

THE PEACE RIVER JOURNAL, 1799-1800

The fur trade of North America had its beginning in the quest for a route to the Indies. China—the Gold of Ophir—a waterway to the Far East—these were the lodestones that led men to follow the rivers of the new found continent. The Anglo Saxons found the Treasure of Gold in the barter of furs. Boundless forests and illimitable plains were the fur fields of their endeavor. Fur and trade thus led to the exploration of North America. After the English conquest of Canada the pioneers of this exploration were the members of the North West Company. They were nearly all British merchants of Montreal, many of them from the Highlands of Scotland. In extending their trade to the remote wilds of the Indian country they displayed an audacity of initiative, and independence of precedent, that made them unique in the annals of commerce. Until the union of the two great companies, the Hudson's Bay and the North West, in 1821, only the Nor' Westers crossed the mountains and established trading centers on the Pacific slope of the Rockies.¹ The era of the North West Company on the western side of the mountains (1793-1821) was pre-political, almost pre-literary, hence its history is difficult to obtain.

Each year the fur traders visited tribes more and more remote. One of their number, Alexander Mackenzie, followed the unknown trails to the lands of the sunset and reached the Pacific Ocean. Mackenzie proposed a scheme for world commerce which included the extension of the Company's trade to the Pacific whence the furs might be shipped to China. The Rocky Mountains had rimmed the western world of the French explorers, but Mackenzie crossed them (1793) by the Peace River Pass. In preparing for his journey to the Pacific, Mackenzie ascended the Peace to about five miles above the Smoky River. To the "most distant settlement of the Company," he tells us in his journal. Any buildings the Company may have had were no longer there and he built a fort, but he states that his predecessor there had found the Indians very troublesome, and the men who now accompanied him and were building the new fort "left this place in the beginning of last May and went to Rainy Lake in canoes

¹ In 1809 the Hudson's Bay Company sent a clerk, Joseph Howse, to see how far west David Thompson had gone. In 1810 Howse was sent a second time. He was supplied with trading goods and wintered (1810-11) north of Flathead Lake. In the spring of 1811 Howse and his companions abandoned the Columbia valley to the North West Company. *David Thompson's Narrative* Ed. by J. B. Tyrrell, 1-ii.

laden with packs of furs."² Westward from this point Mackenzie was the pioneer explorer.

The silence of the years shuts out the doings of the Nor' Westers after Mackenzie's voyage. But other adventurous Scots came to make these upland paths their own. James Finlay ascended the Peace in 1797 and he too followed the narrow, twisting trail over the edge of the world and beyond. In the wilderness of mountains west of the Rocky Mountain Portage he voyaged along the Peace River exploring its northern branch, which ever since that time has been known as Finlay's River. Next he followed the southern branch nearly to its source and traded with the Indians whom he acquainted with British goods as well as white faces. No record of this second crossing of the northern Rockies has been found, but it is referred to by Simon Fraser and John Stuart in their journals of 1805-1806 and was evidently common knowledge among the traders.

The years passed. The Rocky Mountain Fort was built on the south side of the Peace River³ near the eastern end of the portage where the river cuts its way through the mighty barrier of the Rockies. The wild canyon of the river was the gateway to a new world. A world of strange wildernesses, of unnamed valleys, of far flung snow fields, of mountains that were nameless and rivers that flowed none knew where. Many adventurers were to travel this way on the long lone trails of the Northland.

It is not known when and by whom the post at Rocky Mountain Portage was built. The *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Fort, Fall 1799*, here published for the first time, is in Masson, MSS., Vol. 4, Public Archives of Canada. It records the trade of the fort and the last entry is dated April 20, 1800. It consists of 27 pages of manuscript (about 8x6½), written in a clear beautiful hand, but with a variable orthography and grammar, and a noticeable lack of punctuation. It is just a little old diary of the day's happenings which all traders were obliged to keep. The writer's name is gone but the diary pictures for us those days now more than a hundred years ago.

² In *The Search for the Western Sea*, 446, Mr. Burpee says that the fort under the care of Mr. Finlay, where Mackenzie stopped a few days, was the "highest establishment so far made on Peace River." But Mackenzie, in charting his course of the river, mentions passing "the establishment of last year" more than a hundred miles farther up the river than Finlay's post according to the distances he gives, and about forty miles still farther west he arrived at his destination. It was from this place the men now with him had set out for Rainy Lake the previous May with the packs of furs. Thus Mackenzie definitely asserts that the North West Company had two posts beyond Finlay's establishment (of 1792), one of which, though abandoned, was seen by Mackenzie. Mackenzie, *Voyages*, London, 1801, 128, 136.

³ Horetzky, Charles, *Canada on the Pacific*, 58. McDonald, Archibald, *Journal of Peace River: A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific*, 18.

A few facts may be gleaned from meagre information in the narrative: (1) The fort, located on Peace River near the portage, had been used at least one year previous to the winter of 1799-1800, and on November 11 a flag staff, 55 feet long, was erected. (2) Reference to Mr. Finlay's expedition across the mountains two years before (1797) verifies that episode and date, as given in Simon Fraser's First Journal, and John Stuart's Journal. (3) The most reliable voyageurs were sent to visit distant tribes to persuade them to bring their furs to the fort. (4) Letters were sent to, and received from, the "Lower Fort" several times during the winter of 1799-1800. On the first trip the men set out from Rocky Mountain House December 16, and returned with letters January 3. No mention is made of the contents of the letters. (5) Upon two occasions the Indians complain of the high prices charged for the trading goods. However, this was not unusual, and in each of these two instances a big trade had been followed by a "drinking match" and the morning after naturally brought a feeling of discontent.

