notable peaks, and was approaching the eastern end of Howse Pass, between Mount Balfour and Mount Forbes. Shortly before entering the pass Henry abandoned his sled, the bottom of which was entirely worn out by constant and rough contact with stones where the snowfall had been light, and continued his journey on snow-shoes, to what he presumed to be "the highest source of the Saskatchewan." About half a mile from the source of the Saskatchewan, Henry left the river on his right and entered a thick forest of pines, and after a walk of two miles came to a small opening "where three small streams of Columbian waters join. The principal one comes from the west, and is divided from Saskatchewan waters only by a ridge." From here near the source of Blaeberry River, where Henry stood, it would take, he says, three days to walk on snow-shoes to the banks of the Columbia, but in summer a man might do it afoot in one. Henry, however, was not at this time going any farther than the pass, and accordingly turned his back on the Blaeberry and retraced his steps to the fort on White Earth River.

Henry had planned a trip south to Bow River on his return from Howse Pass, to visit the different Piegan camps, but was warned by friendly Indians not to leave his fort, as the Fall Indians had formed a plot to murder him. The Fall Indians had lately been on the war-

path against the Crows, with whom they had fought on the Yellowstone River. The Crows had cried out derisively that next summer they would save the Fall Indians the trouble of coming to war; they would come themselves to the Saskatchewan, and would be led by Americans. The Fall Indians now felt that they were in evil case indeed. They were already on bad terms with their eastern neighbours, the Crees and Assiniboines; if they went north to the wooded country they would starve; starvation faced them also if they crossed the mountains; in fact retreat was cut off on every side. They faced the Crows, and faced them on unequal terms, for the Crows were well armed, and had threatened to bring white men with them, while the Fall Indians had to fight alone, and, to crown all, the traders had refused to supply them with guns and ammunition. Guns and ammunition they must have, and the only way to get them was to enter the forts under pretence of trade, take the traders unawares, murder them, and help themselves to what they needed. This they had determined to do. They had tried to draw the Piegans into the plot, but the latter told them that it would be madness to do such a thing; that they would drive the traders out of the country, and would then be even more hopelessly at the mercy of their enemies; finally the Piegans threatened that if the Fall Indians did not abandon their plot, they would themselves join the traders against them. This had the desired effect, and the Fall Indians promised to behave themselves. Henry, however, had no great faith in their promises, and put his

fort into shape to give them a warm reception if they should still resort to treachery; but their valour had evaporated, and the winter passed off quietly.

In May, 1811, Henry left Rocky Mountain House in a boat with six men, and travelled down the Saskatchewan to the site of Boggy Hall, where he had expected to meet a party from the Athabaska. As they did not turn up, he continued down the river, past Fort Augustus (Edmonton), to Lower White Earth House, where he arrived on May 17th.

Where Henry was, or what he was doing, during the succeeding two years and a half, we can only conjecture, as his journal is missing from May 17th, 1811, to November 15th, 1813, when he arrived at Astoria from Fort William. It is probable that he spent most of this time in the Saskatchewan country, going down to Fort William in the spring of 1813. From Gabriel Franchère it is learned that he left Fort William for Astoria in July of that year. He followed, no doubt, the usual route to the Saskatchewan, and crossed the mountains either by Howse or Athabasca Pass. In the former case he would have reached Astoria by way of the Upper Columbia, the Kootenay, and the Lower Columbia; if he went through Athabaska Pass he must have followed the all-Columbia route from Boat Encampment.

Of the six months spent by Henry at Astoria—the last six months of his life—little need be said here. His time was taken up with the routine of the fur trade.

He also found time to visit Clatsop and Chinook villages, and to make short excursions into the surrounding country, which, however, took him no farther afield than the upper waters of the Willamette, and in any event covered no new ground.

H.H. Bancroft, in his *North-West Coast,* says that the Missouri Fur Company sent an expedition to the Upper Missouri and the Yellowstone, in 1808, under Alexander Henry, who was not only to establish posts on those streams, but was to cross the Rocky Mountains and open traffic with the nations of the western slope. Bancroft goes on to say that Henry erected an establishment at the forks of the Missouri, which he made his head-quarters, but being dislodged by the Blackfeet the following year (1809), passed over the great divide, and built a house on the north or Henry branch of Snake River, one day's journey above its junction with the south or Lewis branch; and that this cabin, called Henry Fort, was the first establishment erected in this latitude west of the Rocky Mountains. This startling bit of information, we learn from a foot-note, Bancroft extracted from an address by Thomas Allen at an anniversary celebration, in February, 1847, of the founding of St. Louis, printed in De Bois's *Industrial Resources,* III, 516—rather an indifferent authority for such a circumstantial and positive statement. In the same foot-note Bancroft adds: "The Missouri Fur Company being dissolved in 1812, two years later we find Mr. Henry in charge of the post in the Willamette Valley engaged in curing venison for the Northwest

Company at Fort Astoria, and finally a prominent partner in the Northwest Company. He was drowned in company with Donald McTavish," etc.[1] Elsewhere Bancroft repeats the statement that Alexander Henry was in charge of the N.W.C. post on the Willamette in 1814.[2]

From Alexander Henry's own narrative, it is clear that he never at any time went farther up the Missouri than the Mandan villages; that he never crossed the mountains by any pass south of Howse; that he was never on the Henry branch (the Clearwater) of Snake River, and probably was never nearer the Snake River itself than its confluence with the Columbia. As we have seen, Henry was on the Saskatchewan in both 1808 and 1809. While he was certainly on the Willamette in 1814, he was never at any time in charge of the Company's post there. It might be added, parenthetically, that in 1814 there was no such place as Fort Astoria, the name having been changed to Fort George when Astoria was turned over to the North West Company in the autumn of 1813.

The fact is that Bancroft hopelessly confused three different traders of the name of Henry. Of the several statements he makes, the only one that actually applies to Alexander Henry is that which refers to his death. Andrew Henry was the man who wintered in 1808–9 at the forks of the Missouri, and built Fort Henry on the Clearwater branch of Snake River; and the trader who was in charge of the Willamette post in 1814 was

[1] *North-West Coast*, p. 129. [2] *Ibid*, p. 244.

Alexander's cousin, William Henry, who is frequently mentioned in the former's journals.

On Sunday, May 22nd, 1814, Alexander Henry was drowned, with Donald McTavish of the North West Company and several others, on their way from Fort George to the Company's vessel, the *Isaac Todd*. So abruptly closed the career of one of the ablest officers of the North West Company, after nearly a quarter of a century's service in the west. He was not a great explorer in the sense that Alexander Mackenzie and David Thompson were; he made no such remarkable discoveries as are associated with their names; but he was an untiring traveller, and what is much to the point, he travelled with his eyes wide open, and noted in his voluminous journals everything that aroused his interest. His journals are essential to a full understanding of the course of exploration in North-Western America.

CHAPTER II

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE REACHES THE ARCTIC COAST

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE was born at Stornoway, in the island of Lewis, on the west coast of Scotland, in the year 1764.[1] He came to America at the age of ten, with his father, went to school in Montreal and in 1779 entered the fur trade. The fur trade at this time, so far as it was not controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company, was monopolized by several enterprising merchants of Montreal, at the head of whom stood Simon McTavish and Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher. But their supremacy did not remain long unchallenged. Two other Montreal merchants, John Gregory and Alexander Norman McLeod, formed a partnership with two western traders, Peter Pond and Peter Pangman, in opposition to the North West Company, represented by McTavish and the Frobishers. This new organization was afterward known as the X Y Com-

[1] It has generally been supposed, on the authority of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (9th Ed.) and the *Dictionary of National Biography*, that Mackenzie was born at Inverness, in the year 1755. The correct place and date were obtained by Rev. Dr. Bryce from the grandson of the explorer.

pany, and during its brief career kept things very lively in the western fur field. The enterprise and aggressiveness of the new company attracted to its side the young adventurer from Scotland, and it is not too much to say that a large portion of the success attained by the X Y Company was due to the energy and resourcefulness of Alexander Mackenzie.

After five years' experience in the counting-house at Montreal, and a year at Detroit, where he had an opportunity of familiarizing himself with the practical details of the fur trade, Mackenzie left for the west, reaching Grand Portage in 1785. He was now a *bourgeois*, or partner of the Company, and was given charge of the important Churchill River district. With him in the district was his cousin, Roderick McKenzie, a young man of exceptional abilities. Roderick McKenzie afterward became a partner of the North West Company, and devoted much of his time to the gathering of material for a history of the western fur trade. Unfortunately this history was never published, but the material, in the form of original journals and letters of the traders, from Lake Superior to the Mackenzie River, and McKenzie's own invaluable notes, is still extant, and forms a most important body of data for the future historian. Not the least interesting portion of this material is a series of letters from Alexander Mackenzie to Roderick McKenzie, a number of which have been published in Masson's *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*. Masson also published

several of the more important journals and narratives brought together by Roderick McKenzie.

The relations of both Alexander Mackenzie and his cousin with their rivals of the older Company were on the whole very friendly—in agreeable contrast to some of the other traders, who could not be rivals in trade without becoming bitter personal enemies. Roderick McKenzie had for opponent in 1786-7 William McGillivray, one of the leading members of the North West Company. McKenzie had been directed to establish a post at Lac des Serpents, near and below Ile à la Crosse. McGillivray arrived about the same time. His orders were, he said, to build beside McKenzie; not, in fact, to let him out of his sight. McKenzie had fixed on a place for his fort, on the advice of the Indians, but McGillivray knew of a much better one, and asked McKenzie to visit it with him. They went together, and McKenzie at once recognized that his opponent was right. Here they pitched their tents within gunshot of each other. The next day all hands set to work, and in a short time comfortable lodgings for the winter were completed.

In the spring, after a successful winter's trade, accomplished without serious disagreement, McKenzie and McGillivray agreed to travel in company to their respective head-quarters. They arrived side by side, the crews singing in concert, much to the astonishment of some of the other traders. They both however were well received. The friendly relations thus established were never broken. McGillivray afterward re-

tired from the fur trade, and in 1814 was appointed a member of the Legislative Council of Canada, in recognition of his services during the War of 1812. Later he returned to his native Scotland, where he purchased a property, and died there about 1825.

But all the rival traders did not get on so happily together. In the Athabaska department, the North West Company was represented by John Ross, while the redoubtable Peter Pond looked after the interests of the X Y Company. Pond was a difficult character. He could not keep on good terms even with his friends, while he treated his opponents in the fur trade as personal enemies. He and Ross and their respective followers, quarrelled from the very first, and finally, in a scuffle between the two parties, Ross was fatally shot. This serious news being taken down to Grand Portage by Roderick McKenzie, the partners of the two companies grew alarmed, and after discussing the situation together decided to unite their interests. Under the new arrangement Alexander Mackenzie was sent to take charge of the Athabaska district, while Roderick McKenzie went back to the Churchill, now in charge of Patrick Small of the older Company. The two cousins continued their correspondence at intervals. In 1788 Alexander Mackenzie writes his cousin: "I already mentioned to you some of my distant intentions [his projected journey to the Arctic Ocean]. I beg you will not reveal them to any person, as it might be prejudicial to me, though I may never have it in my power to put them in execu-

tion." Roderick McKenzie records in his Reminiscences a conversation about this time with Alexander Mackenzie. "He informed me in confidence that he had determined on undertaking a voyage of discovery the ensuing spring [1789] by the water communications reported to lead from Slave Lake to the Northern Ocean, adding that if I could not return and take charge of his department in his absence, he must abandon his intention." Roderick McKenzie had at that time determined to leave the fur trade. "Considering his regret at my refusal," he continues, "and the importance of the object he had in view, I without hesitation yielded to his wishes, immediately set to work and accompanied him into Athabaska."

Following the usual route by way of Frog and Methye portages, they arrived at what was then known as Mr. Pond's old establishment—the post built by him on the Athabaska River in 1778, about thirty miles above the lake. Here the outfits for the several posts of the Athabaska department were made up and dispatched. Traders had already penetrated to the Lake of the Hills (Athabaska), Great Slave Lake, and the Peace River country, but without making any permanent establishments, and, to judge from one of Alexander Mackenzie's letters, with but indifferent success from a trading standpoint. It was now decided to build a post on Lake Athabaska. Alexander Mackenzie remained at the old establishment for the winter with two or three men, while Roderick with the rest of

the party paddled down to the lake to build the new fort.

"On my arrival at our destination," he says, "I looked out for a suitable spot for a new establishment to replace the old one of Mr. Pond. After making every possible enquiry and taking every measure of precaution, I pitched on a conspicuous projection that advances about a league into the Lake, the base of which appeared in the shape of a person sitting with her arms extended, the palms forming as it were a point. On this point we settled and built a fort which we called Fort Chipewean. It is altogether a beautiful, healthy situation, in the centre of many excellent and never-failing fisheries, provided they are duly attended to at the proper season." The fort was afterward moved to the north side of the lake, and was for many years the most important establishment in the far north-west, being the head-quarters for all the vast territory north to the Arctic and west to the Pacific.

About Christmas, Alexander Mackenzie journeyed down to the lake over the ice, and remained with Roderick at Fort Chipewyan until February, 1789, when he returned to his own post with the winter express, bound for their far-off destination, Grand Portage. By the express he sent a letter down to the partners, announcing the building of the new fort and the opening of an extensive trade with the Chipewyans.

In May, Roderick McKenzie set out in a light canoe for Grand Portage, one of the objects of his journey

being to explore a new route from the Churchill to the Saskatchewan, so as to avoid the long and difficult Methye Portage. He followed the Pembina River, a branch of the Clearwater, to the height of land, then crossed over to Swan Lake and the Whitefish River, which brought him to La Loche River on the regular route to Ile à la Crosse. This route, however, did not prove satisfactory. On his return journey from Grand Portage, McKenzie tried another route. "I went," he says, "from Isle à la Crosse by Lac Clear to the head of the Athabaska River, which I found to be one continued chain of falls and rapids roaring among rocks and precipices, entirely unfit for the purposes of navigation, so that we had the greatest difficulty with our canoe to find our way through to the landing-place of Portage la Loche." It was clear that Portage la Loche, or Methye Portage, difficult as it was, was the only practicable route from the Clearwater River to Ile à la Crosse Lake.

"When I left Fort Chipewean for Grand Portage," says Roderick McKenzie, "Mr. Mackenzie was preparing for his first voyage of discovery." This was toward the end of May, 1789. In the last letter written by Alexander Mackenzie to the partners before he set forth on his journey, he mentions the arrival at Fort Chipewyan in March of Laurent Leroux "from the other side of Slave Lake, where he had seen a great number of Red Knives and Slave Indians. They traded with him and promised to meet him this summer on the west side

of the lake." "I intend," adds Mackenzie, "to pass that way on my voyage for a supply of provisions."

Mackenzie left Fort Chipewyan on June 3rd, at nine in the morning, in a birch-bark canoe manned by four French-Canadian *voyageurs,* two of whom were accompanied by their wives, a young German named John Steinbruck, and an Indian known as the English Chief, because of the many journeys he had made to the Hudson's Bay Company's fort at Port Churchill. The English Chief travelled with two of his wives in a small canoe, and two other Indians, engaged to act as interpreters and hunters, followed in another. Laurent Leroux also accompanied the party as far as Great Slave Lake, where he expected to meet and trade with the Red Knife Indians. Leroux was himself something of an explorer. In 1786 he and Cuthbert Grant had been sent by Peter Pond from his post on the Athabaska River to build a fort on Great Slave Lake. With the exception of Samuel Hearne's discovery in 1772, this was the first visit of white men to Great Slave Lake. The post was built at the eastern mouth of Slave River. Leroux wintered there in 1786-7 and 1787-8. He also founded, under the orders of Alexander Mackenzie, a post on the north side of the lake, called Fort Providence, about lat. 62° 20′ and long. 114°. Leroux was with David Thompson on the Assiniboine in 1797-8. Some years later he left the fur trade and returned to the province of Quebec, where he died in 1855 at the ripe old age of ninety-seven.

Eskimo Encampment, Chesterfield Inlet, Hudson Bay

Fort Simpson, Pacific Coast

Ramparts of the Mackenzie River

Paddling west along the shore of the lake for twenty-one miles, passing the mouths of the Athabaska, Mackenzie changed his course to north-north-west for nine miles, which brought him to Slave River. He notes the peculiarity of this river, that flows into Lake Athabaska when the water is high on Peace River, and at other times empties the waters of the lake north into Great Slave Lake. The party camped on the banks of the Slave River, and the following morning continued their journey, passing the mouth of the Peace River, described as upwards of a mile broad with a strong current. They landed for the night beside some rapids near the mouth of Dog River, where the Slave River is about two leagues in breadth.

Embarking the following morning at three o'clock, they had to make several portages. Two of these, called the Mountain and the Pelican, entailed hard work. At the latter the whole party was engaged in taking baggage and canoes up the hill. One of the Indian women attempted to run her canoe down the rapids, but lost control, and only managed with great difficulty to leave it in time to save her life, while the canoe with all it contained was dashed to pieces on the rocks. Nine miles farther down another dangerous rapid was passed. Here in 1786 five men who were accompanying Cuthbert Grant to Great Slave Lake had been lost in the rapids. The place was known in consequence as the Portage des Noyes. At five in the afternoon camp was made, the men being thoroughly tired. Fortunately the hunters brought in seven geese,

a beaver, and four ducks, to comfort the hearts of the weary *voyageurs*.

Notwithstanding this hard day's work, the following morning they were off again at half-past two. Mackenzie knew that the journey before him was a long and difficult one, and if he was to reach the mouth of the great river and return during the short season of the far north he must push his men to their utmost strength. And being men of the right sort, almost as interested as himself in the success of the expedition, they needed very little urging.[1] This day, June 6th, they paddled steadily from half-past two in the morning till six in the evening, covering seventy-two miles in spite of a head wind. At six o'clock they landed, unloaded the canoes, and pitched their tents. Nets were set in a small river near by. Half-past three the next morning saw them off once more, on their strenuous race to the Arctic. The weather, although early in June, was so cold that the Indians were obliged to wear mittens. This day they made poor progress, the rain coming down in such torrents that even these determined travellers had to make for shore and get under cover. Geese and ducks still contributed to the evening meal around the camp-fire, but this night fire was an impossibility. The men huddled together under the canvas, smoked their pipes, and rolled over in their

[1] The officers of the fur-trading companies drove their men at top speed when travelling light. Mackenzie was severe enough, but the lot of the *voyageurs* who manned the canoes of Sir George Simpson was far worse. That autocrat of the wilderness had no mercy at all on his men.

blankets for an uncomfortable night's sleep, while the wind howled outside, and the rain drove through the tents. Neither wind nor rain abating, Mackenzie was reluctantly compelled to spend another day in camp.

The morning of the 9th broke foggy but calm. Embarking at half-past two, a few miles brought them to the small branch of the Slave River known as Embarass River, and after a ten-mile paddle they reached Great Slave Lake, about nine o'clock in the morning. Here they found a great change in the weather. The air was extremely cold. The lake was entirely covered with ice, except close to the shore. The gnats and mosquitoes which had borne them company down the river turned back in disgust, and that was the one redeeming feature in a very uncomfortable situation. The trees on the banks of the river were in full leaf, though the ground was not thawed above fourteen inches in depth. The Indians informed Mackenzie that at a very small distance from either bank of the river there were extensive plains, frequented by large herds of buffaloes; which confirms Hearne's story, and clearly establishes the fact that the buffalo ranged as far north as Great Slave Lake.[1] Moose and reindeer were reported in the neighbouring woods, and beaver were plentiful around the small lakes and streams. The mud-banks of the Embarass were covered with wild-fowl. Altogether this was a hunter's

[1] The so-called wood buffalo are still found in the country west of Slave River, which has been made into a reservation for their protection, by the Dominion Government.

paradise, and a country to delight the heart of the fur trader.

Coasting eastward between the southern shore of the lake and a long sandbank covered with driftwood and supporting a few straggling willows, Mackenzie reached Leroux's establishment. The canoes were unloaded and tents pitched, as from the appearance of the ice on the lake there was every prospect of their being obliged to remain here for some time. The nets were immediately set, as it was absolutely necessary that the stores provided for the voyage down the Mackenzie should remain untouched.

For five precious days Mackenzie waited impatiently for an opportunity to cross the lake. At last a westerly wind drove the ice apart and opened a passage. Striking the tents and embarking at sunset, a quick paddle brought them to a small island eight miles out in the lake, where they camped for the night. The next morning a strong wind from the north with vast quantities of floating ice prevented them from embarking, but about one in the afternoon they succeeded in getting away, and made about ten miles under difficult conditions. They camped again on an island; and the ice closing in, made no progress the following day. The 18th and 19th were equally unfavourable. They were still ice-bound in the middle of the lake, and to add to the discomfort of their situation were pestered by mosquitoes. At last on the 21st a southerly wind drove the ice to the northward, and at five in the afternoon they embarked and made fifteen miles through broken

ice, dangerous enough in bark canoes. However, they got safely to a group of small islands within three miles of the northern shore of the lake, which was still inaccessible on account of the ice. A number of reindeer that had crossed on the ice to these islands and been caught there by the thaw furnished the party with an abundance of fresh meat. Mackenzie sat up all night observing the setting and rising of the sun, which he found to be below the horizon four hours and twenty-two minutes. Even at this time of the year the cold was so severe that during the sun's disappearance the water was covered with ice an eighth of an inch thick.

The 22nd they coasted to the westward among the islands off the north shore, much impeded by floating ice; and the next day turned north-west up what is now known as the North Arm of Great Slave Lake. This day they traversed a deep bay "which receives a considerable river at the bottom of it"—Yellowknife River—and landing on the mainland in the afternoon, found three lodges of Red Knife Indians. The Indians informed Mackenzie that there were many more lodges of their friends at no great distance, and one set off to fetch them. Leroux purchased of the Red Knives upwards of eight packs of good beaver and marten skins, and the English Chief got from them over a hundred skins on the score of debts due to him, of which he had many outstanding in this country. Forty of the skins he handed over to Leroux to cover his own indebtedness, and exchanged the remainder for "rum and other

necessary articles." Mackenzie had several conversations with the Red Knife or Copper Indians, but could get no information from them material to his expedition. They had no knowledge of the great river he sought, beyond the point where it left Great Slave Lake, and as the sequel proved, their knowledge even of that was extremely hazy. In order to save as much time as possible in crossing the bays, Mackenzie engaged one of the Indians to act as guide. This day, the 23rd June, at noon, he took an observation, which gave 62° 24′ north latitude, variation about twenty-six or twenty-seven degrees to the east.

In the afternoon he assembled the Copper Indians, and informed them that he would take his departure the following morning, but that some of his people would remain on the spot until the other Indians who had been sent for should arrive, and that if they brought down a sufficient quantity of skins he would have a fort built here for their convenience. The Copper Indians were delighted; hitherto they had only been able to carry on a trade through the Chipewyans, who gave them little or nothing for the fruits of their hunt.

The morning of the 25th Mackenzie took leave of Leroux, and amid a fusillade of small arms embarked on his journey. Crossing to the western side of the North Arm, he landed on an island, and was much surprised to find that the greater part of the wood with which it was formerly covered had been cut down within ten or fifteen years. On making inquiry of the English Chief he was told that several winters before

many of the Slave Indians inhabited the islands in this bay, as there was an abundance of fish throughout the year, but that they had been driven away by the Crees, who continually made war upon them.

From this island their course was south-east from point to point across many small bays on the main shore, in six to ten fathoms of water. Whenever they approached the land they found deserted lodges, marking the ravages of the warlike Crees. On the 26th they continued their course to the south-eastward, and rounding the southern extremity of the North Arm, met a heavy swell from the open lake. Here Mackenzie took an observation and found he was in 61° 40′ north latitude. The next three days were spent in sailing with fair winds to the westward along the north shore of the lake, searching everywhere for the outlet of the great river. The Copper Indian who had undertaken to guide them proved to be a broken reed, and at last the English Chief grew so irritated that he threatened to murder him. Finally, however, on the morning of the 29th, they doubled an island—Big Island—and found themselves at the entrance to the river. Passing the point of the long island, their course was south-west by west through a wide channel, so shallow that Mackenzie judged it must be dry when the lake was low. The course of the river now turned to the westward, becoming gradually narrower for twenty-four miles, till it was not more than half a mile wide. The current at the same time increased considerably, and the soundings were three and a half fathoms. The

north shore was low, that to the south much higher, and both well wooded. Mackenzie here notes the familiar circumstance that land covered with spruce, pine, and white birch when laid waste by fire subsequently produces nothing but poplar, although that species of tree had never previously been found in the particular locality.

A stiff breeze from the eastward drove them on under sail at a great rate. They held to the north side of the river, where the current was found to be much stronger than on the south side. Horn Mountain was now in sight, which their Copper guide informed them was the home of the Beaver Indians. He added that there were extensive plains on both sides of it which abounded in buffalo and moose — a statement which, if correct, carries the range of the buffalo still farther to the northward. Great numbers of wild-fowl were found among the islands in the river, and the hunters kept the party well supplied from day to day.

On July 1st the course was westerly, among islands, with a strong current. The river had now narrowed to about half a mile. They passed a stream upon the south-east side—Trout River—and the same day reached the mouth of the River of the Mountain, now the Liard, where Fort Simpson was afterward built. Continuing their course downstream, they concealed two bags of pemmican on an island in the expectation that they would be of service on the return journey, though the Indians assured Mackenzie that it would be quite impossible to return up the river that season.

Mackenzie travelled warily, for he had been warned by the Indians of a formidable waterfall about this part of the river.

In fact all the way down the natives—Slave, Dog-rib, and Hare Indians—magnified every rapid into a dangerous cataract, until Mackenzie learned to take their assertions with a big grain of salt. Although they made no hostile demonstrations against the explorer—indeed, generally fled at his approach, and were with difficulty persuaded to come near—they conjured up all sorts of imaginary horrors and dangers, apparently to dissuade him from continuing his voyage. Some of them assured him that old age would come upon him before he could return; that it would take several winters even to reach the sea; that he would encounter monsters of horrid shapes and destructive powers; others warned him against a Manitou which swallowed every person that approached it. Unfortunately these stories had a terrifying effect upon the Indians of Mackenzie's party. They were already weary of the voyage in any event. The tireless energy of the explorer was too much for them. Long days of ceaseless toil were more than they had bargained for. Also they were in terror of meeting Eskimo. They assured the explorer that game would be unobtainable farther down the river, and that they would all assuredly die of starvation. They would willingly have deserted Mackenzie, as their countrymen had deserted Samuel Hearne on his first journey toward the Coppermine, but Alexander Mackenzie was of a more masterful

spirit. They soon learned that they must swallow their fears, real or imaginary, and follow the impetuous white man wherever he chose to lead them.

It is interesting to learn from Mackenzie that the Crees had ranged in their war excursions even below the mouth of the Liard. The tribes of the Mackenzie River held them in the same terror as the Sioux inspired in their neighbours of the north-western plains, or the Iroquois among the tribes of the St. Lawrence valley. The primitive state in which Mackenzie found these tribes of the Mackenzie River is illustrated by the fact that they still used stone axes, made of brown or grey stone from six to eight inches long and two inches thick, the inside flat, the outside round and tapering to an edge, and fastened at the middle with green deerskin to a two foot-handle. This axe seems to have been intended more for peaceful than warlike purposes. Their weapons consisted of bows and arrows, spears, daggers, and pogamagans or clubs. The bows were five or six feet long with strings of sinews. The arrows were barbed with bone, horn, flint, iron, or copper, the iron no doubt procured through the more southerly tribes, the copper from the Red Knives. The spear was barbed with bone, and was used for striking reindeer in the water; the daggers were flat and sharp-pointed, made of horn or bone; the pogamagan was made of the horn of the reindeer, the branches being cut off except that which formed the extremity. This weapon they employed both in war and hunting.

On July 2nd Mackenzie came in sight of the Rocky

Mountains, at the point where they most nearly approach the river. "We perceived," he says, "a very high mountain ahead, which appeared, on our nearer approach, to be rather a cluster of mountains, stretching as far as our view could reach to the southward, and whose tops were lost in the clouds." A few hours later they were abreast of the mountains, whose summits seemed to be barren and rocky, while their declivities were covered with wood. "They appeared also to be sprinkled with white stones, which glistened in the sun, and were called by the Indians *manetoe aseniah,* or spirit stones." Mackenzie suspected that they were talc, though they possessed more brilliant whiteness, but on his return journey found they were nothing but patches of snow. Sir John Franklin was at this same point on August 6th, 1825. Here the river turns abruptly from a west-by-north course to due north. The mountains cross the river some distance below, and for several hundred miles it flows between two parallel ranges, the eastern being always in sight. Franklin noticed the same brilliant whiteness in this eastern range. The mountains appeared white as marble in the bright sunshine.

Mackenzie sighted these mountains on July 3rd, and that evening camped at the foot of a high hill which in some parts rose perpendicularly from the river. He immediately ascended it, accompanied by two men and some Indians, and in about an hour and a half with very hard walking gained the summit, which, to his surprise, he found crowned by an encampment. The

Indians informed him that it was the custom of the people who had no arms to choose these elevated spots for their camps, as they could render them inaccessible to their enemies, particularly the Knisteneaux or Crees, of whom they were in continual dread. This is the famous "Hill by the River Side" or "Rock by the River Side" so often referred to in the narratives of later explorers, and of which an admirable drawing by Kendall is given in Franklin's Second Expedition.

Since they entered the Mackenzie the weather had been decidedly warm, but it now turned very cold with the suddenness of these northern latitudes. The banks of the river were covered with masses of ice which neither the sun nor the force of the current had been able to remove.[1] On the morning of July 5th they landed on the north bank of the river and surprised a party of natives, who fled to the woods in confusion. After a good deal of parleying, they were persuaded that the white men had no sinister designs, and a present of knives and a few beads and other trinkets completely won their confidence. They proved to be of the Slave and Dog-rib tribes. Mackenzie questioned them closely through his interpreter as to the course and character of the river, but could get nothing intelligible out of them. However, by the gift of a

[1] The Ramparts, some distance below, "are frequently the scene of great ice jams in the spring, and the dammed-back water is stated to have risen on one occasion over a hundred feet, and on its recession left a boat stranded on the heights above" (R. G. McConnell, Geol. Survey, 1888-9, 106 D).

kettle, an axe, a knife, and other small articles, one of them was induced to accompany the party as guide. Re-embarking, they continued their course, and before nightfall passed the mouth of Great Bear River. Mackenzie was struck by the clear greenish hue of its waters, like the waters of the sea. He makes no mention of the remarkable mountain at the entrance to Great Bear River, afterward described by Franklin, whose summit "displays a variety of insulated peaks crowned in the most irregular manner." They camped for the night a few miles below Great Bear River, at the foot of a rocky hill, on the top of which, according to the guide, it blew a storm every day throughout the year.

Mackenzie was still pushing forward with the same extraordinary energy, embarking at four, three, or even two in the morning, and urging his men to their utmost. He was determined at all hazards to complete the great object of his journey, and as the way was long, uncertain, and perhaps hazardous, the season short, and provisions very limited, the utmost expedition was imperative. The Indians grumbled constantly at the killing pace, but, to their honour, the French-Canadian crew stood by him gallantly.

Day after day they paddled down the river, the day lengthening rapidly as they approached the Arctic Circle. Whenever natives were seen on the banks, Mackenzie landed and questioned them as to the course of the river, its distance from the sea, and the character of the surrounding country, but little that

was of any practical service could be elicited. Indeed, the Indians were universally shy and suspicious of these white strangers from the south, and always fled at their approach, having to be coaxed back with presents. At one place all fled but one old man, who met them on the beach. He was, he said, too far advanced in years, and too indifferent about the short time he had to remain in the world, to be very anxious about escaping from any danger that threatened him. At the same time he pulled his grey hair from his head by handfuls and offered it to them, imploring their favour for himself and his relations. Mackenzie convinced him that the white men came as friends, not enemies, and he went off to recall the fugitives.

