

A MOUNT RAINIER CENTENNIAL

In 1833, Dr. William Fraser Tolmie made a journey from Nisqually House to Mount Rainier. It was a notable undertaking as the first near approach to the great peak. He kept a diary. Parts of that precious document have taken their places as prized publications among the works on the Pacific Northwest. An appropriate monument to the man and to his famous alpine excursion is found in Tolmie Peak in the northwestern corner of Rainier National Park.

As the centennial of Doctor Tolmie's arrival in the Pacific Northwest approaches, many people are thinking of commemorating it. Two preliminary events are worth recording. Mr. C. B. Bagley furnishes the account of one of these, an informal celebration of the ninety-sixth anniversary of Doctor Tolmie's arrival in the Northwest. The other preliminary item is a letter proposing a centennial celebration in 1933. It was written to Mr. Horace M. Albright, Director of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C., by Asahel Curtis, of Seattle, chairman of the Rainier National Park Advisory Board. A copy of the letter was sent to The Mountaineers, Inc., and to certain northwestern newspapers. It will undoubtedly prove a sufficient impulse to produce the desired result. In that case, some picturesque chapters of local history will certainly be revived. To further the cause, the letter by Mr. Curtis is here published in full, following the account of the recent celebration in Victoria.—EDITOR.

Ninety-sixth Anniversary of Doctor Tolmie's Arrival

On Saturday, May 4, 1929, at their residence in Victoria, the Misses Tolmie celebrated the 96th anniversary of their father's arrival at Fort Vancouver. The occasion was marked by the presence of a number of interested guests representing historic families in the Pacific Northwest, with whom Dr. Tolmie was intimately connected during his long and honorable career as an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company and member of the House of Assembly of Vancouver Island. The oldest guest present, Mr. James R. Anderson, who is 87 years of age, is the son of A. C. Anderson, author of the first history written of the Pacific Northwest. Other honored guests were: Mrs. Dennis Harris, daughter of Sir James Douglas; Mrs. J. O. Grahame; Mr. George Simpson McTavish, (descendant of Sir George Simpson) and Mrs. McTavish; Mrs.

S. F. Tolmie (wife of Hon. Dr. Tolmie, present Premier of British Columbia), and Miss Carol Tolmie, their daughter; Dr. E. C. Hart and Mrs. Hart; Mr. John Andrews, great-grandson of Dr. W. F. Tolmie; Mrs. W. F. Bullen, granddaughter of Sir James Douglas; and Mr. John Hosie, Provincial Archivist and Miss Hosie. Owing to indisposition Mrs. Higgins, daughter of the Hon. J. S. Helmcken, and Mr. J. O. Grahame were unable to be present.

The guests were entertained at the historic old solid mahogany table which, with the accompanying chairs, formerly graced the dining hall at Fort Vancouver nearly one hundred years ago. The table is a treasured relic in the Tolmie family and it naturally formed an appropriate centre for the function. In a sense the gathering was a reunion of historic families around the festive board. After a bountiful tea around the old table, Miss J. W. Tolmie called upon John Hosie to make a few remarks. Mr. Hosie briefly recounted the circumstances of Dr. W. F. Tolmie's arrival at Fort Vancouver, and his reception by Dr. John McLoughlin. Mr. Hosie paid a glowing tribute to the character, attainments, and distinguished services of Dr. Tolmie.

In reminiscent mood the next speaker, J. R. Anderson, entertained the company with interesting recollections of his first meeting with Dr. W. F. Tolmie, of various incidents and events in which Dr. Tolmie played an important role. He spoke of Dr. Tolmie's innate kindness of heart and of the wonderful hospitality dispensed at Cloverdale over a long period of years. He recalled the fact that the first apples he ever ate or saw were at Fort Vancouver, given him by Mrs. Douglas and grown at Fort Vancouver. In passing he recalled the names of many notabilities who had sat around the old table at the Fort, including David Douglas, botanist, Ulysses S. Grant, General Sherman, General Sheridan, Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour, Commander Wilkes, Theodore Winthrop, and many others.

Mrs. Dennis Harris spoke in similar strain, mentioning the friendly relationships that existed between the Douglas and Tolmie families, and describing in detail a visit paid by a company of Victorians to Nisqually in 1864.