The narrative tells us that on Friday the fifth day of October, 1799, the trader set off from the Forks Peace River with two canoes loaded with $18\frac{1}{2}$ pieces of goods for the winter's trade, four women, five children, and twelve men. The northern winter would soon hold the land in its icy grasp and the little party made haste to ascend the river before the ice should wreck their canoes. On the thirteenth of October they arrived at the Rocky Mountain Fort "not without a few accidents." To each of the toil-worn voyageurs was given a dram with which to celebrate their arrival. The Indians of the country had deemed this a suitable time to assemble themselves to welcome the trader, and they were to assemble themselves to welcome the trader, and they were permitted to hold carnival with a keg of rum mixed for the occasion. They were further delighted by a gift of tobacco to each one. The number of inches given was graduated nicely to accord with the importance of the Indians, a chief always receiving a piece measured to his dignity. As a return for the courtesy and hospitality of the trader the Indians brought a present of a "little meat to the Fort."

Busily the men worked building a house for themselves. This winter their old house was made over into a hangard as the "Old hangard was too small," and the shop of previous years was taken by the trader to be his own room. Every effort was made to complete the buildings before the snow and cold weather added to their labors.

The arrival of Indians to trade, the sending for those who lagged behind, the quest for new and remote tribes, made up the life of the fort. Daily the hunter was abroad on the trail of buffalo and elk to furnish food for the men. With laconic brevity the journal reads: "The men working as usual" or, "Nothing, cold weather" and again, "The hunter is gone a hunting and sleeps out." Occasionally fist fights among the men enlivened the daily toil, but good fellowship usually prevailed, and the fur men mingled with the Indians without fear. To both the Indians and the whites trade was peace. Every day was a work day, not excepting Sundays. Only New Year's and Easter were celebrated with feasting and idleness. On these days French gayety brought some cheer into the somber, sordid life of trade. Earlier than the dawn on January first, the jolly voyageurs assembled at the window of their bourgeois. A few shots fired aroused him to the importance of the day. As was the custom of all North West Company posts they were then invited in to receive the New Year greetings of the Company. On this first day of the new nineteenth century they were given a "couple of 'drams and half a fathom of tobacco each." The expense of the modest party is summed up as "five pints of rum and five fathoms of tobacco."

Following the thread of the narrative we find the names of fourteen voyageurs at the fort with the fur trader. Twelve of these men arrived in October with the outfit, the thirteenth was probably the man left as caretaker of the post the previous summer (1799), and the fourteenth was Cardinal, who arrived from the "Lower Fort" March 15, to help with the canoes. These names are as follows:

Beison	Dejardin
Bouché	Gagnon
Brunoche	Lafreniere
Cantaras	Mandau
Cardinal	Maniant
Connoyé	Perriard
D'Allair	Sauteux

Our trader tells us of these men: Beison and Bouché were lazy fellows and their comrades would not help them build their houses, but every one willingly aided Lafreniere, who was agreeable and industrious. The lazy Bouché was not amiable. He quarreled with Brunoche the week they arrived, and in less than

a month he had a second quarrel, this time with the popular Lafreniere.

Once Cantaras and Connoyé were the messengers of trade and friendship to the far away nations, but their perverse Indian guides decided to go elsewhere, and bade them return to the fort as they were going to a place where furs were few and food was scarce. However, the Indians with meticulous honesty, returned the presents given to them, except four skins of tobacco.

Early in November Lafreniere was very ill. I believe, says the trader "he falls in fits for there is time that he does not know what he is doing—he Bites, gives Blows, kicks, and does everything he can." About a week later Lafreniere was well enough to work at the snow shoes and sleds, but his gayety was gone for he said "that some spirit haunted him." What the superstitious voyageurs thought of this ghostly visitant is not related.

Calamities great and small were a part of the day's record. On the last day of November Dejardin broke an ax, and Friday, ever a day of ill omen, Connoyé did likewise. A few days later the careless Brunoche left a kettle full of water out over night, and the December cold froze the water "through and through and broke the kettle out of service." In that same week the Company's dog "hung himself and Dyed this evening." The cause of this tragedy is not told, but the voyageurs were not unduly depressed for they jokingly sent Perriard, the simpleton, to see if the poor dog lying on the river bank had come to life.

Brunoche had a trap-line which interested him more than his work about the fort, and twice he caught a fox—the last was a red one. But Brunoche was a greedy fellow and he asked permission to make a kettle potash [*potage*] for himself shortly after the trader had given half a kettle to him. This extravagant indulgence was refused, and poor Brunoche went away grumbling that everything he asked was denied him. However, he may have been a bit close fisted himself for he charged the Company two skins for the loan of a kettle to the men going down river for the letters, and at another time he took two pairs of shoes in return for one pair lent to the men going for bark.

Due to leisure and rum a fight occurred on New Year's day, and Cantaras gave Connoyé a "pair of black eyes and the best Drubbing he ever got in his life." In the midst of the spring canoe building Connoyé quarreled with Gagnon over a tool. As

Gagnon did not know how to fight Connoyé, though less powerful, gave him a black eye.

In December Maniant and Beison carried the mail to Mr. F. Fort, the resident bourgeois (or possibly clerk) at the down river fort known as "Lower Fort." They made for themselves a forty-pound bag of pemmican, and also carried ten pounds of dried meat; one gun flint, one fire steel, and eight pairs of shoes completed their outfit. On January 3, they returned with letters. Having been on the road New Year's day they missed the festivities of both forts, and now the trader gave to each one of them a half fathom of tobacco and one dram. On a second journey for mail Maniant, Cantaras, and Connoyé were the couriers. They were to secure bark for canoes as well as news from the outside world. Seventeen days later they returned. The letters disclosed an error of two days in the date of the journal which was corrected to read March 15 instead of March 17, and this is the sole bit of information divulged from the letters. The three men brought bark for two canoes and they were accompanied by Cardinal, a man from the lower fort, who was to help build the new canoes. The trader characterized Cardinal as the laziest fellow he ever saw, and one who "did not know a piece of wood that works or splits well."