About one hundred and twenty-five miles below Bear River Mackenzie came to what is now known as Sans Sault Rapid. This was the formidable "waterfall" of which he had been warned by the Indians above. As a matter of fact it is the most serious obstruction to the navigation of the river between Great Slave Lake and the sea, but except at low water presents no serious difficulties even to fairly large craft. At high water the rapid is almost drowned out, and can then be ascended even by the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mackenzie had difficulty in recognizing in this comparatively easy rapid the impassable waterfall of which he had received such highly coloured accounts from the natives.

Another thirty miles or so brought the explorer to

one of the most striking points on this remarkable river. Here the banks suddenly contract to about five hundred yards, and for three or four miles the river flows majestically between walls of limestone rising perpendicularly from the water's edge to a height of one hundred and twenty-five feet, increasing at the lower end of the gorge to two hundred and fifty feet. These Ramparts of the Mackenzie, as they were afterwards called by the traders, have been admirably described by later travellers, notably Sir John Franklin, and R. G. McConnell, of the Canadian Geological Survey.

One party of Indians met with, of a different tribe from any hitherto encountered, possessed small pieces of iron which they used as knives. These, they said, they obtained from the Eskimo, who no doubt procured them from the Russians on the western coast. They were armed with bows of a peculiar construction, made in two pieces bound with sinews, which were also understood to have been procured from the Eskimo. From these Indians, who seem to have been more cleanly and intelligent than the tribes farther up the river, a guide was procured, who informed Mackenzie that he would sleep ten nights before he reached the sea. He spoke of the upper Indians in terms of great derision, describing them as old women and abominable liars. With the latter part of the description Mackenzie had every reason to agree.

On July 10th he obtained an observation that gave 67° 47′ north latitude, which was farther north than he

expected, according to the course he had kept. The difference he attributed to the variation of the compass, which was more easterly than he had imagined. He now for the first time became convinced that the great river emptied into the "Hyperborean Sea," and though it was probable that from lack of provisions he could not now return to Athabaska that season, he nevertheless determined to penetrate to the discharge of the river. The river shortly before had been narrow, flowing rapidly between high banks; but as they proceeded it widened and ran through various channels formed by islands, some of them little more than banks of mud or sand. Their shores, about six feet above the surface of the water, were faced with solid ice. The channels were so numerous and bewildering that Mackenzie was at a loss which to follow. The guide favoured the easternmost on account of the Eskimo, of whom he was in constant dread, but Mackenzie decided to take the middle channel, as it appeared to be the largest and ran north and south. A snow-crowned range of mountains lay off to the westward, stretching north as far as could be seen. According to Indian report, they were the same as had been seen farther up the river.

The guide now rebelled. He had never been, he said, to the *Benahullo Toe* or White Man's Lake. The Chipewyans too were disheartened and anxious to return. Finally Mackenzie satisfied them by promising that if he did not reach the sea within seven days he would turn back. Indeed, he adds, "the low state of

Eskimo in Kayaks, Mouth of Mackenzie River

Dogrib Indians on Great Slave Lake

our provisions, without any other consideration, formed a very sufficient security for the maintenance of my engagement." At half-past eight in the evening they landed, and pitched their tents beside a deserted Eskimo camp. Mackenzie sat up all night to observe the sun. At half-past twelve he called up one of his men to view a spectacle which he had never before seen. Surprised to find the sun so high, he thought it the signal to embark, and began to call his companions, who would scarcely believe that the sun had not descended nearer to the horizon, and that it was then but a short time past midnight.

Continuing their course down the middle channel, they landed on the 12th at another deserted Eskimo encampment. The banks of the river were high and covered with short grass and flowers, though the earth was not thawed more than four inches from the surface. The grass and flowers were in striking contrast to the ice and snow that filled all the surrounding valleys. The stream now widened out into what seemed to be a lake, and Mackenzie found his position to be 69° 1′ north. Without knowing it, he had already attained the object of his journey, for the body of water before him was the mouth of the middle branch of the Mackenzie.

There was open water to the westward, and the course was steered for a high island about fifteen miles distant, which was reached about five o'clock in the afternoon. No land appeared ahead, and the bay was covered with ice for a couple of leagues. Mackenzie

accordingly pitched his tents on the island, ordered nets to be set, and climbed with the English Chief to the highest point of the island. From this elevation he had a wide view in every direction. Solid ice extended from the south-west around to the eastward. As far as the eye could reach to the south-westward he could dimly perceive a chain of mountains, stretching farther to the north than the edge of the ice, at a distance of upward of twenty leagues. To the eastward were many islands. Still Mackenzie did not realize that his task was now practically accomplished. He returned to his men, who "could not refrain from expressions of real concern that they were obliged to return without reaching the sea." Indeed, he says, "the hope of attaining this object encouraged them to bear without repining the hardships of our unremitting voyage. For some time past their spirits were animated by the expectation that another day would bring them to the *Mer d'Ouest,* and even in our present situation they declared their readiness to follow me wherever I should be pleased to lead them." The same spirit of discovery, the same fine enthusiasm, which had carried La Vérendrye and his gallant sons through every hardship, inspired these humble French-Canadian *voyageurs.*

But proofs of the fulfilment of his object were now hammering at the doors of Mackenzie's consciousness, though with Scottish stubbornness he refused to listen to them. "We had no sooner retired to rest," he writes in his journal on Monday, July 13th, "than some of the

people were obliged to rise and remove the baggage on account of the rising of the water." But he goes off calmly to examine the nets, supposing that this extraordinary phenomenon was nothing but the result of a high wind. In the nets were found a fish about the size of a herring, which none of the party had seen before except the English Chief, who recognized it as being of a kind that abounded in Hudson Bay. About noon Mackenzie took an observation which gave 69° 14′ north latitude, and the meridian variation of the compass was 36° east. The longitude he subsequently discovered by the dead reckoning to be 135° west.

The following morning he was awakened by one of his men crying out that he saw a great many strange animals in the water. "I immediately perceived," he says, "that they were whales; and having ordered the canoe to be prepared, we embarked in pursuit of them. It was, indeed, a very wild and unreflecting enterprise, and it was a very fortunate circumstance that we failed in our attempt to overtake them, as a stroke from the tail of one of these enormous fish would have dashed the canoe to pieces." These were the small white whale. "They were frequently seen," says Mackenzie, "as large as our canoe."

About noon an attempt was made to reach the ice, but the wind rising suddenly from the north-east, and the fog closing down with equal suddenness, they were thankful enough to get back to the island in safety. Hoping to find natives, Mackenzie paddled some

distance inside the islands, screened from the wind, but without success. Returning, he encamped on the eastern end of the island, which he had named Whale Island, and which still bears the same name on the maps. The island "is about seven leagues in length, east and west by compass, but not more than half a mile in breadth." "This morning," says Mackenzie, "I ordered a post to be erected close to our tents, on which I engraved the latitude of the place, my own name, the number of persons which I had with me, and the time we remained here." From this it would appear that the explorer had at last become convinced that he was really at the mouth of the Mackenzie; though it is not until the next morning that he records in his journal that "being awakened by some casual circumstance at four this morning, I was surprised on perceiving that the water had flowed under our baggage." "As the wind had not changed," he adds significantly, "and did not blow with greater violence than when we went to rest, we were all of opinion that this circumstance proceeded from the tide." An incident that throws light upon the matter is that a month later, on his way up the river, he upbraided the English Chief for his faithless conduct. "I stated to him," he says, "that I had come a great way, and at a very considerable expense, without having completed the object of my wishes, and that I suspected he had concealed from me a principal part of what the natives had told him respecting the country, lest he should be obliged to follow me."

Mackenzie's expectation had been that the river he was descending discharged into the Western Sea — the Pacific, — and the fact that he had actually reached the Arctic — if he realized it — seemed of too little moment, under the discouraging circumstances, ever to be recorded.

On the morning of the 16th he sailed once more among the islands, in a final effort to get in touch with the natives, presumably the Eskimo, but without success. The guide imagined that they were gone to their distant haunts, where they were in the habit of fishing for whales and hunting caribou. His relations, he said, saw them every year, but he did not encourage Mackenzie to expect that he would be likely to find any of them, unless it were at a small river that fell into the Mackenzie from the eastward, at a considerable distance upstream. "We accordingly," says Mackenzie, "made for the river, and stemmed the current."

On the morning of the 21st they were back at the point where the Mackenzie forks into its several branches before finally emptying the product of its gigantic drainage basin into the Arctic. It had been comparatively easy travelling up to this point, but as soon as they paddled on to the main stream they encountered a current so strong that it became necessary to get out and tow the canoe with a line. The land on both sides was elevated and almost perpendicular, and the narrow strip of shore between the banks and the water's edge was covered with broken stone fallen from the precipice. Altogether it was an uncomfortable

path along which to tow even a light canoe. "The men in the canoe relieved two of those on shore every two hours, so that it was very hard and fatiguing duty, but it saved a great deal of that time which was so precious to us." That evening they camped at the same place where they had camped on the 9th, on their way down the river.

The next day Mackenzie had an opportunity of visiting one of the Indian villages, and took advantage of the occasion to question closely the inhabitants, through the medium of the English Chief, concerning the nature of their country. From them he learned that the Eskimo occasionally ascended the Mackenzie River in search of flint stones to point their spears and arrows; that there was a lake at no great distance to the eastward where the Eskimo had their home. The Indians also professed to have heard from the Eskimo of white men to the westward. These white men came in "large canoes," and the Eskimo obtained from them iron in exchange for leather. The "lake" where the Eskimo met these "canoes" was called by them *Belhoullay Toe,* evidently merely a variant in spelling of the name which Mackenzie has already translated as White Man's Lake. From these natives Mackenzie obtained an interesting account of the Eskimo, who were described as wearing their hair short; having two holes perforated, one on each side of the mouth in a line with the under lip, in which they placed long beads that they found in the lake. Their bows were described as somewhat different from those used by the Indians;

and the curious statement was made that the Eskimo employed slings from whence they could throw stones with such dexterity that they proved very formidable weapons in the day of battle.

From a Dog-rib Indian, encountered a few days later, Mackenzie obtained further particulars of the White Man's Lake, or *Belhoullay Teo,* as he now spells the name. He had been informed, he said, that there was another river (the Yukon) on the opposite side of the mountains to the south-west, which fell into the *Belhoullay Teo,* in comparison with which the Mackenzie was but a small stream. Emboldened no doubt by the interest which this more or less accurate bit of information excited in Mackenzie, the Dog-rib proceeded to embellish his story with details drawn from his lively Indian imagination. The natives on the banks of this river, he said, were very large, and very wicked; they killed common men with their eyes; and did many other wonderful things. It may be that the "killing with their eyes" was the Indian conception of the white man's strange and deadly weapon; or more probably it was pure fiction.

On the 27th Mackenzie again hears of the White Man's Lake and the river that flows into it. Meeting another party of Indians, he induced one of them to draw a map of the country to the westward in the sand. "This singular map he immediately undertook to delineate, and accordingly traced out a very long point of land between the rivers, though without paying the least attention to their courses, which he represented

as running into the great lake, at the extremity of which, as he had been told by Indians of other nations, there was a *Belhoullay Couin,* or White Man's fort. This I took to be the Unlaska fort, and consequently the river to the west to be Cook's River [it was of course the Yukon]; and that the body of water or sea into which this river discharges itself at Whale Island communicates with Norton Sound." Mackenzie tried to induce this Indian to guide him over the mountains to the River of the West, but without success. A further attempt to get light on the river and the tribes who inhabited its borders resulted merely in a fairy tale more preposterous than any that had gone before. The inhabitants of that country were represented as of gigantic stature and adorned with wings; they fed on large birds; and so forth.

On August 2nd Mackenzie was back again at the mouth of Bear River, and a few miles above found the bank of the river to be burning, a circumstance which had escaped his notice on the way down, as he had followed the opposite shore. On closer examination it proved to be a species of coal, to which he conjectured fire had been communicated from an old Indian encampment. Sir John Richardson, however, took a different view — that this lignite, which is excessively combustible, takes fire spontaneously on exposure to moist air. When Franklin passed this way in August, 1825, the banks were burning; they were burning in 1848, when Richardson reached the mouth of Bear River; and they were still burn-

ing in 1888, a hundred years after Mackenzie's journey.[1]

Franklin found at the same spot, "layers of a kind of unctuous mud, similar, perhaps, to that found on the borders of the Orinoco, which the Indians in this neighbourhood use occasionally as food during seasons of famine, and even at other times chew it as an amusement. It has a milky taste, and the flavour is not disagreeable."

August 14th Mackenzie reached the mouth of the River of the Mountains, which he ascended for about two miles. He describes the stream as very muddy, and forming a cloudy streak along the water of the Mackenzie for some distance downstream, until the contraction of the channel blended the two waters into one. On the 20th an awl and paddle were found on an island in the river, which were recognized as belonging to the Crees, who were known to have passed this way on a war expedition. Two days later Mackenzie reached the entrance to Great Slave Lake; and at four in the afternoon of the 24th a large canoe was observed ahead with two smaller ones, on overtaking which they were found to contain Leroux and an Indian with his family, returning from a hunting expedition on which they had been out twenty-five

[1] R. G. McConnell's Exploration in Yukon and Mackenzie Basins, Geol. Survey, 1888-9, 98 d. Mr. E. Stewart, Superintendent of Forestry, descended the Mackenzie in 1906, and says in his Report: "Eight miles above Fort Norman (at the mouth of Bear River) for upwards of two miles along the right bank of the river smoke is distinctly observed from fires still burning far down in seams of coal, or rather lignite."

days. On the 30th the entire party reached Leroux's house, where Mackenzie paid off his Chipewyans. Taking leave of Leroux, the explorer continued his homeward journey, reaching Fort Chipewyan about three in the afternoon of the 12th of September, after a voyage of one hundred and two days — one of the most remarkable exploits in the history of inland discovery, whether regarded in the light of the results achieved, or of the time taken to cover a journey of nearly three thousand miles.

CHAPTER III

FIRST OVERLAND JOURNEY TO THE PACIFIC

VERY soon after his return to Fort Chipewyan, on September 12th, 1789, Alexander Mackenzie ascended the Athabaska River to the mouth of the Clearwater, where he met Roderick McKenzie on his way back from Grand Portage, and they returned together to Fort Chipewyan, where they spent the winter. In the spring the explorer went down to Grand Portage, where he arrived on July 13th, and wrote somewhat disgustedly to his cousin: "My expedition was hardly spoken of, but that is what I expected." He returned to the west, and in March of the following year writes again to Roderick McKenzie, who was then at the Slave Lake Fort, established by Leroux. He suggests that a party of men be sent down the "River Disappointment" on a trading voyage to the Beaver Indians; and that a post be established at the entrance of Slave River. The name here given to the Mackenzie River is suggestive. Mackenzie still felt that the object of his expedition of 1789 had not been accomplished. He asks Roderick to purchase some Indian curiosities for him. He was destitute of such articles,

the serious problems of his journey having left no opportunity for such minor considerations; and he adds: "It would be unbecoming a North-Wester to appear below [that is, at Grand Portage or Montreal] so unprovided in that line." One of the things he asks for is the horns of the "small musk buffalo" or musk ox, that singular-looking inhabitant of the barren lands that has excited the interest of so many later travellers.

When Alexander Mackenzie first conceived the idea of his second journey of discovery there is no definite means of knowing. From certain remarks in the journal of his voyage to the Arctic, it would appear that, having failed to reach the Pacific by way of the Mackenzie River, he cherished the idea of an overland expedition to the Pacific, and his subsequent letters to his cousin abound in casual hints pointing to conversations that had taken place on the subject. In August, 1791, he mentions his intention of crossing the ocean, and from other sources it is known that he had about this time determined to spend some months in England perfecting his scientific knowledge. He did not propose to allow any lack of technical equipment to mar the success of this second expedition. Having carried out this design, and returned to Canada with suitable instruments, early in 1792, he hurried on to Fort Chipewyan to make preparations for his great journey. He had determined to ascend the Peace River this season, winter there, and as early as possible the following spring make a dash for the Pacific. Two men had

already been sent forward to prepare timber for a fort on Peace River.

It having been arranged that Roderick McKenzie was to remain in charge of Fort Chipewyan and the affairs of the district during his absence, Alexander Mackenzie set forth on October 10th, 1792, for his second and most important tour of discovery. He took with him two canoes laden with necessary supplies, while some of his men followed in several others. Coasting along the southern shore of Lake Athabaska, he entered one of the branches of Peace River known as the Pine River, and reached the main stream on the morning of the 12th. The following day at noon he reached Peace Point, from which, as described in an earlier chapter, the River derives its name. The 17th he reached the fall, where the river is about four hundred yards broad, the fall being about twenty feet high. The next day he passed Loon River, and encamped on Grande Isle. A heavy frost during the night left Mackenzie in some apprehension as to whether he could reach his destination before ice on the river blocked his progress. He therefore determined to push forward with redoubled speed, and embarking at three o'clock on the morning of the 19th, reached the Old Establishment five hours later. This post had been built by a trader named Boyer in 1788, under Mackenzie's instructions. Up to this point the river had already been explored by one Vandrieul, or Vaudreuil, on behalf of the North West Company.

Continuing his voyage, Mackenzie overtook a trader

named Finlay[1] who was encamped near the fort of which he was to take charge during the ensuing winter. Here Mackenzie remained for several days, making arrangements for the trade of the post. This was the highest establishment so far made on the Peace River. Taking his departure on the morning of October 23rd, under volleys of musketry, Mackenzie continued his voyage up the river, passing the mouths of several branches, and reaching the mouth of Smoky River on November 1st. Ascending the main stream, a paddle of six miles brought him to the spot where he had determined to make his winter quarters; and he arrived none too soon, for the ice was fast forming on the river, and another day or two's delay would have proved serious. The men who had been sent forward to make preparations for the winter had the timber and palisades ready, and the entire party set to work with a will to build the fort, while the Indians of the neighbourhood were sent to bring in a supply of game. Before Christmas Mackenzie was able to move from his tent into the new building, while the men went on with the erection of a range of five smaller houses for their own occupancy. December 29th they were visited by what is known in the west as a Chinook wind, under the extraordinary influence of which the snow disappeared from the ground as if by magic, and even the ice on the river was covered with water, having the same appearance as when breaking up in the spring. A few hours

[1] This was John Finlay, whose name was given to a branch of Peace River.

afterward, the wind changing around to the north-east, they were back once more in the heart of winter. Similar conditions were experienced early in January.

About this time Mackenzie was informed by the Indians that they had been hunting at a large lake, called by the Crees the Slave Lake. It was represented as a large body of water lying about one hundred and twenty miles due east of the Fort of the Forks. The Crees on their war excursions from the Saskatchewan to the Peace River country had been accustomed to leave their canoes at this lake, following a beaten track from thence to the forks. This is the first mention of what is now known as Lesser Slave Lake. A rough cart-road now takes the place of the old war-road of the Crees.[1]

On January 10th, 1793, in a letter to Roderick McKenzie, the explorer says that he has made out the longitude of the fort to be 115° 25′ and the latitude 56° 34′ 30″. In a subsequent letter he corrects both, giving the former as 117° 43′[2] and the latter as 56° 9′. He was not far astray either in latitude or longitude. In 1803 David Thompson fixed the position of this fort as latitude 55° 8′ 17″ and longitude 117° 13′ 14″, var. 23½° east. It is probably the same fort, though Thompson says it was five miles above the Forks, while Mackenzie gives it as six.

From the natives Mackenzie learned of a great river

---

[1] Since this was written a railway has been built from Edmonton into this Peace River country.

[2] 117° 35′ 15″ in his narrative.

on the western side of the mountains, flowing toward the setting sun. As the spring approached he made active preparations for his journey, but experienced a good deal of difficulty in securing Indians to accompany him as guides and hunters. He finally prevailed on three to undertake the journey, but one was afterwards induced to desert by another Indian, whose offer to serve as a guide had been rejected. Knowing the little dependence to be placed on Indian promises, Mackenzie feared that the others would disappear also, which would have meant the abandonment of the expedition. It is true these Indians knew no more of the country to be traversed to the westward than he did himself; but their instinct for finding their way was as indispensable as their ability to forage for the party, and to act as interpreters, in a strange country. It was therefore with a good deal of relief that he found them faithful.

May 9th, 1793, having left two men in charge of the fort until his return, Mackenzie embarked in a twenty-five foot canoe which he had built specially strong and light for the uncertain waterways that lay before him. With him went Alexander Mackay, one of the most capable of the Company's men in the Athabaska district, six French-Canadians, two of whom had been with him on his voyage down the Mackenzie, and the two Indians. The Indians who were left behind "shed tears on the reflection of those dangers which we might encounter in our expedition, while my own people

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE Esq.r

UCB LIBRARIES

offered up their prayers that we might return in safety."

They embarked at seven in the evening, and camped on an island in the river. At a quarter past three the following morning they continued their voyage, but at noon had to land to gum the canoe, which, being heavily laden, had sprung a leak. In the afternoon the hunters killed an elk and a buffalo, so that they had plenty of fresh meat. Mackenzie was now exploring the upper waters of the Peace River, never before traversed by white men. "The west side of the river," he says, "displayed a succession of the most beautiful scenery I had ever beheld. The ground rises at intervals to a considerable height, and stretching inward to a considerable distance, at every interval or pause in the rise there is a very gently ascending space or lawn, which is alternate with abrupt precipices to the summit of the whole, or at least as far as the eye could distinguish. . . . Groves of poplar in every shape vary the scene, and their intervals are enlivened with vast herds of elks and buffaloes." The current increasing in strength, they had little opportunity to use the paddles and had to resort to poling.

With a strong wind ahead they embarked the next morning at four, leaving all the fresh meat behind, the canoe being already too heavy laden. They were travelling through a country where game was plentiful, and for the present need give no thought to the morrow's meals. This morning they passed the mouth of a small stream flowing in from the east, named by

the Indians the *Quiscatina Sepy* or River with the High Banks; and in the afternoon met a party of Beaver Indians on a hunting expedition. It was toward evening, but Mackenzie did not think it wise to land lest the Beavers might induce his Indians to desert the expedition. The Beavers, however, followed along the bank, and he had no option but to camp with them. From them he learned that he would reach the foot of the mountains in about ten days.

As they paddled up the river the banks increased in height, until their view of the surrounding country was completely shut off. At the same time the river narrowed from four or five hundred yards to half that width. On the 13th they found tracks of grizzly bears along the shore, but did not see any of the animals, to the relief of the Indians, who held them in great dread. Three days later, however, Mackenzie notes in his journal, "We this day saw two grisly and hideous bears." Buffalo and other large game were still very plentiful, indeed, so much so, that in places the country had the appearance of a barn-yard. At two in the afternoon of May 17th, eight days after their departure from the Forks, they had their first view of the Rocky Mountains, bearing south-west by south, their summits covered with snow. The current was now become very strong and to lighten the canoe Mackenzie, Mackay, and the two hunters landed and followed up the banks. This day they reached the first serious rapid. In attempting to haul the canoe upstream it was driven violently against a projecting rock and considerably

injured. Repairing the breach, they attempted to continue their course, but were finally compelled to return to their starting-point. Traversing the stream to the opposite bank, they found the current equally violent, but as the banks were not so steep they could get foothold, and with a sixty-fathom line managed to pull the canoe up the rapid to the clear water above. Their difficulties were only beginning, however. Climbing a hill, Mackenzie found that, as far as he could see, the river was an almost continuous rapid. There was nothing for it but to go forward. Sometimes hauling the canoe, sometimes carrying it over a rocky point, they made their toilsome and dangerous way upstream, camping at night wherever they could find a little bit of level ground. Sometimes it seemed as if further progress was completely barred, but by heroic efforts they managed to find a way around or over every impediment. At one spot steps had to be cut in the face of the solid rock for a distance of twenty feet. Mackenzie led the way and leaped down to a small rock on the opposite side, receiving those who followed on his shoulders. In this way they worked their way around by slow and painful degrees. At a critical point in one of the rapids a wave struck the bow of the canoe so violently as to break the line. For a moment all seemed lost. Mackenzie looked on with inexpressible dismay, for the loss of the canoe, with all his supplies, meant the abandonment of his enterprise. By a miracle, however, another wave, more propitious than the first, drove the canoe out of the tumbling water, so that the

men were enabled to bring her ashore without material injury.

The men were now completely discouraged, and muttered discontentedly that there was nothing for it but to return. As far as eye could see, the river above was one white sheet of foaming water. But Mackenzie had not come so far to turn back. Paying no attention to the murmurs of his followers, he ordered them to encamp while he himself set off with one of the Indians to examine the river above. He followed the banks as long as daylight lasted, but could see no end to the rapids and cascades of this Rocky Mountain canon, and was finally convinced that it was impracticable to proceed any farther by water. Returning to camp, he talked the matter over with Mackay, and it was settled that the latter should the following day follow the river until he reached navigable water.

At sunset the next day Mackay returned. He had penetrated thick woods, ascended hills and sunk into valleys, till he got beyond the rapids, a distance of three leagues from camp. It was now decided to attempt the almost superhuman task of carrying the canoe and baggage overland to the navigable water above. At break of day on the 22nd the men began to cut a road up the mountain side. The canoe was then lifted from the water, and with infinite fatigue, by passing the line around the stumps of successive trees, they managed to warp it to the summit of the hill. The same afternoon the men cut a road through the bush for about a mile, and they all returned exhausted to camp.

The next day, carrying the canoe and baggage with them, they made about three miles. The 24th they continued their painful journey, up and down hill, cutting a way as they went, until finally they reached the river above the rapids. About two hundred yards below this point the river rushed with astonishing but silent velocity between perpendicular banks not more than thirty-five yards apart. Below this again the channel took a zigzag course, the waves dashing with impetuous strength first against one side then against the other, tossed in high, foaming billows as far as could be seen. Mackenzie might well congratulate himself on having surmounted such a gorge.

The 26th they continued their voyage, poling upstream. The river here widened considerably, being full of small islands. The air was so cold that the men had to wear blanket coats even while they worked at the poles. On the last day of the month they reached the forks of the Peace River. Mackenzie was inclined to follow the Finlay branch, as it appeared to be the most likely to bring him to the point where he hoped to strike the ocean, but an old Indian who had been thus far had warned him on no account to follow this stream, as it was lost in various branches among the mountains and afforded no communication with any considerable stream flowing toward the sea, while the southern branch, according to the Indian, led by a portage to another large river, where the inhabitants built houses and lived upon islands. Mackenzie fortunately decided to follow the advice of the Indian, for, said he, "I did

not entertain the least doubt, if I could get into the other river, that I should reach the ocean."

Accordingly he ordered his steersmen to turn up the south branch, to the disgust of his men, who were already more than tired of the ceaseless toil and danger of the enterprise and in no mood to stem the violent current of the Parsnip. "The inexpressible toil these people had endured," says the generous-minded Mackenzie, "as well as the dangers they had encountered, required some degree of consideration." He therefore employed all the resources of his mind to soothe their discontent, making it perfectly plain, however, that he was determined at all hazards to continue his discoveries.

They were only able to make two or three miles up the Parsnip, which was in flood, in an afternoon's hard labour, and were then compelled by sheer exhaustion to land and camp for the night. At sunrise on June 1st Mackenzie had his men embarked, and after some hours' discouraging conflict with the fierce current, found about noon, to his great relief, that it was beginning to slacken. He put to shore to gum the canoe, and while this was being done took an observation which gave 55° 42′ 16″ N. Continuing the voyage, about evening the current became violent, and Mr. Mackay and the Indians disembarked to lighten the canoe. At sunset they encamped on a point, the first dry land they had found fit for the purpose. During the morning they had passed the mouth of a large river flowing in from the west (the Nation). Mackenzie was struck by the

immense number of beavers on this part of the river. In some places they had cut down several acres of large poplars. Their industry knew no bounds. They laboured from the setting to the rising sun.

The second and third of the month Mackenzie worked steadily upstream against a rapid current. He rose with the sun, but had to camp before nightfall, as his men were then completely exhausted by the constant strain at the paddles. At noon on the third he obtained a meridian altitude which gave 55° 22′ 3″, and according to his calculations, he was at this time about twenty-five miles southeast of the forks. The following day the current continued very strong. The river was high and rising rapidly, in many places overflowing its banks. No place fit for a camp could be found until late at night, when they landed on a gravel bank, of which little more appeared above water than the spot they occupied. During the night the water continued to rise, and when Mackenzie awoke in the morning he was just in time to save canoe and baggage from floating downstream, leaving the party stranded helplessly in the midst of the wilderness. Sending the men forward in the canoe, Mackenzie landed with Mackay on the east shore and climbed a neighbouring mountain, hoping to get a view of the surrounding country, but on reaching the summit found himself on an elevated plateau covered with heavy timber. Climbing to the summit of a lofty tree, he saw on the right a ridge of mountains covered with snow, bearing about northwest, and another ridge of high land stretching toward

the south, between which and the mountains to the eastward there appeared an opening which was evidently the course of the river. Satisfied with this information, Mackenzie returned to the river-side, but could see no sign of the canoe. The Indian hunters had landed with him, and he now sent Mackay with one of them downstream, while he proceeded up the banks, in search of the missing party. As the day wore on without bringing any response to the signal guns fired at intervals, Mackenzie's anxiety became intense. The Indians were convinced that the canoe had been upset in the current, and were already discussing the building of a raft to return down the river, calculating the number of days that would be required to reach their homes, when late in the evening a shot from Mackay conveyed the welcome news that the canoe had been seen. Though convinced that the men had taken advantage of his absence to relax their efforts at the paddles, Mackenzie was so relieved to find all safe that he accepted their story of toil and hardship and comforted each with a consolatory dram.

Without knowing it Mackenzie had passed the mouth of Pack River, which would have taken him by an easy route to what was later known as Giscome Portage, and so to the Fraser. He probably made the same mistake here that he was to make a fortnight later in passing the mouth of the Nechaco. Pack River flows into the Parsnip behind a low, flat island "timbered with spruce and large cotton-wood," and Mackenzie apparently paddled up the east side of the Parsnip without seeing

the mouth of this important tributary. Dr. Alfred Selwyn camped on this island in 1875. "At low water in the fall," he says, "the northern channel is nearly dry." It was, perhaps, up this northern channel that Mackenzie passed at high water in 1793, and thus missed the junction of Pack or McLeod's Lake River, of which he makes no mention either on his upward journey in June, or on his return journey in August.

For the next four days their course lay up the Parsnip, sometimes paddling, oftener tracking the canoe along the banks of the river, for the water was still rising, and the current so rapid as to make navigation well-nigh impossible. On the 7th Mackenzie found his position to be in lat. 55° 5′ 36″, long. 122° 35′ 50″. He was anxiously looking for the portage which, if the accounts of the old Indian were correct, he should now be approaching. If he could get in touch with the natives some information might, no doubt, be derived from them, but so far he had seen nothing but their deserted camp-fires. On the 9th, however, two Indians appeared on the bank of the river, and after a good deal of parleying with his interpreter, they met Mackenzie on the shore. His account of the meeting with these strange Indians, who were, no doubt, Sikannis, is very interesting. They laid aside their bows and arrows, and when Mackenzie stepped forward and took each of them by the hand, one of them, but with a very tremulous action, drew his knife from his sleeve and presented it to him as a mark of his submission. A flag was shown them as a token of friendship, and

they examined it as well as everything about the explorer with minute and suspicious attention. They had heard, indeed, of white men, but this was the first time they had ever met one. Through his interpreter, Mackenzie closely questioned the Sikannis as to the great river he was seeking. They told him that a long portage led to the river, from whence they were just arrived; that they obtained ironwork from another tribe which inhabited the banks of this river and an adjacent lake (the Carriers); that this tribe trafficked with another a moon's journey from their country; that the last tribe (the Coast Indians) lived in houses, and traded at the sea-coast with men like Mackenzie, who came there in vessels as big as islands. One of the Sikannis was induced to guide the party to the great river, but, as it turned out, he knew just about as little of the way as Mackenzie did. June 12th they reached a small lake, the source of the Parsnip. "This," says Mackenzie in his journal, "I consider as the highest and southernmost source of the Unjigah or Peace River, latitude 54° 24′ North, longitude 121° West from Greenwich." If he meant that this was the ultimate source of the Peace he was mistaken—the head-waters of the Finlay being recognized as the source of the Peace River, and of the entire system that eventually finds its way into the Arctic Ocean through the Mackenzie delta. The Finlay is two hundred and fifty miles in length; the Parsnip only one hundred and forty-five. But what of this? How trivial it seems in the light of Mackenzie's wonderful achievement! A little over four

years before he had stood at the mouth of the Mackenzie, first of white men to traverse its mighty waters from Great Slave Lake to the Sea. To-day he stood at one of its remote sources, two thousand four hundred and twenty miles from its mouth, and again his was the honour of first discovery. Alexander Mackenzie had explored the entire distance from the source of the Parsnip to the Arctic Ocean.

