

DAVID THOMPSON'S JOURNEYS IN THE SPOKANE COUNTRY

On the 25th day of March, 1812, at Spokane House, near the present city of Spokane the stock of furs that had been gathered during the previous year in trade with the Indians and free hunters of what is now Northwestern Montana, Northern Idaho and North-eastern Washington was being prepared for shipment to Fort William on Lake Superior. Spokane House was a trading post of the North-West Company of Montreal and the gentlemen (bourgeois or partners) of the Company in charge of the business in the Columbia River district were David Thompson and John George McTavish, the former of Welsh and the latter of Scotch descent. Mr. McTavish had been at the House all winter and David Thompson had arrived only the day before from Saleesh House in Montana (See this Quarterly for October, 1918).

The earlier publications in this series have indicated the usual route traveled up to that time—between Spokane House and the Columbia River at Kettle Falls, a distance of at least seventy miles overland. This was the road traveled at this time also, but before using it Mr. Thompson seems to have had in mind building boats or canoes at Spokane House or a little further down and traveling down the Spokane River to the Columbia, it being the practice of the fur traders to travel by water whenever possible. He therefore sent a man to examine the falls in the river below the House, (where the Long Lake dam of the Washington Water Power Company has since been built) and other men to report on cedar timber said to be growing at some distance. He himself on the morning of the 27th followed, evidently with men and tools to saw out the boards for canoes. Cedar timber is not plentiful in the Spokane country, and his search for it was not a success, but this excursion carried him eastward to within a mile or two of Post Falls on the Spokane River. The details of this journey are given in the journal entries now printed, but the entries covering the journey from Spokane House to Kettle Falls are omitted, being largely repetition of what has already been given.

It has been remarked in these articles that David Thompson was one of the most remarkable men whose name is connected with the Columbia River. The only book that contains an adequate account of the career of this man is "David Thompson's Narrative," published by the Champlain Society of Toronto in 1915. In that narra-

tive Mr. Thompson states (p. 556) that their party left Kettle Falls for Athabasca Portage or Pass on the 22nd of April, 1812, in six canoes, carrying in all one hundred and twenty-two packs of furs weighing ninety pounds to the pack, in addition to three hundred pounds of provisions and five men in each canoe. This then is the record of the original shipment of merchantable product direct from the Spokane country to the markets of the civilized world. These furs reached London by way of Montreal. Mr. McTavish accompanied the party as far as the Athabasca Pass and perhaps further.

This contribution completes the series entitled David Thompson's Journeys in the Spokane Country. In August, 1812, a large party of men of the Pacific Fur Company (John Jacob Astor) arrived from the mouth of the Columbia River and began the erection of a rival trading post about one-quarter mile from Spokane House. Of that enterprise we have several published accounts, but these journal entries of David Thompson furnish the original record of travel and trade in the Spokane country.

T. C. ELLIOTT.

JOURNAL OF DAVID THOMPSON, MARCH 25-29, 1812

March 25

Wednesday. A cloudy cold stormy day, from the west d. In Morn'g. froze & a little snow. Sent off Michel on a journey to the Columbia Falls¹ & with him Coté & Deleau. to search for birch rind & bring what they find, if good to the Falls. An Indian to go with Methode to visit the Cedar said to be abt 25 m. hence, but altho' spoke to yesterday at noon, cannot be got to find his horses yet. Sent Tobacco by an old Shawpatin² & 2 others to the Tribe in general to cross the Mountains to the Saleesh Indians.

March 26

Thursday. 6 a. m. 16-W-tly. 11½, Cloudy. 2 P. M. 30-N.W.ly 2 Cloudy. Men sent for horses did not arrive till 4¼ p. m., too late to set off. At noon sent 2 lads to examine the Cedar said to be at a small lake³ on our road.

March 27

Friday. 6 a. m. 26— Moderate snow 2 In. deep. Calm. At 11½ a. m. ceased. the rest of the day mild fine weather. Eastly wind ¼. at 8½ a. m. set off with 4 horses, 3 for Baggage and Provisions. At 3 p. m. came to the camp⁴ at the parting of the Roads in the

¹ Where Long Lake dam now is; but perhaps Kettle Falls.

² Nez Perce Indian.

³ Probably Newman Lake, near the road he traveled on March 23rd.

⁴ Near the Antoine Plante place, where he camped the night of March 23rd.

Great Plain, baited 1 1-3 hours. found part of a Chevrul, that a man had hung up, which had been run down by the wolves. 19½ S. M., say 15½ G. M., set off at 4-20, held on to 5½ p. m. & put up at a rill.⁵ one of our horses knocked up. here the lads came to us, they saw only a few useless small Cedars. we have therefore lost our time & must now turn to the Columbia.