The hunter of the fort was a young Indian and he had as a companion and assistant a little boy, the son of L'homme Seul. Frequently the voyageurs joined the hunt, and they were always sent to bring the meat to the fort. This hunter was a temperamental fellow and he often wanted to return to his people. Presents and persuasion induced him to remain until late in March when, being ill, he was sent home carrying a fine gun lent to him for the summer.

The Indians had their part in the life of the fort; indeed, they displayed a great interest in society, and while generally reluctant to work there always ready for their own kind of revelry. The Cigne [*Cygne*] was the most notable chief. His warriors were good beaver hunters and paid their credits promptly; only once did they fall behind and then it was on "account of the Cigne's fyr-in-Law's Death." A chief's clothing was offered to the Cigne, but he refused it and suggested it be given to L'homme Seul as the Indian's choice. Greatly displeased the trader refused to clothe any chief till the next year.

Jimathush, L'homme Seul, the Gauché, Le Grand Vieux, and Le Marie [*marie*] des Deux, Jolie femme [*s*] were the élite

of the forest, and good customers at the fort. Q. D. Comrade and the petite Renard were lesser grandees who sometimes traded at the down river fort.

The literalism of the journal discloses that our trader is versatile. Well trained in the customs of the trade he manages the volatile voyageurs and the self-centered Indians, at the same time securing every possible advantage for the Company. No item of gain is too small for his consideration: sixty candles rendered from the grease of the buffalo; innumerable shoes made by the women; meat—rabbits or buffaloes; swamp tea; all are worthwhile by-products of a vast economic interest. He is mildly generous to merit. Occasionally he permits the men to squander their wages in phials [*fiols*] of rum. Sometimes he is caustic over inefficiency, but he never complains of hardship and danger. There is only realism in "it Blowed so hard Gagnon and myself was very near being killed by the head of a tree that the wind broke and came to fall on my room," and "there is a great [*many*] musketos already for we cannot sleep."

The North West Company may not have had an exclusive monopoly of the Indian trade in this vicinity in 1799-1800, for some evidence of free trade appears in the journal. In January our bourgeois "sent two men with Jimathush to visit a Boulogniere about three days march from here." Some of the voyageurs had possessions of their own distinct from those of the Company: Cantaras and Lafreniere went to the Indian lodges to get a dog belonging to Cantaras; Dejardin had given them something to trade for grease, and on their return the following day loaded with provisions, the trader remarks "I told them I hoped they would not trade any more." Again, Lafreniere sold his dog to the Company; later, when preparing the furs to be sent to headquarters, a shortage of pack cords made it necessary for the trader to borrow five carrying straps from Bouché. Both Beison and Bouché had their own canoes, and these mended, were a part of the spring brigade to the east.

April came. The breaking of the ice in the river had been eagerly awaited, for it heralded the trip to Rainy Lake with the returns of the winter's trade. Industry was the order of the day but occasionally the charm of idleness made itself felt and a few careless sunlit hours were spent by the men. The journal notes that two of the men working on the new canoes "went in the woods for varangues and slept the most part of the Day."

The packs of furs were ready, new canoes and old ones were carefully loaded. Last of all an account was taken of the property remaining at the fort and one man, Brunoche, was left in charge. The others set out in four canoes on the long voyage eastward. Overtaking the ice they camped for two days then, on the silent waters of the broad Peace River, they passed into—Oblivion.

MARION O'NEIL

JOURNAL OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FORT.

FALL, 1799.

Fri. 5th Oct^r. Set off from the Forks Peace River with two Canoes loaded with 18½ Pieces, four women, five children and 12 Men and arrived here the 13th not without a few Accidents. Gave the Men each a Dram and mixed a keg Rum—gave all the Indians that are here each a Dram and a P^s of Tob. and they brought a little Meat to the Fort.

Sun. 14th Part of the Indians came over with all their things. Rec^d 70 Sk^s Beav^r and 88 D^o M^t C^{rs} from the F. P. River—

Mon. 15th Rec^d 66 Sk^s B^r and 70 Sk^s M^t C^{rs} and they begun to Drink. The Men arranged their old nouses¹ to make a hangard for I have taken the Shop for my room and the Old hangard is too small.

Tues. 16th The Indians are Drinking yet—undone all the Goods and found the Gun flints wanting. I Cannot get a Single Dog from the Indians.

Wed. 17th gave out 477 Sk^s B^r and 5 Sk^s M^t old and new. Bouche and Brunoche had a Dispute together—

Thurs. 18th gave out the rest of the C^{rs} amounting to 683 Sk^s B^r and 26 M^t. gave 8 Sk^s Amⁿ to the Men that are going inland. I could not prevent the Indians from going on the other side.

Fri. 19th The rest of the Indians went away on this side. gave the men that go inland a Dram each—told D'Allair that if he heard any thing about the New Indians to try and go for them if he thought to loose too much time by Coming to the Fort—

Sat. 20th The men working at their houses as fast as they can— The rats eat every thing they can catch—

Sun. 21st The men working as usual

¹ Old houses.