Carrying canoe and baggage over the height of land, a distance of eight hundred and seventeen paces, the party came to another small lake, emptying through a small but tumultuous stream to the southward into the Fraser. These eight hundred and seventeen paces marked the water-parting of two great river systems, one emptying far to the northward into the Arctic, the other into the Pacific. Mackenzie was upon the threshold of another important discovery. He had already achieved the distinction of first crossing the mountains into what was afterward to be known as New Caledonia. He was presently to discover and explore for some distance the third largest river of the Pacific Coast.

The troublesome stream down which he was now about to force a passage was no encumbered by rapids, whirlpools, treacherous rocks, sandbars, and driftwood, that it well earned the name of Bad River which Simon Fraser afterward bestowed upon it. The journey down this river was in fact a chapter of accidents. It began with the shattering of the stern of the canoe on a rock; the steersman losing control, the canoe drove against

the bank, and the bow met the same fate as the stern; one of the crew had already been left behind on a sandbar, and as the canoe was driving furiously downstream, the foreman, attempting to arrest her progress by seizing the branch of a tree, was jerked violently overboard and hurled ashore. The canoe rushed on, went over a cascade, and broke several holes in the bottom. Now a complete wreck, it drove on, while Mackenzie and his men hung on to the sides, and with great difficulty brought it into shallow water. While the Indians sat on the bank and wept, Mackenzie stood to his waist in the icy cold water, directing the unloading of the canoe. Finally everything was got ashore with the exception of the balls for their guns, which could not be recovered, having gone to the bottom.

This unfortunate accident brought the discouraged *voyageurs* almost to the point of mutiny. Without a canoe, and no balls for their guns, it seemed to them the height of folly to continue the expedition. Mackenzie waited patiently until a hearty meal and a glass of rum had raised their spirits somewhat, and then put the situation before them with persuasive force. He reminded them that they had engaged for the work with their eyes open; that he had placed before them the difficulties and dangers they would have to face, before they engaged to accompany him. He urged upon them the honour of conquering disasters, and the disgrace that would be theirs if they compelled him to return home without having accomplished the object of the expedition. He appealed to their courage and

resolution, the peculiar boast of the Northmen, and told them that he looked to them to uphold the character of their race. He pointed out that the difficulties they had experienced were largely the result of their ignorance of the route; that the navigation was not impracticable in itself; and that the knowledge they had already gained as to the character of the country and its waterways would enable them to pursue the voyage with greater security. Mackenzie's eloquence had the desired effect. He had touched a responsive chord in his shrewd appeal to the racial pride of the French-Canadian *voyageur*. For the present at least, his men would follow wherever Mackenzie chose to lead.

While their enthusiasm was warm he set them to work repairing the canoe, and sent two of the men with an Indian in search of bark. If possible they were also to penetrate to the banks of the great river, and examine the character of the small stream upon whose banks they were encamped, down to its junction with the river. The Indian reached camp late at night with a small roll of bark, and gave a very discouraging account of the character of the Bad River, an account which was confirmed by the two men when they returned the following morning. Nevertheless Mackenzie determined to take the canoe down if there was any way of doing so. Four of the most experienced men were given the task of navigating her, while the rest of the party trudged along the banks with most of the cargo, cutting their way through the bush, wading sometimes knee-high in mud and water, and tormented

from daylight to dark by clouds of mosquitoes. Finally at noon on the 17th they found that all further progress was barred by the accumulated driftwood that completely filled the mouth of the stream. Nothing remained but to cut a road across the intervening neck of land which was all that now separated them from the river. The canoe was lifted from the water and carried three-quarters of a mile through a continual swamp, in which they waded up to the middle of their thighs. "At length," says Mackenzie, "after all our toil and anxiety we enjoyed the inexpressible satisfaction of finding ourselves on the banks of a navigable river, on the west side of the first great range of mountains."

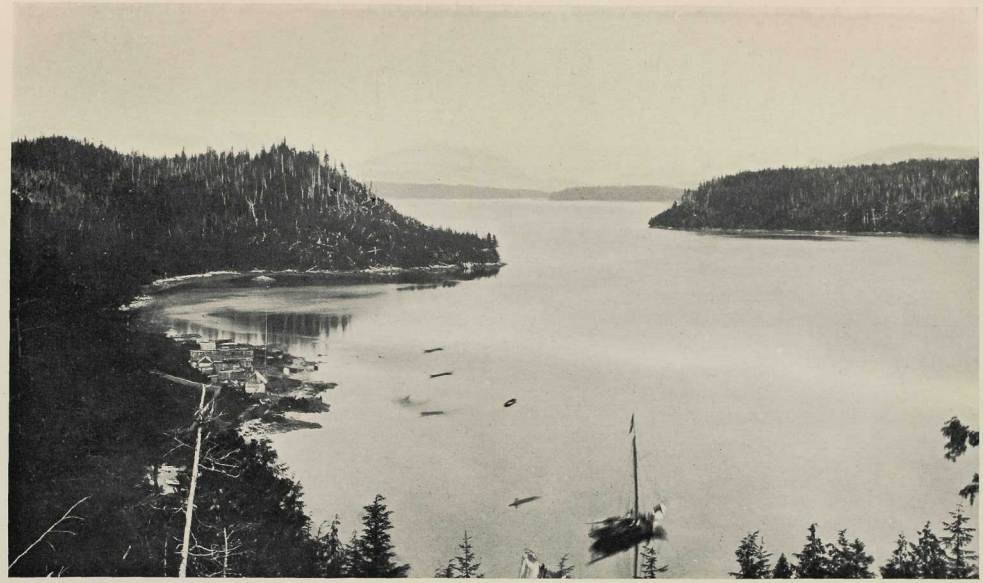
In 1806 Simon Fraser, following Mackenzie up the Peace and the Parsnip, reached this same point. He had the same disastrous experience with his canoes on Bad River, their bottoms being smashed almost beyond repair by the time he reached the place where Mackenzie portaged over the neck of land. He was more fortunate, however, in completing his journey to the river. "After the canoes were gummed a little," he says in his manuscript journal, "we continued on, and had better going than we had reason to expect. The river—right branch—is narrow, but plenty of water to bear the canoes, and the current is not strong, which enabled us to continue on with both canoes with their full loads on. At 10 a.m. we arrived at the large river opposite an island, without encountering any other difficulty

than cutting several trees that lay across the channel, and we were most happy at having exempted the long and bad carrying place, and seeing ourselves once more on the banks of a fine and navigable river." Here, as well as elsewhere, Fraser indulges in a good deal of rather captious criticism of Mackenzie.

Mackenzie had now completed the first stage of his journey, and for a time was to enjoy the luxury of a broad, navigable waterway, broken only occasionally by rapids, at least so far as he followed its course. Before eight on the morning of June 18th he embarked with his men, and with the aid of a strong current made good progress, covering about seventy miles before nightfall. He was now on a branch of the Fraser River. Thirty-four miles from his starting-point he reached the great fork of which his guide had informed him, where the Fraser, after flowing north-west for a time, sweeps around in a great semicircle before turning south on its long journey to the sea. The river was here half a mile wide and assumed the form of a lake. Continuing downstream, Mackenzie saw many signs of natives, but for some days could not get in touch with them. On the 19th he reached what was afterward known as Fort George Canyon. The rapids were found to be of considerable extent, and impassable for a light canoe. An Indian portage path led along the left shore, and this was widened to admit the passage of the canoe. The distance was only half a mile, but was over difficult ground, and the canoe had been so often patched that it required almost

superhuman efforts to get it across. Four hours were consumed in this laborious undertaking, the fatigue of which, says Mackenzie, "beggars all description." Some miles above he had passed, without noticing it, the mouth of the Nechaco River, afterward explored by Simon Fraser, who rather scornfully notes the omission. It is to be remembered, however, that Mackenzie was paddling along the east bank of the Fraser, and could very easily overlook the Nechaco, which flows in behind a considerable island, on the west side.

The following day Mackenzie landed at a deserted Indian house, of which he gives a minute description. He had seen nothing of the kind west of Michilimakinac, the tribes of the plains contenting themselves with teepees. Mackenzie had never been on the Missouri, and was therefore not personally familiar with the houses of the Mandans and their neighbours. This house of the Carrier Indians on the banks of the Fraser, the first of its kind visited by white men, is described as about thirty feet long by twenty wide, with three doors. It appeared to have been built to accommodate three families. There were three fire-places, with rows of beds on either side, and behind the beds an elevated place for storing dried fish. In the house Mackenzie found a singular-looking machine, cylindrical in form, fifteen feet long by four and a half feet in diameter, made of long thin strips of wood fastened to six hoops. This he rightly supposed to be a fish-trap; the familiar salmon-basket of the Carriers, of which an excellent illustration is given in Father



Bella Coola Bay, Pacific Coast

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

Morice's *Northern Interior of British Columbia.* In the course of the day two other houses were observed built on islands in the river.

On the 21st Mackenzie prudently cached ninety pounds of provisions in a deep hole,[1] to guard against distress on the return journey. The same day he discovered a party of Indians on the shore, and endeavoured, through his interpreters, to get into communication with them. The Carriers, however, met his friendly advances with a shower of arrows. Mackenzie landed on the opposite bank, determined at all costs to conciliate them. He realized that unless he could convince this first party of his friendly intentions it would be folly to proceed. News of his coming would spread rapidly down the river; he was already regarded as an enemy, and sooner or later would have to face an attack by overwhelming odds. The Carriers paying no attention to the friendly assurance of his interpreters shouted across the river, Mackenzie conceived the daring project of walking alone up the beach in hopes that the Indians might be induced to come over to him. He, however, took the precaution of sending one of his own Indians through the woods, to keep him in sight,

[1] This method of preserving supplies was ingenious. A hole was dug, and the earth and sods carefully deposited on a sheet spread on the ground. Then a tarpaulin was put in the bottom of the hole; the provisions went in next; the tarpaulin was gathered up around them, and the hole filled with earth again. Any earth that remained over was thrown into the river. Finally the top of the cache was smoothed over, and a camp-fire made above it, to remove every sign of the excavation. When all this had been accomplished the hidden store was safe from thieves, human or otherwise.

and in case of treachery to fire on the natives. The plan worked admirably. Two of the Carriers came out in a canoe, but stopped when within a hundred yards of the shore. Mackenzie made signs for them to land, holding out looking-glasses, beads, and other alluring trinkets. At length, but with evident apprehension, they approached the shore, stern foremost, but would not venture to land. Finally Mackenzie prevailed on them to come ashore. The Carriers examined the explorer, his arms, his clothing, everything that he had about him, with a mixture of admiration and astonishment. They had never seen anything of the kind before. Mackenzie was the first white man who had ever ventured into the Carrier country. The interpreter now cautiously joined the party, and renewed his assurances of friendship. The Indians paddled over to their friends, and after a consultation the white men were invited to come across to the camp. From this party, and from others farther down the river, Mackenzie obtained many particulars as to the character of the country, the course and nature of the river, and the tribes along its banks. The story was discouraging enough. The river was described as emptying into the sea, but far to the southward; its course was broken by many waterfalls and rapids, some of which were impassable; at these dangerous points the river rushed between high, rugged, perpendicular banks, which would not admit of any passage over them; and to add to the depressing picture, the tribes along the river were so malignant that the white

travellers could expect no mercy from them. But obstacles of this kind only served to sharpen Mackenzie's determination to win a way to the sea. He induced a couple of the Carriers to accompany him as guides, and the next morning continued his journey. Here and there groups of natives were encountered, but thanks to his guides, although at first their attitude was menacing, they were all eventually brought to a friendly understanding. Many iron implements, as well as copper and brass ornaments, were seen in the camps, bearing witness to intercourse at first or second hand with white traders on the Pacific Coast. One very old man told Mackenzie that as long as he could remember he had heard of white people to the southward; and he had been told, though he did not vouch for the report, that one of them had made an attempt to come up the river and had been destroyed. The Indians described the distance across country to the sea as very short, and Mackenzie himself estimated it as not above five or six degrees. They assured him that the overland journey was not difficult, as they avoided the mountains, keeping along the valleys, many of which were entirely free from wood. The route they were accustomed to follow, when they went to trade with the coast tribes, struck westward from Fraser River, some distance above where Mackenzie now was encamped. The journey occupied no more than six nights, as they counted it. They bartered beaver, bear, lynx, fox, and marten skins for iron, brass, copper, beads, and other articles,

which they in turn obtained from white traders on the coast.

Mackenzie was now face to face with an exceedingly difficult problem, and the ultimate success of his enterprise might depend upon how he settled it. Three courses were open to him. He might continue his voyage down the great river, the Columbia as he thought it, the Fraser as it really was; he might return to the West Road River and follow the Indian trail overland to the sea; or he might abandon the whole project and return to the other side of the mountains. The third alternative he dismissed at once. He was not the man to turn back while there remained any conceivable way of attaining his object. The choice, therefore, remained between the river and a dash overland. The river had the one merit of leading unquestionably to the sea. On the other hand, all that he had heard from the natives strengthened his conviction that its navigation would be attended with almost appalling difficulties, and that it would carry him far to the south of where he had hoped to strike the ocean. Not more than thirty days' provisions remained of what he had brought with him, and his ammunition was almost exhausted. The return journey had to be thought of, and that meant the ascent of a tumultuous stream, involving many difficult and dangerous portages, through hostile tribes, who could effectually prevent his obtaining supplies even if they did not destroy the entire party. Altogether the successful termination of his expedition by this route seemed very improbable.

Mackenzie decided that his one chance lay overland. If he could find the Indian trail, and push westward at top speed, he might accomplish his object and return before provisions and ammunition were quite exhausted. Having made up his own mind, the next thing was to sound his men. He called them together, and paving the way by a warm commendation of their fortitude, patience, and perseverance, put the case fairly before them, finally proposing that they should try the overland route to the sea. At the same time, that there might be no uncertainty as to his unalterable determination to complete his expedition, he told them that in the event of their failing to secure guides for the overland journey, he would return and follow the river. He was resolved not to abandon the attempt, even if he had to make it alone. The French-Canadians responded nobly. They assured him that they would follow wherever he might lead. A guide having been procured among the Carriers, arrangements were made for an immediate departure.

Before leaving Mackay engraved the name of Alexander Mackenzie, with the date, on a tree by the river's side. This place is notable as the farthest point reached by Mackenzie down the Fraser. A trading post was afterward built here by the North West Company, and called Alexandria, in honour of the explorer. Among the natives in the Carrier village Mackenzie met a Rocky Mountain Indian and four members of a tribe from farther down the Fraser — evidently Chilcotins or Shuswaps. Having taking leave of his Carrier

hosts, Mackenzie turned the nose of his canoe against the stream, his objective point being the spot where the Indian road struck westward toward the Pacific. Much depended upon his guide, who alone of those in the party knew where the trail was to be found. It was therefore with some anxiety that the explorer learned of the determination of the Indian to push ahead by land instead of travelling in the canoe. Making the best of a bad matter, Mackenzie sent Mackay with the two Indian hunters to accompany and keep an eye on him. His anxiety was more than justified when the following morning Mackay and the two Indians were overtaken without the guide. Mackay's story was alarming enough. Soon after they had left the main party, they had met a party of Carriers who appeared to be in a state of extreme rage. The guide asked them some questions, and then set off at such a pace that Mackay had much ado to keep him in sight. When he finally overtook him, the Indian told him that he feared treachery was meditated against the white men. Off they went again at the same breakneck pace, which was kept up until ten o'clock at night, when they all lay down as they were upon the ground, completely exhausted, cold, wet, and hungry. At dawn they continued their journey, and on reaching the lodge of the guide found it deserted. Rushing about for a time like a madman, crying out to his people, the guide set off again in the direction in which he had come, and had not since appeared.

The situation looked serious indeed. It was evident

that for some unexplained reason the natives had turned suddenly hostile, and a savage attack might be expected at any moment. The *voyageurs* were seized with a panic, and urged upon Mackenzie the hopelessness of further prosecuting their journey. All they cared for now was to get out of this dangerous country as rapidly as possible. Mackenzie, however, paid no attention to their frightened remonstrances. After an ineffectual effort to get in touch with some of the natives whom he had seen the previous day, he chose a position for his camp which could be readily defended, got the arms in order, filled each man's flask with powder, and distributed a hundred bullets. No attack was made, however, though two or three natives who were observed on the river fled immediately on their approach. Finally, an infirm old blind man was discovered wandering around the camp, from whom an explanation was obtained of the inexplicable behaviour of the natives. It appeared that soon after Mackenzie had left the village below a number of Indians from the north arrived, who denounced the white men as enemies. Their sudden departure up the river seemed to confirm this story, and now the whole Indian population was ready to destroy the treacherous whites. To add to the anxieties of his situation, the guide was nowhere to be found. There seemed to be no object in remaining where they were, and Mackenzie accordingly embarked and continued his course upstream, taking the old man, in lieu of any better guide, with him. A couple of days were lost in building a new canoe, the old one

having become quite useless, but on the afternoon of the 29th the missing guide turned up, to Mackenzie's immense relief. He had a plausible excuse for his absence, but nevertheless disappeared again the next morning without leaving any explanation.

The new canoe being completed, it was launched, and Mackenzie continued his search upstream for the mouth of the West Road River, which he understood to be the place where the Indian trail to the coast had its beginning. He reached this river on July 3rd, and now felt more seriously than ever the absence of the fickle guide. He was at a loss what to do. It would be madness to attempt the overland journey without a guide. Yet if he left this spot, which was the rendezvous, he might miss the natives altogether. Finally it was decided to proceed cautiously upstream, in the hopes of falling in with the missing guide. Fortunately they had not proceeded far before they met him paddling down to meet them, with six of his relatives. These men were prepared to pilot Mackenzie overland, and after caching in two hiding-places a ninety-pound bag of pemmican, two bags of wild rice, two of Indian corn, a keg of gunpowder, and a bale of trading goods, he set out on the last stage of his journey to the sea, on July 4th.

Among the party they carried four and a half bags of pemmican, weighing from eighty-five to ninety pounds each; a case of instruments; a parcel of goods for presents weighing ninety pounds; and one of ammunition of equal weight. Each of the *voyageurs*

MACKENZIE'S TRACK

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

carried one of these ninety-pound loads beside his gun and some ammunition; the Indians were only given forty-five-pound bundles, and grumbled at that; Mackenzie and Mackay carried about seventy pounds each, in addition to their guns. Mackenzie had also the tube of his telescope swung across his shoulders, a troublesome addition to his already heavy load.

So they set forward, over hill and dale, through woods and swamps, their labours lightened by the conviction that every step brought them nearer their goal. The first night they slept at an Indian village, whither the guide had preceded them. Father Morice has identified this as a village of the Naskhu'tins, which was in Mackenzie's day eleven miles distant from the mouth of the West Road River, or as it is now called, the Blackwater. At sunset an elderly Indian with three companions arrived from the west. He with many of his countrymen had been on a trading expedition to the Coast Indians. According to his report, it did not require more than six days' journey, with light loads, to reach this tribe, and from thence it was not quite two days' march to the sea. To Mackenzie's gratification, he offered to send a couple of young men ahead of the party, to warn the different tribes of their approach, and pave the way to a friendly reception.

At the first Indian camp encountered on the westward journey Mackenzie made the curious discovery of two halfpence hung as ornaments in children's ears. One was an English halfpenny of George III, the other a 1787 coin of the State of Massachusetts Bay.

They had evidently reached this out-of-the-way spot from the fur traders on the Pacific coast. From now on evidence multiplied of the traffic with white traders, metal implements and ornaments, pieces of cloth, and many other articles being found in every Indian camp.

The way lay through a comparatively level country, and they were able to make good progress. On the morning of the 6th they fell in with the great road to the sea, which here followed the north bank of the Blackwater, and the same day came up with a party of Indians, who informed Mackenzie that he was approaching a river, of inconsiderable size, which emptied into an arm of the sea, and that in this bay a great wooden canoe with white people arrived about the time when the leaves begin to grow, or the early part of May. This was good news indeed, though as a matter of fact many a long mile had yet to be travelled before the explorer would have sight of the salt water.

At 2 p.m. on July 9th they reached what Mackenzie supposed to be a new river, but which was in reality still the Blackwater. He left the main stream at what is known as the Upper Canon, where the Blackwater takes a great bend to the south, and following a small branch, had again reached the river about long. 124°, near the entrance to Kluscoil Lake. Here Mackenzie prudently cached half a bag of pemmican for use on the return journey.

Continuing his journey, on the morning of the 10th he crossed the river and followed a small branch that leads to the Cluscus Lakes, where a post of the

Hudson's Bay Company was afterward built. Beyond lay a range of beautiful hills covered with verdure. At noon Mackenzie obtained an altitude, which gave 53° 4′ 32″ north latitude. He found a small fishing village, the inhabitants of which called themselves Sloua-cuss-Dinais or Red-fish Men, and from them he learned that he was still several days' journey distant from the sea. The stock of provisions was now running low, and it became necessary to reduce the daily allowance by one-third, a measure very unwelcome to the men. On the 12th they again reached the Blackwater, which, according to the natives, was navigable for canoes from the Fraser up to and beyond this point with the exception of two rapids. The rapid pace, the inclemency of the weather, which had been rainy almost continuously since they left the Fraser, and apprehensions of attack from the Indians, were beginning to tell upon the spirits of the *voyageurs*. Mackenzie was himself worried over his diminishing supplies and the uncertainty of his guides, but had to stifle his own uneasiness in order to encourage his men. They had been in worse situations before, he told them, and had always managed to pull through in safety; they could not now be far from the sea, and must soon be among the Coast Indians, who, being accustomed to trade with white men at the coast, would be disposed to treat them with kindness. The *voyageurs* plucked courage from the optimism of their leader, and pushed forward with renewed energy.

Mackenzie's course was now from Eliguck Lake,

near the head-waters of the Blackwater, across a considerable hill to a group of small lakes, beyond which he forded Dean River. From here, under the guidance of some friendly Indians, he crossed the Tsi-tsutl Mountains, and late at night on the 17th reached the banks of the Bella Coola after an extremely exhausting march. He slept that night at a village of the Coast Indians, where he and his men were hospitably entertained. After feasting sumptuously on salmon and other delicacies, Mackenzie and his party laid themselves down to rest with no other canopy than the sky. "I never," says Mackenzie, "enjoyed a more sound and refreshing rest, though I had a board for my bed, and a billet for my pillow."

Eloquent testimony is borne by the explorer to the intelligence and kindliness of the people of this village. No sooner had he awakened in the morning than roast salmon and delicious berries were brought to him. Mackenzie examined their houses and the ingenious weirs which they had constructed across the river to catch the salmon. Connected with their salmon fisheries were many curious superstitions. Fish was their only animal food. One of their dogs having picked and swallowed the bone of a deer from Mackenzie's campfire, he was beaten by his master until he disgorged it. One of the *voyageurs* also having thrown a deer bone into the river, a native immediately dived and brought it up, and, having burnt it in the fire, instantly proceeded to wash his polluted hands. Their prejudice against venison was so strong that they objected to

Mackenzie taking it in a canoe, lest the salmon might smell it and abandon the neighbourhood, leaving them to starve. They, however, willingly furnished him with a couple of canoes and a supply of roast salmon, with which to continue his journey.

Taking leave of these friendly Indians, Mackenzie continued his journey down the Bella Coola, accompanied by seven of the natives, who were marvellous canoemen. "I had imagined," says Mackenzie, "that the Canadians who accompanied me were the most expert canoemen in the world, but they are very inferior to these people, as they themselves acknowledged." One of their exploits was to shoot the canoe over a fish weir without taking a drop of water. A run of two hours and a half down the rapid current brought the party to the great village of the Coast Indians. They landed a little above the village and walked through the woods. As they came within sight of the village the guides signed to Mackenzie to take the lead. The natives could be seen running from house to house in a state of wild excitement, some armed with bows and arrows, others with spears. Did this mean a hostile reception? At any rate, there was nothing now to do but to go forward. Without a sign of fear, Mackenzie and his men marched into the village, and as they approached, the villagers threw down their weapons and crowded around the white strangers. Suddenly an elderly chieftain broke through the press and embraced the explorer, to his surprise. Another, following closely upon his heels, unceremoniously brushed the old chief-

tain aside and paid Mackenzie the same compliment. He again was followed by a younger Indian. Meanwhile the curious crowd were pressing so closely on every side that it was impossible to move. Now, however, they swung back to admit a young chieftain, who, advancing with dignity to the explorer, broke the fastenings of the splendid robe of sea-otter skins that he wore and threw it around Mackenzie. There could be no doubt now that he had won their hearts. They had invested him with one of the most precious of their possessions.

The old chieftain led the way to his own house, where mats were spread for the white men. The chief and his counsellors seated themselves opposite. Native dishes were ceremoniously placed before them—roasted salmon, cakes made from the inner bark of the hemlock sprinkled with sweet salmon oil, which were found very palatable. The feast lasted for three hours, the curious tribesmen meanwhile standing around in a circle. Mackenzie, not to be outdone in courtesy, presented the chief with a pair of scissors to trim his beard, a blanket to the young man who had given him the sea-otter robe, and other articles to the minor chiefs.

There could be no doubt that the explorer was regarded as a great medicine man. Tales of his marvellous possessions had preceded him to the village, and the natives stood around in open-mouthed astonishment as he explained the object and properties of his astronomical instruments. The following morning the old chief came to Mackenzie's lodge complaining of a pain

in his breast. Mackenzie, who had found it wise on many previous occasions to humour the credulous belief of the Indians in his powers as a healer of all physical ills, now gave the sick man a few drops of Turlington's Balsam on a lump of sugar, which he swallowed without hesitation. Having tested the white man's powers on himself, the old chief carried him off to another part of the village, where his son lay suffering from a violent ulcer. To his consternation, Mackenzie was requested to touch the sick man and make him whole. Knowing that it at least could do him no harm, he again had recourse to the precious balsam. The effects not being immediately apparent, which perhaps was not surprising under the circumstances, Mackenzie found on returning to the sick man later in the day that the native doctors had again taken him in charge, and were vehemently practising their skill and art on the unhappy patient. They blew on him, and then whistled; they rubbed him violently on the stomach; they thrust their forefingers into his mouth, and spouted water into his face. He was next carried on a plank into the woods, where a fire was kindled, and the native physicians resorted to the heroic, and possibly effective, treatment of scarifying the ulcer with red-hot instruments. The patient bore the cruel pain like a stoic, but the scene was too much for Mackenzie, who hastily withdrew.

The explorer was now anxious to hasten his departure. He had not yet completed the object of his journey, and had little time to waste if he was to return to the east before winter. But the chief and his

followers seemed loth to let him go. To his request for canoes and guides to conduct him down to the sea they turned a deaf ear. Finally he stumbled upon an effective argument. Their superstitious fears had invested the astronomical instruments with magical powers, and these fears naturally turned toward the most vital factor in their lives—the salmon. They were apprehensive that the salmon might be frightened from that part of the river. Therefore when Mackenzie got out his instruments to take an altitude, they were as anxious as they had formerly been reluctant to hasten his departure. A canoe was instantly provided, and four of the villagers were assigned the duty of guiding the party down to the coast. Before he left, however, Mackenzie had an opportunity of examining the chief's own canoe, a somewhat remarkable vessel, built of cedar, forty-five feet long, four feet wide, and three feet and a half in depth. It was painted black and decorated with white figures of fish of several species. The gunwale, fore and aft, was inlaid with the teeth of the sea-otter. In this canoe, said the chief, he had travelled ten winters before a considerable distance toward the midday sun, that is toward the south, with forty of his people, when he saw two large vessels full of white men, by whom he had been kindly received. They were, he said, the first white people he had ever seen. Mackenzie conjectured that they were the ships commanded by Captain Cook.

Leaving the village[1] where he had been so hospitably

[1] The village still survives, and is known to-day as Burnt Bridge.

entertained, the explorer continued his voyage down the Bella Coola. Making brief visits to other villages on the way, he rapidly descended the current, and about half-past six in the evening came within sight of the mouth of the river where it discharges into North Bentinck Arm. He estimated the distance from the great village upwards of thirty-six miles, which made pretty rapid travelling. At a village a short distance above the mouth of the Bella Coola he spent the night.

At eight o'clock the following morning, July 20th, Mackenzie reached the mouth of the river and found himself at last on salt water. The tide was out and had left a large space covered with seaweed. The surrounding hills were involved in fog. The bay appeared to be from one to three miles in breadth. As he paddled along the shore he saw a great number of sea-otters, or what he supposed to be sea-otters; he afterward concluded that most of them were seal. Porpoises disported themselves in the water, while white-headed eagles soared aloft. At two in the afternoon the swell was so high and the wind so boisterous that he could not proceed with his now leaky vessel. He therefore landed in a small cove on the north side of the arm. Mackenzie was now exceedingly anxious to secure an observation, but continuous cloudy weather prevented him. Provisions were getting perilously low, and he was by no means sure that he could count on the natives to assist him. Twenty pounds of pemmican, fifteen of rice, and six of flour, among ten half-starved men, in a

leaky vessel and on a barbarous coast, made the situation critical. Yet he would not return without getting an observation.

At six on the morning of the 21st Mackenzie left the small bay which he had named Porcupine Cove, and which is now known as Green Bay, and continued his way down the North Arm, and into Labouchere Channel, crossing to South Bentinck Arm and Burke Channel and landing at a cape which he thought was the same Vancouver had visited some time before and named Point Menzies.[1] Here he had an altitude, and here also he for the first time met with any hostility on the part of the Coast Indians. Three canoes arrived with fifteen men in each, who entered into conversation with the guide. They examined the white men and their belongings with an air of indifference and disdain, and one in particular treated Mackenzie with studied insolence. The secret of his hostility came out when he told Mackenzie that a large canoe had lately come into this bay, manned by white men, one of whom, whose name he pronounced *Macubah*,[2] had fired on him and his friends, and another named *Bensins* had struck him with the flat of his sword. From his insolent behaviour Mackenzie did not doubt that he had deserved the punishment. However, he was to give the

---

[1] R. P. Bishop says that this was Edward Point, not Point Menzies. See *Mackenzie's Rock*, p. 17.

[2] This evidently referred to Lieut. Johnstone, an officer of Vancouver's expedition, who made an examination of this part of the coast in boats, in 1793, and was at Point Menzies the last of May of that year.

explorer more than a little trouble before he was rid of him.

Leaving "Point Menzies," Mackenzie followed the main channel to the westward, landing at the ruins of an Indian village. He had been followed by ten canoes of savages, whose attitude was so hostile that Mackenzie prepared to defend himself from an attack. About sunset, however, they departed, taking with them several small articles which they had managed to pilfer while ashore. By an observation he found the longitude of the place to be 128° 02′. The guide now urged Mackenzie to depart, as the natives, he said, were as numerous as mosquitoes and as malignant. The alarmed *voyageurs* joined their remonstrances to his, but Mackenzie was determined not to leave the place until he had determined his position. Finally he succeeded in getting an observation, which gave 52° 21′ 33″ by an artificial horizon, and by the natural horizon 52° 20′ 48″ north latitude. By these he concluded that he was at the entrance to Vancouver's Cascade Canal. His object now being accomplished, he prepared to return; but before entering the canoe he mixed some vermillion in melted grease and painted in large characters on the south-east face of the rock on which he had slept the previous night this brief memorial: "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three."[1]

---

[1] Captain Bishop, who has worked out the position of the rock with meticulous care, finds it to be on the north side of Dean Channel, a little to the east of Elcho Harbour. See *Mackenzie's Rock.*

Of the return journey little need be said. Early on the morning of the 23rd he reached Porcupine Cove. As he drew near the village at the mouth of the Bella Coola he was met by a number of Indians with daggers in their hands and fury in their faces. Among them he recognized the same troublesome individual who had already done so much to thwart him, and who now took the occasion to repeat his former grievance against *Macubah* and *Bensins*. Nothing but Mackenzie's resolute attitude, and the familiarity of the natives with the deadly power of fire-arms, now saved the party from annihilation. Upon Mackenzie presenting his gun the Indians fled into the wood. He was determined, however, to teach them a lesson, and drawing his men up in front of the village, which he appropriately named Rascal's Village, he insisted on the restoration of everything that had been pilfered, and demanded as well a supply of fish, as the conditions of his departure. The Indians, who were by this time thoroughly cowed, complied with all his demands. Mackenzie paid for the fish and continued his voyage up the river. On the 25th he reached the great village and got a cold reception from the old chief, but a few presents had the effect of restoring the white men to favour. Procuring here a supply of fish, he continued his way up the river, travelling by land, and about eight the following morning reached the upper village, where he was cordially received by the chief, Soocumlick.

