

DAVID THOMPSON'S JOURNEYS IN THE PEND OREILLE COUNTRY

This is the second of three journals kept by David Thompson, fur trader and explorer, the first white man yet known to have traveled down the Pend Oreille River in the states of Idaho and Washington. The first was printed in this *Quarterly* in January, 1932, and these are the first publications ever made of these journals. David Thompson spent the winter of 1809-10 at a newly erected trading post on Thompson Prairie, a few miles above Thompson Falls, on the Clark Fork River, Montana. James McMillan, an efficient associate in the North West Company, was with him, and Finan McDonald remained in charge of Kullyspell House on Pend Oreille Lake. These three were the only white men now known to have been resident in this entire Pacific Northwest that winter. In the spring of 1810, Thompson and McMillan, with the furs they had gathered, descended the river in canoes to Kullyspell House where the skins obtained at both trading posts were prepared for carriage to Fort William on Lake Superior. In packs of ninety pounds each these represented a shipment of about two tons.

Waterways were the arteries of trade in those days and Thompson was still hopeful of finding a water route to the Columbia by way of the Pend Oreille, which would be more direct and less arduous than the Kootenai River route by which he came. There is no record of exploration of the upper Columbia before 1810 but this journal strongly suggests that some one had, for Thompson already knew where it flowed and of the existence of Kettle Falls. So he decided to make another examination of the river below the lake, and, leaving instructions for the first two loaded canoes to meet him at a place agreed upon (Sineacateen), took his departure from Kullyspell House on April 24th, 1810.

The first obstruction in the river below the lake is the falls where the Great Northern Railway crosses a few miles east of Newport, correctly designated as Albeni Falls. This name attached about the time the railroad was built from that of Albeni Poirier, who then resided just below the falls on land settled before survey in 1887. Mr. Poirier's early home was in the province of Quebec whence he migrated, first to Wisconsin and then to Idaho. The name, frequently corrupted or misspelled, is a curious perpetuation of the French nomenclature of the river.

In the first journal of this series mention was made of a tribe called "Greenwood Indians." Use of that name by Alexander Henry in his journal (Vol. II page 712) in his chapter on the "ethnography" of the trans-mountain region has been called to mind. This chapter was written by Henry prior to March, 1811. The Indians are the Nez Perces. No such tribal name was again mentioned by Thompson in his travels, or had been by Lewis and Clark in 1805-6. Evidently it was a misnomer.

This journal contains the first known reference to what now is Sand Point, Idaho. It also illustrates Thompson's wonderful power of observation and ability to estimate distances. His travel from Newport to the Box Canon by the river was fifty-five miles. The Milwaukee railroad now parallels the river with a mileage practically the same

Thompson again traveled down the Pend Oreille in June, 1811, and his journal at that time will complete the series.

David Thompson's Journal

1810, *April 24th Tuesday*¹ A very fine Day Obsd sun Lt 108°-43 ½' Latde 48-12-38N close enough Good Sent Le bon Vieux & Michel to buy a Canoe of Pine Bark for the voyage which was mended & brought to be traded at 3¾ PM paid 7 Skins value for it we Got ready & at 4*-5' PM set off Co N 65 W ⅓ M N 70 W 4½ M N 86 W ½ M west 5 M² [L-35 or 45] + ¼ M 7 PM S 45 W 2 M 7 ½ PM when we turned a point of Sand & put up at 7-35 PM having passed the Lake in a fine Calm Thank Heaven there is yet very much Snow on the Shores & even a little Ice on the Lake, tho it was never even half froze over for 24 Hours during the whole winter the Snow appears deep in the woods Very few wild Fowl, say none.

April 25th Wednesday A fine frosty Night & very fine Day Observed. At 7 ½ AM set off Co S 43 W 3 ½ M 8 ½ AM Co S 72 W ⅓ N 86 W 3M S 36 W ¾ M hitherto all the distances have been estimated by the watch the rest are by the Eye S 12 E ⅓ M S 2 E 1 M S 18W 1 ½ M S 17 E 1 M + ½ M So ¼ S 20 W 1 M at beg of Co Obsvd for Latde 169° 24 ¾' G Varn 18° E good at 10' PM set off Co + ⅓ M S 19 W ¼ M S 58 W ½ M opposite end of Co the Skeetshoo Rivulet³ of 15 yds wide Co

¹ At Kullyspell House near Memaloose Point on Pend Oreille Lake.

² These figures are obscure but seem to refer to the hour of the day.

³ Hoodoo Creek; northerly end of trail to the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Rivers.