- Mon. 22nd The men working as usual
 Tues 23rd The men working as usual. fine weather
 Wed. 24th The men continue as usual
 Thurs. 25th All of the men of the Big house helps Lafreniere but not one will help Beison nor Bouché because they are too lazy
 Fri. 26th The men employed as usual
 Sat. 27th The saw and auger that I took from below are good— gave three M Amⁿ to the hunter who killed a Beav^r and a Cerf² but is too far and
 Sun. 28th The men working as usual—
 Mon. 29th The men at work as usual—
 Tues. 30th Weighed all the provisions 2960 Dry'd M^t 1000^{lb} P^d M^t 2100^{lb} Grease 1440^{lb} Depouilles³ and about 200^{lb} fresh M^t and about 500^{lb} that has been eat since we arrived here. I suppose the Bag Balls to weigh 80^{lb} —I traded 62 B^r Skins, 41 Green Sk^s 12 Orig⁴ and Bieche⁵ Sk^s 13 Buffloe skins. 2 Sk^s worth Pack Cords. Cantaras and Connoyé who were sent off with the Indians arrived saying that the Indians sent them to the Fort for fear of Starving for that there were no animals where they were going they returned all that I gave them excepting 4 Sk^s Tob. the hunter killed 6 Rabbits—
 Wed 1st Nov^r The hunter killed 2 Bieches gave him one M Powder—fine weather
 Thurs 2nd The M^t weighed 400^{lb}
 Fri 3rd The hunter went a hunting but Missed— gave him 1 piece Tob—
 Sat 4th The hunter missed on the Buffloe gave him 2 M Amⁿ
 Sun 5th The hunter killed a Buffloe
 Mon 6th The M^t weighed 540^{lb} Lafreniere is very sick— gave the hunter 1 p^s of Tob.
 Tues 7th Gagnon and the hunter and I went for swamp Tea but could not find any.
 Wed 8th Rained a little all Day—Lafreniere is very sick— I believe he fall in fits for there is times that he does not know

² The French Canadians used the French word for stag.

³ *Depouilles* referred to the back fat on the ribs between flesh and skin. /Thompson says "The fat of the Bison is of two qualities, called hard and soft; the former is from the inside of the animal, which when melted is called hard fat (properly grease), the latter is made from the large flakes of fat that lie on each side of the back bone, covering the ribs, and which is readily separated, and when carefully melted resembles Butter in softness and sweetness." David Thompson's *Narrative*, 434.

⁴ *Original* was the name commonly used for moose.

⁵ *La biche* of the French is the American elk, sometimes called the red deer.

what he is doing he Bites gives Blows, kicks and does every thing he can—

Thurs 9th Maniant and Cantaras went with the hunter a hunting and killed a she Buffloe— Maniant made a present of a gun to your Comrade— Maniant bought 1 phial of Gagnon for 20 [?] and Drank it.

Fri 10th The M^t weighed 580^{lb}

Sat 11th The men planted a flag staff of 55 feet long I gave them a Dram each and [they] begun to Drink 10 phials rum—

Sun 12th The men Drank a little of the rum that they hid last night—

Mon 13th Lafreniere begun to work at the snow Shoes and trains⁶ Gave 2 M Pow. to the hunter who killed 2 Biches

Tues 14th The M^t weighed 480^{lb} Bouche and Lefreniere had a Quarrel—

Wed 15th Covered the hangard with earth

Thurs 16th The hunter killed nothing

Fri 17th The hunter killed 5 Rabbits gave him 1 P^s Tobacco—

Sat 18th A young man arrived from the Indians on the other side and says [they] work very well for their C^{rs}. The Ice Drifts in the river— begun to be pretty Cold

Sun 19th The hunter killed nothing— Lafreniere says that there is some spirit that haunts him—

Mon 20th The Men melted part of the Depouilles into Grease— Beison and Maniant went for trains— The hunter sleeps out—

Tues 21st Lafreniere making trains

Wed 22nd Melted the rest of the Depouilles— The young man went away and traded 2½ Sk^s in M^t and B^t—

Thurs 23rd The Ice Drifts in the river—

Fri 24th There is no more fresh M^t in the hangard— gave 1 M. shot to the hunter—

Sat 25th The hunter killed 7 Rabbits

Sun 26th The hunter killed one he Buffloe

Mon 27th The M^t weighed 720^{lb}

Tues 27th for as I was looking over the Journal I found an error of one Day for I wrote that the month of Oct^r had 30 Days instead of 31. Weighed the Grease that was melted the other Day—560^{lb}

⁶ Sleds used to transport provisions and trading goods.

Wed 28th Gave 1 P^s Tob to the hunter. Snowed all Day a little— Dejardin Broke an ax.

Thurs 29th The hunter kills nothing

Fri 30th Connoye broke an ax— The hunter is gone a hunting B^r and sleeps out—

Sat 1st Dec^r The hunter and two Boys arrived from five lodges who are close by and who have already almost all their C^{rs}—They ask for rum but I refused them on account of its not being the custum—

Sun 2nd Traded 6½ Sk^s M^t and 4 in furs. Cantaras and Lafreniere went for a Dog belonging to Cantaras.