March 28

Saturday. A cloudy windy Mornng. Set the pt. of the Skeetshoo⁶ River, at the sortie of the Lake,⁶ as we think, N. 72 E 10 m. Here a pt. stretches to the Northd., the hills to the eastd. bend round to the S. Ed. & it is said the end of the Lake is somewhere abt. E. S. Ed. of us. The Skeetshoo River runs nearly parallel with the road, formg. from hence an L. of abt. 20° to the Sortie from the Lake, abt. S. 35 E. 1½ m. from us is a Fall.⁷ MM. Co. to the Camp⁸ S. 80 W. 2 m. At camp⁸ turn N.W. up the Banks, then hold on a little, see the Hills of the at the Ho.⁸ of Trout Brook, they bear due S. 87 W. 16 m. by walking. These Hills run abt. N.N.W. by the Compass to the Saleesch River.⁹ The Horse Plains formd a deep Bay to the right, beyond which, abt. 15 m., a ridge of Hills near perpend. to the first stretch, & these are soon hid from the view by those from the Plain we left, which are now abt. 3 m. dist. & wind along shutting in the Horse Plains on the right at an L of W.N.W. many isolated Knowls &c. Cranes, Frogs, & Rooks to-day, the latter 6 days ago. Willows budding, Grass turning a lively green; in the afternoon the men arrived & directly sent them off, they slept about ¼ m. below the Forks of the Trout Brook¹⁰ with the Skeetshoo River, camped with them.

March 29

Sunday. A sharp mornng., ther. 18°. Early set off 6:38 a. m. went to the top of the Bank,¹¹ here I set the Co. to the Ho. S. 55 E. 1½ m. The Skeetshoo River passg. the Ho. runs to the north to the meetg. of the Trout Brook, then bends round to the westd. & So.d. to due South, & round the Pt. no Hills to be seen to the southd. & eastd. but bold woody land; from the north end of the Pt. I set the Co. up the Hills over the bottom & to the bend of the Defile we take on the top of do. is N. 36 W. then turns. to the W.N.Wd. Co. from

⁵ This camp close to the Washington-Idaho boundary line. The next morning he goes a little distance toward Post Falls before starting back.

⁶ His name for the Spokane River but really for the Coeur de Alene Lake and tribe.

⁷ Post Falls.

⁸ Spokane House. He is now on the ridge between the Spokane River and Peone Prairie.

⁹ The Pend d'Oreille River.

¹⁰ The Little Spokane River.

¹¹ The camp was about ¼ mile below the mouth of Little Spokane River and he climbed the hill north of the camp for these observations.

So. end of Pt. to north do N. 53 W. 5 m., then N. 36 W. $1\frac{1}{2}$ to Rill,¹² where we baited at the foot of the Hills at 9:48 a. m. Men on foot walked well, here the River goes off abt. due So. 5 m., at which Pt. the Falls¹³ is said to be. At 10.55 a. m. set off, at 1 1-3 p. m. at the partg. Roads for roots &c., Co. has been N. 36 W. 3 m., all rising hill, Co. N. 80 or 70 W. 3 m. to the wet Plain. Co. to the Pt. of Hill from the right N. 80 W. 1 m. Met Michel & La Course, from whom I had a Goose, abt. the size of a large stock Duck, the whole species is of this size. Turn N. 30 W. 1 m. to the Brook,¹⁴ beneath a Bank. 2 p. m. here we baited. The Brook comes from the Marsh & Hills to the left and runs S.E.d, then winds round to the Wtd., at 3.5 p. m. set off, at 4-3/4 crossed the bold Brook, at 5 p. m. recrossed the do., kept along it sometimes within view to 5.45 p. m., when we camped at a small rill, our Co. has been N. 30 W. $3\frac{1}{2}$ G. M. to the Brook, this comes from the Hills N.Ed., held on by 3 small Ponds of Water all still frozen, snow in places, Co. N. 30 W $\frac{3}{5}$ m., recrossed the Brook, held on N. 30 W. $1-\frac{3}{4}$ m. to a Rile at which we camped. An Ilthkoyape Indian came along with us, he shared of our fare.

¹² At Tuntum.

¹³ Long Lake Dam.

¹⁴ Chimakaine Creek, which they crossed and recrossed a little later.

¹⁵ Note No. 6 at page 287 of this quarterly should have read Twin Lakes insteda of Spirit Lake.