Resting at the Friendly Village for a few hours, Mackenzie crossed the mountains, and following the

U.B.C. LIBRARY

same route which he had traversed on his way down, regained the Fraser on August 4th, about a month after his departure. Ascending the river and passing the forks, he encamped on August 15th by the side of Bad River. Two days later he had the satisfaction of embarking on the waters of the Parsnip, and on the 19th reached the main stream. Five days later, at four in the afternoon, he landed at his fort on the Peace River. "Here," concludes Mackenzie, "my voyages of discovery terminate. Their toils and their dangers, their solicitudes and sufferings, have not been exaggerated in my description. On the contrary, in many instances, language has failed me in the attempt to describe them. I received however, the reward of my labours, for they were crowned with success."

CHAPTER IV

NINETEEN YEARS IN THE WEST

IN his preface the editor of Daniel Williams Harmon's *Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America* compares Harmon's achievement with that of Alexander Mackenzie, rather to the advantage of the former. While admitting that Harmon's narrative is unequal to Mackenzie's in minuteness of geographical detail, he claims that, putting aside the voyage to the North Sea, Harmon's explorations were more extensive than those of Mackenzie. He means, of course, that within the limits covered by both Harmon surveyed a larger area than Mackenzie.

This is probably true, for during the nineteen years that Harmon spent in the west, during which period he never came east of Fort William, he was almost constantly on the move, and his journeys covered nearly every section of what is now Western Canada, from Lake Superior to Northern British Columbia, and from the International Boundary north to Great Slave Lake. At the same time, there can be no comparison between the two men so far as actual discovery is concerned. Harmon undoubtedly added something to what was known of the geography of the west, and he added a

good deal more to what was known of the languages, character and customs of the north-western tribes and those of the Pacific coast, fifteen of which he says he had visited and become familiar with; but for the most part his travels took him over fairly well-known ground, and none of his journeys approached in importance, even remotely, the two famous expeditions of Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

It remains true, however, that Harmon fills a place and not an inconsiderable place, in the story of Western American exploration. This much would be clear even if nothing remained of Harmon's but his map, for that map, based, as the editor says, on that of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, shows many important additions and corrections, and was probably at the time it was published the most complete and accurate map of the northern half of the continent. At the same time, while Harmon corrected some of the errors of his predecessors in exploration and map-making, he himself managed to slip up occasionally, and in one case at least was completely led astray by Indian report. His map shows in Northern British Columbia or New Caledonia an immense lake extending in a north-easterly direction from about 54° 40′ N., 125° 30′ W., to 56°N., 124° 30′ W. This lake, which the natives called Musk-quâ Sâ-ky-e-gun or Bear's Lake (Great Bear Lake on his map), Harmon describes as the source of Finlay's or the North Branch of Peace River. The real source of the Finlay River is a small body of water, Thutage Lake, near the height of land, 57° N., 127° W.

Harmon's Great Bear Lake was "so large that the Indians never attempt to cross it in their canoes," and was situated nearly due west from the junction of the Finlay and Parsnip rivers, at a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles. Those who resided at the east end affirmed that it extended to the Western Ocean, but on his map Harmon places the western end well inland, four or five degrees, in fact, east of the head of Observatory Inlet. Elsewhere he describes a large river of New Caledonia which enters the Pacific several hundred miles north of the mouth of the Fraser, and "arises near Great Bear's Lake." This could only have been the Skeena, one branch of which rises in Babine Lake, the largest body of water in Northern British Columbia, and another near a very small lake called Bear Lake, a little north of 56°, and east of 127°. This little lake with the significant name will be referred to again.

In Simon Fraser's manuscript journal of 1806, in the Bancroft Collection, a similar account is given of this singular lake. Possibly Harmon may have got the story from Fraser, or they may both have been deceived by, or misinterpreted, Indian reports. In Fraser's journal, as quoted by H. H. Bancroft, under date of the 23rd of April, 1806, the arrival of a party of Indians from Finlay River is recorded, who report that that stream does not begin its course in a series of rapids, as had been supposed, but near a large lake called Bear Lake, "where the salmon come up, and from there is a river that falls into another much larger, according to their report, than even the Peace River, that glides in a

north-west direction." "We cannot," concludes Fraser, "imagine what river this is; by their description and the course it runs it cannot be the Columbia, and I know of no other excepting Cook's". Fraser had not yet explored the great river that bears his name, and which at this time was supposed to be the Columbia. In a foot-note Bancroft disposes of the problem of Bear Lake off-hand. "It is Babine Lake here referred to."[1] But a later investigator takes quite another view. A. G. Morice, who is thoroughly familiar with the geography and history of Northern British Columbia, flatly contradicts Bancroft, though it must be confessed that the criticism he brings against Bancroft of so peremptorily solving the question might with almost equal justice be applied to himself. "The lake above mentioned," he says, "is simply Bear Lake, sometimes called Connolly by a few strangers, and the river that exercises the mind of Fraser is the Skeena."[2] Father Morice has personally ascertained that this small Bear Lake is one hundred and eighty miles from the head-waters of the Finlay. In the light of all the evidence it does not appear that he has finally disposed of the question. It may be that this insignificant lake and the great body of water spoken of by Fraser and Harmon are identical, but in that event there must have been more than the usual exaggeration in the accounts of the Indians. From some points of view Babine Lake meets the situation much more closely,

---

[1] *History of the North-West Coast*, II, 96.
[2] *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia*, 56-7.

and it is by no means certain that Bancroft's conjecture was wrong. On the other hand, the theory might even be advanced that Harmon and Fraser were deceived by some confused stories of one of the great inlets or channels along the coast. All that is certain is that nothing very closely resembling the immense lake they describe has any existence in Northern British Columbia.

Harmon, a New Englander by birth, entered the service of the North West Company in 1800, and the same year left Montreal for the west with one of the canoe brigades. He reached Grand Portage on June 13th. Three years before Harmon's visit the group of Montreal merchants known as the X Y Company, who had entered into a vigorous opposition to the North West Company, had built a fort at Grand Portage, about two hundred rods from the establishment of the North West Company. Harmon's description of the latter is practically the same as the one quoted in an earlier chapter, from an anonymous writer who was at Grand Portage in 1793. "Every summer," says Harmon, "the greater part of the Proprietors and Clerks, who have spent the winter in the Interiour come here with the furs which they have been able to collect during the preceding season. . . . The people who come from Montreal with the goods go no farther than this, excepting a few who take those articles to the Rainy Lake which are intended for Athabaska, as that place lies at too great a distance from this to permit people who reside there to come to this place and return, before

U.B.C. LIBRARY

the winter commences. Those who bring the goods from Montreal, on their return take down the furs, etc., from the north." Harmon, brought up in the pious atmosphere of a New England home, was shocked to find the traders treating the Sabbath with no more consideration than any other day of the week. "People who have been long in this savage country have no scruples of conscience on this subject." The men were engaged in making and pressing packs of fur to be sent down to Montreal. But all was not work at Grand Portage. One evening "the gentlemen of the place dressed and we had a famous ball, in the dining room. For musick we had the bagpipe, the violin and the flute, which added much to the interest of the occasion. At the ball there was a number of the ladies of this country; and I was surprised to find that they could conduct themselves with so much propriety, and dance so well."

Harmon remained a month at Grand Portage and then left for the interior. He was kept busy for a day or two at Fort Charlotte, at the western end of the portage, sending off canoes laden with supplies for Fort des Prairies. He left Fort Charlotte on July 15th in two canoes manned by six *voyageurs,* and threading the intricate series of small rivers, lakes, and ponds that then formed the route to Rainy Lake, reached Rainy Lake Fort on the 24th. Here were encamped many Chippewas, who maintained themselves on the excellent sturgeon and whitefish caught in the lake, which they supplemented with wild rice. "This," says

Harmon, "is thought to be nearly as nourishing as the real rice, and almost as palatable. The kernel of the former is rather longer than that of the latter, and is of a brownish colour." On the 29th he crossed Lake of the Woods, or Woody Lake as he calls it, and entered the Winnipeg River, noting as he descended the "majestick and frightful waterfalls" that break its course. On the last day of the month he reached the North West Company's post at the mouth of the river, and notes the presence of an establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company at the same place.

Harmon's destination had been the Saskatchewan, but it was now decided that he should take charge of a new fort in the Swan River country. He therefore waited at the mouth of the Winnipeg River for the Swan River brigade, and spent the interval very agreeably in pigeon-shooting. He was now for the first time introduced to that most important food, pemmican, the bread of the western wilderness. Pemmican "consists of lean meat dried and pounded fine and then mixed with melted fat. This compound is put into bags made of the skins of the buffalo, etc., and when cold it becomes a solid body. If kept in a dry place it will continue good for years." Harmon describes it as very palatable and nourishing. Sometimes sugar or dried berries were added to improve the flavour of the pemmican.

On August 10th the long-expected brigade arrived from Grand Portage, and Harmon embarked for his Swan River post. Skirting the shores of Lake Winnipeg the brigade reached what is known as Sturgeon

Bay, on the western coast, on the 17th, and immediately ascended Dauphin River to Lake Manitoba, from whence they portaged over into Lake Winnipegosis. At the entrance of another little river called the Dauphin, connecting with Dauphin Lake, they stopped to make up an assortment of goods for the Dauphin River post.[1] Harmon mentions that a French missionary was stationed at this place before the British occupation. "I am told," he says, "that there are some Indians still living who recollect prayers which were taught them by the missionary." This was probably one of the Jesuit fathers who went west with La Vérendrye, or possibly with Saint-Pierre.

On October 9th Harmon entered Swan River, which he found very shallow and encumbered with rapids, and reached Swan River Fort the following day. Travelling had been very unpleasant up the river. For about four miles of the way the men had to get out of the canoes and drag them up the shallows, while Harmon trudged along the bank in an uncomfortable mixture of snow, mud, and water. The Hudson's Bay Company had had an establishment here a few years before, but had abandoned it, and now the North West Company had a monopoly of the fur trade in the Swan River district. Sending several men to build a fort about fifty miles up the river, Harmon remained at the Swan River Fort for a few days, waiting for a guide to conduct him to Fort Alexandria. On the 18th two men arrived from Alexandria, and Harmon left with them for that place.

[1] Somerset House on his map.

The route lay across an open country broken occasionally by clumps of small timber. On the 22nd they crossed Swan River on a raft and got into a somewhat more hilly country, almost destitute of timber. The following afternoon they reached Fort Alexandria, "built on a small rise of ground on the bank of the Assiniboine, or Upper Red River, that separates it from a beautiful prairie about ten miles long and from one to four broad, which is as level as the floor of a house." On the whole the fort was delightfully situated, and as game was plentiful Harmon was content enough to spend the winter there. It is worth noting that although horses had only been acquired by the Assiniboines and Crees within a comparatively short period,[1] they were so numerous in 1800 that well-built, strong, and tolerably fleet animals could be bought for a mere trifle.

At Fort Alexandria Harmon had his first experience of the life of the western fur trader, and the picture he draws is not altogether an inviting one. The Indians who visited the fort were Crees and Assiniboines. Men, women, and children drank all they could get. "At some times ten or twelve of both sexes may be seen fighting each other promiscuously, until at last they all fall on the floor, one upon another. To add to the uproar a number of children, some on their mothers'

[1] Edward Umfreville, writing in 1789, says "they were originally imported by the Spanish on the western side of the Continent, and it is but lately that they have become common among the Nehethawa [Cree] Indians."

shoulders, and others running about and taking hold of their clothes, are constantly bawling."

Against this unpleasant picture of the Indian in civilized society may be placed another of a vastly different kind. During the winter Harmon had set out for a camp of the Assiniboines on a trading expedition. When they approached within about a mile of the camp, ten or twelve of the chiefs met them on horseback and conducted them to the village, where they were received with every demonstration of joy. The principal chief sent his son to invite them to his tent. "As soon as we had entered it and were seated, the respectable old chief caused meat and berries and the best of everything which he had, to be set before us. Before we had eaten much, we were sent for to another tent, where we received a similar treatment; and from this we were invited to another; and so on, till we had been to more than half a dozen. At all these we ate a little, and smoked our pipes." "Hospitality to strangers," concludes Harmon, "is among the Indian virtues. During several days that we remained with these people, we were treated with more real politeness than is commonly shown to strangers in the civilized part of the world." The Indian brand of hospitality was in rather marked contrast to that which the civilized white men offered in their forts.

The next three years Harmon spent in the Upper Assiniboine and Swan River country, moving about from fort to fort, trading with the Indians, hunting

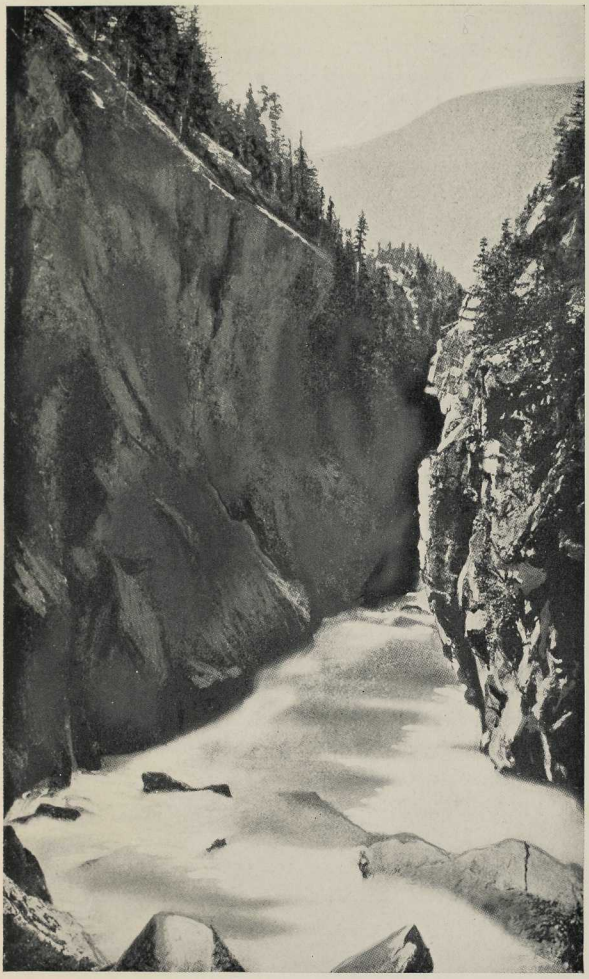
buffalo, and adding to his knowledge of the country. In March, 1804, he started out on a trading expedition over the western plains. He travelled for ten or twelve days, camping with wandering bands of Assiniboines, until he reached the country of the Rapid Indians (Atsinas), apparently somewhere about the South Saskatchewan. "A white man," he says, "was never before known to penetrate so far." No doubt Harmon thought so, but there is evidence to the contrary. It has already been seen that Anthony Hendry traversed this very region fifty years before.

In the autumn Harmon left Fort Alexandria for "Montagne à la Basse",[1] some distance down the Assiniboine, to obtain a supply of goods for the winter trade. He made the return journey in twenty-one days. Montagne à la Bosse was fifty miles above McDonnell's House at the mouth of the Souris, and stood on a high bank commanding an extensive prospect. On November 24th Harmon received a letter from Chaboillez, at Montagne à la Bosse, informing him that Lewis and Clark had reached the Mandan villages, and that as soon as navigation opened they designed to continue their journey to the Rocky Mountains, and thence descend to the Pacific Ocean.

Harmon was back again at Montagne à la Bosse in April, 1805, and while there Chaboillez induced him to undertake a tour of discovery. He was to leave that place about the beginning of June, accompanied by six

[1] Should be Bosse, according to Dr. Coues, from the French word meaning hump, knob, etc., applied in this case to the hill or bank on which the fort stood.

U.B.C. LIBRARY



Canyon of the Fraser River

U.B.C. LIBRARY

SIMON FRASER, ESQ.

or seven Canadians and two or three Indians, and proceed by way of the Mandan villages and the Missouri to the Rocky Mountains. It was expected that they would return from their excursion the following November. Harmon, however, fell ill about the time he had planned to start for the Rocky Mountains, and the journey was abandoned. Dr. Coues, in referring to this project, in a foot-note to his Henry and Thompson, says that Harmon had "made up his mind to go to the Pacific via the Missouri River at the Mandans," and that "had he done so, he might have given Lewis and Clark a close race for their laurels." There is nothing in Harmon's own statement, or elsewhere so far as can be seen, to justify such a conclusion. The time allowed for the expedition—six months at the outside—would have been barely sufficient for a journey to the Rocky Mountains and back; and certainly would not have sufficed for an expedition to the Pacific and back even under the most favourable conditions. Moreover, it is stated in Harmon's Journal that Larocque attempted to make this same journey, and as already seen, Larocque's expedition was to the Rockies, not to the Pacific. Only one party attempted to reach the Pacific by way of the Missouri, previous to the successful Lewis and Clark expedition, and that attempt was made long before Harmon's day, by the sons of La Vérendrye.

Toward the end of June, 1805, Harmon left the Assiniboine country, and returned by way of Red River to Lake Winnipeg, and on the 16th of July

arrived at the mouth of the Kaministikwia, where he remained for a few days at the New Fort as it was then called, afterward known as Fort William.

On the 22nd he again left for the interior, his destination now being the Saskatchewan. On September the 5th he reached Cumberland House, not the establishment of that name built by Samuel Hearne for the Hudson's Bay Company, but the neighbouring fort of the North West Company, built, Harmon tells us, thirty years before by Joseph Frobisher. Leaving Cumberland House, he continued up the Saskatchewan, and turning up the south branch, arrived on September 21st at South Branch Fort, about one hundred and twenty miles above the Forks. This fort had been built the previous summer.

In coming up the river Harmon had seen the remains of a number of trading establishments, some abandoned as long as thirty years before. One, a few miles below the South Branch Fort, had been abandoned fifteen years since, on account of an attack by the Rapid Indians. A near-by fort of the Hudson's Bay Company suffered at the same time. The Indians, to the number of one hundred and fifty horsemen, first attacked the Hudson's Bay fort, killing the few people who were there, with the exception of one man who managed to hide. After plundering the fort and setting fire to it, they turned their attention to the North West Company's establishment, two hundred rods distant. Here, however, they met with a different reception. The North West men had been warned in time, and had

shut the gates of the fort. The garrison consisted of three men, with several women and children. The three men pluckily defended the fort from the block-houses and bastions until nightfall, when the Indians withdrew, carrying with them a number of dead and wounded, while the little garrison sustained not a scratch. In the morning the fort was abandoned, the traders embarking their women and children and all their property in several canoes, and paddling two hundred miles down the river to a point below the Forks, where they built another fort.

In September Harmon returned to Cumberland House, where he passed the following winter. He mentions that the Hudson's Bay house was within a hundred yards of the North West fort, and was in charge of Peter Fidler, of whom we have already heard. The traders on the Lower Saskatchewan lived mainly on fish, of which they obtained an abundant supply by means of spread nets. Sturgeon were caught in these nets anywhere from ten to one hundred pounds in weight. Trout, catfish, and pike lent a slight variety to the universal fish diet.

July, 1807, saw Harmon again at the New Fort. The seven years for which he was under engagement to the North West Company had expired, but the free life of the fur trader, with its strange admixture of hardship and adventure, danger and pleasure, had taken too deep a hold on him, and he decided to turn his face once more toward the western wilderness, that wonderful land of stupendous distances, of great lakes and rivers,

limitless plains, and gigantic mountains. His decision is, however, made the occasion of one of those fits of moralizing which one finds scattered so thickly throughout his narrative, and which always appear so incongruous in their relation to the text that one suspects they must have been introduced by the reverend and well-meaning editor, who seems to have been singularly lacking in the saving sense of humour.

Harmon wintered at Lake Nipigon, where he was again subjected to a monotonous diet of fish. In the spring he returned to Fort William, and left the same day for the Athabaska district, in company with J. G. McTavish. In descending the Winnipeg River they met David Thompson, on his way back from the Columbia River. On the 12th of August they reached Cumberland House, and turned north to the Churchill by way of Portage de Traite or Frog Portage. Paddling up the Churchill—English River as the Canadian traders called it—they reached Ile à la Crosse Fort on the 25th. Harmon describes it as a well-built fort standing on the north side of the lake, with an excellent kitchen garden attached. Leaving the fort, five days later they crossed Methye Portage, and dropped their canoes into the waters that ultimately empty into the Arctic. Harmon, like every other traveller who has passed this way, is enraptured with the wonderful view from the summit of the portage down the valley of the Clearwater.

On the 6th of September they paddled out of the Clearwater River on to the broad waters of the Atha-

baska; and the following day reached Fort Chipewyan. This fort, afterward removed to the northern side of Athabaska Lake, was at this time situated on a rocky point, at the south-western end of the lake. It was the general rendezvous for all the traders in the Athabaska district and beyond. On the 21st Harmon notes that ever since his arrival men from almost every corner of the district had been flocking in, some coming from more than a thousand miles down the Mackenzie River, others from Great Slave Lake and Peace River. The same day, Simon Fraser arrived from his adventurous voyage down the Fraser River to the sea.

On the 22nd of September, Harmon left Fort Chipewyan, and entering Peace River, paddled up to Fort Vermillion, passing on the way, about sixty miles below the fort, a waterfall about twenty feet in height. This modest little cataract is apparently the one described by the irrepressible Peter Pond to Isaac Ogden, of Quebec, as "the largest falls in the world." The river at this point, said Pond, is at least, two miles wide. Harmon says thirty rods. Quite a discrepancy.

Continuing up the river, Harmon reached Dunvegan[1] on the 10th October, and wintered there. He was never more comfortably situated. Buffalo, moose, deer, and bear furnished the larder, as well as the produce of a tolerably good kitchen garden. The fort was equipped with a fair collection of books; and, to crown

[1] Dunvegan was, and in fact still is, situated on the left bank of the Peace River, about lat. 56°, long. 118° 40′. The fort was named after the "cold, bleak, rock-built castle of the McLeods of Skye."

all, Harmon had as companions for the winter several traders whom he describes as "enlightened, sociable, and pleasant." What could man want more? What mattered it that on December 20th the thermometer registered forty degrees below zero, so long as a good fire blazed on the hearth? Others, however, were not so fortunately situated, for on March 20th Harmon gets word of the death of several Canadians in the vicinity of Great Slave Lake, from starvation, those who survived having lived for several days on the flesh of their dead companions. Commenting on this, Harmon mentions the case of an Indian woman who was reported to have eaten no less than fourteen of her friends and relations during one winter.

Harmon remained at Dunvegan until October, 1810, when he was requested by the Company to cross the mountains and take charge of the New Caledonia department.

John Stuart, who was at that time in charge of the New Caledonia department, had asked to be relieved, but Harmon persuaded him to remain, he himself becoming second in command. Accompanied by Stuart, and a number of men, in four canoes, he ascended the river, reaching Fort St. John on the evening of the third day, and Rocky Mountain Portage Fort five days later. Some of the Sicannies, a mountain tribe, helped them over the portage. These Indians, whom Harmon describes as quiet, inoffensive people, seem to have been unfortunately situated. To live, they had to get down to the habitable country on one side of the

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

mountains or the other. They spent, or attempted to spend, the summer months on the Pacific side of the mountains, and the winter on the eastern side. On the western side they were attacked by the Tâcullies[1] and Atenâs; when they returned to the eastern slope the Crees and Beaver Indians gave them an equally hot reception. Being driven from the salmon streams on one side, and the game country on the other, they frequently had to live for weeks at a time on roots picked up in the mountains. Between the devil and the deep sea, the wretched Sicannies fell upon many evil days, and not infrequently ended in starvation.

Harmon left the western end of the Rocky Mountain Portage on the 17th, and the following week was spent in the heart of the mountains, following the river through the pass now known as Peace River Pass. Just as they got clear of the mountains they passed the mouth of Finlay's Branch, and continued up the South Branch—now the Parsnip River—through a thickly timbered country, to McLeod's Lake Fort. Here they left the canoes, and travelled overland to Stuart's Lake, a distance of one hundred miles to the westward. The fort at Stuart's Lake was pleasantly situated on rising ground, at the east end of the lake. Fifty miles due west lies Fraser's Lake, where a small fort had been built in 1806. Harmon came here and remained until the spring of 1811, when he returned to Stuart's Lake. Stuart's Lake Fort he made his head-quarters, and here he remained for the next six years, building up a profitable

[1] Carrier tribe.

trade for the Company, studying the character and customs of the Tâcullies and other tribes of the vicinity, and making occasional excursions, of no very great length, into the unexplored country to the west and south.

The Tâcullies, or rather these particular members of the tribe, were new to the white man and his ways, and Harmon tells that when they first witnessed a New Year's celebration they "hid themselves under beds, and elsewhere, saying that they thought the white people had run mad, for they appeared not to know what they were about. It was the first time that they had ever seen a person intoxicated."

In December, 1812, Harmon left Stuart's Lake on an expedition to the country of the Nâte-ote-tains,[1] a tribe that had up to this time had no intercourse whatever with white men. Seven days' hard travel brought him to their first village, the inhabitants of which "were not a little surprised and alarmed to see people come among them whose complexion was so different from their own." Men, women, and children came out to meet Harmon, all armed, some with bows and arrows, others with axes and clubs. They made no hostile demonstration, however, and as soon as they understood the object of the visit, Harmon and his men were treated with the utmost respect and hospitality.

Continuing his journey, Harmon passed through four other villages of the Nâte-ote-tains, from whom he learned that a large river flowed through their country and emptied into the Pacific (probably the Skeena),

[1] Babine Indians.

and that white traders ascended this river for some distance in barges, to trade with another tribe who lived along its banks. These white men Harmon conjectured to be Americans, who had come around Cape Horn to the North Pacific Coast, where they were carrying on a coasting trade with the Indians.[1]

In November, 1812, Harmon notes the arrival of John Stuart and J. G. McTavish from Fort Chipewyan. The latter with his men purposed wintering near the source of the Columbia, and descending it in the spring to its mouth, where they were to meet Donald McTavish, who had sailed from England for the mouth of the Columbia in October. On the 1st of May John Stuart left Stuart's Lake, with six Canadians and two Indians, with the intention of joining J. G. McTavish on the Columbia, and if possible discovering a water route from Stuart's Lake to the Columbia. On the 25th of September Harmon received a letter from Stuart describing his journey to the Columbia, which had been successfully accomplished. He had descended the Fraser for eight days, when the canoes had to be abandoned and a land journey of more than one hundred and fifty miles undertaken to a lake called O-ke-nâ-gun, the modern Okanagan, south of the Fraser River, and about 50° N. and 119° W. From Okanagan Stuart wrote that he could go all the way by water to the ocean by making a few portages, and he hoped to reach the Pacific in twelve or fifteen days at farthest.

[1] According to Father Morice, these were simply Indians from the coast, not white men.

On the 7th of November Joseph Larocque, who had accompanied McTavish and his party on the voyage down the Columbia, arrived at Stuart's Lake Fort. They had met Stuart and his company on their return, and Larocque, with two of Stuart's men, had come to Stuart's Lake by the very roundabout route of Red Deer River, Lesser Slave Lake, and Dunvegan — a route which entailed two crossings of the mountains, eastward through the Yellowhead Pass, and back by the Peace River Pass.

In May, 1819, Harmon finally left New Caledonia, and following the same route by which he had come in, at last reached head-quarters at Fort William on August 18th, and returned from thence to the east, after an absence of nineteen years in the wilderness.

U.B.C. LIBRARY

CHAPTER V

EXPLORING THE CANYON OF THE FRASER

IN the story of Western American exploration no incident is marked by more indomitable pluck than the descent of the fearful canyon of the Fraser by Simon Fraser and John Stuart. Viewing the tumultuous waters to-day from the safe vantage-point of a railway car window, one gets a faint idea of the appalling difficulties surmounted by these Scottish-Canadian discoverers. The steadfast courage, endurance, and resourcefulness needed to carry them through this notable exploit were extraordinary even in an age and among a race marked by these characteristics.

Simon Fraser was born at Bennington, Vermont, about the year 1776. His father, a Scotsman by birth, and a captain in Burgoyne's army, was captured with that ill-fated general and imprisoned at Albany. After his death the widow with her young son crossed the boundary and settled at Three Rivers, in what is now the province of Quebec, afterward removing to St. Andrews, Cornwall. Simon entered the service of the North West Company at the age of sixteen, and about ten years after became a *bourgeois* or partner of the Company. At different times he was stationed in nearly every section of the western fur country, from

Grand Portage to New Caledonia. His restless temperament, even more than the exigences of his occupation, kept him constantly on the move. If he kept any journals of his first fourteen years of service in the North West Company, they are no longer extant. Up to the year 1806 his life can only be traced indistinctly by means of occasional references in the journals of David Thompson and other contemporaries. He wintered 1795-6 at Lac la Ronge; was agent for the Company at Grand Portage in 1797[1]; and at Fort Liard, Athabaska, in 1804. He signed the Montreal agreement that same year. In June, 1805, he passed Cumberland House on his way west to the Rocky Mountains. Crossing the mountains by the Peace River Pass, he ascended the Parsnip to a lake which he named after Archibald Norman McLeod. Here he established a small outpost. In the spring of 1806, accompanied by John Stuart, he crossed over from the head-waters of the Parsnip to the Fraser River, which he descended to the Nechaco. Here they left the main stream and turned up the Nechaco to the mouth of a tributary now known as Stuart River. Fraser seems to have given the name to the entire stream. Paddling up Stuart River, they came to a considerable lake, which was named, like the river, after John Stuart. Near the outlet of the lake a post was established, afterward known as Fort St. James. Of Fraser's encounter with the Carriers on the shores of the lake, and of their first introduction to the properties of tobacco and soap, an interesting and

[1] W. S. Wallace says this was another Simon Fraser.

U.B.C. LIBRARY

amusing account is given by Father Morice.[1] In August Stuart with two men was sent overland to another lake about forty miles to the south. After exploring the lake he was to descend to the confluence of the Nechaco and Stuart rivers, where Fraser would meet him. This was done, and Stuart's report being favourable as to the prospects of a trading establishment on the new lake—which he had named after his chief—they both turned up the Nechaco, and built Fort Fraser near the outlet of Fraser Lake. Leaving two or three men here, Fraser and Stuart returned to Lake Stuart, where they wintered.

In the spring of 1807 Jules Maurice Quesnel and Hugh Faries arrived from the east with instructions to Fraser to explore the great river, the Tacouche Tesse, then still supposed to be the Columbia. Fraser and Stuart descended to the forks, or the confluence of the Nechaco and Fraser, where they built a post and named it Fort George in honour of the King. It became the starting-point for their great expedition down the river to the sea. All preparations having been made, they left Fort George on May 28th. With Fraser went Stuart and Quesnel and nineteen *voyageurs,* as well as two Indian guides, in four canoes.

Their troubles began almost immediately. Fifteen miles from Fort George they came to what was afterward known as Fort George Canyon. Attempting to run the rapids, one of the canoes was nearly wrecked against the rocky bank of the river. In the afternoon they had

[1] *Northern Interior of British Columbia.*

fine going with a smooth current, and passed the mouth of a river on the right which they named Bourbonneur.