Mon 3rd Cantaras and Lafreniere arrived loaded with all sort of Provisions—Dejardin as his Comrade went to the Lodges gave him something to trade Grease but I told them that I hoped he should not trade any more—

Tues 4th The Company's Dog whom I had given to Gagnon for the winter hung himself and Dyed this Evening and after being Dead Gagnon through him on the river side and the men sent our simpleton Perriard to see if the Dog was come to life after seeing that the Dog was Dead—

Wed 5th D'Allair, Mondou and three Boys arrived from four Lodges who have almost all their C^{rs} made already and the Cigne⁷ told the Men to ask to trade rum but refused them. Gave them each a Dram and they drank 4 Phiols— The hunter killed a Bieche and wounded another— Gave him 1 P^s of Tobacco

Thurs 6th The M^t weighed 360^{lb}

Fri 7th D'Allair and Mondou set off to go to the Lodges gave 8 Sk^s C^{rs} to them and one small P^s of Tob for the Cigne who works very well— Sent the hunter for Tea with them and gave him 3 M Amⁿ

Sat 8th I forgot to mark that I got 60 Candles last Monday and Brunoche left one of the kettles out full of water and the water froze through and through and broke the kettle out of service

Sun 9th nothing Cold Weather

Mon 10th at the long last The Ice took about Daylight this morning

Tues 11th Brunoche and Gagnon went over on the other side of the river on the Ice to fire on an otter but missed it—

Wed 12th The hunter, D'Allair and Mandou arrived with 5

⁷ Cigne [*Cygne*] swan.

Beav^r which they killed coming along

Thurs 13th The hunter killed nothing

Fri 14th The hunter went a hunting but killed nothing—
Beison and Maniant made 40^{lb} Pemecan—

Sat 15th The hunter killed 1 Bieche

Sun 16th Beison and Maniant are set off with the Letters for Mr. F. Fort with the Letters^s and took 40^{lb} Pemecan, 10^{lb} Dried M^t 1 Gunflint, 1 firesteel and 8 p^r Shoes— The Cigne with 9 others arrived and paid 539 Sk^s B^r C^{rs}. as they worked so well and they have nothing to Drink I gave them 45 Sk^s C^{rs} in rum and they Drank what provisions they— The M^t weighed 480^{lb} and the hunter with L'homme Seul's son killed 2 Biches and 1 Buffloe

Mon 17th The Indians drank all night and traded 47 Sk^s B^r 30½ Sk^s B^r M^t 17½ Sk^s B^r Tails. 3 Sk^s Grease, 9½ Sk^s Castorum, 3 Orig. Sk^s, 1 Buffloe hide Dressed and 1 Green and gave 22 Sk^s C^{rs} to the hunter. The M^t weighed 1080^{lb} gave 3 Inches Tob. to smoak for nothing—

Tues 18th Gave out 210½ Skins B^r and 49 Sk^s M^t C^{rs} to the Indians and traded 8 Sk^s B^r and 6 D^o M^t— The Indians complains very much of the prices of the Goods here—

Wed 19th Lafreniere and Mandau went away with the rest of the Indians— gave him 4 M. Amⁿ as he is going to make provisions for his Woman and as he owes too much to charge him with it— The hunter killed two Buffloe— 1 small and 1 large — Snowed a little—

Thurs 20th The M^t weighed 680^{lb} gave the hunter 2 M. Amⁿ and 1 P^s Tob. and he is gone to sleep out— The Men went for M^t with their trains—

Fri 21st Brunoche caught a fox

Sat 22nd The hunter arrived but killed nothing— Gagnon cut his thumb very bad

Sun 23rd The hunter killed a he Buffloe

Mon 24th The M^t weighed 640^{lb} Snowed a little

Tues 25th Snowed a little to Day—

Wed 26th The hunter kills nothing

Thurs 27th Lafreniere arrived with a few provisions—

Fri 28th The hunter is gone a hunting and sleeps out—

Sat 29th The hunter arrived and killed 1 Bieche

Sun 30th The M^t weighed 340^{lb} The hunter killed 3 Biches

Mon 31st The M^t weighed 960^{lb}

Tues 1st Jan^y 1800 The men about Daylight fired a few Shots at my windows and came into my room and I gave them each a Couple of Drams and $\frac{1}{2}$ f^m Tob. each Spent in all about 5 pints Rum and 5 f^ms Tob—Connoyé and Cantaras fought together and the latter gave the first a p^r of Black Eyes and the best Drubbing that ever he got in his life— The men bought four phiols—

Wed 2nd D'Allair and the hunter is gone a hunting

Thurs 3rd The hunter killed 2 Biches— Beison and Maniant arrived with Letters gave them $\frac{1}{2}$ f^m Tob and I Dram each—

Fri 4th The M^t weighed 400^{lb} gave the hunter another Gun and 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ M. Amⁿ and 1 flint— this is only the third for it seems by the Letters that I am wrong—

Sat 4th The hunter is gone a hunting

Sun 5th The hunter killed 1 Buffloe

Mon 6th Four men are gone for the M^t of the Buffloe— made the Weight of the Packs 86^{lb}—

Tues 7th The M^t weighed 344^{lb}

Wed 8th Sent the hunter for Jimathush who is Close by to see if he will be willing to go and Discover the new Indians with a Couple of Frenchmen

Thurs 9th Jemathush arrived and paid 59 $\frac{1}{2}$ Sk^s B^r C^{rs}— asked hi mif he was willing to go and Discover The new Indains— he Directly said yes and that he would find them very quick— Two young men arrived from the Cigne's Band and says that the Indians has not made all their C^{rs} on acc^t of the Cigne's fy^r-in-Law's Death—

Fri 10th Sent the hunter with the other two to try and see if he could get a young man to go with Jimathush— gave him 1P^s of Tob. the Gauche arrived from other three Lodges to get 3 Sk^s Gunflints—

Sat 11th The Gauché set off—

Sun 12th Nothing

Mon 13th The hunter arrived and told us that he could not find a Young man to go and Discover the new nations

Tues 14th The hunter went a hunting gave him 3 M. Amⁿ and 1P^s of Tob

Wed 15th The hunter killed a she Buffloe and 2 Biches—

Thurs 16th The M^t weighed 1152^{lb} The hunter is gone a hunting—

Fri 17th The hunter arrived and told us that there was three Lodges coming to the Fort tomorrow. Gave him 1 P^s Tob. and 1 Steel Tob. Box on C^{rs}.