+ 1 M + 1 M + $\frac{2}{3}$ M + 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ M S 80 W $\frac{1}{4}$ S 88 W $\frac{1}{2}$ M N 74 W $\frac{1}{3}$ M N 50 W 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ M S 80 W $\frac{1}{3}$ M S 80 W 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ M S 66 W 1 M R. West 1 M R. west 1 M S 53 W $\frac{1}{3}$ M N 78 W 1 M to the Falls⁴ carry on the mid of the Islet 20 yds then Co S 55 W $\frac{1}{2}$ M Camped at 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ PM⁵ A little to the left of where we carried, when the Water is high there is a Portage Killed 5 Ducks 1 Goose missed several shots, one at a Chevrul & lost a wounded Beaver 3 Eggs found of a Goose the Day I left Saleesh House The angling place is at the P+ (?) of the Portage Islet.⁶

April 26th Thursday A frosty Night to Ice very fine Day At 7 AM set off Co S 88W $\frac{3}{4}$ M put ashore & Obsd for Longde & Time At 7 35 AM set off Co N 72 W $\frac{1}{4}$ M N 50 W $\frac{1}{2}$ it is somewhere I think in this Co where I obsd for Latde last Septr. N 30 W 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ M N 50 W $\frac{1}{3}$ N 80 W $\frac{1}{2}$ N 50 W $\frac{3}{4}$ + 1 M S 86 W 1 M + 1 M N 86 W 1 M + 1 M S 72 W $\frac{1}{3}$ S 40 W $\frac{1}{3}$ S 50 W $\frac{1}{4}$ S 70 W $\frac{1}{3}$ + $\frac{1}{4}$ S 85 W $\frac{1}{5}$ N 88 W $\frac{1}{6}$ N 80 W $\frac{1}{4}$ N 67 W $\frac{1}{5}$ N 60 W $\frac{1}{6}$ N 52 W $\frac{1}{4}$ N 40 W 1 M end of Co⁷ met Indians traded a Bag of Roots for 12 In of Tob & gave 10 Inches Obsd for Latde 109° 54' VG 17° East variation VG embarked Co N 40 W $\frac{3}{4}$ N 27 W 1 M + $\frac{1}{2}$ M Co N 55 W 1 M + 1 M near beg of Co came to 2 Tents of Kullyspels engaged a Guide who embarked with us traded 2 Cakes of Moss & Root Bread & a few boiled Roots staid 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Hours & set off Co N 20 W 1 M end of Co where I camped last Octr on my return. Co N 12 W $\frac{1}{2}$ M + 3 M + $\frac{1}{2}$ M N 22 W $\frac{1}{2}$ M + 2 M at 6-10 PM camped⁸ having thank Heaven killed 1 Crane 13 Geese & 1 Duck there are a few Flocks of small Geese but by no means the 1/10 part of what was last Fall.

April 27th Friday A fine light cloudy morning At 6-35 AM set off Co N 26 W 1 M N 30 W 1 M N 12 W $\frac{1}{4}$ M N 2 E $\frac{1}{6}$ N 25 E $\frac{1}{4}$ N 34 E 1 M + $\frac{1}{2}$ M N 15 W 1 M + $\frac{1}{4}$ N 40 W 2 M N 70 W 1 $\frac{1}{5}$ M N 15 W 1 M N 40 W $\frac{1}{2}$ N 85 W 1 M + 1 M N 20 W 2 M N 50 W 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ M N 12 W 1 M N 37 W 1 M + $\frac{3}{4}$ M N 35 W 1 M N 50 W 1 M N 72 W 1 M N 13 E $\frac{1}{2}$ M end of Co put ashore & obsd for Latde 109° 40 $\frac{3}{4}$ ' VG 19 Est variation VG North $\frac{1}{3}$ N 52 W 1 M + $\frac{1}{2}$ M N 25 W $\frac{1}{4}$ N 15 W $\frac{1}{2}$ M N 42 W 1 M + $\frac{1}{3}$ M N 5 E $\frac{1}{2}$ N 33 W 1 M N 32 E $\frac{5}{6}$ N 22

