

## DAVID THOMPSON'S JOURNEYS IN THE SPOKANE COUNTRY

In the April number of this Quarterly David Thompson is chronicled as having arrived at Spokane House from the Athabasca Pass across the Rocky Mountains on November 10th, 1811, with a stock of tobacco and other trading goods for the winter's trade with the Indians visiting Spokane, Kullyspell and Saleesh Houses, the three trading posts of the North-West Company established in the Upper Columbia Basin in 1809 and 1810; Jacques Finlay was the clerk in charge at Spokane House, Michel Kinville at Kullyspell House and Finan McDonald at Saleesh House. At that date only two other trading posts were in existence in the Columbia river basin, namely those of the Pacific Fur Company at Astoria in April 1811, and at Okanogan in Sept. 1811. The part of Mr. Thompson's journal reproduced here-with describes his journey from Spokane House to Saleesh House, where he is to spend the winter of 1811-12.

The trail traveled by Mr. Thompson and his men on this journey ran in an easterly direction from Spokane House, skirting Five Mile Prairie and crossing Peone Prairie and then over the hills to Spokane Prairie just east of Trent, on the No. Pac. R. R., and near where Antoine Plant afterward settled. It then followed the edge of the hills northeast through Rathdrum and turning to the North followed more closely the line of the Spokane and International R. R. to the Pend d'Oreille river. Crossing the river it passed through Sand Point and around the northerly end of the lake (called Kullyspell lake by Mr. Thompson) and along the northerly side of the Clark Fork river to the upper end of Thompson's Prairie, Montana.

It will be noted that Mr. Thompson did not use the name Pend d'Oreille at all and that his Saleesh or Flathead river continued from Montana clear to the Columbia river near the international boundary line. This is quite in keeping with the last official ruling of the National Geographic Board at Washington, D. C., which designates the entire length of that stream as the Clark Fork river. But the name Pend d'Oreille has been attached to a county in the state of Washington, and is still locally applied to the river after it leaves the lake of that name, and is familiar to most of the old residents who may read this contribution.

This point of crossing the river by Mr. Thompson establishes the location of the historic ferry later known to all packers and miners

and emigrants and travelers through the Spokane Country as Simeaca-teen. The spelling of the name varies upon nearly every map that has been printed. Here had been the established crossing place for the Indians from time immemorial and remained so for white people until the time of bridges and railroads. Here in the Spring of 1813 certain rivals in the fur trade were encamped waiting a supply of the fragrant weed from Spokane House and here ended the seventy-five mile race of the famous horse Le Bleu belonging to John Clarke of the Pacific Fur Company, as narrated in equally racy style by Ross Cox in his *Adventures on the Columbia River*, page 217 (Harper Edit.). Here in later years at times a trading store was maintained to supply the passing packers and miners with liquid rations and other necessities.

Mr. Thompson's journal entry for Nov. 14th, serves to record the approximate date of the abandonment of Kullyspell House, which had been established by him in September, 1809, on the north shore of Pend d'Oreille lake, near the mouth of the Clark Fork river; the site has been informally established as on what is known as Sheep-herders Point, southeast of Hope, Idaho. This House was found to have been unprofitably located as well as some miles off the line of travel between the Pend d'Oreille and Flathead Indians. Mr. Thompson now passes by without mention of it; but he was in haste, because of the lateness of the season and rumored Indian troubles, and some anxiety because of the non-arrival of a partner and clerks expected by way of the House Pass, the Upper Columbia (his Kootenai) and the Kootenay (his McGillivray's) rivers. Kullyspell House was consolidated with Spokane House which became the principal center in the interior, as distinguished from Astoria near the Coast, of all the activities of the North-West Company while remaining in business on the Columbia.

When returning from Astoria in July, 1811, in company with the David Stuart party, Mr. Thompson had taken a great liking to a Kanaka named Coxe and had taken him on in exchange for a voyageur named Boulard, which circumstance is mentioned by Alex Ross in his *Oregon Settlers*, page 114. In the *David Thompson's Narrative*, pages 515-16, mention is also made of the bravery and nerve of Coxe. According to this *Journal*, Coxe remains at Spokane House for the winter, and probably was the first Sandwich Islander to come to the Spokane Country.