Sat 18th All the Indians arrived excepting four Lodges and paid 340½ Sk^s B^r C^{rs} and 45 D^o M^t and they began to Drink but not without saying that we took too much provisions for 1 Skⁿ

Sun 19th The Indians Drank all night and traded 29 B^r 886^{lb} half Dried M^t, 215^{lb} Grease— 129^{lb} P^d M^t— 12 Sk^s B^r tails— 258^{lb} Depouilles— 15 Tongues. 2 fresh B^r, 3 Coté de Boueffs⁹ 7 Green Skins 5 Dressed D^o 2 Sk^s Pack Cords 4 Sk^s Castorum 7 Nets and gave 45 Sk^s rum on C^{rs} to the hunter and 20 Sk^s worth to those who were to go and Discover the new Indians but now that they have Drunk they decline going.

Mon 20th Gave out 449½ Sk^s B^r C^{rs} and 50 Sk^s M^t old and new—

Tues 21st Asked the two Indians whether they intended to go with the frenchmen or not—they told us that it was too hard to go where they were through the Woods and that they were not able to find them for that they were so afraid of the Crees that they never stirred in the Winter time— so I gave them their C^{rs} (63 Sk^s) and told them to go with their Parents.

Wed 22nd Le Grand Vieux arrived and paid 49½ Sk^s B^r C^{rs} and gave out 33 Sk^s C^{rs}. Sent two men with Jimathush to visit a Boulogniere about 3 Days march from here— All the Indians are gone on the other side

Thurs 23rd Nothing

Fri 24th Two Boys arrived from the Indians that are not arrived and traded 1 Skⁿ Gunflint.

Sat 25th Lafreniere arrived and told us that if we wanted spunk there was plenty but for Bark there was none— We have had fine warm weather ever since the Ice is taken and hardly any Snow.

Sun 26th Lafreniere gave a new Gun for a Dog and I gave him 40 [illegible] for his own for the Comp^y— pretty Cold weather—

Mon 27th Gave about 4^{lb} Grease to Beison and D'Allair to make a kettle potash for themselves.

Tues 28th The hunter is not arrived

Wed 29th The hunter arrived with the two Frenchmen that

9 A buffalo hide.

I sent this morning for them gave him 4 M Amⁿ and 1 P^s Tob. to hunt.

Thurs 30th The hunter killed nothing

Fri 1st Feb^y The hunter killed nothing. Q. D. Comrade and the petit Renard arrived and paid 154 Sk^s B^r C^{rs}.

Sat 2nd Traded 57 Sk^s Beaver and gave out 84 Sk^s B^r C^{rs}— Snowed a little—

Sun 3rd Q. D. Comrade and Renard says that they must go to the other Fort for the hunter of the other Fort asks them to go there. I kept a little Boy here with the hunter in order to encourage and keep him Comp^y— he kills nothing gave him 1 P^s Tob—

Mon 4th The hunter is gone a hunting.

Tues 5th Cold Weather

Wed 6th The hunter arrived and killed a she Buffloe— Weighed all the furs which weigh 27 Packs in all— Brunoche asked me to allow him to make a kettle potash after he having had ½ a kettle from me so he went away grumbling and saying that every [all] he asked from me I refused but he does remember to have asked me two Sk^s for the Loan of a kettle to go Down with the Letters and to have taken two P^r of Shoes instead of one that he lent when I sent the Men for Bark—

Thurs 7th The hunter went a hunting but killed nothing— Sent four men for the M^t—

Fri 8th The hunter is gone a hunting— gave him 3 M. Amⁿ — The Powder is good for nothing— The M^t weighed 430^{lb}—

Sat 9th Le Marie Des Deux Jolie femme arrived and paid 51 Sk^s C^{rs} and traded 6. The hunter arrived but killed nothing—

Sun 10th Traded 26 B^r for Goods and 16 Sk^s Provisions for rum. 2 Coté de Boeuffs 1 Bieche Sk. Gave the hunter 5 Sk^s rum on C^{rs} and asked more as I refused him he took all his things in order to set off tomorrow

Mon 11th The hunter was going to set off with his parents but as I called him back he told me he was willing to stay so I gave him 1 P^s Tob. and 3 M. Amⁿ and sent him a hunting for a Couple of Days—

Tues 12th nothing— Cold Weather.

Wed 13th Lafreniere working at the trains

Thurs 14th Brunoche caught a red fox

Fri 15th The hunter arrived and killed 2 she Buffloe

Sat 16th Eight men are gone for the two Buffloe and the

hunter killed a she Buffloe

Sun 17th Gave 1 P^s of Tob. to the hunter who killed another she Buffloe— The M^t weighed 1040^{lb}

Mon 18th The M^t of the two last Buffloe weighed 880^{lb}
Gave 1 P^s Tob. 1 M. Pow and 14 Balls Gave 15 [?] for a Dog to Cantaras—

Tues 19th The hunter is gone a hunting

Wed 20th The hunter arrived but killed nothing—

Thurs 21st The hunter did not go a hunting

Fri 22nd The hunter went a hunting but killed nothing—

Sat 23rd The hunter went a hunting but killed nothing—
the Snow melts of¹⁰ the houses—

Sun 24th The hunter killed a he Buffloe—

Mon 25th The M^t weighed 324^{lb} — as the women went for herb the hunter went a hunting in order to get a fould of them as we suppose for as Gagnon went with them he met the hunter who was coming to meet the Women

Tues 26th The Cote de Boeuffs are so bad that I was obliged to get a Couple cut to make shoes for the Men that are going for Bark—

Wed 27th The men made a Taureux¹¹ to set off tomorrow for the lower Fort and arranged themselves—

Thurs 28th Sent Maniant, Cantaras and Connoy for Bark and the Letters gave them a Dram each— The hunter is gone a hunting gave him 1P^s Tob.