Sunday, the 29th, they embarked at four in the morning; cached a bale of dried salmon on an island against their return, and three additional bales a few miles farther down; ran through the Cottonwood River Canyon without misadventure; and camped for the night at the mouth of a river, which on the return journey was named Quesnel after one of the party. The village of Quesnel now stands about the spot where Fraser encamped.

Embarking again at the first touch of dawn, they ran down with a strong current. The view on either side was altogether charming. The plains rose gradually from the banks of the river until in the distance bounded by hills thickly clothed with evergreens. Behind these rose other hills, and then again others, giving the scene the appearance of an immense amphitheatre. This day they passed the site of the future Alexandria—Mackenzie's farthest point to the southward. Beyond this all was new, unexplored, undiscovered. Native houses appeared here and there on the banks; then a group of Indians, who watched the approach of the white men with evident alarm. As they drew near the shore they could see couriers posting off on horseback with the news to the Indians below. Fraser thought it wise to remain here until a number of the natives should collect, to whom he could explain his intentions. These were of the Atnah tribe, and among them was a boy who understood a little of the Carrier language and

could therefore act as interpreter. His mother was of the Tahowtin nation, which Masson incorrectly identified with Harmon's Nate-ote-tain. Father Morice explains that the Nate-ote-tain or Nato-o'tin are the Babines, while Fraser's Tahowtin were a sub-tribe of the Carriers known as the Lhtha-o'ten.

In the afternoon some of the Atnahs and Tahowtins arrived on horseback. They were friendly, but gave a very discouraging account of the river below, which they described as a succession of falls and cascades enclosed by impassable cliffs. They advised Fraser to abandon the attempt. No, said he, he was determined to force a passage down the river, and was yet to be convinced that it was not possible. Then, said they, if he would go, the Great Chief of the Atnahs lived at the next village, and had there a slave who had been to the sea and might be procured as a guide. The Atnahs and Tahowtins had heard of fire-arms, but had never yet seen any. They asked Fraser to show his and explain its use. Fraser produced the gun, and to give them an illustration of its effectiveness told his men to fire at the trees. Terrified at the report, they fell on their faces, and when they had sufficiently recovered their wits to examine the marks of the bullets in the trees, their uneasiness was increased. They naïvely assured Fraser that the Indians in that country were good and peaceable, and would never make use of their arms to annoy white people.

The Great Chief of the Atnahs did even better than had been promised for him. Not content with sending

his slave, he volunteered himself to accompany the explorers. He was well known to the tribes below, he said, and his presence would ensure their security. Fraser gladly accepted the offer. Embarking, they ran down some minor rapids, and late in the afternoon came to one much more formidable than any yet encountered. It was about two miles in length. On either side the cliffs rose sheer from the water's edge. The channel was contracted to forty or fifty yards, and through this narrow gorge the immense body of water rushed turbulently, its foam-crowned waves dashing hither and thither against the rocky walls. Yet, as it was next to impossible to carry the canoes over the precipitous banks, it was decided to attempt to run the rapid. Fraser ordered five picked men from the crews to man a light canoe, and, not without serious misgivings, watched them push out into the stream.

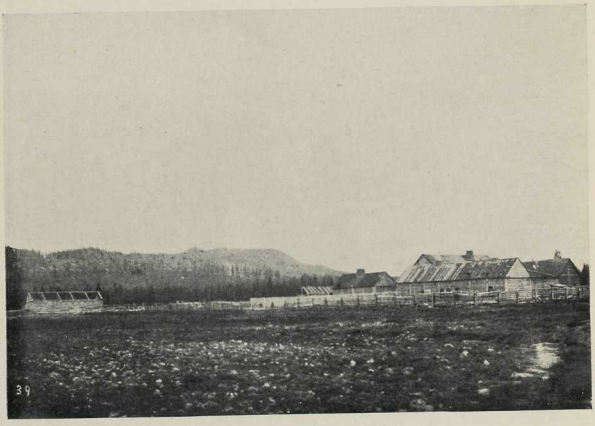
Only for a moment could they control her. Over the first cascade she rode in safety. Then the men lost all power. Drawn into an eddy, she was whirled about like a reed, while her crew could do nothing more than keep her afloat. Swinging around for a time, she flew out into the current, over the breakers, now escaping a jutting rock by a hair's-breadth, again in imminent danger of crashing into the bank. Finally she was forced against a low, projecting rock. The men sprang out and managed to hold the canoe, while Fraser came to their assistance.

How to reach them, though, was the problem. The situation was perilous for all. The bank was extremely

Yale, B.C., Fraser River

U.B.C. LIBRARY

Ruins of Rocky Mountain House, Saskatchewan River



Fort St. James, 1875

high and steep, and the rescuing party had to drive their daggers into the face of the cliff to check their speed. Unless they were to abandon the canoe and baggage, there was nothing for it but to drag everything up the face of this perpendicular bank. Steps were cut in the wall with the daggers; a line was fastened to the front of the canoe; some of the men scrambled to the summit with the line, while the rest supported it upon their shoulders. As they drew and pushed it up their lives hung upon a thread. One false step, or the breaking of the line, would hurl the whole party into the furious waters beneath. With infinite labour, however, and the utmost care, they managed before dark to get the canoe to the top of the cliff. There was nothing for it now but to carry everything overland. It was a superhuman task—climbing the steep face of a mountain with eighty or ninety pound packs; but these wiry *voyageurs*, inured to every hardship, accomplished what would have been impossible to ordinary travellers.

The natives watched the proceedings with interest and curiosity, no doubt wondering what particularly mad freak brought the white men to such an outrageous exploit. They assured Fraser that the navigation of the river for some distance below was impracticable, and advised him to leave his canoes in their charge and proceed overland to the banks of a great river that lay off to the south-east (the Thompson), which would bring him to the lower waters of the Fraser, and from thence he would have smooth going to the sea. The plan looked inviting, but Fraser would have none of it.

His instructions were to trace the Fraser to the sea, and that he was determined to do at all cost. The crew stood by him to a man.

Here the explorer encountered for the first time a tribe which he calls Chilk-odins, who inhabited the banks of a large river flowing in from the west (the Chilcotin River). The Fraser had risen eight feet within twenty-four hours—nothing unusual with that torrent-like stream, says Father Morice. With the aid of the Indians, two of the canoes were hauled laboriously over the ridge. Fraser had intended to leave the other canoes and part of the provisions behind, the Indians having promised him horses; but with native perversity they broke their engagements, and there was nothing for it but to haul another canoe over, so that all the party might proceed by water. With difficulty he managed to secure four horses, which were of some service in the heavy work of portaging, though one of them went over the cliff into the river with Stuart's desk and the medicine chest and was lost. The natives, while not over-generous in other respects, were prodigal of advice, but Fraser preferred to follow the dictates of his own judgment. One interesting bit of information they supplied, however. White people, they said, had lately passed down the first large river to the left. "These," comments Fraser, "were supposed to be some of our friends from the department of Fort des Prairies." It was of course David Thompson's party, and the river was the Columbia. Fraser must have wondered what this great river could be, for it must be remem-

U.B.C. LIBRARY

bered that he still laboured under the misapprehension that the river he was himself descending was the Columbia. It was not, in fact, until he reached the mouth of the river, and found that it debouched far to the northward of where the Columbia was known to empty, that he realized his mistake.

Sunday, June 4th, Fraser continued his journey down the river, which turned out to be quite as dangerous as the Indians had painted it. He notes a precipice of immense height which seemed to bar the river ahead—now known as Bar Rock. Running several minor rapids, he came to one which indeed looked impassable. Examining it by land, it was found to be a succession of immense whirlpools; but again the choice was between running the rapid or abandoning the canoes. The latter were therefore unloaded, and the canoes went down light. Between the whirlpools and the rocks the course was hazardous in the extreme. "It was," says Fraser, "a desperate undertaking," but fortunately they got through without either breaking or sinking the canoes.

This was only half the task. The packs still remained to be brought down by land. The only passage lay along the face of a huge precipice, on loose stones and gravel which constantly gave way under their feet. One of the men, losing the path, got into an intricate and perilous situation. With a large pack on his back he got so engaged among the rocks that he could move neither backward nor forward, nor yet unload himself without imminent danger. Seeing his predicament,

Fraser crawled on hands and knees to the spot and managed to cut the thongs that held the pack, dropping it over the precipice into the river. For two miles their way lay along this perilous pathway, and before they reached the lower end the shoes were worn from their feet, and they arrived bruised, bleeding, and utterly exhausted.

Day after day the same story is told. The river was one long series of dangerous rapids, down which they ran with their lives in their hands. The dangers of the river were matched by those of the land. When the portages were not treacherous, they were at least long and exhausting. The men were harassed by fatigue. From daylight to dark, when not on the river, they were toiling with heavy packs up steep hills, down into deep ravines, around steep precipices; a pair of moccasins did not last a day; when the moccasins went they had to stumble along over sharp rocks and thorns without any protection.

On the 6th they came to a waterfall which seemed to afford no passage. Cascades and whirlpools hemmed in by huge rocks offered a dreary prospect. Quesnel and six men were sent to examine both sides of the river for a carrying place. After an absence of three hours they returned and reported that there was a beaten path on the opposite side, but it was four miles long and through a very rough country. They crossed over, and after consultation decided to try the river. The canoes were put in the water and tracked down to the fall. Portaging over a point, they ran several small rapids and encamped for the night.

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

The morning of the 9th they reached a rapid that threw all that they had hitherto encountered into the shade.

"Here the channel contracts to about forty yards, and is enclosed by two precipices of immense height which, bending towards each other, make it narrower above than below. The water which rolls down this extraordinary passage in tumultuous waves and with great velocity had a frightful appearance. However, it being absolutely impossible to carry the canoes by land, all hands without hesitation embarked as it were *à corps perdu* upon the mercy of this awful tide. Once engaged, the die was cast. Our great difficulty consisted in keeping the canoes within the medium or *fil d'eau,* that is, clear of the precipice on one side and from the gulfs formed by the waves on the other. Thus skimming along as fast as lightning, the crews, cool and determined, followed each other in awful silence, and when we arrived at the end, we stood gazing at each other in silent congratulation at our narrow escape from total destruction."

Reaching comparatively quiet water, they paddled on to an Indian encampment. Here the natives drew a chart of the river below, which they represented as a chain of insurmountable difficulties. They asked Fraser why he had not taken the advice of the old chief and gone overland. The river below, they said, would be found impracticable both by land and water. He would have in many cases to climb up and down dangerous precipices by means of rope ladders. These had been

placed there by the Indians, and there was no other way. But Fraser, though weary and discouraged, was not yet beaten by any means. Having got so far, he would find some means of completing his journey. He prevailed upon one of the local Indians to go with him as guide, and continued his course until late in the evening. One rapid succeeded another in quick succession. Inaccessible cliffs rose to the sky on either side. "I scarcely ever saw anything so dreary and dangerous in any country," exclaims Fraser. "At present, while writing this, whatever way I turn my eyes, mountains upon mountains whose summits are covered with eternal snow close the gloomy scene."

The morning of the 10th Fraser sent two men ahead to examine the river, and their report confirming what the natives had said as to its impracticability, he decided at length to abandon the canoes. Erecting a scaffold he put them on it, covered them with branches to shield the gum from the sun, and cached such articles as could not be made up into convenient packs. By five o'clock on the 11th all was ready. Each man shouldering an eighty-pound pack, they set forward on foot toward the sea. A hard day's travel brought them to the banks of a small stream, where they encamped. The next day, continuing their route, they were suddenly confronted by a party of Askettihs (probably the Lillooet Indians), who, mistaking them for enemies, presented their bows and arrows in readiness for an attack. Discovering their mistake, however, they shook hands and accompanied the explorers to their evening

U.B.C. LIBRARY

camp, where they brought gifts of dried salmon, berries, and edible roots. These Indians said that the sea was about ten nights' journey from their village. One of the old men, a very talkative fellow, and reputed to be a great warrior, had been to the sea and seen "great canoes" manned by white men. He observed that the chiefs of the white men were well dressed and very proud, for, continued he, getting up and clapping his two hands upon his hips, then striding about the place with an air of importance, "this is the way they go."

June the 14th Fraser reached the forks, or the point where the Thompson joins the Fraser. Here the chief men of the Askettih village came out to meet him, "dressed in coats of mail." The old chief harangued them in his own language; they answered in theirs; and it needed the services of three interpreters to settle the affair. When the conference was over the ambassadors returned to their camp. Fraser and his party followed and encamped on the right bank of the Thompson,[1] directly opposite the Indian village. The tents had no sooner been pitched than the Indians came over in canoes. "I had to shake hands with over one hundred of them," says Fraser ruefully, "while the old chief was haranguing them about our good qualities." Fraser had the inexpressible satisfaction of learning that from this point the river was navigable to the sea; a statement which his subsequent experience scarcely

[1] So named by Fraser in honour of his fellow-explorer of the North West Company, who at this very time was tracing the course of the mighty Columbia.

justified. During the night the old chief with his countryman the pilot and the Tahowtin interpreter deserted and returned to their own country, leaving the explorer in a rather awkward situation. However, the natives seemed friendly, and after some negotiation were prevailed upon to furnish a canoe. At the Askettih or Lillooet village Fraser again heard of the Columbia — "at some distance to the east there is another large river which runs parallel with this to the sea." The village was rudely fortified, one hundred feet in length by twenty-four, surrounded by palisades eighteen feet high, slanting inwards, and lined with a shorter row supporting a bark roof.

The day following his arrival at the forks he set forward on the final stage of his journey. The heaviest packages were loaded in the canoe, and in it embarked Stuart with two of the natives who had agreed to act as guides. The rest of the party went on foot, each man bearing a heavy pack on his back. Among the first Indians met with Fraser found a new copper kettle and a gun of large size, both he thought probably of Russian manufacture. The following morning he fell in with another band of Indians, among whom were two of a tribe called Suihonie. They were exceedingly well dressed in leather, and on horseback. Fraser noticed that one of them wore a silver brooch "such as the Salteaux wear." Stuart meanwhile was finding the river by no means easy going. The current was exceedingly swift, and constantly broken by dangerous rapids. From the mouth of the Thompson the ex-

plorers were travelling over a portion of the river that is familiar to every traveller who crosses this part of the continent. Both Canadian transcontinental railways follow the Thompson to its junction with the Fraser, and from thence down almost to Vancouver the traveller is never for any length of time out of sight of the river.

On the 19th Fraser was conducted by the Great Chief of the Hacamaugh, a tribe whose country lay between the Columbia and the Fraser, to an encampment of the tribe. The scene was singular enough, as Fraser describes it. "He took me by the arm and conducted me in a moment up the hill to the camp. Here his people were sitting in rows to the number of twelve hundred, and I had to shake hands with the whole! Then the Great Chief made a long harangue, in the course of which he pointed to the Sun, to the four quarters of the world, and then to us; he afterwards introduced his father, who was old and blind, and carried by another man, who also made a harangue of some length. The old blind man was placed near us, and he often stretched out both his hands, through curiosity, in order to feel ours."

On the 21st one of the men had an extraordinary escape from drowning. Having with several of his companions in three canoes attempted to run an exceptionally dangerous part of the river, one of the canoes filled and upset in the first rapid; the foreman and steersman managed to get clear of the wreck and swam ashore, but this man was unlucky enough to go under with the canoe. Unable to get clear of the

thwarts, he remained in this critical situation until the canoe drifted into smooth water and righted sufficiently to enable him to crawl out. Although he had swallowed a quantity of water, he managed to climb to the upper side of the vessel, which had again drifted out into the current. "Here," he says, "I continued astride the canoe, humouring the tide as well as I could with my body to preserve my balance, and, although I scarcely had time to look about me, I had the satisfaction to observe the two other canoes ashore near an eddy, and their crews safe among the rocks. In the second or third cascade (I do not recollect which) the canoe plunged from a great height into an eddy below, and striking with great violence against the bottom, split in two. Here I lost my recollection, which, however, I soon recovered, and was surprised to find myself on a smooth, easy current, with only one half of the canoe in my arms." So he floated down through rough water until the current carried him into an eddy at the foot of a steep precipice. Utterly exhausted, he lost his hold, a large wave washed him among the rocks, and another hoisted him clear on shore. When he recovered consciousness, he managed somehow to climb up the almost perpendicular face of the cliff and regained his companions. He had drifted, in an upturned canoe, for three miles through a succession of rapids, cascades, and whirlpools, and by extraordinary good fortune lived to tell the tale.

On the 26th they came to a portion of the river beyond which navigation seemed impracticable. They had

U.B.C. LIBRARY

already had to do a good deal of portaging; the men were weary and dispirited; and provisions were perilously low. All hands had to proceed by land, over an exceedingly rugged and difficult country. "I have been for a long period among the Rocky Mountains," says Fraser, "but have never seen anything like this country. It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human being should venture; yet in those places there is a regular footpath impressed, or rather indented upon the very rocks by frequent travelling. Besides this, steps which are formed like a ladder or the shrouds of a ship, by poles hanging to one another and crossed at certain distances with twigs, the whole suspended from the top to the foot of immense precipices and fastened at both extremities to stones and trees, furnish a safe and convenient passage to the natives; but we, who had not had the advantage of their education and experience, were often in imminent danger when obliged to follow their example." To climb, with a ninety-pound pack on one's back, up or down these dizzy ladders, must indeed have been a trying experience. As it was impossible to portage the canoes over such country, Fraser resorted to the desperate expedient of setting them adrift. They were recovered some distance down the river, more or less damaged, but not beyond patching.

On the 28th they came to a village of the Achinrow tribe, where they were received with much kindness. Neat mats were spread for their reception, and plenty of salmon, in wooden dishes, was placed before them.

The houses of these Indians were remarkably well constructed. They were made of planks three or four inches thick, each plank overlapping the adjoining one a couple of inches. The posts, which were very strong and rudely carved, received the cross beams. The walls were eleven feet high, covered with a slanting roof. The Achinrows told Fraser that from their village the river was navigable to the sea, and this time the statement proved well founded.

The old canoes having been abandoned some little time before, Fraser now procured new ones, and continued his journey. Before he left he learned from the natives that white men had come from below to the foot of the rapids some time before. They showed him marks indented in the rocks which they said the white men had made, but which Fraser thought were nothing but natural marks.

Embarking on the morning of June 30th, the party made their way downstream under comparatively easy conditions. The same day they reached the mouth of the Coquihalla, where the town of Hope now stands, and saw in the distance a mountain which the natives called Stremotch—Mount Baker. They encamped at sunset on the banks of the river, in the midst of a grove of gigantic cedars, some of which were five fathoms in circumference. Mosquitoes surrounded them in clouds, and they had to go supperless to bed—a dreary prospect. At the mouth of the Coquihalla they had seen seals, and a native who had come up from the coast assured them that they might reach it the following day.

U.B.C. LIBRARY

Setting forward again at four o'clock the next morning, they landed at a village where the natives regaled them with fish and berries, as well as dried oysters. The Indians who had conducted them this far now went off with their canoes, and Fraser had difficulty in securing others. Finally the chief of the village consented to lend his large canoe and to accompany the party himself. The tide was now observed to rise two and a half feet. The explorer was nearing the end of his journey. But he was not yet at an end of his difficulties. The river Indians had been at war with those of the coast, and told Fraser that if he went down to the sea the coast Indians would certainly destroy him. They indeed painted their enemies in such lurid colours that the *voyageurs* grew alarmed and declined to go any farther. Fraser, however, like Mackenzie, was not a man to be so easily turned from his purpose. Peremptorily ordering his men to embark, he pushed off, without the Indian guides, and continued his journey.

Two miles below the village they came to a point where the river divides into several channels. Looking back, Fraser found that a number of the Indians were pursuing him in their canoes, armed with bows and arrows, spears and clubs, singing their war songs, beating time with their paddles upon the sides of their canoes, and evidently bent upon mischief. Fraser, however, continued his way with apparent unconcern, and the natives thought better of their meditated attack. Proceeding on his way down one of the channels, he at

last came in sight of a gulf or bay of the sea, which the Indians called Pas-hil-roe. It is described as running in a south-east and north-east direction, and containing several high and rocky islands whose summits were covered with snow.

Directing his course toward the right shore, he ascended a small winding river to a little lake, by the side of which stood an Indian village called by the natives Misquiame. Landing, he found only a few old men and women, the others having fled into the woods at the approach of the white men. After an hour spent in examining the village, consisting of a number of houses under a common roof, fifteen hundred feet in length by ninety in breadth, Fraser and his men prepared to embark, but found that in the meantime the tide had ebbed and left the canoe high and dry. While they were dragging it down to the water the Indians plucked up courage and appeared at the edge of the wood howling like wolves and brandishing their war clubs. Finally Fraser got away, and continued his course to a second village, but did not think it prudent to disembark. His provisions being completely exhausted, he determined to return up the river to the friendly Indians, intending if supplies could be obtained to return and explore the mouth of the river and the adjacent coast. It was now evening, and the tide being in his favour he ran rapidly upstream until eleven, when he encamped within six miles of the friendly village. The men, being extremely tired, lay down to

UBC LIBRARIES

sleep on the shore where they landed, but were roused before long by the tide washing around the camp. Early the next morning they embarked and reached the chief's village at five.

An Indian named Little Fellow, who had accompanied them as guide and who had remained behind at one of the lower villages, returned during the morning with discouraging tales of the natives below, who he said were determined to destroy the entire party if they returned down the river. Fraser was so anxious to get at least within sight of the sea that this alone would not have deterred him, but unfortunately the villagers would not let him have a morsel of provisions, and the owner of the canoe insisted that his canoe should be immediately restored. While he was in the village one of the men came running to inform him that the natives were pillaging the canoe. Alarmed at this report, he hastened to the shore, and found the Indians, among whom were several from the lower villages, in an ugly humour. Fraser, knowing the character of the men he had to deal with, pretended to fly into a violent passion, thrust them violently aside, and abused them roundly, exactly, as he says, in their own fashion. Peace and tranquillity were instantly restored, but it was evident that it would not be safe to remain here any longer, and it would be madness to go down to the sea with no prospect of provisions. Very reluctantly, therefore, Fraser turned his face homeward. "I must acknowledge," he says, "my great disappointment in not seeing the main ocean, having gone so near it as to be almost

within view." He had hoped to have settled his position by an observation for the longitude. However, he found that his latitude was nearly 49° (as a matter of fact he was some minutes north of 49°), and as the mouth of the Columbia was known to be in 46° 20′, or thereabouts, it was evident that this great river was not the Columbia. "If I had been convinced of this," remarks Fraser, somewhat disgustedly, "when I left my canoes I would certainly have returned." There of course spoke the fur trader. He had been sent to explore what was believed to be the Columbia, as an important route from the interior to the sea-coast, or vice versa. He had discovered an impracticable waterway. Yet geographically Simon Fraser had accomplished a notable task, under exceedingly difficult and trying circumstances. Twenty years afterward George Simpson descended the Fraser from Stuart Lake to the sea, and with somewhat characteristic assurance claimed the honour of first discovery, or rather of having first explored the river from Stuart Lake to the sea. He must surely have been aware of Fraser's achievement. The fact that Fraser did not actually come within sight of the sea — his farthest point was probably somewhere about where the city of New Westminster now stands —cannot detract from his just title to be recognized as the discoverer of the river that has ever since borne his name.

In connection with the misconception of Fraser, and also of Alexander Mackenzie, as to the true character of this river, it is somewhat curious that at the very

U.B.C. LIBRARY

time Fraser was struggling down what he thought was the Columbia, David Thompson was paddling up the true Columbia, without knowing it. The error was natural enough in both cases. Looking at the completed map of the Pacific coast as we have it to-day, we may wonder at first how they could have been led into such a mistake. But it must be remembered that in the days of Fraser and Thompson all that had actually been discovered was the upper waters of this unknown river and the mouth of the Columbia. What more natural than to suppose that this mighty river, pointing down so significantly to where the mouth of the Columbia was known to be, was itself the Columbia? And on the other hand, how could David Thompson have imagined, until he had traced its entire course, that the river which he reached by way of Howse Pass, and which flowed not south, but north, was in reality the Columbia?

U.B.C. LIBRARY

CHAPTER VI

DAVID THOMPSON, ASTRONOMER, GEOGRAPHER, AND EXPLORER

THREE names must ever stand first in the annals of exploration in Western Canada: La Vérendrye, Mackenzie, Thompson. Of these three only one, Alexander Mackenzie, has received the meed that was his due. Parkman, it is true, did something toward awakening public interest in the splendid achievements of La Vérendrye and his sons; and Elliott Coues made an equally praiseworthy effort to secure recognition for David Thompson; but the fact remains that until a few years ago both La Vérendrye and Thompson remained little more than names to the great majority of readers. This, no doubt, was due largely to the fact that the original journals of both were published for the first time in 1927 and 1916 respectively, by the Champlain Society of Toronto, La Vérendrye edited by the present writer and Thompson by J. B. Tyrrell; while Mackenzie's narrative was published during his life time and gained immediate recognition. In their original form the journals of David Thompson fill forty volumes of manuscript, and cover the amazing period of sixty-six years, from 1784 to 1850. What Dr. Tyrrell

has edited is not these journals but a narrative prepared by Thompson in his latter years and containing the substance of the journals.

A brief account has been given in an earlier chapter of Thompson's journeys and explorations during the eight years that he passed in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. It now remains to follow him through the much longer and more important period of his service with the North West Company. He was left, in the previous chapter, on his way down to Grand Portage to offer his services to the partners of the North West Company. He arrived there July 22nd, 1797, and lost no time in putting himself in communication with the Canadian traders. He had met three of the partners of the North West Company on his way down and had talked the matter over with them. The partners were glad to have the services of a man like Thompson. More far-sighted than their rivals, they realized the value and importance of exploration, even from a purely commercial point of view; and as a matter of fact Thompson seems to have appeared on the scene just when his services were most needed. "The Company desired," says Mr. Charles Lindsey, who made a special study of the subject in connection with his Investigation of the Unsettled Boundaries of Ontario, "to learn the position of their trading houses with respect to one another, and also to the 49° of North latitude, become, since the treaty of 1792, the boundary line between Canada and the United States, from the north-west corner of the Lake of the

Woods to the Rocky Mountain, in lieu of the line from the former point to the head of the Mississippi, as designated by the treaty of 1783. The source of the Mississippi was then known only to the Indians and a few fur traders, and was supposed to be further north than the Lake of the Woods. Mr. Thompson was instructed to survey the 49th parallel of latitude, to go as far as the Missouri River, visit the ancient villages of the agricultural natives who dwelt there, to inquire for the fossils of large animals, and to search for any monuments that might throw light on the ancient state of the countries to be travelled over and examined. He received orders on all the agents and trading posts of the Company for men and whatever else he might require."

Setting out from Lake Superior with four canoes on August 9th, 1796, equipped with a sextant of ten inches radius, with quicksilver and parallel glasses, an excellent achromatic telescope, one of a smaller kind, with drawing instruments and thermometers, all by Dollond, Thompson crossed the Grand Portage, taking five days to carry canoes and supplies over the eight miles of very difficult road to Pigeon River. He followed the usual route through Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods, and reached Lake Winnipeg on September 1st. Coasting around the southern and south-western shores of the lake, which are here mostly low ground rising occasionally in limestone cliffs fifty feet high, he reached Pigeon Bay and ascended Dauphin River, a small stream about thirty yards wide and three feet deep. Both the soil and

U.B.C. LIBRARY

timber improved in quality as he proceeded, but deer and beaver were scarce. From Dauphin River he paddled through St. Martins's Lake to Lake Manitoba and by way of Meadow Portage to Lake Winnipegosis, where he camped near the mouth of Little Dauphin River. Coasting up the west side of the lake, he ascended Swan River to Swan River House, an establishment of the North West Company. The two following months Thompson spent in travelling on horseback about the Assiniboine country, during which time he surveyed the upper waters of the Assiniboine to its source, and also Red Deer River. On November 28th he set out on his Mandan tour, already described in another chapter.

On the 25th of February, 1798, Thompson started on foot, with a dog-team to carry his supplies, on a long and arduous journey to the head-waters of the Mississippi, and thence to Lake Superior. This expedition lies outside the present narrative, but it is worth mentioning that by it Thompson made the first scientific examination of the upper waters of the Mississipi. He reached Lake Superior in May, surveyed a portion of the south shore of the Lake, reached the Falls of Ste. Marie on the 28th, and leaving there in a light canoe reached Grand Portage on June 7th.

On the 14th of the following month he once more started for the interior, returning to his former field north of the Saskatchewan. On the 18th of August he was at Cumberland House, where he met Peter Fidler of the Hudson's Bay Company, almost as indefatigable an

explorer as himself, and a man of character and resourcefulness, of whom we get tantalizingly brief glimpses in the journals of the fur traders. Why was there not a Boswell at Cumberland House to record the meeting between these two remarkable men—both the product of exceptional conditions and an exceptional environment?

From Cumberland House Thompson set out again on a long canoe journey to Lac La Biche, a small body of water emptying through a river of the same name into the Athabaska. His course was by way of the Sturgeon-Weir River and Frog Portage to the Churchill, which he ascended to Lac La Ronge, where it will be remembered Peter Pond had wintered in 1782, and where, Thompson tells us, Simon Fraser wintered in 1795-6. Again ascending the Churchill, he reached Ile à la Crosse Lake on September 6th, and turned up the Beaver River, which he followed to the mouth of a small tributary, Green River. The North West Company already had a post on Green Lake, at the head of this stream. From this post, Thompson took horses and travelled overland to Fort George on the Saskatchewan, and turning north again, reached Beaver River, which he ascended to Little Beaver River, and following this branch to its source in Beaver Lake, crossed the portage and found himself at Lac La Biche on October 4th. Three days later he commenced to build a fort on a small bay on the west side of the lake, the position of which he afterwards ascertained to be lat. 54° 46′ 23″

N. and long. 111° 47′ W.[1] This proved a favourable position for a trading post, lying as it did on Athabaskan waters, and separated only by a short portage from a tributary of the Churchill. Here Thompson spent the winter. Toward the end of March, 1799, he travelled to Fort Augustus on the North Saskatchewan, a mile and a half above the mouth of Sturgeon River, where he remained until the 10th of April.

On the date last mentioned Thompson left Fort Augustus with a party of three men and five horses, and journeyed north-westward until he reached the Pembina River. Sending the horses back to the fort, he proceeded to explore the Pembina in a canoe. On the 25th April he reached the junction of the Pembina with the Athabaska, and continuing down this river to the mouth of Lesser Slave Lake River, paddled up the latter to Lesser Slave Lake, making a survey of the river as he went. Returning to the Athabaska, he travelled downstream to the mouth of the Clearwater. On the 10th of May he turned up the Clearwater, crossed Methye Portage, and reached Ile à la Crosse Fort on May 20th. Here he was married, on June 10th, to a girl of fourteen, Charlotte Small. This important event did not prevent him from, according to his usual custom, fixing the position of the fort, which he found to be in 55° 26′ 15″ N., 107° 46′ 40″ W. During the summer he went down to Grand Portage, whether on his honeymoon or for some more prosaic purpose

[1] According to Dr. Coues; Tyrrell says, 54° 56′ 30″ and 112° 12′.

Thompson does not say. At any rate he was back at Fort George on the Saskatchewan in September, and remained there until March, 1800, when he travelled overland to Fort Augustus, and on the last day of the same month started for Rocky Mountain House, which he reached seven days later. This establishment, built by the North West Company in 1799, and one of several bearing the same name, was situated on the north bank of the Saskatchewan, something over a mile above the mouth of the Clearwater River. This was, as Dr. Coues points out, the "uppermost permanent post the North West Company ever had on the Saskatchewan, and thus always the main point of departure for the crossing of the mountains by any of the passes about the sources of this great river." Its position, by Thompson's observations, was in lat. 52° 21′ 30″ N., long. 114° 57′ W. Thompson had planned to cross over by land to the upper waters of the Red Deer River, an important tributary of the South Saskatchewan, but was prevented by an accident. He, however, sent four of his men on the same journey. A boat had been built for them, and in this they apparently descended the Red Deer to its junction with the South Saskatchewan, where Chesterfield House was afterward built by the Hudson's Bay Company, and followed the South Saskatchewan down to the forks, being the first white men to traverse a large part of this route. Thompson himself spent the summer on the North Saskatchewan, and on the 5th October left Rocky Mountain House for what he calls his "Journey to the Kootenaes Rocky Mt., 1800."

