

## DAVID THOMPSON'S JOURNEYS IN THE SPOKANE COUNTRY

The record given herewith of a part of David Thompson's trip in the spring of 1812 when returning from Saleesh House, Montana (where he had wintered) to Spokane House should be read in connection with the part appearing in the July number of this *Quarterly*. Upon part of this return journey Mr. Thompson made use of the water route instead of horses, and traveled in a canoe all the way from Thompson's Prairie down the Clark Fork River and across the Pend d'Oreille Lake to the camping place from which he starts on March 16. This camp was on the bank of the Pend d'Oreille River nine or ten miles west from Sand Point, Idaho. He is now on his way to Fort William on Lake Superior, the headquarters of the North-West Company in Canada, and is quitting forever the Columbia River country, where his career has been chiefly spent since the summer of 1807. Mr. John George McTavish, another prominent partner of the company, arrived late in the previous fall from across the Rocky Mountains, and has wintered at Spokane House, and succeeds Mr. Thompson in the management of the business of the company in the Columbia River country. This same Mr. McTavish later assumes an important rôle in the bargain made at Astoria in the fall of 1813, by which the business and properties and fort of the Pacific Fur Company passed into the hands of the North-West Company.

From Sinecateen Crossing of the Pend d'Oreille River (the north end of the "Skeetshoo Road," as this journal calls it) Mr. Thompson sends word to Mr. McTavish of their arrival there, and a few days later begins to retrace the trail traveled by him on the 12th-13th of November previous, but not over the entire distance. From near the old Antoine Plant place, northeast from Spokane, instead of taking the more direct trail across Peone Prairie, the party proceed southwesterly to a junction with the trail leading from below Spokane Falls northward toward Five Mile Prairie and proceed along that trail to Spokane House, probably a dryer trail at this season of the year. In other words, Mr. Thompson travels from near the Northern Pacific Railway station of Trent along the north side of the Spokane River until it bends to the southward, and then crosses the open plain north of the river, where so much of the City of Spokane has been built, until he takes the course of the Northwest Boulevard from Spokane and skirts Five Mile Prairie to Spokane House. He probably visits the Falls at this time. This is the first record of the use

by white men of the present Northwest Boulevard of the City of Spokane, although it was used again this same year by a certain red-headed son of the Emerald Isle named Ross Cox, who had been left behind by his associates of the Pacific Fur Company, and was being carried to their new establishment near Spokane House on the back of a friendly Spokane Indian. The account of this episode can be read in Cox' *Adventures on the Columbia River*.

Mr. Thompson spends three days at Spokane House preparing the furs for shipment, and then starts for Kettle Falls to embark in canoes for the Athabasca Pass. The record of that period will complete this series.

T. C. ELLIOTT.

JOURNAL OF DAVID THOMPSON, MARCH 16TH-24TH, 1812

March 16

*Monday.* A very sharp Night. Ice formed in the mid. of the River, tho' very thin, clear cold sharp day. At 6.55 a.m. set off, Co. S. 53 W.  $1\frac{1}{3}$  m., S. 85 W.  $2\frac{1}{4}$  m., S. 40 W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  m., S. 10 W. 1 m., S. 22 W. 1 m. +  $\frac{1}{3}$ . S. 10 E.  $1\frac{1}{4}$  m., S. 15 W.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  m., S. 68 W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. to the Place where we put ashore & I camped,<sup>1</sup> with Villiard wrote to Mr. J. McTavish & sent off the letter by Michel & F. Franchementagne. At 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  a.m. the men pitched the Tents, gummed their Canoe & went off at 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  p. m., gave them a bale of meat of 82 lbs., & since they have left the Ho.<sup>2</sup> they have eaten 1 do., which shoes dried meat to be less expensive than Pemmican. The Co. of the River below is S. 56 W. abt. 3 m.

*Remarks.* These Cos. are all taken as exactly as may be with a miners Compass, the needle is generally too much agitated to take the Cos. to a single degree, except at times, but these Cos may serve as a confirmation of those of 1810, as no Iron was ever near the Compass, the drawing of the River & Kullyspell Lake are not intended to supersede those of 1810,<sup>3</sup> as in the Lake we had a strong head wind. The River is tolerable well done, the lower part has too much snow to see the Small Brooks with certainty. Very few Fowl about, & those as usual shy in the extreme, saw only 3 Chevril & those near the Saleesh Ho., 1 very small Otter, no Cranes, no Stock Ducks, abt. 6 Teals, a few fishing Ducks. 9 p.m. 18+<sup>4</sup>. Clear. Wind N.E.tly all day, but very light.

<sup>1</sup> Sineacateen Crossing, at the mouth of Hoodoo Creek. See previous footnote 6, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Saleesh House, to which these men were returning. Mr. Finan McDonald had been left in charge there.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Thompson had explored the Pend d'Oreille (Kullyspell) River upon two occasions in the fall of 1809 and spring of 1810 as far as the Box Canyon. For account of this see the David Thompson's *Narrative*, pp. 412-14 and 427.