Fri 1st March The hunter arrived and killed 2 Buffloes

Sat 2nd The M^t weighed 880^{lb} got a Cote de Boeufs and 1 Bieche Skⁿ cut into Shoes for the men that are going on the other side of the portage

Sun 3rd The men made about 60^{lb} Taureaux for their Voyage—

Mon 4th Beison, D'Allair and the hunter set off to go on the other side of the portage gave them for their Voyage 16 M. Amⁿ 1 Skⁿ Tob. 2 needles 2 awls 2 Gun worms 3 Gun flints 15 P^r Shoes and about 70^{lb} Taureaux and a Dram each

Tues 5th Two young men arrived from the Cignes Band (9 lodges) about 2 Days from here—

Wed 6th The Indians traded 5 Skins and gave them 6 Sk^s C^{rs} and 1 foot Tob, for nothing to give to the Cigne—

¹⁰ Off.

¹¹ Taureux [*Taureaux*] Buffalo raw hides, cut and made up in bags, containing pemmican.

Thurs 7th nothing. Snowing

Fri 8th nothing

Sat 9th Beison, D'Allair and the hunter arrived saying that they could not go further than the Portage for the river is as Clear of Ice as in the middle of summer but they seen the place of two Lodges that remained in the middle of the Portage a long time as it seems and Beison thinks that they are some of the Indians that Mr. Finlay seen two years ago¹²— Gave them a Dram—

Sun 10th Nothing. gave the hunter 2 M. Amⁿ

Mon 11th the hunter killed 3 Buffloe

Tues 12th The M^t of two Buffloe weighed 804^{lb}. The hunter sleeps out

Wed 13th The M^t of the other Buffloe weighed 450^{lb}—

Thurs 14th fine weather

Fri 15th Snowing all Day

Sat 16th The hunter killed nothing for ever since he is gone from here he has been with three Lodges who are starving Close by here for their Laziness.

Sun 15th For it seems by the Letters that arrived to Day from the Lower Fort that I am two Days wrong so instead of the 17th it is the 15th. Cardinal and the three men who went of from here arrived with Bark for two Canoes gave them a Dram each.

Mon 16th The hunter killed a he Buffloe

Tues 17th The M^t weighed 450^{lb}. Cardinal split wood for Varangues¹³ and the first made an Etrave¹⁴

Wed 18th Lafreniere made 17 Varangues and Cardinal made 10 and split more.

Thurs 19th Lafreniere made 21 Varangues and Cardinal made 40 Lices¹⁵ and 9 Varangues— It is very well for us that Lafreniere is here to help him for if he did not we would not I believe set off from here this for I never saw such a lazy fellow and he does not know a P^s of wood that works or splits well—

Fri 20th The hunter killed 2 Biches— Lafreniere made 21 Varangues and Cardinal finished the Lices of a Canoe

Sat 21st The M^t weighed 434^{lb} Lafreniere made the Var-

¹² Both Simon Fraser and John Stuart, writing at Rocky Mountain House in 1805-06, mention the voyage of James Finlay in 1797 west of the portage, and state that he went nearly to the source of the Parsnip River.

¹³ Varangues are the ribs of a canoe made from hard wood.

¹⁴ Etrave (naut.) stem.

¹⁵ Lices [lisses] strakes of wood-work about a birch-bark canoe.

angues of a Canoe and Cardinal made 9 Varangues and 2 Etraves—

Sun 22nd as the hunter told us this morning that he was sick and that he wanted to go with his parents so I sent away and lent him a Gun

Mon 23rd Lafreniere split Maitres and made 18 Varangues and Cardinal split 57 Lices

Tues 24th Lafreniere made 21 Varangues and Cardinal only split the Lices of a Canoe as he was sick—

Wed 25th Lafreniere finished the Varangues of both the Canoes and made 1 Etrave and Cardinal finished the Lices of both the Canoes. as the Dryed M^t was beginning to spoil I got a gris made so as to Dry it—

Thurs 26th Cardinal began a Gabari.¹⁶ Lafreniere made 1 Etrave and squared maitres— Brunoche Dryed some of the M^t.

Fri 27th rained and snowed a little to Day— Brunoche Dryed the rest of the M^t and Cardinal finished his Gabari and went in the woods for wood for Planchets¹⁷

Sat 28th Lafreniere and Cardinal made four Planchets and squared a Couple of Maitres. Brunoche instead of arranging the hangard after having Dryed the M^t went to visit his traps—

Sun 29th Seen two Bustards this morning. three young men arrived and traded 4 Sk^s Tob. for B^r and went off directly— told them to tell their parents that instead of remaining at Lac Du Brochet doing nothing to come to the Fort as fast as they could—

Mon 30th Brunoche went and rose about 3 f^{ms} Bark for a Canoe. Sauteux, Cardinal and Lafreniere made Maitres for both the Canoes and squared them— fine weather.

Tues 31st Brunoche rose 4½ f^m Bark— Lafreniere, D'Allair and Maniant squared the Lices. Cardinal with the men made the Bed for the Canoes and made Lices— Got all the B^r tails put to Dry and Boiled— a young man arrived and traded 1 Skⁿ Tob and went off saying that his parents will come after tomorrow—

Wed 1st April All the Indians arrived and paid 542 Sk^s B^r C^{rs} and begun to drink— Spoke to the Cigne and his parents to cloth the Cigne but when I offered it to him he refused and told me to give it to L'Homme Seul for that he was the most proper in the Band but when I told them that since they re-

¹⁶ Gabari [Gabarit] naut. the frame-timber of a canoe.