He took with him five French-Canadians and a couple of Indian guides, all on horseback. The route lay in a south-easterly direction, across the Clearwater, and several tributaries of the Red Deer, until they struck the Red Deer itself, which they ascended to the mouth of Williams Creek, in lat. 51° 41′ 41″, long. 114° 56′ 40″. Here Thompson encamped, and the following day rode west, about twenty-two miles, to the foot of the mountains, where he met a chief of the Kootenays with a number of his followers. He accompanied the Indians to their camp, and prevailed on some of them to come back with him to Rocky Mountain House.

On November 17th of the same year Thompson again left Rocky Mountain House, with Duncan McGillivray of the North West Company and four men, on a journey to the upper waters of the Bow River. As far as the Red Deer his route was the same as on the previous trip, but in the present case he crossed the Red Deer and continued on a little east of south until he struck Bow River, about where the town of Calgary now stands. Turning down the Bow, he crossed it and struck what is now known as Highwood River, on November 22nd. Crossing this stream, he arrived at a camp of the Piegan Iindians, and after spending a day with them ascended the river to another camp of the same tribe, who told him that it was only ten days' journey overland to the Missouri. He started on his return journey on the 26th, and two days later reached the Bow River, which he ascended to the mountains, reaching the Gap in lat. 51° 03′ 04″, long. 115°

21′, where he could look to the eastward over limitless plains stretching out to a remote horizon, and to the westward over a sea of mountains and snow-capped peaks. Returning, he reached Rocky Mountain House on December 3rd.

It appears from Thompson's journal that some time during this year (1800) Duncan McGillivray made a journey to the westward from Rocky Mountain House, in the course of which he reached the source of the North Saskatchewan, near the summit of the Rocky Mountains in Howse Pass, and crossing the summit, came to a stream flowing toward the south-west. From here he returned to Rocky Mountain House. This journey, to which Mr. Tyrrell draws attention, is important as establishing the first discovery of Howse Pass by Duncan McGillivray. The credit for this achievement has sometimes been given to David Thompson.[1]

Thompson spent the winter of 1800-1 at Rocky Mountain House, and in June of the latter year made another journey into the mountains, to a point in lat. 51° 57′ 24″, long. 116° 27′ 54″, from whence he returned to the fort.

From the autumn of 1801 to the autumn of 1802 his journals are missing, but in November, 1802, he was at Lesser Slave Lake, where he fixed the position of the North West Company's fort at the west end of the lake in lat. 55° 32′ 36″. Early in 1803 he arrived at Fort of

[1] Howse Pass was examined by Dr. Hector in 1859. See his report in Palliser's Journals. London, 1863.

the Forks on Peace River, five miles above the mouth of Smoky River, where he remained, making short explorations into the surrounding country, until the 15th of March, 1804, when he descended the Peace River on the ice to Horse Shoe House (lat. 57° 8′, long. 117° 39′ 49″), and as soon as the ice broke up, continued down the river by canoe to Lake Athabaska, where he rested for a few days at Athabaska House (lat. 58° 42′ 50″, long. 111° 8′ 30″). Ascending the Athabaska River, on his way to Ile à la Crosse, he passed Peter Pond's old fort on May 17th, 1804. He surveyed the river to the mouth of the Clearwater, which he reached on May 19th. Paddling up the Clearwater and crossing Methye Portage, he was once again at Ile à la Crosse Fort; and from there descended by the usual route to Lake Superior, and took up his quarters at the New Fort at the mouth of the Kaministikwia — afterwards Fort William — to which place the head-quarters of the Company had been removed since Thompson last visited Lake Superior.

Never content to remain idle for any length of time, we find Thompson again on the move before the end of July. Leaving Kaministikwia, he followed the new route through Lac Mille Lacs and Lac la Croix, to Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods, and Lake Winnipeg. On the 1st of September he was at the mouth of the Saskatchewan, and eight days later at Cumberland House. From this time until June, 1806, Thompson was busily engaged in travelling about the country between the Saskatchewan and the Churchill, to the

eastward of Cumberland House and Frog Portage, mapping out new routes, establishing new posts, carrying on his meteorological journals, and fulfilling his commercial duties as a fur trader. On the 14th June, 1806, he set out from Cumberland House for the Kaministikwia. On the 11th of September we know that he was again at Cumberland House, for Harmon mentions meeting him there. One month later he arrived at Rocky Mountain House, then in charge of Jules Quesnel, who two years later accompanied Simon Fraser on his perilous journey down the Fraser. Thompson spent the winter trading with the Indians and making preparations for a long-planned journey through the mountains, a journey which was to bring him to the most important period of his life as an explorer. For the next five years we shall find him almost continuously on the western side of the Rocky Mountains, threading his way through the tangled wilderness of the Pacific slope. He is much more difficult to follow on this side of the Rocky Mountains than on the eastern side. It is true we still have the benefit of his careful surveys and astronomical observations, but he is now traversing entirely new ground, and unravelling the most intricate river system on the continent. The student is further puzzled by the fact that while many of the geographical names found in Thompson's journals and on his map are also found on modern maps, they are applied to entirely different streams and lakes, while other of his names are entirely obsolete. For this reason the list of Thompson's place-names

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

with their present equivalents, in the Introductory Chapter, will be found helpful in following him through this most important field of his explorations.

On the 10th of May, 1807, Thompson left Rocky Mountain House on horseback, following the north bank of the Saskatchewan, while his assistant, Finan McDonald, brought the provisions up the river in a canoe. On June 3rd they reached Kootenay Plain, "a wide, open flat on the north side of the river within the mountains," which Thompson placed in lat. 52° 02′ 06″. On June 6th they reached the forks, and turned up the south branch, which they ascended for three miles. Navigation then became impossible for the canoe. Thompson remained here until the 22nd, making preparations for his journey across the mountains. Provisions and equipment were packed on the horses, and the party set out for the summit, which they reached at one o'clock on the same day. Thompson found the point at which he reached the height of land to be in lat. 51° 48′ 27″. One gets an idea of the magnitude of the rivers that drain this great western country when it is remembered that to within a few miles of the point where Thompson now stood in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, he had followed one and the same river, the Saskatchewan, for a distance of 1,100 miles. The country he is now entering is radically different from the one he leaves behind, and the rivers of course correspond. The quiet, easy-going, navigable rivers of the plains gave place to the turbulent and treacherous streams of the Pacific slope. Explorer or trader who

navigates these wild rivers must have his wits about him if he would come safely through.

A few miles south of the summit Thompson reached the upper waters of a small tributary of the Columbia, now known as Blaeberry River, "whose current," he notes in his journal, "descends to the Pacific Ocean"; and he piously exclaims, "May God in His mercy give me to see where its waters flow into the ocean, and return in safety." He camped near the summit on the 23rd, waiting for Finan McDonald and the rest of his party, who arrived the following day. He then descended Blaeberry River to the main stream, this portion of which he named the Kootanie. It was actually the Columbia. Duncan McGillivray had, as we have already seen, reached the Blaeberry River in 1800, but had gone no farther. Thompson was the first white man to stand upon the banks of the Upper Columbia. He reached the river on June 30th, and fixed his position in lat. 51° 25′ 14″, long. 116° 52′ 45″. He camped here for twelve days, building canoes. On the 12th July he packed everything into these and paddled upstream to a lake which he called Kootanae, now Windermere Lake. Here, or rather a mile below the northern end of the lake, he unloaded his canoes and built a fort — Fort Kootanae, or, to adopt the official Canadian spelling, Kootenay—on the west side of the Columbia, in lat. 50° 32′ 15″, long. 115° 51′ 40″, var. 24½° E. Mr. Tyrrell states that there is now a village of Shuswap Indians about opposite where the old fort stood. At this fort Thompson spent the

winter, trading with the Indians, and taking meteorological and astronomical observations.

In April, 1808, he continued his exploration toward the south, and finally reached the source of the Columbia in Upper Columbia Lake. This notable achievement was but an incident to Thompson. From the head of the lake he could see the waters of another great river flowing turbulently to the south, and made up his mind to follow it. The canoes were carried over the intervening flat terrace to the banks of McGillivray's River (Kootenay). This portage, which Thompson also named after his friend McGillivray, is marked on his maps as two miles; G. M. Dawson made it about a mile and a half. A canal now connects the two great rivers at this point. Thompson descended the Kootenay, passing the mouth of St. Mary's River a little below the present Fort Steele on the 24th April, and the mouth of the Tobacco River three days later. Continuing downstream, he followed the river around the great bend, portaging past Kootenay Falls on May 6th, and on the 8th reached a camp of Flatheads and Kootenays, where he remained a few days. Setting out again on the 13th, he passed the mouth of a river which he named after Finan McDonald, now Moyie River, and the next day entered Kootenay Lake. Returning up the river to the Indian camp, he travelled along the bank of Moyie River on horseback, following approximately the present railway line from Yahk to Cranbrook, and rejoining the Kootenay about the mouth of St. Mary's River on May 18th. He crossed the Kootenay and ascended its

right bank to the portage, from whence he reached the fort on the 5th of June. Packing the winter's crop of furs, he descended the Columbia to Blaeberry River and crossed the mountains, reaching Rocky Mountain House on the 24th of June. He descended the Saskatchewan to Cumberland House, where he arrived on July 9th, and reached Rainy Lake House on the 2nd August.

On the 27th of October we find him again crossing the mountains by the same pass. He killed two buffalo at the height of land, and saw a herd of cows some distance down the western slope—one of the very rare recorded instances of buffalo being found on the Pacific side of the mountains. He reached the Columbia on the last day of the month. As on his previous journey, he crossed the mountains with horses. These he now sent through the woods, while he ascended the Columbia in a boat to a point near the mouth of the Spilimichene River. From here he sent Finan McDonald on to establish a post at Kootenay Falls, while he went on horseback to Kootenay Fort, where he wintered.

In April, 1809, he once more crossed the mountains, with forty packs of furs. At the Kootenay Plain he built a canoe and paddled down the Saskatchewan to Fort Augustus, where he was on June 24th. Sending the furs down the river, he himself returned to the mountains, meeting Joseph Howse of the Hudson's Bay Company west of Kootenay Plain. Howse, after whom the pass was afterwards named, was on his

U.B.C. LIBRARY

way back to Fort Augustus from an exploring trip to the mountains. Thompson reached the Columbia on August 13th, and ascending it to McGillivray's portage, entered the Kootenay on the 20th, and nine days later was at the place where he met the Flatheads in 1808. Here he remained until September 6th, when he set out on horseback to the southward, crossing the Cabinet Range, by the Indian road, to Kullyspell Lake (Pend d'Oreille), on a peninsula on the east side of which he built a fort, Kullyspell House, in lat. 48° 12′ 14″. On the 27th September he left the new fort on an exploring trip around the southern side of the lake, to where the Saleesh River, or Pend d'Oreille, leaves the lake. This river has its source about lat. 49° 25′ N., long. 114° 50′ W., and flows thence to the Flathead through the very heart of the Rocky Mountains across the international boundary to Flathead Lake, thence south and west to its junction with the Missoula 47° 18′ and long. 114° 45′. Thence as Clarks Fork it flows north-west to Lake Pend d'Oreille and from Lake Pend d'Oreille west, north, and west to its junction with the Columbia in 49° N., 117° 35′ W. Exploring this for some distance, in fact well into what is now the State of Washington, he returned to the fort on October 6th. Clarks Fork falls into the Columbia at 49° N.—i.e. on the international boundary. Five days later he set out on horseback in the opposite direction, following the Pend d'Oreille from where it enters the lake in a south-easterly direction; then, leaving the river, rode north-east and north-west, until on the 21st he reached the

Kootenay above the falls, or about the site of the present town of Jennings. Here obtaining canoes, he descended the river past Kootenay Falls to the Great Road of the Flatheads, where he left the river and journeyed overland to Kullyspell House, which he reached on October 29th.

Early in November he again ascended the Pend d'Oreille, and built Saleesh House in lat. 47° 34′ 35″, long. 115° 22′ 51″, near the mouth of present Ashley Creek, in Montana. He wintered here, or rather made it his head-quarters, from which he explored the surrounding country, on one of his trips ascending Clarks Fork to the junction of Flathead River with the Missoula, returning in April, 1810, to Kullyspell House. Once more he started north by the Kootenay and Columbia, and made Howse Pass on June 18th. He descended the Saskatchewan, passing the ruins of Fort Augustus, which had been destroyed by the Blackfeet since he had last seen it, and met Alexander Henry at White Mud Brook House, on White Earth River. He reached Cumberland House on July 4th, and on the 22nd was at Rainy Lake.

Returning to the far west, Thompson arrived at Alexander Henry's new establishment on White Earth River on September 6th; on the 15th he was at Old White Earth House, and from there went down the Saskatchewan to Boggy Hall, between Brazeau River and Wolf Creek, or rather the site of Boggy Hall, for the post had been abandoned in the fall of 1808. Near here Henry found him on October 15th, encamped on

U.B.C. LIBRARY

the top of a hill three hundred feet above the river, in a grove of pines so thickly set together that he could not see the tent until within ten yards of it. Some of Thompson's canoes had been stopped and turned back by the Piegan, who were self-constituted guardians of Howse Pass, and as a result Thompson had decided to find a new way through the mountains farther north, by way of the Athabaska River. A party of "freemen" (that is, traders working on their own account) and Nipissing Indians had penetrated the Rocky Mountains by way of the Athabaska Pass a few years before, but for all scientific as well as practical purposes, the expedition upon which Thompson was just setting out made the real discovery of Athabaska Pass.

Thompson sent some of his men up the Saskatchewan for horses, and on October 29th left Boggy Hall for the north. This journey was to test his courage, endurance, and leadership to the utmost. From start to finish it was a desperate fight against almost overwhelming odds. Starvation dogged his footsteps continually; more than once the members of the party were in danger of being frozen to death; formidable obstacles presented themselves at every turn; and nothing but the masterful spirit of their leader kept the men from mutiny. The first week in November brought him to Pembina River. On the 7th two of his men arrived at Henry's Fort for provisions. They reported that Thompson was cutting his way doggedly through a wretched, thick, woody country, over mountains and through gloomy muskegs, and that the party were at the point of starva-

tion, animals being very scarce in that quarter. On the 1st of December, however, Thompson reached the Athabaska, and ascended it to a point in lat. 53° 23′ 37″, mean long. 117° 44′ 15″, where he built a hut for his goods, and a meat shed. Unfortunately, however, there was nothing to put into the shed. His provisions were about exhausted, and until others could be obtained he dared not attempt the pass. Some of his men were sent hunting; others in search of birch to make sledges and snowshoes for the journey; while still another party went overland to Rocky Mountain House on the Saskatchewan, for provisions, dogs, and horses, of all of which they were entirely destitute. "It is seventeen days," says Henry, "since they left Mr. Thompson on Athabaska River at the foot of the mountains. On their way here they ate an old horse and five dogs, but had been some time without food, and were worn out with fatigue and hunger." Henry gave them what provisions he could spare, but he himself was in sore enough straits, having no more meat in store than would answer for eight days' rations, and of other provisions not a mouthful. "Our hunters are lazy," he says, "and when we shall see an Indian to bring a supply, God knows."

Meanwhile Thompson was having a desperate time on the Athabaska. Provisions were scarce; the thermometer ranged from 30° to 36° below zero; the men were ready to desert at any moment.[1] Notwithstand-

[1] In a letter to Alexander Fraser, dated Athabaska River, Foot of the Mountains, 21 December, 1810, Thompson says: "I am now preparing in this hard season to cross the mountains and gain my first post near the head of the Mississourie, a march of about

ing, on the 29th of December he started out from his camp, determined to force his way through the mountains to the Columbia, at any cost. Provisions and supplies were loaded on sleds, drawn some by one, some by two dogs, according to the load; beside these, 208 lb. of pemmican and other provisions were loaded on four horses. So the party set out, making its way slowly up the frozen bed of the Athabaska toward the pass. On the first day of the New Year, 1811, the thermometer registered 24° below zero, and the travelling was so bad that the dogs could not move the sleds. Some of the provisions were accordingly cached, and the loads reduced by one-third, and on they went, spurred to their utmost by the untiring Thompson, to whom difficulties and dangers were but incentives to greater effort. On the 4th they came to a bold defile, through which issued the branch of the Athabaska now known as Whirlpool River. This was "the canoe road to pass to the west side of the mountains." On the 8th they were at the head-waters of Whirlpool River, between mountains two to three thousand feet high. Two days later they crossed the height of land, in lat. 52° 08′ 38″ W. On the 11th they began to descend the western slope, along the course of a small stream. Thompson, having no paper, sent a report of his pro-

---

34 days, and a part of it over a dangerous country for war. . . . If all goes well and it pleases good Providence to take care of me, I hope to see you and a civilized world in the autumn of 1812. I am getting tired of such constant hard journeys; for the last 20 months I have spent only bare two months under the shelter of a hut, all the rest has been in my tent, and there is little likelihood the next 12 months will be much otherwise."

gress to the partners of the Company on boards, to be copied at the nearest post and forwarded. The snow getting deeper and softer as they descended the pass, the dogs could no longer haul the loads, and Thompson abandoned everything except what was absolutely essential. He had much difficulty in keeping up the spirits of his men, but at last, on the 18th of Janaury, they were within sight of the Columbia. Thompson, the indefatigable, would have pushed on at once to Kootenay House, but his men were by this time thoroughly dispirited. He turned back, therefore, to the junction of Canoe River with the Columbia, where he spent the remainder of the winter.

In the spring of 1811 he explored the Columbia to the mouth of Blaeberry River, and continued over the old ground to the source of the Columbia. Crossing McGillivray's Portage to the Kootenay, he was once more at the Great Kootenay Road on May 19th. This road, according to Mr. Tyrrell, strikes up a stream from the south-east bend of the Kootenay River; apparently it is the one called "Kootenae Road" on Thompson's map. It ran from about the position of the town of Jennings, south to the Pend d'Oreille. Another Indian road, also indicated on Thompson's map, as the Lake Indian Road, ran from somewhere in the neighbourhood of Bonner's Ferry, south of Pend d'Oreille Lake. Following one of these roads—it is not clear which—Thompson reached the Pend d'Oreille west of the lake, travelled over another Indian road, the Sheetshoo, to the Spokane River, and on June 15th reached Spokane House,

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

in lat. 47° 47′ 4″, about where the city of Spokane now stands. This post had apparently been built by Thompson or one of his assistants some time before. From here he descended the Spokane River to the Columbia, and ascended the latter river to Ilthkoyape or Kettle Falls, visited many years afterward by Paul Kane, who describes them as the highest on the Columbia, about one thousand yards across and eighteen feet high, the immense body of water tumbling amongst the broken rocks rendering them exceedingly picturesque and grand. He explains the origin of its name (note similar condition at the Chaudiere Falls, Ottawa). Resting here for a few days, Thompson started down the Columbia, and reached the mouth of Snake River on July 9th, 1811. Down to this point he was travelling over entirely new ground. From Snake River to the mouth of the Columbia, Lewis and Clark had preceded him in 1805. At Snake River Thompson took formal possession of the country. The entry in his original manuscript journals, as noted by Dr. Coues in his Henry-Thompson Journals, is as follows: "½ a mile to the Junction of the Shawpatin (Snake) River with this the Columbia, here I erected a small Pole, with a half sheet of Paper well tied about it, with these words on it—Know hereby that this country is claimed by Great Britain as part of its Territories, and that the N.W. Company of Merchants from Canada, finding the Factory for this People inconvenient for them, do hereby intend to erect a Factory in this Place for the commerce of the Country around.—D. Thompson." Alex-

ander Ross, in his *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregan or Columbia River*, says that he was at this place on the 14th of August, 1811, when "early in the morning, what did we see waving triumphantly in the air at the confluence of the two great branches, but a British flag, hoisted in the middle of the Indian camp, planted there by Mr. Thompson as he passed, with a written paper, laying claim to the country north of the forks, as British territory."

Thompson reached the mouth of the Columbia on July 15th or 16th. Alexander Ross and Gabriel Franchere both state that it was on the 15th, but Mr. Tyrrell points out that Thompson's record of his observations seems rather to point to the 16th as the date of his arrival. The famous Astoria had been founded at the mouth of the Columbia a few months before. The following year, when it was handed over by the Pacific Fur Company to the North West Company, the name was changed to Fort George.

Thompson remained at Astoria for a few days and then started up the river, reaching the mouth of the Willamette, near the present city of Portland, on July 24th. From here he ascended to the mouth of the Snake River, and turned up that river as far as lat. 46° 36′ 13″, long. 118° 50′, where he arrived on August 8th. From this point he left the river and travelled overland to Spokane House, where he was on the 12th of the same month. He then descended the Spokane to its mouth, and followed the Columbia north to Kettle

J.B.C. LIBRARY

Falls, the farthest point he had previously reached in this direction. From here he wrote a letter to Harmon, dated August 28th, informing him of his voyage down the Columbia to the sea. This letter only reached Harmon on the 6th of the following April, at his post on Stuart's Lake in what is now Northern British Columbia. It had come by the Indian post. Paul Kane in his *Wanderings of an Artist* describes this rather primitive mail delivery. "The gentlemen in charge of the various posts have frequently occasion to send letters, sometimes for a considerable distance when it is either inconvenient or impossible for them to fit out a canoe with their own men to carry it. In such cases a letter is given to an Indian, who carries it as far as suits his convenience and safety. He then sells the letter to another, who carries it until he finds an opportunity of selling it to advantage; it is thus passed on and sold until it arrives at its destination, gradually increasing in value according to the distance, and the last possessor receiving the reward for its safe delivery. In this manner letters are frequently sent with perfect security, and with much greater rapidity than could be done otherwise." One wonders what the less rapid method could have been like. Thompson's letter took exactly seven months and eight days in getting from Kettle Falls to Stuart's Lake.

From Kettle Falls Thompson continued up the Columbia, through the Lower and Upper Arrow lakes to Boat Encampment, at the mouth of Canoe River, which he reached about the beginning of October, 1811.

He had now completed his greatest achievement as an explorer. During the four and a quarter years that had elapsed since he first stood on the banks of the Columbia, at the mouth of the Blaeberry, he had surveyed every inch of the great river from source to mouth, eleven hundred and fifty miles; and as far down as the mouth of Snake River was the first white man to explore its waters. In 1807 he had ascended the river from Blaeberry to Kootenay House; in 1808 he had explored from there to the source, and followed the Kootenay to Kootenay Lake; in 1810 he had reached the most northerly point of the Columbia, by way of Athabaska Pass, and ascended the river to Blaeberry; in 1811 he had descended the Columbia to its mouth; and the same year reascended it to the mouth of Canoe River, thus completing his survey.

From Boat Encampment Thompson went over the Athabaska Pass to the head waters of the Athabaska. In April, 1812, he is back again at Kettle Falls on the Columbia, and on May 6th once more at Boat Encampment. On that day he set out on foot over the pass, reaching the house of Mr. William Henry on the Athabaska (lat. 52° 55′ 16″) on the 11th. Two days later he descended the Athabaska to the mouth of Lesser Slave River, went up that to the lake; returning, he continued down the Athabaska to the Red Deer, turned up the Red Deer to the lake of the same name, crossed the portage to Beaver River, and descended the Beaver to lat. 54° 22′ 14″, long. 110° 17′, where the survey is abruptly broken off. It is probable that he

followed the usual route from there to Cumberland House, and so on to Lake Superior. At any rate, we find him at Fort William in August of the same year, when he finally took leave of the great west. He returned to Montreal and settled at Terrebonne, where for two years he was engaged in preparing for the North West Company his great map of Western Canada. This very remarkable map, now in the possession of the Ontario Government in Toronto, and portions of which were copied for Dr. Coues' Henry-Thompson Journals, is on a scale of about fifteen miles to an inch. It was compiled mainly from Thompson's own observations and surveys covering a period of twenty years, but embodies also Turner's surveys of Athabaska Lake and Slave River, Alexander Mackenzie's track through the mountains and down the Fraser as far as Alexandria, and John Stuart's survey of the Fraser down to the sea. The map is reproduced in full by Mr. Tyrrell in *Thompson's Narrative*.

"David Thompson," says H. H. Bancroft, "was an entirely different order of man from the orthodox fur trader. Tall and fine-looking, of sandy complexion, with large features, deep-set studious eyes, high forehead, and broad shoulders, the intellectual was well set upon the physical. His deeds have never been trumpeted as those of some of the others, but in the westward explorations of the North West Company no man performed more valuable service or estimated his achievements more modestly. Unhappily his last days were not as pleasant as fell to the lot of some of the worn-out members of the Company. He retired almost

blind to Lachine House, once the head-quarters of the Company, where Mr. Anderson [whose unedited *North-West Coast* is one of Bancroft's main sources] encountered him in 1831 in a very decrepit condition."

Anderson must, however, have misjudged the physical condition of the veteran explorer, or his date is wrong, for it is known that in 1831 Thompson was still actively engaged in his profession. He surveyed Lake St. Francis on the St. Lawrence River in 1834; three years later he made a survey of the famous canoe route from Lake Huron to the Ottawa, which had been traversed by explorers and fur traders from the early days of the French regime, and was still in active use; and later still he surveyed Lake St. Peter on the St. Lawrence. We learn from Mr. Tyrrell that his last years were spent either in Glengarry County, Ontario, or in Longueuil, opposite Montreal, where he died on the 16th of February, 1857, at the age of nearly eighty-seven years. It is a remarkable fact that, in spite of the constant hardships they had to endure, many of these western fur traders and pathfinders lived well into their seventies, some into the eighties, and a few even into the nineties. Thompson's wife survived him by only about three months, dying on the 7th May, 1857. They were both buried in Mount Royal Cemetery at Montreal.

Although Bancroft had formed such a favourable opinion of David Thompson's work as an explorer, it is clear that he had only a very vague knowledge of the

U.B.C. LIBRARY

extent of his explorations. In his *History of British Columbia* (p. 134) Bancroft says: "Old Fort Kamloop was first called Fort Thompson, having been begun by David Thompson, astronomer of the North West Company, on his overland journey from Montreal to Astoria, by way of Yellowhead Pass, in 1810"; and in his *History of the North-West Coast* (II, 122) he gives a detailed account of this purely imaginary part of Thompson's explorations. "Thompson," he says, "crossed the mountains at some point south of Peace River—probably he came through Yellowhead Pass to Mount Thompson—and after a preliminary survey of his surroundings he regarded the north branch of Thompson River as more likely to prove an important tributary of the true Tacoutche Tesse of Mackenzie than the stream to which he afterwards gave the name of Canoe River. The more he examined this stream the more he became satisfied, from the description given by Stuart and Fraser, that this was not the river descended by them. Nor was it until he had reached Kamloops Lake, and had there seen all the tributaries of this river taking their decided westward course in one large body toward the defile where he knew the Fraser to be, that he became convinced that he had not been navigating the Columbia." Thompson thereupon, according to Bancroft, retraced his steps to the headwaters of Thompson River, crossed over to Canoe River and descended that stream to a point some distance above its junction with the Columbia. Here he wintered, and in the spring of 1811 paddled down-

stream to the Columbia, and from there descended the Columbia to its mouth, which he reached on July 15th, 1811. With the single exception of the date of Thompson's arrival at the mouth of the Columbia, which is about correct, Bancroft is hopelessly at sea. As we have already seen, Thompson crossed the mountains in 1810–11 by the Athabaska Pass, not the Yellowhead. According to Bancroft, he crossed the Yellowhead Pass to the head-waters of the North Thompson River, descended that river to Kamloops Lake a distance of one hundred and eighty-five miles, returned to the head-waters of the river, crossed to Canoe River, and descended that river some distance to his winter quarters, and all this before winter had set in. On the other hand, Thompson's own narrative proves conclusively that up to the 10th January, 1811, he was still on the eastern side of the mountains, and it was not until the middle of January that he reached the mouth of Canoe River, by the Athabaska Pass. In the spring of 1811 he did not, as Bancroft states, descend the Columbia to its mouth from Boat Encampment, but ascended it to its source—quite a different matter. He did of course descend to the mouth of the Columbia, but it was by way of the Kootenay, not by way of the Arrow Lakes. As we have seen, the portion of the Columbia between Kettle Falls and Boat Encampment was explored for the first time on Thompson's upward journey from Astoria, in August and September, 1811.

It is evident that Bancroft had not seen Thompson's own Journals at Toronto when he wrote his Histories of

U.B.C. LIBRARY

British Columbia and the North West Coast. He probably placed together what scraps of information he could gather from the journals of Thompson's contemporaries in the fur trade, and the result furnishes a warning as to the pitfalls that beset this method of writing history. Most historians are forced at times to resort to circumstancial evidence, because they cannot obtain direct evidence, but nine times out of ten they guess wrong, as Bancroft did here.

The explanation of Bancroft's mistake is simple enough. It is all in the Thompson journals. David Stuart and Thompson went up the Columbia together, but in separate parties, Pacific Fur Company and North West Company, in July, 1811. Stuart with a party of nine or ten men, was to explore the Okanagan, or Ookenaw Kane as it appears on Thompson's map. He reached the mouth of the Okanagan, on August 31st, where he established Fort Okanagan. Leaving several of his men to winter here, he with three others pushed up the Okanagan, which he ascended to its source, some two hundred and fifty miles. He crossed over to the river afterward known as Thompson, but which is named Sheewap on Thompson's map, and descended it to the mouth of the north branch, where he established a post among the Shuswaps, and returned February 26th, 1812. He reached Astoria on May 11th, and left again about the end of June, with a large party, for Fort Okanagan. Ascending the Okanagan, he spent the winter of 1812–13 at Fort Thompson. The position of this fort is clearly indicated on Thompson's map, on the

north side of the river, between the forks. Probably during the winter of 1812–13 Stuart descended the Thompson to its junction with the Fraser, as its course is clearly laid down on Thompson's map. It is a rather amusing commentary on Bancroft's story that while the main Thompson River is carefully mapped by Thompson, from source to mouth, on Stuart's surveys the North Thompson is represented only for a very short distance from its mouth. Clearly neither Stuart nor Thompson had explored it at any time.

One cannot close this sketch of the life and achievments of David Thompson better than by quoting Dr. Coues' fine tribute: "The world can never be allowed to forget the discoverer of the sources of the Columbia, the first white man who ever voyaged on the upper reaches and main upper tributaries of that mighty river, the pathfinder of more than one way across the Continental Divide from Saskatchewan and Athabaskan to Columbian waters, the greatest geographer of his day in British America, and maker of what was then by far its greatest map."

U.B.C. LIBRARY

CHAPTER VII

THE AFTERMATH

THE long story of the exploration of North-Western America, from Hudson and La Vérendrye to Mackenzie, Fraser, and Thompson, has now been told. There remains but to trace briefly the history of subsequent explorations. In its broader aspects the story closed with that brief but pregnant inscription painted by Alexander Mackenzie on a rock washed by the waters of the Pacific Ocean. All that followed was in a sense but the filling in of the details. Yet this must not be understood as minimizing the importance and value of subsequent explorations. The search for the Western Sea had been crowned with success; but there remained immense areas of what is now the Dominion of Canada the discovery and exploration of which would add to the sum of geographical knowledge. For a hundred years to come this important field was to be traversed in every direction by fur traders and explorers, from the Missouri to the Arctic, and from Hudson Bay to the Pacific. A comparison of Arrowsmith's earlier maps with the latest Canadian Government maps reveal the immense amount of geographical work accomplished in this field during the nineteenth century

and the first quarter of the twentieth. Its main features are to-day fairly well-known; many of its vast areas have been traversed by well-equipped reconnaissance surveys. Nevertheless it would be quite inaccurate to assume that there remain no large unexplored areas in Canada. Some forty-four years ago the late George M. Dawson surprised the unscientific world by the statement that between one-third and one-fourth of the entire area of the Dominion still remained unexplored, and even this computation was based upon a very liberal interpretation of work actually done. He assumed that along each reasonably accurate line of exploration a belt of country about fifty miles in width was removed from the unexplored category. No explorer, however competent, could know much about the country twenty-five miles away from his route on either side; still he would have obtained a general idea of the character of the land. Drawing broad belts of this kind across the map, and ignoring all districts under 7500 square miles, there still remained sixteen large unexplored areas, of which the aggregate was computed to be about 954,000 square miles. This was in 1890. Seven years later Dr. Dawson again referred to the subject, and was able to announce that the aggregate blank spaces on the map of Canada had been very materially reduced in the meantime; largely, it may be said, owing to the splendid work accomplished by the Geological Survey, of which he was then the very capable head. Three and a half decades have gone by since then, with a further shrinkage of the unexplored

U.B.C. LIBRARY

areas. Yet there remains a great deal of exploration still to be accomplished before the map of Canada, and especially of North-Western Canada, can be said to be even approximately accurate.