In behalf of the guests Mr. George Simpson McTavish thanked the Misses Tolmie for their hospitality, remarking that it was a great honor to be present on such a historic anniversary. Miss J. W. Tolmie, who presided, made a graceful acknowledgment.

C. B. BAGLEY.

Centennial Celebration Proposed

Seattle, Washington

November 22, 1929

Mr. Horace M. Albright, Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D.C.

My Dear Mr. Albright:

Nineteen hundred thirty-three will be the hundredth anniversary of the visit of white man to that territory which is now the Rainier National Park. This visit was first made by W. F. Tolmie, then holding a position with the Hudson's Bay Company. Mr. Tolmie ascended the Puyallup River with Indian guides and climbed a peak in the northwest corner of the Park.

Mr. Tolmie remained with the Hudson's Bay Company practically all his life, later on was one of the factors, and when the United States took over the territory now comprising Western Washington he moved with his family to Victoria. His family has been prominently identified with the history of the Pacific Northwest and Mr. Tolmie's son is now the Premier of British Columbia.

It seems peculiarly fitting that recognition should be given to this centennial and on behalf of the Rainier National Park Advisory Board I have suggested that some appropriate ceremony be held and have invited Premier S. F. Tolmie to be the guest of our Board on that occasion, which invitation Mr. Tolmie has accepted.

The Northwest entrance road approaches the Mountain on much the same ground over which Mr. W. F. Tolmie traveled on his first visit to the Park, and a peak and a creek in the northwest corner of the Park have been named in his honor. Because of this I wish to suggest that we expedite the work in the northwest corner of the Park with the hope that we have a road completed to Mowich Lake by 1933. This can be done by letting a clearing contract in 1930, and grading and construction in 1931 and 1932. The date of Mr. Tolmie's visit to this region was in September so we would have a considerable part of the construction period of 1933 if necessary.

I wish further to suggest that the entrance arch in this corner of the Park be emblematic of the pioneer explorer, trapper and hunter who first opened the Northwest preceding the actual settler by many years; that there be placed on this entrance a plaque recording this first visit to the Mountain, the nature of the visit and the fact that this entire area now constituting Western Washington

—which, at the time of Mr. Tolmie's visit was under the English flag, was transferred to the United States without recourse to arms but through the peaceful methods of arbitration. I believe that no such similar transfer of territory had ever taken place in the history of the world. It was here on Puget Sound that the most serious conflict of opinion occurred and where there was the greatest danger of armed conflict between the people. In fact, for a considerable time, a portion of the territory in the San Juan Islands was jointly occupied by the troops of both nations.

The people of both British Columbia and of Washington are proud of the fact that these two nations were able to settle this difficulty by arbitration. This date will also mark the 120th year of peace between these two nations—a situation without parallel in world history. It, therefore, seems particularly appropriate that we celebrate this event with a ceremony participated in by the people of the two nations.

I wish you would give serious consideration to these suggestions and advise me at an early date.

Sincerely yours

ASAHEL, CURTIS, Chairman.

Official Approval

That the suggestion by Mr. Curtis has met with prompt official approval is seen in the reply, dated at Washington December 6, 1929, by Horace M. Albright, Director of the National Park Service. That reply includes the two following paragraphs:

"I have your very interesting letter of November 22 in regard to the invitation extended to Premier S. F. Tolmie to be the guest of your board in 1933 which will be the hundredth anniversary of the visit of white man to that territory which is now the Rainier National Park. I quite agree with you that it is peculiarly fitting that recognition should be given to this centennial and it is especially fitting that Premier Tolmie should be the guest of honor in view of the fact that the first visit to the park was made by his father, W. F. Tolmie, then holding a position with the Hudson's Bay Company.

"In regard to your further suggestion that the entrance arch on the West Side Highway on the west boundary be emblematic of the pioneer explorer, trapper and hunter who first opened the Northwest preceding the actual settlers by many years, this appeals to me as a very interesting suggestion and one which I will have Chief Landscape Architect Vint look into. I would appreciate it

if you would send him direct any further views and suggestions you may have in this regard. Of course, the entrance arches are provided for separately in the annual park appropriations and not out of the road funds. However, it is not too early to begin thinking about this gateway arch."