4 Albeni Falls.

5 On the Poirier land at foot of the falls.

6 The bridge of the Great Northern Railway now uses these islands.

7 Near Dalkena (?)

8 Near Cusick (?)

W $\frac{1}{4}$ N 30 W $\frac{1}{3}$ N 42 W $\frac{1}{4}$ end of Co came to where the River is very narrow & bounded on each side by very high perpend Craigs, here are strong rushes of Current & whirlpools with small Falls⁹. We put ashore at 2-25 PM to examine the Country & see what could be done we went up on the left side a high steep Bank of Rock & Earth we then went thro thick small woods along the sides & shelves of Hills &c abt N 60 W 1 M almost all the way up to the middle in Snow in many places for a few steps it bore us & we then sank down so as to be obliged to haul ourselves out on all fours or by the branches of the Trees having crossed the Portage we had a steep Bank to go down, from here I surveyed the Country before me a bold range of high snowy Mountains bounded the left Side of the River came down to the waters Side in rude Craigs the right side was of high elevated Hills of Rocks & ranged away thus to a vast distance My new Guide who once been here pointed out the Country to us Abt 3 M below us was a Fall¹⁰ this would be passed abt 5 M this was a steep high Fall as the height of a large Tree but could not be approached in this season. the Snow was by far too deep in the mid of Summer he told us, they left their Canoes a little distce this Side the Fall & by Hands & Feet got along the steep Rocks to the Fall beyond which no Indians ever penetrate, except a few to gather Red Ochre which is very fine & in plenty among the Mountains, but the Road he described as highly dangerous & passable only to light active men & they obliged to go on hands & Feet up the steep Craigs, which he assured us was continued for distance of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ days March beyond the Great Fall. here they (illegible) on the Columbia which down to its Junction with the Spokane River is little else but terrible Cataracts bounded on each side by high Craigs & is quite unnavigable Those who voyage this Way make a long Portage into a small River¹¹ which runs nearly parallel to the Columbia & falls into it on the North Side below the Cataract¹² but this River¹³ is said to be impracticable to us altho so near the Great Falls, yet he assured us we would take near a whole day to go there including the Portage we were on this is easily credible, as this portage alone would have taken us near 4 Hours. Attentively surveying the Country & considering all the mass of Information I had collected from a variety of Indians, I concluded that we must abandon

9 Box Canon below Ione.

10 Metaline Falls.

11 Colville River.

12 Kettle Falls on the Columbia.

13 By way of the Kootenai River, source of the Columbia and Howse Pass across the Rocky Mountains.

all thoughts of this way & return, please Heaven, by our old Road till future opportunity shall point out some more eligible which I very much doubt. at 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ PM set out on our return & pray Heaven to protect & prosper us in the Journey we now undertake. Amen. Went on till 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ PM when we put up where I obsd for Latde. Killed 1 swan 1 Crane 2 Geese & found 16 Goose Eggs. the Cranes are fat there is in many places very much Snow along the Beach & very much every where in the woods.

April 28th Saturday A very fine day. At 7 AM embarked & kept on till 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ PM when we put ashore & made a kettle of meat staid 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ Hour & set off held on till 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ PM when we camped on the right Side abt 1 M below the place we camped April 26th.

April 29th Sunday A very fine day strong head wind the most part of the day. At 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ AM set off & abt $\frac{1}{3}$ M above where we camped April 26th on the opposite side obsd for Long & Time. We then went on & about $\frac{1}{3}$ M above the western projecting point of Sand & Gravel a little above the Tents I obsd for Latde. Killed 2 Geese & 1 Duck Traded 2 Bags of Roots & 1 of Moss Bread 5 Carp & paid our Guide whom we now left 2 ft of Tob 1 large Knife 1 small do Paid for Roots &c 4 small Knives 8 In of Tob at 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ PM put up.

April 30th Monday A day of very variable weather frequent showers of Rain & very heavy high wind the Evening moderately fine. At 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ AM set off Michel very ill at 10 AM passed the Fall¹⁴ head wind at 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ PM came to the Brook¹⁵ of Aquilae Obsd. here I found Beaulieu & Boisverd splitting out wood fired 2 shots & they came when I informed them of the necessity of rising Birch Rind & they get ready for the Morrow about an Hour after the 2 Canoes arrived loaded with Furrs from the Lake I gave them a good Meal of swan, Geese & Roots & informed them of the impossibility of passing by this River. Killed 1 Duck. Boisverd is very ill, having been ruptured by a violent Fall from a Horse 3 days ago, & his foot hanging in the Stirrup the Horse hauled him a considerable distance before he could be extricated he has thrown up much blood which has relieved him considerably.

May 1st Tuesday. A fine Day, but strong wind, mostly behind, having given orders & seen all the men off to raise Birch Rind at 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ AM set off & held on till 5 PM when we put ashore in the

¹⁴ Albeni Falls again.

¹⁵ Hoodoo Creek (Sineacateen).

Lake, at the beg of the Co that leads to the sandy Point of the River, here¹⁶ we put ashore & made kettle while the waves subsided have had enough of them all day. At 6 PM set off & held on till 9 1/2 PM when thank Heaven we crossed the Lake & camped close to the House on the Island.¹⁷

T. C. ELLIOTT.

16 A few miles west of Sand Point.

17 One of the islands near Memaloose Point.