In the preceding chapters the history of exploration has been brought down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, or say to the close of the first decade of that century. It remains to survey very briefly the achievements of the succeeding one hundred and twenty years.

Broadly speaking, these later explorations are confined to the northern half of the immense field with which this story has to deal. Lat. 60° may be taken as its southern boundary, with an extension to 55° in the extreme west to include what is now Northern British Columbia.

Fifty years after Hearne's journey to the Coppermine, and thirty-one years after Mackenzie had reached the mouth of the great river that bears his name, Captain (afterward Sir) John Franklin reached Fort Providence, on the north side of Great Slave Lake, on his way to the Arctic coast of America. The expedition which he commanded had been sent out by His Majesty's Government to explore the coast to the eastward of the mouth of the Coppermine; to correct as far as possible the very defective geography of the northern interior of the continent; to take astronomical and meteorological observations; observe the dip and variation of the needle; and study the curious phenomena of the aurora borealis.

Franklin, accompanied by Dr. John Richardson, George Back, and Robert Hood, all of whom distinguished themselves on this expedition, and two of whom led subsequent expeditions to the same Arctic coast, sailed from Gravesend in May, 1819, on board the ship *Prince of Wales,* and reached York Factory by the end of August.

Following the Hayes route to the interior, they arrived at Norway House on October 6th, and Cumberland House sixteen days later. Here they remained until the middle of January, when they left for the north with dog-sleds and snow-shoes. The long journey to Fort Chipewyan, at the western end of Lake Athabaska, was made in two months and eight days. Here they remained until July 18th, when they took their departure for Old Fort Providence.

Up to this point Franklin had travelled over familiar ground, following in the footsteps of Pond, Mackenzie, and other early explorers. Mackenzie had preceded him to the Arctic, but Franklin was to blaze a new trail from Great Slave Lake to the sea, by way of Yellowknife River and the Coppermine. With the exception of the vague mapping of Hearne's journey and the fragmentary reports of fur traders and Indians, nothing was known of the immense country that lay between Great Slave Lake and the mouth of the Coppermine. Ascending Yellowknife River with his somewhat unruly party of French-Canadian *voyageurs* and Indians, he reached his winter quarters, near Winter Lake, and

U.B.C. LIBRARY

built there a small wooden building, which was dignified with the name of Fort Enterprise.

In June of the following year, 1821, he crossed the height of land and descended the Coppermine to the sea. Not far from Bloody Fall, the scene of the horrible massacre so vividly described by Hearne, he encountered a band of Eskimo, but found great difficulty in getting in touch with them. The Eskimo had perhaps reason enough to doubt the good intentions of Franklin's Indians, and knew little or nothing of the white men.

From the mouth of the Coppermine Franklin and his party turned to the eastward along the bleak Arctic coast of the continent. A month later he had completed the exploration of Coronation Gulf, Bathurst Inlet, and Melville Sound, from the mouth of the Coppermine around to a point on the north-west coast of Kent Peninsula, which he named Turnagain. At the foot of Arctic Sound, west of Bathurst Inlet, he had discovered the mouth of a river which he named after Robert Hood, and as the season was now too far advanced to explore the coast farther to the eastward, he returned to the mouth of Hood River and ascended it to Wilberforce Falls. The shallowness of the stream made further progress impossible. The large canoes were therefore abandoned, and the party set out overland for Fort Enterprise, practically without supplies and with very little prospect of securing game by the way. It was now the end of August, winter was rapidly approaching, and travelling was exceedingly slow and difficult. Before they reached the banks of

the Coppermine, instruments, books, and specimens had been left behind to lighten the loads, and they were thankful to eat what even the wolves had left behind. Several days were lost in getting across the Coppermine. Back with three men pushed on ahead, reached Fort Enterprise, and continued on to the south in search of Indians and supplies. A few days later Franklin with another small detachment reached the fort. The fort gave shelter, but nothing more. Food there was none, but he was too exhausted to move. Meanwhile Richardson, Hood, and a Scotch sailor named Hepburn had fallen behind. They were presently joined by a *voyageur,* Michel. Day after day they struggled forward, with nothing to eat but lichen scraped from the rocks. Michel, crazed with hunger, shot poor Hood, and threatened the others. In self-defence Richardson shot the murderer. Some days afterward the two survivors crawled into the fort in the last stages of exhaustion. Back had not yet returned. He was trying desperately to reach Fort Providence. On November 3rd he fortunately met some Indians, and the following morning an ample supply of provisions was hurried back to Fort Enterprise. On December 11th the survivors reached Fort Providence. The following July Franklin was back again at York Factory, having travelled by land and water, as he says, five thousand five hundred and fifty miles, some of the distance at least under conditions of the most extreme hardship.

Three years after his return Franklin was placed in command of a second expedition, the object now being to

U.B.C. LIBRARY

explore the Arctic coast west of the Coppermine. With Franklin went Richardson and Back, as well as a young naval officer named Kendall. They wintered, 1825-6, on Great Bear Lake, where they built Fort Franklin, and in June descended the Mackenzie to the head of the delta. Here the party separated, Franklin and Back taking the western arm of the river, Richardson and Kendall the eastern. His experience on the former expedition having convinced Franklin that canoes were not adapted to the navigation of the Arctic coast, he had provided himself with two stout boats which he named the *Lion* and the *Reliance*. Richardson was similarly equipped with the *Dolphin* and the *Union*.

From the mouth of the Mackenzie, Franklin explored the coast west to Gwydyr Bay, near Point Beechey a distance of three hundred and seventy-four miles. Meanwhile Richardson had turned east and surveyed the coast to the mouth of the Coppermine, a distance of nearly a thousand miles, naming the great strait separating the mainland from Wollaston Land after his two stout little boats. Early in August he ascended the Coppermine to Bloody Fall, and, abandoning the boats and superfluous stores, continued up the river for some distance, and then struck overland to Great Bear Lake. Here he fell in with a party of Indians who guided him around the lake to Fort Franklin, which he reached on the 1st of September, and before the end of the month the entire party were together once more, having accomplished very much more in the way of

exploration than on the first expedition without a tithe of the hardships.

In 1833 Captain Back returned once more to the sub-arctic region of America, to search for traces of the expedition that had sailed in 1829 under Captain Ross. In August, 1833, Back reached Great Slave Lake, and having been instructed to descend the Thlew-ee-cho-dezeth or Great Fish River (now Backs River), which had never yet been explored, made his way to the eastern end of the lake, found the entrance to Hoar Frost River, ascended it to Cook Lake, thence to Walmsley Lake and Artillery Lake. Lockhart River brought him to Clinton-Colden Lake and Aylmer Lake. Following the north shore of Aylmer Lake, he portaged over the height of land and discovered a small lake, which he called Sussex, and which proved to be the source of the river he was seeking.

It was impracticable to complete his exploration that year, and having descended the river as far as Musk-Ox Lake, he turned back to the east end of Great Slave Lake, where he built Fort Reliance and settled down for the long winter.

June of the following year found him prepared to resume his journey to the northern coast. Word had been received of the safety of Ross and his party, and Back's energies could now be devoted solely to the interests of geographical discovery. By the end of the month he reached Musk-Ox Lake and continued his way down the great river, henceforth to bear his own name. It was hard going, for the river was not only

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

broken by many turbulent rapids, but the lakes into which it expanded every little while were still more or less covered with ice. July 13th he reached Lake Beechey, and was disappointed to find the course of the stream turn abruptly to the south-east. Indian reports had led him to expect that this river emptied into Bathurst Inlet, but it now looked as if it must flow into Hudson Bay. However, he must trace it to its mouth, wherever that might be. Indications of Eskimo multiplied as he advanced, but the natives themselves were not met with until near the end of the journey, when the expedition was approaching the sea-coast. A few days before Back's anxiety as to the probable outlet of the river had been relieved by a decided trend to the north, and July 29th he reached the mouth of the river, which, "after a violent and tortuous course of five hundred and thirty geographical miles, running through an iron-ribbed country without a single tree on the whole line of its banks, expanding into fine large lakes with clear horizons, most embarrassing to the navigator, and broken into falls, cascades, and rapids, to the number of no less than eighty-three in the whole, pours its waters into the Polar Sea in latitude 67° 11′ 00″ N., and longitude 94° 30′ 0″ W."

Before returning to Fort Reliance, Back explored the coast as far as Point Ogle, the extreme north-eastern point of Adelaide Peninsula, and gave names to a number of capes and islands between Point Ogle and the mouth of the river. The return journey up the

river occupied a little more than a month. He reached Fort Reliance on September 27th, 1834.

An officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, Thomas Simpson, took up the thread of exploration in the far north four years after Back had completed his journey. In actual achievement Simpson is fairly entitled to rank first in this particular field. His total explorations covered an immense stretch of the Arctic coast. He not only connected Franklin's farthest west with Point Barrow, the most easterly point reached by Elson in 1826, but also succeeded in filling in the important gap between Turnagain and Ogle.

Starting from Fort Confidence, at the eastern end of Dease Bay, Great Bear Lake, on June 15th, 1839, Simpson, with his companion Peter Warren Dease, descended to the mouth of the Coppermine and coasted around to Point Turnagain. Continuing his way to the eastward, he completed the exploration of Kent Peninsula, sailed inside Melbourne Island and through the maze of islands in Labyrinth Bay. He rounded Adelaide Peninsula, landed on Ogle Point, and on Montreal Island found a cache left there by Back five years before. He then explored the coast to the north-eastward as far as the mouth of Castor and Pollux River, which he reached on August 20th. Returning from thence, he reached the mouth of the Coppermine on the 16th of the following month, and Fort Confidence eight days later.

Simpson also explored a portion of the southern coasts of Victoria Land and King William Land, as Richardson had already done with Wollaston Land.

U.B.C. LIBRARY

One of the most important results of Simpson's work was the final settlement of the question as to the existence of a water-channel separating these great Arctic islands from the mainland. His discoveries therefore had an important bearing upon the search for a North-West Passage—but that matter lies outside our field.

Anxiety as to the fate of Sir John Franklin led to several overland expeditions to the Arctic coast which indirectly resulted in important geographical discoveries. In 1846-7 Dr. John Rae crossed the isthmus from Repulse Bay to Committee Bay and explored the coast of the Gulf of Boothia from a point a little south of Cape Inglefield around to Ross Peninsula. In 1854 he connected the discoveries of Simpson from Castor and Poilux River to Cape Porter.

Richardson's expedition of 1848, while important in other respects, did not add very materially to what was already known of the Arctic coast of the continent. Mention, however, must be made of James Anderson's expedition in 1855 to the mouth of Backs River, from Great Slave Lake. The later journeys of Warburton Pike, J. B. and J. W. Tyrrell, and David T. Hanbury through the barren grounds have already been sufficiently alluded to so far as this narrative is concerned.

To summarize the results of these several expeditions, it will be seen that between 1821 and 1854 the northern coast of the continent was explored from Point Barrow in the west to Melville Peninsula in the east. In the interior, Great Bear Lake was discovered and partially

explored, as well as Backs River, the major portion of the Coppermine, and a number of less important lakes and rivers. Mackenzie's slight and Hearne's serious errors in fixing the position of the mouths of the two great rivers they respectively discovered were corrected; and the Arctic coast of North America at last assumed a definite character. Incidentally a great deal was learned of the geological features of this region of the far north, as well as of its flora and fauna, the character of the tribes that inhabited it, its physical features and climate. Valuable data were also acquired as the result of astronomic and magnetic observations.

Turning to the far west—to that vast territory lying north of the Peace River and the Skeena, and west of the Mackenzie, which now constitutes Northern British Columbia and the Yukon Territory—the last hundred years or so have seen a succession of important explorations, conducted by men of untiring pluck and energy under exceptionally difficult circumstances. If the history of exploration in the far north-west is divided into three periods, the first may be said to belong to the North West Company, the second to the Hudson's Bay Company, and the third to the Geological Survey of Canada. The first has already been dealt with in earlier chapters. It remains to tell briefly the story of far north-western exploration by officers of the Hudson's Bay Company; and afterward by officers of the Geological Survey.

The Stikine River was first discovered at its mouth, by Captain Cleveland, of the sloop *Dragon*, in April,

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

1799, but this was nothing more than a visit to the delta of the river, and it was not until 1834 that any portion of its upper waters was explored. In that year J. McLeod, a chief trader in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, ascended the Liard to Simpson Lake, in what is now Yukon Territory. Returning to the forks of the Liard and Dease rivers, he ascended the latter to Dease Lake (the lake and river were so named by McLeod in honour of Peter Warren Dease), crossed the height of land to the upper waters of the Stikine, which he called the Pelly River, and followed it westward as far as the famous Indian bridge at the foot of Thomas Fall. This frail construction, afterward appropriately named Terror Bridge by Robert Campbell, was too much even for the steady nerves of McLeod and his men and they decided to return to the Liard. As mentioned by George M. Dawson, in his elaborate Report on an Exploration of the Yukon District, the geographical information obtained by McLeod was incorporated in Arrowsmith's 1850 map, on which, however, the upper part of the Stikine is named Frances River, is placed much too far north, and is not connected with the Stikine. The name Frances appeared again on the 1854 map, as an alternative to Stikine, but subsequently fell into disuse. "McLeod's route," says Dawson, "from the head of Dease Lake, crossed the Tanzilla within a few miles of the lake and followed its left bank, recrossing before the main Stikine enters the valley, probably by an Indian suspension bridge, which is reported still to exist (1887), within a

mile or two of this point. On careful consideration of the facts, there can scarcely be any doubt that the Tooya River was McLeod's furthest point, and the Indian bridge probably crossed it near the position of the present bridge, though it may have been at some point further up the stream which has not yet been mapped."

An effort was made two years later to continue McLeod's exploration down the Stikine, but nothing was accomplished owing to the hostility of the Indians. In 1838 Robert Campbell, another officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, accompanied only by a half-breed and two Indian boys, succeeded in establishing a trading post at Dease Lake, where he spent a wretched winter. "We passed," he says, "a winter of constant danger from the savage Russian [coast] Indians, and of much suffering from starvation. We were dependent for subsistence on what animals we could catch, and failing that, on *tripe de roche*. We were at one time reduced to such dire straits that we were obliged to eat our parchment windows, and our last meal before abandoning Dease Lake, on 8th May, 1839, consisted of the lacing of our snow-shoes."

In 1824, ten years before McLeod discovered the upper waters of the Stikine, another officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, Samuel Black, explored Finlay river from the place where it becomes known as the Peace River to its source in Thutage Lake.

Two years later Fort Conolly was built by James Douglas on Bear Lake, at the head of the Skeena River;

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

and an overland route was subsequently established from Fort Conolly to the Liard and to Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie.

Returning to the north again, we find that Robert Campbell was commissioned by Sir George Simpson in 1840 to explore the north branch of the Liard to its source and endeavour to reach the head-waters of the Colville. Pursuant to these instructions he left Fort Halkett on the Lower Liard in May, 1840, with a canoe and seven men. Ascending the river far into the heart of the mountains, Campbell entered a beautiful lake which he named Frances Lake, after Lady Simpson. Leaving his canoe there, he shouldered blankets and gun and ascended the valley of a stream to its source in a lake ten miles long, both of which he named Finlayson. From here he struck across to a river which he called the Pelly, in honour of Sir H. Pelly, a Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Constructing a raft, he drifted downstream for a few miles, and then returned to Frances Lake, where some of his men had in the meantime constructed a house afterward known as Fort Frances.

In June, 1843, Campbell, having provided himself with a birch-bark canoe, descended the Pelly to the mouth of a large tributary which he named the Lewes, where he met a party of Wood Indians. From them he got such a discouraging account of the natives lower down the main stream that he decided to turn back. In 1848 Campbell built Fort Selkirk at the confluence of the Lewes and the Pelly; and two years later descended

the Yukon to the mouth of the Porcupine, which he ascended, crossed over to the Mackenzie, and so reached Fort Simpson. Dr. Dawson points out that one result of this journey was to show that the route from Fort Selkirk by way of the Porcupine River to the Mackenzie was preferable to that originally discovered. The Porcupine had itself been discovered in 1842 by J. Bell, of the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1844 Bell descended it to its confluence with the Yukon, and three years later A. H. Murray built Fort Yukon at the mouth of the Porcupine.

In concluding this brief sketch of the explorations of the fur traders in the extreme west and north-west, one cannot do better than quote George M. Dawson's eloquent tribute. "The utmost credit," he says, "must be accorded to the pioneers of the Hudson Bay Company for the enterprise displayed by them in carrying their trade into the Yukon basin in the face of difficulties so great and at such an immense distance from their base of supplies. To explorations of this kind, performed in the service of commerce, unostentatiously and as matters of simple duty, by such men as Mackenzie, Fraser, Thompson, and Campbell, we owe the discovery of our great north-west country. Their journeys were not marked by incidents of conflict or bloodshed, but were accomplished, on the contrary, with the friendly assistance and co-operation of the natives. Less resolute men would scarcely have entertained the idea of utilizing, as an avenue of trade, a river so perilous of navigation as the Liard had proved to be when

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

Fort Edmonton

Fort Ellice, 1879

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

explored. So long, however, as this appeared to be the most practicable route to the country beyond the mountains, its abandonment was not even contemplated. Neither distance nor danger appears to have been taken into account, and in spite of every obstacle a way was opened and a series of posts established extending from Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie to Fort Yukon."

Some idea of the extreme remoteness of these fur posts west of the Mackenzie River may be gained from a statement of the time required to convey goods to them from London, and carry furs back to the same market. The goods were sent from London to York Factory one season; carried inland to Norway House the next; reached Peel River the third, and were hauled over the mountains to La Pierre's House; arrived at Fort Yukon the fourth. The fifth season, the returns in the shape of peltries were carried to Peel River; the sixth, they reached Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie; and the seventh, they arrived at their destination. Seven years from the time the trading goods left London to the time the furs bartered in exchange reached the same place!

Important as are the explorations of the Canadian Geological Survey, they can only be briefly alluded to here. The late George M. Dawson spent many years in the exploration of the far west. From 1876 to 1879 he was engaged on surveys both in Northern and Southern British Columbia, as well as on the Queen Charlotte Islands, the report of the latter embodying a mass of exceedingly valuable data in ethnology and

archæology. In 1887 Dr. Dawson carefully explored the Yukon district, and the results obtained form the basis of our present knowledge of much of that great region.

Mention has already been made, in earlier chapters, of the explorations of Robert Bell and A. P. Low, a former director of the Survey, around Hudson and James bays, in the country east of the bays and between them and Lake Winnipeg; as well as of the work of the Tyrrells in the far north. Various officers of the Survey have also from time to time added materially to our knowledge of the geographical and other features of the Lake of the Woods district, the Winnipeg country, the great plains lying between the Saskatchewan and the Missouri, the wooded country north of the Saskatchewan, the valley of the Peace River, the region about Lake Athabaska, Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake, in the Rocky Mountains and Northern British Columbia, as well as in some of the Arctic Islands. The results of these explorations and surveys are to be found in that invaluable series of reports published annually by the Geological Survey of Canada. No one who has not had occasion to examine these reports carefully can have any conception of the enormous amount of information they contain as to the character of this broad country, its physical features, resources, history, its fauna and flora, its native inhabitants and their manners and customs. From the particular point of view of this book, they contain the records of numerous large and small surveys performed by the devoted

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

and efficient officers of the Geological Survey. Thanks to their enthusiasm and careful work, accurate information is now available as to the character of many large districts that were a few years ago practically unknown. And perhaps no one thing has contributed more to the success of their work in recent years than the development of air transportation, bringing even the most remote and inaccessable regions within easy reach. What has been said about the achievements of the Geological Survey must also be said of those of the Topographical and Geodetic Surveys of Canada, the extent and value of which it would be hard to overestimate. The time is coming, though it must still be a good many years ahead, when the unexplored areas will diminish to the vanishing point, and the long story of the exploration of North-Western America will come to a final close.

U.B.C. LIBRARY

APPENDIX

MEMORANDUM BY ALEXANDER HENRY ON AN OVERLAND ROUTE TO THE PACIFIC

SIR,

I have sent for your Perusal and Amusement a Rout from Quebec or Montreal across the Contenent to the Westernmost Extremity of America, I have also Annexed an Estimate of the expence which I think Sufficient.

if his Majesty Should think Proper to Incourage the Undertaking, and think me a Proper Person to Command, this Hazardous Interprize, knowing the possibility and from the Great desire of Continuing, that Discovery which I have already began, I would except of it—having from Experience by Residing and Traveling amoungst the Natives Acquired the different Languages of the Nations, or Tribes, Inhabiting those Interior Parts, and often from Necessity been Obliged to Learn the different Methods Practis'd for Procuring Subsistance by fishing and Hunting and having already pass'd the greatest part of the Rout as farr as the Rivers which Descends to the Sea, as farr North as Sixty degrees—but if his Majesty Should not think proper to Incourage the Discovery at present, this Rout may be Usefull some other day, which if so expectation will be fulfilled, always being happy in Communicating any thing to you that may be of Use to the . . . public—

Mr. James Phyn, Merch't

Old Broad Street is my Correspondant, who can give you any Information concerning me you Require.

I am Sir your
Most Humb'e Serv't.
ALEX'R HENRY.

Montreal, 18 Oct^r.
(1781).
To Joseph Banks Esq'r.

A Proper Rout, by Land, to Cross the Great Contenant of America from Quebec to the Westernmost extremity by Alex'r Henry founded on his Observations and Experience, during the Space of sixteen Years, Traveling with the Natives, in least known, and before Unknown parts of that Extensive Country.

Everything Necessary be prepared to Sett from Quebec or Montreal the beginning of May if possible and Proceed to Michilimakinac where the Provisions are laid in for the Voyage and Canoes purchased from the Savages proper for Transporting over Carrying places and Navigating in Small Rivers, and Lakes, and Proceed frome thence to St. Marys the Entrance of Lake Superior, and Coasts, along the North Side, of said Lake untill you arrive at the Great Carrying place 150 leagues from Makinac, Near the Westermost Extremity of said Lake, where the Carrying place is Twelve Miles over and no other Method of Transporting Canoes and Goods, but by Canadians, who are very Expert in that bussiness, This may be done, by the Twentieth of July, and Ready to depart, from whence you ascend Grozell River for Ten leagues, passing severall Carrying places, From an Acre, to a League long, here you come to the Lands height, where the Watters seem to be at a Stand, and a Number of Small Lakes, from half a League to Five leagues long, This being the Extremity of the River St. Lawrence,—likewise those which, Discharges themselves at York Fort in Hudson's Bay —you continue Carrying from one Lake, to another, for about 20 Leagues, when you Perceive the Watters running to the Westward in Small Streams not Sufficient to Carry Canoes drawing only Six Inches of water, The Farther you Proceed down these small Rivilets the more they Encrease in Size, untill you come to Saganagaw, where they become Navigable, which, is about Sixty Ieagues from the Great Carrying place and Thirty Carrying places, This being, the most difficult Part of the Voyage, on Acco't of the Fatiguing the men, and Shallowness of the Rivers, and Breacking the Canoes, which are only made of Bark, not much thicker, than a Crown Piece. This Lake is about Fifeteen Leagues long. From

U.B.C. LIBRARY

here you must Proceed to Lake Lapluye or Rain Lake, distant from Saganagaw Sixty Leagues, between which are Fourteen Carrying places, from fifety yards, to a mile, the face of the Country is very poor and Rocky. This Lake is about Twenty Leagues long, and Ten wide. The Borders of this Lake is Inhabited by the Chipeways, being the most Westermost part of there Territories, at the Extremity of this Lake, is a Carrying place called the Chaudier, from hence you Continue down a fine River without a Carrying place for Forty Leagues about Two hundred yards wide, fine Rich lands each Side being the first from the Carrying place fit for Cultivating, where Provisions might be Raised at a Moderate Expence to Supply the trade in the Interior parts. This River Empties itself into Wood Lake, which is Reckoned thirty Leagues long—full of Islands, and many deep bays, the Borders of this Lake appears, Mountaineous and Barren, here the Natives begins, to speak the Kristinoes Language, this part of the Country abound in wild oats, or wild Rice, the most valuable of all Spontaneous Productions growing in water and Marchy places not fit to Produce any other Vegteable Substances, without which the Inhabitants could not Subsist, nor Travelors, Proceed far in the Country for want of Provisions, its Utility and Culture, is Worthy, the attention of the Curious, a Stock of this, must be laid in here To Conduct you, to your wintering ground, which is purchas'd from the Natives for European Manufactors from the westermost discharge of this Lake Commences the River Winipigon, a Very large River from one mile to Three miles wide,—a Rocky Mountaneous Country. The Navigations is Dangerous on Account of the falls, and Rapids, Twenty Carrying places, most of them, Great Falls, from Twenty to Fifety foot Perpendicular, This River is Reconned, Eighty leagues Long, Great Quantity's of Sturgeon in the Lower parts of this River, Very Good food, This River falls in a Lake, from whence it takes its Name, Lake Winipigon one hundred and Twenty leagues long, but not Equal, In Width, to Lake Superior or Huron by the time the Canoes gets to this Place, The Stormy Season, will set in, which generally begins the first of September,

(I was Twenty Eight days Crossing this Lake). From the Entrance of which must Coast along the North Shore for near Forty Leagues, where the Lake forms partly a Strait, and then must Cross, to the South side and many Deep bays, which are very Dangerous at this Season, Untill you arrive at the Entrance of the River Bourbon, which falls in Lake Winipigon. This Lake discharges itself into Hudsons bay, at York Fort, (Contrary to the Travelers here to fore, who make the Great Discharge from Lake Bourbon). at the Entrance of this River is a Rapid, where the Canoes, and everything must be Carryed over by the men. two miles long, and assend this River to Lake Bourbon, about Twenty Leagues, from the Grand Rapid, a very strong Current, all the way, and four Carrying places. This Lake is Eighteen leagues long. The Lands, appears poor, the Soil bad, it is Remarkable. There is no Cedre found to the Northward of this Lake, from thence, you enter the River Pasquyaw, a fine Large River, the current Strong, but no falls or Carrying Places, to Impede the Navigation for Canoes for Three hundred Leagues, each side, of this River for Fifety Leagues are Generally covered with Watter, occasioned by the Melting of the Snow in the Spring, but these parts abound with wild fowls, Duck, Geese, Swans, in Such abundance that the Savages brings Canoe Loads, which is a Great Relief, as Provisions—about this Time, begine to be Scarce—and Proceed up this River untill you arrive at a Small Discharge, which falls into the River Pasquyaw from the North, Called the English River, from a Fort being built near it, by hudsons bay Company Called Cumberland Fort, from the Entrance of pasquyaw River to the Village is Fifty leagues, and from the Village to Cumberland fort, Sixty leagues, the banks of the River, from Pasquyaw Village appears higher and of a Clay Soil, only covered with Small brush in different places—The Great Plains, not being farther distant than ten or fifeteen Leagues, which abounds with buffaloes, and Supplys the Numerous Inhabitants, with every thing necessary for food and Cloathing, the Source of this River is unknown, but the inhabitants about Eighty leagues above this, Report the

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

Course Incline more from the Southerd, Coming through the Great plains, from the Stony Mountains, from whence the Rivers take there Rise, which falls into the South sea, the Course from Lake Superior, to this place near Northwest, the English River, only Two leagues long, when you enter Sturgeon Lake, Eighteen Leagues long|when you enter bad River called so on Account of its Rapids, fifteen leagues long untill you arrive at Beaver Lake, which is Ten leagues, here the People must winter, being the only Place where provisions can be had abounding with Fish of every kind, that every man can Supply himself with food—for the winter which is very Severe, the Ice, five foot thick, in the Lake, through which holes are made with Chisles proper for that purpose, and nets, sett under, by which means the fish are taken, the Winter here very long, the latter end of October, the Lakes frizes. & Snow fall and Continues so until the Latter End of May, before the Rivers becomes Navigable but the Lake generally, not before the middle of June. Proceed from Beaver Lake up Kenoche, or Pike River, to a Lake of that Name, here, the Men must Supply themselves with fish, the River being so plenty, they can take any Number of them they chuse Lake Kenoche; five Leagues long, & from thence from Lake to Lake, & Sometimes, a small Rapid River and Carrying places, untill you arrive at the Great River Missinebe Eighty Leagues North from Beaver Lake. Two hundred Leagues West from Churchill, or Prince of Wales's fort—the Northermost of Hudson's bay's factory's, from Beaver Lake, to this River, is seven Carrying places, from Two hundred yards, to half a Mile Long the Lands Level, but the Soil, not Rich, at this Place the Missinebe's River is two miles broad, a Gentle Current from hence, Guides must be procured, as the Natives Inhabiting these parts, Seems, Sepparated, and unconnected with the Southern Indians, there Language, differing but little from the kristinay the passages very difficult, to find in the River on Acco't of its great breadth, and Number of Islands—and the great Lakes, here the Canoes must be Refitted, and when Ready, proceed up this River, In the Streights of which, are great Rappids, and Dangerous places

from the great body of Watters, Coming, down from the Melting of the Snow, in this Season, & proceed to Orrabuscaw Carrying place, Two hundred and fifty Leagues, from where you fall on the Great River, Course, near West, Supposed to be in Sixty Degrees Lattitude, Day nineteen hours long, the Twenty second of June, the North side of this River, appears a Barren, Mountaneous Country mostly bare Rocks, great quantity of fish in this River, the Natives appear, as you Proceed to the Westward, to Increase in Number, at this Carrying place, Provisions must be procured from the Natives Dry'd mouse and Rein Deer, to Subsist the people while Carrying over this Carrying place which is Twelve Miles long, & as far as Orabuscaw Lake, it will take six days to Carry over, at the other End of which, you fall on the River Kiutchinini which runs to the Westward, takes it Rise to the Northward of this Place, Current, Gentle, the Land Low and Marshy—Great plenty of Wild fowl in the fall—The Season by this time will be advanced, it will be Necessary to prepare for Winter, Build Houses &c, the frost very Severe, Imploy the Natives to hunt, for the Subsistance of the men—which is mostly Flesh, Dry'd Buffloes meat, & mouse Deer, It is not onl, the Provisions for the winter Season, but, for the Course of next Summer, must be provided which is Dry'd Meat, Pounded to a Powder & mixed up with Buffeloes Greese, which preserves it in the warm Seasons here, every Information must be procured from the Savages, Relating to the Course of this River, the Inhabitants of the Lower parts the Orabuscaws, makes war on the Kitchininie therefore, it Will be Necessary to Procure a Peace between the two Nations which would be no difficult matter for the Natives, from all Parts, hearing of Europeans being here, will come in the winter Season to bring Provisions on Acco't of European Trinkets, by which means, Intelligence may be Procured, and Conveyed toany Distant parts, it is Common for these wandering Tribes to Remove two hundred Leagues in the winter Season. and Carry their Tents, Family's and everything belong to them, when every thing is Ready, and Provisions Procured for the Summer, as no Dependance can be put, on what you are

U.B.C. LIBRARY

to receive in an unknown part. Every precaution should be taken, but very often, must expect to be dessapointed.