¹⁷ Planchets [Planchettes] were small boards for flooring the canoe.

fused the Cigne that they should not have any Chief till next winter— gave them 5 Sk^s rum and 1 foot Tob. for nothing.

Thurs 2nd The Indians traded 22 Sk^s Dried M^t 18 D^o half Dried M^t 5 D^o Depouilles— 13 Sk^s P^d M^t 16 D^o Grease 12 D^o B^r Tails and smoaked B^r 8 B^r Sk^s 5 D^o Cords and nets 1 Cote de Boeuff Dressed 14 D^o Green 4 Green Sk^s 1 Skⁿ Dressed 2 Sk^s Tongues and Bosses¹⁸— 36 Sk^s paid to the hunter. it Blowed so hard that Gagnon and myself was very near being killed by the head of a tree that wind broke and came to fall on my room—

Fri 3rd Brunoche went and rose Bark and I sent four men to rise Bark for the Dried M^t and Cardinal and myself gave out 593 Sk^s B^r and 98 D^o M^t and they asked me to trade the rest of the rum which was so little that I allowed them so as to send them off contented and to encourage them to work well this summer— They traded 14 Cote de Boeuffs Green, 3 Dressed D^o 8 Sk^s M^t and 35 Sk^s Iron works old— Lafreniere made 1 keg Gum—

Sat 4th All the Indians went off— made 33 P^s Dried M^t and arranged the Hangard—

Sun 5th Nothing fine weather

Mon 6th Bouché mended his old Canoe. Cardinal and the others made the Bed and went for Stones for the Canoes— Cold weather

Tues 7th made 22 Packs and pressed 15 and made a new press for the men Broke the old one before they begun— Cardinal made the Maitres for the little Canoe. Sauteux and [?] went in the woods for Varangues and slept the most part of the Day—

Wed 8th made the rest of the Packs which amounts to 40 Packs— I found myself short of Cords for the Packs for I was obliged to borrow 5 Collets¹⁹ from Bouché—

Thurs 9th Cardinal with the other men made one Canoe to Day— The Ice works away very fast and will soon go off for Perriard almost Drowned himself going for water— There is a great [many] musketos already for we cannot sleep.

Fri 10th Lafreniere and D'Allair Blowed the Canoe that was made Yesterday and Cardinal begun the other— fine Day— The Ice works hard— the fresh M^t begins to spoil in the hangard already—

¹⁸ Bosse, the hump of the buffalo.

¹⁹ Collets [Collier] the carrying strap made of a strong piece of stiff tanned leather.

Sat 11th finished and Blowed the last Canoe— Gagnon and Connoyé fought for a setting tool— the last gave a Black eye to the first and is the weakest for the other does not know how to fight—

Sun 12th The men did not work to Day as it is one of their greatest Days in the year²⁰ The Ice moved below the little and stoped above—

Mon 13th Cardinal began to band a Canoe and the others mended Beison's Canoe and Gumed Bouche's— Put the D^r M^t to Dry— The Ice Drifted all Day.

Tues 14th Snowed and rained all Day so hard that it was impossible to work at the Canoes— Got all the Depouilles melted and 20 Taureauxs Pemecan. 27 P^s Grease— 2 P^s B^r Tails— 1 P^s Castorum— The Ice Drifting very thick in the river—

Wed 15th Cold weather— Banded a Canoe and finished guming Bouche's Canoe as it was too Cold to gum or Band any other Canoe—

Thurs 16th The men gumed Beison's Canoe and wanted to begin the new Canoe but it was impossible on account of the weather for it Blowe— snowed, rained and hailed— Cardinal began to Band the last Canoe but left it. The river is Clear of Ice to Day only—

Fri 17th Cardinal finished Banding the last Canoe and made a Canoe Sauteux and the others gumed the other Canoes— the women made a Lodge— fine weather in the morning and bad in the afternoon.

Sat 18th Sent two Canoes with 33 P^s each Beison and Cardinal as their Canoes were ready, and I remained here till tomorrow morning with Lafreniere whose Canoe was not gumed but now is ready to set off tomorrow with 4 men in each Canoe to overtake the others who are but two per Canoe—Took an account of all the property remaining here— I leave Brunoche 2½ P^s Dried M^t 30^{lb} P^d M^t 24^{lb} Grease and 32 B^r Tails for provisions as the Indians will be two months without coming to the Fort—

Sun 19th Set off about sunrise and marched till towards noon and overtook Cardinal and Beison who were Degraded²¹ by the Ice in an Island and so we were obliged to encamp and remain here to Sleep but the worst of the affair is that Cardinal

20 An error in the date. April 13, 1800, was Easter Sunday.

21 "Degraded" is a voyageur's term used whenever stopped on their journey by unfavorable weather.

Broke his Canoe in the Ice and wet all his Packs and P^s but it is impossible for us to unload the Canoes here to Dry the Packs—

Mon 20th In the course of this night the watered lowered so fast that the Canoes almost overset and Beison lost 1 Pack and 1 P^s Grease that fell of of his Canoe into the river and the current is so strong that both [omitted] and Bouché lost for about 200^{lb} Merchandise 3 Orig^l 80 P^r Large and small shoes and so we set [off] this morning and came about $\frac{1}{2}$ a league and overtook the Ice again and put ashore and Dryed the Packs and tyed the P^s Dryed M^t and unloaded the Canoes for I do not expect to set off from here till after tomorrow— Cardinal went a hunting and killed 2 Biches and the men will go for them tomorrow—

Tues 21st