Though no attempt is made to annotate closely the journey along the Clark Fork river the text of the *Journal* is inserted for reference; but it may be said that the Indian trail along that river kept on the north side and did not cross over to the south side as the No. Pac. R. R.

T. C. ELLIOTT.

## JOURNAL OF DAVID THOMPSON, NOV. 11th-19th, 1811

Nov. 11th.

*Monday.* Rain in the night & mornng., fine cloudy day. Wind a Gale W. S. W. At 11½ a. m. set off & held on up the Trout Brook,<sup>1</sup> at 2½ p. m. came to the large Meadow.<sup>2</sup> Men on foot. At 3¼ p.m. camped at the farther end, a small spring of water. Co. say N. 85 E. 1½ m. to up the bank + 2 m. Men following the lead of the Rivulet above the Banks + 2½ m. to the Rill at entrance of the large Meadow, + 2 m. to the Rill where we camped. Left Coxe & Paul the Iroquois with Jacque Finlay.

Nov. 12th.

*Tuesday.* A rainy night, but fine cloudy day. At 9½ a.m. set off, held on to 11½ a.m. when we came on the Plains of the Sketshoo River. Co. S. 85 E. 6 m. to a Rill of Water, the River runs thro' fine Meadows with high meadow Knowls on the right, on the left level meadow, we held on close on the left along a line of woods & woody rocky Hills abt. N. 60 E. 7 m. to 1¼ p.m., where a little water springs at a fallen Tree, trotted fast, then rounded Points of wood to 4 p.m., at a Trot to a Lake,<sup>3</sup> our Co. came up to North, distce in all 11 or 12 m. as we came on fast, & put up at the So. end of the Lake of abt. ½ m. long, lying abt. Ed. & Wd., the last 2 m. along a brook<sup>4</sup> 3 yds. across from the Lake, which Brook is lost in the Ground, our whole Co. straight has been abt. N. 30 E., we left the Sketshoo River at 2½ p.m. always abt. 2 or 1½ m. on our right, the last 1 hour we saw at the Hills on its right were well wooded, as usual, with Red Fir, Fir Pine & Larch, a few Cyprus.

Nov. 13th.

*Wednesday.* A blowy Mornng. At 8.50 a.m. set off, at 11.50 at the Steep Bank, at 1¼ p.m. at a long Pond<sup>5</sup> of water on the right, which we followed. At 1¾ p.m. baited at 2.55 p.m. set off, at 5¼ p.m. at the Saleesh River, we went up the river abt. ½ m. to the Brook<sup>6</sup> & camped in company with Bercier & Methode & 4 Tents of Ind., our Co. may have been N. 30 W. 17 m. to where we baited, then N. 30 E. 8 m. to the Saleesh River, as we came in fast, especially the latter part.

<sup>1</sup> Also called the Rivulet by Mr. Thompson. This is the Little Spokane River, the Indian name for which is said to be Sen-a-hom-a-na, meaning salmon trout.

<sup>2</sup> Peone Prairie.

<sup>3</sup> Fish Lake, now known as Twin Lakes.

<sup>4</sup> Rathdrum Creek, a small stream flowing from this lake, answers this description by Mr. Thompson.

<sup>5</sup> Hoodoo Lake, Kootenai County, Idaho.

<sup>6</sup> Mouth of Hoodoo Creek, and location of the famous Sinecasteen Ferry across the Pend d'Oreille River.

Nov. 14th.

*Thursday.* A fine day. Learning from Bercier & Methode that the Lake Indians do not hunt, but only gamble & keep the men starving, I told them as the Season was fast advancing to lay up the Furr's they have, abt. 4 Packs, & make the best of their way back to Kinville<sup>7</sup> & return to the Skeetshoo River with all the property &c. as to keep up a Post there, with so few Goods is expence to no purpose. We crossed our Horses & things as fast as possible with the Indian canoes & by 9½ a.m. set off up the Saleesh River, baited the horses 1½ hrs., held on and camped at the So. end of the Lake Portage<sup>8</sup> at 5¼ p.m. Methode & Bercier came up to us, here they informed me that the Pagans had killed 2 Kootenae & then made Peace with them, that they had also stripped the 3 Iroquois stark naked & then sent them off with their women. As these poor fellows would, if living, meet Mr. F. McDonald & People & give them the necessary information, they would of course not attempt to come by the old route of the Kootenae River & McGillivray's do. I therefore concluded some accident had happened the Canoes & wrote letters to be sent to the nearest Partners. Killed 1 Goose, good, the Ground quite wet & muddy.