<sup>4</sup> The figures 18+ or 16+ record the reading of the thermometer as eighteen degrees plus. The term "South  $2\frac{1}{4}$  or  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , cloudy" means that the wind blew from the south for that length of time and the weather was cloudy.

## March 17th

*Tuesday.* 6 a.m. 16+, Morn'g. rose Clear but soon lightly cloudy. Wind N. E. 1. 2 p.m. 32+ N.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  cloudy. 9 p.m. 28+ light snow. Calm. 1 poor dwarf Goose.

## March 18th

*Wednesday.* 6 a.m. 28° Calm, smart rain, which has been almost all night. 2 p.m. 48+ S.S.E.  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . Clearing but much rain. 9 p.m.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  do. showers. Saw a large Fire across the Riv. a little below us in the Eveng. A man came, gave him to eat, he went away & soon after came with 2 others & a bag of Roots, which I paid him for in Meat & they went away. They go to the Ed. the morrow.

## March 19th

*Thursday.* 6 a.m. 36+ South  $2\frac{1}{4}$  or  $1\frac{1}{2}$ . Cloudy. 2 p.m. 45+ do 2 do. 9 p.m. 36+ Cloudy. Killed 1 swan & 1 Duck.

## March 20th

*Friday.* 6 a.m. 32+ S.W. by W.  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Cloudy, 2 p.m. 40+ do.  $\frac{1}{4}$  Rainy, 7 p. m. 36+ S. Wly.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in showers. Mr. McTavish & men with Horses arived, made the Goods in loads.

## March 21st

*Saturday.* 6 a.m. 34+ W.S.W.dly. Cloudy. Early began arranging the Goods & c., but it was 11 a.m. before we got off. We went abt.  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. down the River & went into the woods of Cedar, Pine & Firs, but the compass S. 12 E. to 2 p.m. to the end of the Lake where we baited 1811,<sup>5</sup> here I set the compass again and found we had come S. 5 E. abt. 9 m., forming a Curve convex to the Wd., the Lake we then followed, which is abt. 1 m. long by  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. wide, with wide grassy marshes at each end, we held on smartly to 3 p.m. when we came to the foot of the high bank, where we stopped; the people & Horses came at 4 p.m. & camped, as the snow was supposed to cover the Ground beyond us for several miles, this distce say 5 m. is also abt. S. 5° to 10° E. up along the Brook, the country well wooded, with Red Fir, Cyprus, Larch, & Fir Pine, a chance Partridge but no Animals whatever. Many Rats in the Marshes.

## March 22nd

*Sunday.* A rainy morn'g. & Day. Wtly Wind, did not find a part of the Horses till 10 a.m. Rain prevented us from proceeding.

## March 23rd

*Monday.* A rainy morn'g. but clearing up. At 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  a.m. set off. Co. S. 12 W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. to the Bank, took by a road on the right, then Co. S.

<sup>5</sup> See entry of Nov. 13, 1811, at page 171 of this *Quarterly*. The road followed the west side of Hoodoo Creek and Lake.

12 W. to the Lake<sup>6</sup> at 1 p.m., say 10 m., woody, but mostly only Red Fir, then abt. S. W. to 4.50 p.m., along Pts. of Wood, which seemed always to retire to the W.S.Wd., but not so, say S. W. 9 m. as we walked very smartly, then abt. S. 60 W. to 6.40 p. m. say  $4\frac{1}{2}$  m. + S. 75 W.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  m., walked very smartly by a Rill & camped.<sup>7</sup> At 4 p.m. also crossed a Rill. The Brook from the Lake after running abt. 2 m. sinks into the Ground. Abt. 5 m. this side the Lake a Brook<sup>8</sup> of much the same Size with that from the Lake runs direct into the Plain at an angle of abt.  $70^\circ$  to the River short of Co. a Rill of 1 yd. abt. 1 m.

#### March 24th

*Tuesday.* A fine night & morning. Early began to load the Horses at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  a.m. set off Co. S. 75 W.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ m. to a Pt. of picturesque Rocks<sup>9</sup> &c. from hence S. 65 W. 4 m. full to a pt. of Rock. This Co. all along the River, then the River bends to the So. & forms the Falls We cross a large Plain, S. 65 W.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, say 9 m., mostly in a hand Gallop, then thro' the woods, by the Compass, say N. 60 W. 2 m. to a range of Knowls on our (right), N. 70 W. 2 m. along & off do. N.W. 4 m. to the Ho.<sup>10</sup> at 11 a. m., thank Heaven all well, they have these 2 days caught many Trout. Showers in the evening.

<sup>6</sup> The bank is the dividing ridge between watersheds to streams running north and south. The lake is Spirit Lake, formerly Fish Lake.

<sup>7</sup> A little east of the old Antone Plant place near Trent.

<sup>8</sup> A little question as to being Rathdrum Creek. See Note 4, p. 171.

<sup>9</sup> North of Trent.

<sup>10</sup> Spokane House.