A new sett of Interpretors & Guides must be Procured, which can always be had, from the Difft Nations and Proceed down this Great River, Untill, you come to the Sea—which cant be any very Great Distance. Suppose it Should be Thirty, or Forty Degrees of Longitude Unless, some Accidents should Entervene, it can be done in Thirty days, which will be in July, here an Establishment may be made in Some Convenient Bay, or harbour, where Shipping, may come to. In the mean Time a Small Vessell may be Built, for Coasting, and Exploaring the Coast, which can be no Great Distance from the Streight, which Seperates the two Contenants, the Greatest difficulty is procuring provissions for another winter on the Sea Cost, I always found, where the Savages found Subsistance for themselves, there was a Possibility, of procuring from them, or, by the Industry of the Canadians, who are very Expert in fishing, and hunting Risques, there are always expected in Enterprizes of this kind, the Farther North, and West, The Furrs are Finer, & in Greater Abundance, and doubt not but, a Convenient port, may be found, for Establishing a Profitable Trade with the Natives in these parts,— which if once fix't Discoverys may be carried on with more ease, and less Risque, when it is thought Necessary to Return it must be done in the same manner, only they will return in two years to England, by the way of Hudsons bay being much the Shortest way back. There are many National advantages which may Result from Discovering and Surveying these Remote, unknown Parts of America, and having a Communication, fram other Rich Country's in the East and easily, Conveyed across to Hudsons bay, where British Manufactorers, might be sent, To Thousands on the Continent, & fetch large Profits & a Valuable New Commerce be opened and Secured to his Majesty's subjects —as there is at Present no appearance of a North west passage, for Ships— An Estimate of the Expences, Attending the Voyage I here annex—

(Turn over)

Ten Canoes Navigated by Forty men will be sufficient which can be Engaged at £6 p. month Two years advance which is for four years	£5760
10 Canoes at £20 each	200
Provissions for 40 men for 12 months at 2/ a pr. Diem	1460
Equipments for the Mens outfit at £10 each .	400
Transporting from Montreal to Makinac .	500
Merchandize, for Purchasing Provisions & presents to the Natives for 4 years, ammunition etc	4800
Guides and Interpretors for 2 years . .	200
Sterling	£13,320
	is sufficient

The above Expence, without some Extraordinary, should Entervene, The Two Years Wages advance must be paid the Men as an Encouragement, for them, & to Enable them to purchase their Necessaries, for so long a Voyage. The Remainder at their Return, being the only Expence Remaining, as Cash is of no Use to them, after, they pass the Great Carrying place from Lake Superior. The only Persons Necessary to attend such a journey, Should be an Experienced Man to Conduct the Expedition, who must be properly Authorized as Commander in Chief, & and have the whole Regulating in all Matters, whatsoever Ingaging, Discharging, Paying, Purchasing Provisions, Marching, Incamping & ordering in every way whatsoever, after him there should be another Employed who understands Mathematics & if possible Botany and Drawing in the Same Person, as any unnecessary becomes a Great charge, Especially one who is unaccustomed to live in the manner of the Inhabitants of the Country—Through which they must pass, if not used already to Fatigues they should be young & of a good Constitution as they must Expect many severe Trials. Two Clerks or Overseers Who are to act as Commissary's, People of this Country, who must be acquainted with Voyaging and Conducting men chosen by the Commander of the Ex-

U.B.C. LIBRARY

pedition. Orders to be given to the Commander in Chieff, & to the Lieu't Governors of the Upper Posts to aid and ajust all in their Power in Purchasing provisions, & Engaging Men, & any other Matter Necessary for the Voyage, Likewise to the Officers of the Hudsons bay Company, as that would be much the nearer way to Return to England. Likewise I annex the Distances, as near as can be ascertained without Mathematical Observations.

From Montreal to Michillimakinac . .	250	leagues
From Makinac to the falls of St. Mary Entrance of Lake Superior	30	"
From St. Mary's to the Great Carrying Place West end of Lake Superior . .	120	"
From the G. Carrying place to Saganagas	60	"
From Saganaga to Rain Lake	60	"
Rain Lake	20	"
From Rain Lake to Wood Lake . . .	40	"
Wood Lake	30	"
	610	leagues
From Wood Lake to the Entrance of Lake Winipigon	80	"
From the East End of Lake Winipigon to the W. End	120	"
From thence to the Entrance of Lake Bourbon	20	"
Lake Bourbon	18	"
From the Entrance of the River Pasquyaw to the Village	50	"
From the Village to Cumberland Fort .	60	"
From thence to Beaver Lake	33	"
The Lake	10	"
From the N. End of Beaver Lake to where you come to the Missinebe	70	"
From there to the Great Carrying place at the head of the River Missinebe . .	250	"
Carrying place	3	"
From thence to Orobusca Lake . . .	40	"
	1364	leagues

The Carrying Place at the head of the Missinebe River according to the best of my Calculation Lays in 60 Degrees North Latitude & 140 West Longitude from London.

Montreal 18 October, 1781.

To Joseph Banks, Esq'r. G.R.S.

ALEX'R HENRY.

MEMORANDUM BY ALEXANDER DALRYMPLE ON THE ROUTE FOR DISCOVERIES[1]

2nd Feby. 1790.

The season being so far advanced renders a voyage round Cape Horn *inexpedient,* I do not say *impracticable,* for admitting a Vessel to sail the beginning of March, we cannot fairly suppose less than three months to double Cape Horn, which brings it to June, the beginning of winter in South Latitude. Allow three months more to the N. W. Coast of America. This brings it to September, which is the beginning of winter there. But altho' it is therefore an inexpedient season to proceed round Cape Horn on discovery of that Coast It admits a question whether It would not be better under the disadvantage to make the voyage *immediately* than to *procrastinate:* for altho' their arrival on the Coast of America would not be at the most proper season for Discovery, there would be some advantage in the passage round Cape Horn, for the Lion's Voyage P. 4, says it is commonly found that the winds in the winter months are favourable to go round Cape Horn from Europe and unfavourable to come out of the South Seas, and by the Journal of Winds at the Falkland Islands this opinion seems to be confirmed as the Easterly winds seem, at least, as frequent as *Westerly* in *June more frequent* in *July.*

Admitting therefore that the Vessel came upon the Coast of America so late even as October we know by experience of the Prince of Wales and Princess Royal who remained on the Coast till after the middle of Novr., that is practicable to remain on that Coast so late, but these Vessels were at

[1] Canadian Archives, series Q, vol. 49.

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

Calamity Harbour in Lat. 54° 12′ North and the present object of Discovery is *De Fouca's Strait* in 48½ N. Lat., and if they can find a convenient harbour on that Coast to winter in, much progress may be made by land during the winter towards effecting a communication; and if they choose they can proceed to the Sandwich Islands & return at the early part of Spring.

But however much I may be an enemy to *Procrastination,* on any *account,* my opinion is that the present operation ought to be by *Hudson's Bay* in preference to Cape Horn.

The antient idea of a N. W. Passage was by the Hyperborean Sea on the N. of America, altho' I am very far from meaning any imputation on Capt. Cook's memory or abilities, I cannot admit of a *Pope* in Geography or Navigation.

It is alledged that the Esquimaux's extend to the most remote parts of the North Coasts of America. This the Language given in Cook's voyage proves incontrovertibly in western parts; and it is beyond dispute that the Esquimaux's are confined to the Sea Coasts & its vicinity; that they are not to be found where there is not a communication with the sea, is self evident from the nature of their Boats &c.,& therefore the argument is almost demonstrative that there is a *Sea Communication, navigable* for their Boats, from *Labrador* & *Greenland* to the utmost extremity of *America* & the Islands.

Whether the Sea Communication is navigable for *more* than *Boats,* is a matter well worth examining.

Every modern discovery tends to corroborate the old reports, and in the earliest maps, long before Hudson's voyage, the *Bay* or *Sea* which bears *his name* is Distinctly marked, tho' represented of much less dimension than it is.

In these maps a channel is represented as communicating the N. W. part of that Sea which corresponds to *Repulse Bay,* with the *Hyperborean Ocean;* and this sea communication is conformable to all the Indian Maps, which continue the Sea coast from *Churchill* in *Hudson's Bay* to the *Copper River.*

Captain Meares, who was frozen up in Prince-William-Sound, remarks, that there are no *High Islands* of *Ice,* such

as are found in *Cross-Sound* in a much lower Latitude. His inference is a natural one, that *Cross-Sound* is a Sea communication to a higher Latitude where these *High Islands* of *Ice* are found.

Capt. Portlock learnt from the Indians at his *Harbour,* to the *South-Ward* of *Cross-Sound,* that there was a *Sea* beyond the mountains, which environ that Harbour, to the Eastward and the concurrent opinion, of all those who have visited the Coast for many degrees to the Southward, is that the whole is only a Range of Islands.

The opinion therefore of a N. W. Passage is strongly confirmed by the concurrence of the ancient Reports, the Indian Maps, and the opinion of those who have recently visited the N. W. Coast. The only allegations to the country that Capt. Middleton represents *Repulse Bay* to be shut up, and that Capt. Cook & Capt. Clerk could not find a Passage by the *Strait* of *Anian* now called *Behring's Strait.*

Whoever looks into Capt. Middleton's Journal will, I am confident prefer the *positive testimony* of the Indian Maps, to his *conjecture,* and without controverting the Inference drawn from Capt. Cook's voyage. This can by no manner of argument prove the *Sea,* from Repulse Bay round to the Westward is *unnavigable.*

The many great Rivers of Asia disemboguing into that Sea which lyes on the North of It, bring down multitudes of Drifts, which will tend to congregate Ice. That Ice may be so accumulated between Asia and the opposite Coast (the extent Northward of both which is unknown) as to prevent a passage that way. But we have no Reports to indicate any considerable Rivers falling into the *Hyperborean Sea* from *Repulse Bay* to the meridian of Cross-Sound & both Mr. Hearne and the Canadian Traders represent the northern part of America as destitute of Timber.

The allegation concerning the *Bar* of *fixed Ice,* admitting this as a *Fact,* instead of an *Hypothesis,* as it is by some alledged to be, make nothing in favour of what it is brought to prove, for we know the sea is navigable at *Spitzbergen* to 80° N. Lat. and we have no reason to believe the Coast of

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

the Hyperborean Sea, from Repulse Bay westward extends to 70° N. Lat. The Canadian Traders represent it to lye in 68½ N. & Mr. Hearne only alledges it to be in 72° N. Lat. The Danes have a settlement in Davis's Strait in 73° 15′ N. Lat., and there is no one circumstance, either in Mr. Hearne's Journal or in the Canadian Reports, to countenance an opinion that the Country on the west of the Northern part of the Hudson's Bay is uninhabited in winter; on the contrary Mr. Hearne set out in December from Churchill, where the climate seems to be more temperate than at Albany, altho' the latter be much further to the South, and this is a strong presumption of a Sea to the Northward.

But even supposing for a moment, what is not supported by any probable inference, that the navigation westward by the North of Hudson's Bay is impracticable, then we are to consider the matter as confined to an Examination by Land.

The Canadian Traders represent the distance from Quebec to the extremity of Lake Superior to be 750 Leagues or 2250 Geographical miles, & from thence to the Great Slave Lake 1000 leagues, or 3000 more, in the whole 1,750 Leagues or 5250 Geographical miles. Altho' this distance be admitted to be greatly exaggerated, still the estimation operates equally in favour of Hudson's Bay when compared with the distance from thence.

I will suppose the distance in a direct Line may be admitted in miles instead of Leagues, because I would give the fairest computation, this gives 1750 miles thro' a country full of falls & rapids to impede the navigation.

We shall take it however only to the Island in the Arathapescow Lake at 1350 Geographic miles.

This distance from Hudson's Bay is only 600 miles, of which above 200 is the *Chesterfield Inlet known* to be navigable. The Canadian Trader represents the *Arathapescow* Lake to extend 100′ to the Eastward of the Island, Mr. Hearne 90′; and a very considerable portion of the remaining 300 miles is occupied by the *Dobaunt* and other Lakes.

By Hudson's Bay the Discoverers would profit by the information of Mr. Turnor whom the Hudson's Bay Com-

pany have sent into those parts and from whose Astronomical abilities we may reasonably expect competent Information, whereas Peter Pond's allegation (as reported by Mr. Halland) "that the *Observations* of the Latitude in his *last Journey* agreed to a *second* with the positions in his *former* map" laid down by Estimation, betrays his *ignorance* or impudence and invalidates any Reports coming from him.

Supposing some person of knowledge and veracity to be sent with him it is probable Pond would *hide* that Person as is at present alledged of a person whose merits raised his Jealousy.

It is also to be considered that Pond is a native of the United States, and cannot therefore be deemed to be attached to this Country. He also pretends to the Sovereignty of the Lands adjacent to the Arathapeskow Lake, so that by encouraging him we may be fostering a Viper in our bosom.

Should the Vessel by going to Hudson's Bay find no Sea communication practicable, she would return back to England by the beginning of October in time to proceed by Cape Horn, in prosecution of the Voyage on the west side, with the advantage of all that Local knowledge which their Observations and enquiries in Hudson's Bay had obtained.

I am given to understand that the Wages and Provisions for a Vessel of 120 tons & 30 men would not exceed £100 p. month, so that the expence of this attempt would be small.

The most eligible mode of promoting the enterprise would be by sending one vessel round Cape Horn without delay & another to Hudson's Bay; and the Hudson's Bay Company have expressed their readiness to co-operate with Government as the Esquimauxs on the West side of the Bay, are on Friendly Footing with the Hudson's Bay Company's Agents, some of them might probably be induced to accompany the Adventurers in their Canoes. Mr. Hearne mentions that the Esquimauxs winter at a *very great Lake,* called *Yathked,* situated to the S. W. of the *Chesterfield Inlet,* & it is not improbable they may be induced under the English Influence to accompany some of our People across those Lakes & by those Rivers which the Indian Maps represent as connecting Hudson's Bay & the Arathapescow Lake, which would obviate

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

the objection made to the navigation from the Northern Parts of Hudson's Bay, as being a country destitute of Birch-wood for making *Bark Canoes.*

I cannot omit mentioning the propriety of having *Dogs* as a *watch;* for the Indians coming upon their enemies like a Tiger by stealth, The Alarm would be given and their Brutal Ferocity prevented.

CAPTAIN HOLLAND'S PLAN TO EXPLORE FROM QUEBEC[1]

The following Plan strikes Mr. Holland as most Eligible for carrying into Effect the proposed Expedition for Discovering, and Exploring the Interior parts of the Northern and Western Quarter of America: Lying between Lake Aurabusque, or Arathepeskow and the Line of Coast discovered by Capt. Cook:

First. That the Party to be employed should consist of not less than sixteen Persons, including a Surveyor and Assistant: Four Men having some knowledge of Boat Building; Eight Canadians, and Two Indians, for navigating Two, or sometimes Three Canoes, in order at Times, or as occasion may require to be enabled to Detach one, on any separate work which may present itself, such as exploring Rivers, sketching in the side of a Lake opposite to that taken by the Main Party and Chief Surveyor with whom Two Canoes must constantly be stationed for fear of accidents to either; and by keeping the Duplicates, Plans, observations, Journals &c. separated less injury would be sustained by the loss.

One of the great Obstacles to impede such an expedition, would be the want of Provisions. It will therefore be necessary that a sufficient Quantity (for at least Three years consumption) should be deposited at Aurabusquie, to be conveyed thither from the King's Stores at Fort Michilimacinac, and as our Canoes, from the smallness of their size would not be able to contain the Quantity requisite, a Party,

[1] Canadian Archives, series Q, vol. 49.

and Canoes, might be spared from the Fort, to aid in the transporting of it to Aurabusquie; from whence our chief operations ought to commerce.

The track from Lake Superior thither being known (and an accurate survey not the object in view) all that appears necessary between those Places is the ascertaining the Latitude and Longitude of some Principal Posts in our Route; and making such Sketches as may be useful to Persons who may follow. This I presume will be all that can be done in the course of the Ensuing Summer, supposing the Party to depart from Quebec about the end of May; at which Place, and at Montreal; a Month at least will be consumed in making the necessary Preparations Prior to our Departure. Little further during the winter season can be done at Aurabusquie, than exploring the Surrounding Country; making Observations; gaining Intelligence; and preparing for pursuing our Route in Spring; which I think should be by mounting the Slave River; thence North West Coasting the Slave Lake (which by information gained at Quebec from Persons who have been in that Country) is not less than ten Degrees of Longitude; That it Discharges itself into a River which takes its course N. West, and that its Distance from thence, to Prince Williams Sound or Cook's River, does not exceed Fifteen Degrees of Longitude.

After reaching the mouth of Cook's River, or whatever other River, we may fall in with on the outset, It will be advisable to stretch along the Coast, to the South East, to observe the course of all such rivers as may appear of importance; untill we shall be joined by the Party, intended to depart from Hudson's House, who I apprehend will follow the Coast to the North West, and explore the rivers in like manner untill our Junction.

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

ESTIMATE OF EXPENSE NECESSARY TO EQUIP A PARTY ON AN EXPEDITION TO THE NORTH WEST PARTS OF AMERICA TO BE EMPLOYED IN EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

	£	s
A Surveyor at Pr Diem		
One Assistant at 10s. Pr Diem makes Pr Annum	182	10
Four men to understand Boat Building 3s. pr. Diem	219	
Eight Canadians for navigating & Transporting Canoes, Provisions &c	365	
Sixteen Rations of Provisions for the above Party. The Ration consisting of: 16 ounces of Bread, 1 lb. om meat, 1 Pint of Rum		
Necessary Disbursements not included in the above	150	
Indian Trinkets	150	
Canoes, Oil Cloths, Tackling &c	40	
Arms, Aummition, Hatchets, Nap Sacks, &c.		

LIST OF INSTRUMENTS, &c.

List of Instruments necessary for making Astronomical and other Observations by the party intended to cross from Canada to the Pacific Ocean. Prepared by Mr. Holland, February, 1790.

A Transit Instrument.

A Time Piece.

Telescopes { A Refractor / A Reflector } of sufficient power to observe the Eclipses of Jupiter Sattelites.

A Thermometer graduated considerably below the Freezing Point.

A Barometer constructed for measuring Heights.

A Theodolite, Azimuth and Hadley.

CAPTAIN HOLLAND TO EVAN NEPEAN

LONDON, *July 25th*, 1790.

SIR,—Presuming from the advanced state of the season, that little more can be done this year towards prosecuting the intended exploration of the Interior parts of the North West of America; than in making such arrangements at Quebec during the winter as will enable us to leave that place the Instant the Ice breaks up in Spring; to effect which I conceive it of material consequence to have the necessary Instruments and other articles to be procured in this Country shipped this season for Canada, for the following reasons, That after Sunday next the 1st of August the direct communication by shipping to Quebec closes till next Spring; when from unmberless impediments their arrival is frequently retarded till near the commencement of June at which time we should be near Michilimacinak. Submitting the above with all deference to your superior judgement.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most devoted, most obedient
and most humble servant,
JN. F. DE B. HOLLAND.

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

INDEX

Agassiz, Lake, xxiii, xxvi
Akpatok Island, 8, 13, 14
Albany River, xxviii, xxxv
Alexandria, 475, 516
Anderson, James, 577
Anian, Strait of, xix
Arctic coast, 571-78
Arrowsmith, 567, 579
Ash House, 358, 362
Asher, G. M., 4, 6
Assiniboine Indians, 108, 121, 251, 501-2
  River, xxxix, 356
Astoria, 411
Athabaska Lake and River, 167, 170, 171, 172, 332-3, 419, 541, 545, 555

Babine Indians, 510
  Lake, 494-5
Back, Sir George, xliv, 95, 160, 331, 570, 572, 573, 574-6
Back's River, xliv, 574-5, 578
Baffin, William, 46
Bain, James, 269
Bancroft, H. H., 178-9, 411, 494-5, 561-6
Beaver Indians, 456
  River, xxix
Bell, Charles M., 102, 106, 113, 269
  Robert, 95, 163, 584
Bella Coola River, 482-7
Bishop, R. P., 488-89
Black, Samuel, 580
Blackfoot Indians, 122-3, 127, 281, 372-3, 400
Bloody Fall, 149-50, 159, 571
Bobé, Father, 203-209
Bougainville, L. A. de, 263
Bow River, 543
Bryce, George, 179-80, 355
Buffalo, 110, 123, 125, 154 318-19, 377, 390-91, 425, 430, 550
Button, Sir Thomas, 35-45, 54
Bylot, Robert, 32, 46

Cabot, John, xv
Campbell, Robert, 581-82
Canoe routes, xxvi-xxx
Carrier Indians, 470-75, 509, 514-16
Cartier, Jacques, xvi-xviii
Carver, Jonathan, 288-304, 327, 347
Chaboillez, C. J. B., 363, 502
Charles, George, 168
Charlevoix, P. F. X. de, 209-10.
Charlton Island, 31, 59
Chatique, 314-5
Chesterfield House, 176, 373
  Inlet, 44
Chipewyan Indians, 321
Chippewa Indians, 497
Chouart, Medard, 64-84, 212
Christy, Miller, 7, 37
Churchill, Port, xxxii, 41, 52, 91-93, 97
  River, xxviii, 184-5, 329-30
Clearwater River, 331-32
Coast Indians, 483-90
Coats, W., 35
Cocking, Mathew, 116-7, 120, 306, 313
Columbia River, xlvii, 409, 520-21, 526, 534, 548-66
Columbus, Christopher, xiv
Conn, Hugh, 106
Cook's River, 344, 348-51
Copper Indians, 428-29
Coppermine River, xliv, 138, 148-51, 348, 571, 578
Coquard, Father, 262-63

Coues, Elliott, 102, 269, 394, 542, 557, 566
Cree Indians, 432, 434
Crow Indians, 373-75, 410
Cumberland House, 161-2, 313, 328-9, 347, 398, 504
Curry. Thomas, 306

Dalrymple, Alexander, 35, 157, 165, 167
Davidson, G. C., 325, 347
Davis, John, 5, 8
Dawson, G. M., 549, 568, 579, 582, 583
Deering's Point, 105-109
Digges Island, 17, 32
Dobbs, Arthur, 35, 165, 185, 225, 228
Douglas, Sir James, 580
Dowling, D. B., 59
Drainage slopes, xxi-xxv
Dubawnt, Lake and River, 142
Dulhut, D. G., 195-6
Dunvegan, 507-8

Ellis, Henry, 228
Eskimo, 431, 437, 438-9, 443-4, 571

Faden, William, 341
Fall Indians, 409-10
Fidler, Peter, 172, 173, 174-5, 176-85, 505, 539
Finlay, James, 268, 307-8, 317
  John, 452
  River, 459, 493, 580
Fort Assiniboine, 363
  Augustus, 401
  Bourbon, 267, 328
  Charles, 24, 69, 218
  Chipewyan, 333, 420, 421, 422, 448, 449, 507
  Dauphin, 266, 325, 328
  Esperance, 355
  George, 401
  Kootenay, 548
  La Corne, 270
  La Jonquière, 276-80, 286
  La Reine, 248
  Maurepas, 242-3
  Montagne d'Aigle, 399
  Nipawi, 269
  Forks, of the, 453
  Pembina, 391-92
  Poskoia, 268
Fort Prince of Wales, xxx, 162
  Rouge, 390
  St. Charles, 242
  St. John, 508
  St. Pierre, 242
  Selkirk, 581
  Vermillion, 400-2
  William, 393-4, 545
Fox Channel, 46, 61
Foxe, Luke, 47-59
Franchère, Gabriel, 411, 558
Franklin, Sir John, 159, 160, 369-74
Fraser, Simon, 468-69, 513-35
  River, xlix, 465-78
Freemen, 402-3
Frobisher, Benjamin, 415
  Joseph, 312, 355, 415
  Martin, 5
  Thomas, 312, 322
Frog Portage, 320, 333, 506, 540

Gerritz, Hessel, 6, 8
Gibbons, William, 45-6
Gillam, Zachariah, 64-70, 77-8
Giscome Portage, 462
Graham, Andrew, 114, 126, 130
Grand Portage route, xxxvii, 202, 240, 308-11, 335-37
Grant, Cuthbert, 423
  Robert, 355
Gray, Robert, xlviii
Great Bear Lake, 348, 573, 576, 577
  River, 435
Great Slave Lake, 152-53, 348, 350, 425-29
Gregory, John, 415
Grizzly bears, 103-4
Gros Ventres Indians, 359

Hanbury, David T., 160, 577
Harmon, Daniel Williams, 178, 492-512
Hawkridge. William, 45
Hayes route and river, xxvii, xxxiv, 75, 115-16
Hearne, Samuel, 136-64, 354
Hendry, Anthony, 114-135
Henrietta Maria Cape, 20, 58
Henry, Alexander, the elder, 293, 305, 308-24
  Alexander, the younger, 268, 375-85, 389-414, 552, 554

U.B.C. LIBRARY

Henry, Andrew, 413
William, 414
Hood, Robert, 571
Horses, 129
Howse, Joseph, 550
Pass, 409, 544
Hudson, Henry, 3, 6-33
Bay, 3-96
House, 171, 399
Strait, 4-6, 8-17
Hudson's Bay Company, 64-96, 97-113, 114-135, 136-64, 165-90
Hunter, R. H., 104

Ile à la Crosse House, 322
Lake, xxix, 322, 329-30
Innis, H. A., 325, 334
Introduction, xiii
Ittimenaktok Island, 10

James Bay, 19-24, 59
Thomas, 47-62
Jefferys, Thomas, 312
Jussaume, René, 357

Kaministikwia Route, xxxvi 336-7, 393
Kane, Paul, 557, 559
Keating, William H., 291
Kelsey, Henry, 97-113
Kenney, J. F., 113
Kohl, John G., 169-73, 177
Kootenay Plain, 408, 547, 550
River, 549-52

La Biche Lake, 540
La Corne de St. Luc, Louis Luc, 118-20, 134-5, 284
La France, Joseph, 117, 212, 223-34
Lake of the Woods, 199, 225, 237, 242
La Loche Lake, 330
La Noüe, Z. R. de, 202
La Perouse, J. F., Count de, 157, 163-64
Larocque, F. A., 363-75
La Ronge Lake, 333
La Vérendrye, P. G. de, 235-74, 383, 536
Leroux, Laurent, 421-2, 427, 449
Lesser Slave Lake, 453, 544
Lewes River, 581
Lewis and Clark, xxxviii, xlviii, 260, 357, 359, 367, 370
Liard River, 430, 447, 581
Lindsey, Charles, 341-42, 537
Low, A. P., 24, 95, 106, 172, 584

McConnell, R. G., 447
McCraken, Hugh, 358, 376, 378
McDonald, Archibald, 177
Finan, 547, 548, 549
of Garth, John, 371-73
McDonnell, John, 354-55
McDonnell's House, 357-58, 362-63
McGillivray, Duncan, 543, 544, 548
William, 417-8
Mackay, Alexander, 454, 458-62, 476
Mackenzie, Sir Alexander, 173, 328, 331, 352-53, 415-91, 492-93, 534, 536
Charles, 363-75
River, xlii, 429-48, 449, 465
McKenzie, Roderick, 336, 345-46, 416-21
McLeod, Alexander Norman, 415
John, 579-80
Malcolm, 177, 187
McTavish, Donald, 414
John George, 181, 506, 511
Simon, 415
Mandan Indians, 250-54, 359-85
Manitoba, Lake, 267
Marble Island, 35, 51, 87-90
Margry, Pierre, 263
Matonabbee, 143-5
Methye Portage, 320, 331
Middleton, Christopher, 91-4
Minnetaree Indians, 359-61, 366-67, 379
Missouri Coteau, xxiii
Fur Company, 412
River, 356, 359, 363
route, xxxvii
Morice, A. G., 471, 495, 511, 515, 520
Morton, A. S., 112
Munk, Jens, xxxi, 47

Murray, A. H., 582
Musk oxen, 110, 154

Naywatamee Poets, 100, 108, 112
Nechaco River, 470
Nelson River, Port and Fort, xxxii-xxxiv, 41, 53, 79, 233
New Caledonia, 493-512
Niverville, Boucher de, 275-80
North West Company, 166, 168, 190, 335-40, 345, 353, 363-85, 389-414, 492-512
Nottingham House, 176
Island, 18
Noyon, Jacques de, 197-201

Ochagach, 238
Ogden, Isaac, 345-53
Okanagan Lake, 511

Pangman, Peter, 404, 415
Parkman, Francis, 261, 281
Parry, William Edward, 95
Parsnip River, 460-64
Peace River, xliii, xlv, 423, 450-59, 507
Pelly River, 581
Peter Pond Lake, 330
Piegan Indians, 404-6, 410, 543
Pike, Warburton, 154, 160, 577
Place names, li-lxi
Plancius, Peter, 3
Pond, Peter, 166, 170, 312, 316, 325-53, 356, 415, 418
Powys, Llewelyn, 7, 33
Prickett, Abakuk, 7-8, 12-3, 15-34

Qu'Appelle River, xl, 355-6
Quesnel, Jules Maurice, 515, 522, 546

Radisson, Pierre Esprit, 24, 64-84, 194, 212-223
Rae, John, 95, 160, 577
Rainy Lake and River, 225, 241
Ranken Inlet, 35
Red River, xl, 390-91
Resolution Island, 40
Richardson, Sir John, 159, 160, 570, 573, 577
Robson, Joseph, 67, 98, 137, 139
Rochefaucauld-Liancourt, 343
Rocky Mountain House, 403, 405, 542, 544
Rocky Mountains, 407-9, 546-57
Roe's Welcome, 93-4
Ross, Alexander, 558
John, 418
Malcolm, 173
Rupert Bay and River, 23-4, 68
Russel, Israel C., xxi

St. Germain, Venance, 335-36
St. John de Crèvecoeur, 343
St. Pierre, J. R. L. de, 273-84
Salisbury, Island, 16, 40
Saskatchewan River, xl, 118, 171, 175, 328, 399, 409, 542
Selwyn, Alfred, 463
Severn River, xxviii, xxxiv
Sikanni Indians, 463-64, 508
Simpson, Sir George, 424, 534
Thomas, 576
Sioux Indians, 391-2
Skeena River, 494, 510
Slave River, 423-25
Small, Charlotte, 541
Patrick, 345, 418
Souris River, xxxix, 356, 365
South Branch House, 176
Stikine River, 578, 579
Stuart, David, 563, 565
Granville, 261
John, 508, 511, 512, 513
Lake, 509, 511
Swan River, 499-500

Taylor, George, 181-84
Thompson, David, 129, 171, 172, 177, 182, 185-90, 333, 355, 357-63, 372, 402-4, 506, 520, 535, 536-66
River, 519, 525, 563-66
Thutage Lake, 493
Turnor, Philip, 168-74
Turtle Mountain, 358, 362
Tyrrell, J. B., 106, 132, 158, 160, 164, 169, 172, 174, 181, 187, 189, 233, 270, 278, 280, 325, 370, 536, 544, 548, 556, 562, 577
J. W., 92, 160, 164, 577

Umfreville, Edouard, 108, 231, 335-37, 500
Ungava Bay, 10-14
Upham, Warren, xxiii
Vancouver, George, 488
Verrazano, xvi-xvii
Wager Bay, 35
West Road River (Blackwater), 478-82
Weymouth, George, 3, 6, 10
Whale Island, 442, 446
Whitney, Caspar, 160
Winnipeg Lake and River, xxv, 199-200, 226, 238, 266, 397
Winnipegosis, Lake, 267
Wolstenholme Cape, 17
Wydowse, Thomas, 7
X Y Company, 397, 415-16, 418
York Factory, xxxi
Yukon River, 445-46, 581-82

U.B.C. LIBRARY

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

University of British Columbia Library

University of British Columbia Library

DUE DATE

P. C. SENT	AUG 05 1982 RET'D
OCT 22 1976	JAN 04 1984
NOV 5 1976	Subject to Recall
	JAN 08 1984 REC'D
OCT 28 1976 RET'D	NOV 19 1984
NOV 22 1976	NOV 16 1984 RET'D
DEC 3 1976	NOV 3 1986
NOV 29 1976 RET'D	NOV 12 1986 RET'D
APR 10 1978	NOV 14 1995
APR 7 1978 RET'D	NOV 14 1995 CHG'D
SEP 27 1978	
SEP 13 REC'D	
JUL 16 1982	

ET-6 BP 74-453 23 phone

U.B.C. LIBRARIES

372739

~~188637~~

F5513.1

UNIVERSITY OF B.C. LIBRARY

39424071213489

UNIVERSITY OF B.C. LIBRARY
3 9424 07121 3489
PARC
7
UBC LIBRARY