Nov. 15th.

*Friday.* A very fine day. Early sent off Jos. Coté, Bap. Deleau & the Santeaux with Letters for the east side of the Mountains, they are to pass by the lower part of McGillivray's River & to the Columbia & thence upwards to the Athabasca Portage, they have a Bag of Pimmican & and a few pounds of do., with orders to arrange themselves every way for the Voyage, an old Sail. At 8½ a.m. I set off for the Saleesh House in Co'y. with Villiard & Le Fortuna, passed on along the Lake, very muddy, baited the Horses 1 hour, at the Brook south of the Portage<sup>9</sup> Rivulet, grass bad, held on & passed all the bad road to near the first Brook & camped at 4¾ p.m., good campment for grass for the Horses. Clear. 1 fat Goose.

Nov. 16th.

*Saturday.* A fine day, but cloudy. At 7½ a.m. set off. At 10.50 a.m. on the high knowl,<sup>10</sup> at 11½ a. m. on the River Side, baited ½ hour. At 1¼ p.m. at the Herring<sup>11</sup> Rapid, baited ¾ hour, at 5 p.m. at the

<sup>7</sup> Michel Kinville.<sup>8</sup> Sand Point, Idaho; from which point goods were at times carried across the lake in canoes.<sup>9</sup> Pack River or Creek; so named because during mining days goods from the south end of the lake for the Kootenay mines were carried by boat as far as possible up this creek before being transferred to pack animals.<sup>10</sup> Probably the high ridge reaching the Clark Fork River at Cabinet Gorge and Rapids.<sup>11</sup> Heron, Montana; these rapids named because of numerous fish resembling herring, found there by the voyageurs, and the name since shortened and corrupted.

clear Ground close above the large Brook, where we camped directly on going up the Bank. Grass not good, but there is none better near for several miles, abt. 2 m. below the Brook, there is much good Grass, but no water at hand. Snow in the night.

Nov. 17th.

*Sunday.* A snowy sleety night & Mornng. At 9 a.m. ceased. At 9.50 a.m. set off, held on to the Isld. Portage to the low Pt. then turned to the Knowls, held on to the 1st Brook, then to the 2nd do. thro' the piece of woods, open Grounds to the River, where we had a good campment at 4 p.m., having come well on.

Nov. 18th.

*Monday.* A fine night, but snowy Mornng. & Day. At 8 $\frac{3}{4}$  a.m. set off. At 11.50 a.m. at the high Bank Brook, baited 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  hrs. & dried ourselves a little. Snow ceased to small Rain, set off, held on over the steep sloping Banks the Riles &c. & on to the 1st Brook, down it to the River, & up along abt.  $\frac{3}{4}$  m. & camped at 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  p.m., dried our things a little, but Rain came on in the night.

Nov. 19th.

*Tuesday.* Rainy Night & day. At 8 $\frac{3}{4}$  a.m. set off, at 11 $\frac{1}{4}$  a.m. thank good Providence arrived at the House,<sup>12</sup> found Mousseau & Le Paquin just arrived from wandering abt. 5 days in search of the Kootanae Road to McGillivray's River, when getting alarmed they returned here living on horse meat. Mr. F. McDonald & the others are up the River to trade Provisions with the Saleesh Indians &c. The House is in a ruinous condition, nothing whatever done to it. Rainy day, quite wet.

<sup>12</sup> Saleesh House, (or Flathead Fort) then stood near the bank of the river southerly from Woodlin Station of the Northern Pacific Railroad on Thompson's Prairie, Montana. It was established in the fall of 1809 by Mr. Thompson.