

# **SOURIS RIVER POSTS**

**Including David Thompson's Diary of  
his historical trip across the Souris  
Plains to the Mandan Villages  
in the winter of 1797-98.**

BY

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DAVID THOMPSON'S DIARY OF HIS HISTORICAL  
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## *Foreword*

The paper, "Souris River Posts," was read by the writer at a meeting of the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, and was included in its annual report of 1950.

It later was published in serial form in the *Souris Plaindealer*, together with portions of the David Thompson and Alexander Henry (the Younger) diaries, written from day to day as they wandered the Souris plains; also other interesting material of the fur trading days.

Four thousand foolscap pages of the David Thompson diary, are in the possession of the Department of Records in Toronto. These have never been published, but the writer has photostats of the pages that tell of his Souris river wanderings.

The map, which appears on the centre pages of this booklet, was drawn from the detailed "course" information left by the great explorer. His diary proves conclusively that he spent two nights where the town of Souris stands today.

This booklet is published in order to preserve in compact form a great deal of what is at present known of the early fur trading post period on the Souris river.

# *Souris River Posts*

This paper is an attempt to summarize as briefly as possible what is at present known of the trading days along the Souris River, and of the posts that operated for varying periods of time above the Souris mouth.

It is rather unfortunate that outside the journals of David Thompson, Alexander Henry the Younger, Peter Fidler and Peter Garrioch, there appear to be few records in existence. The Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company journals only make brief references to the Souris river posts, in rather marked contrast to the details given of the location and operation of the "Houses" that were near the mouth of the Souris.

Thompson and Henry have left us very detailed records of their travels along the Souris, but only a few brief references are made to the Ash House, which was perhaps the first of the Souris or Mouse river posts. They each tell of stopping at, or near, the abandoned House; and Thompson has left us its latitude. That is about all. Peter Garrioch has left us an interesting story of his wanderings and trading years between Red River and Mouse River, but in only one or two instances does he give us the slightest clue to the location of his post on the Mouse River.

In order, however, to satisfactorily recall or discuss the early Souris River posts, that operated for some years on the middle stretches of the river, it would seem to me to be necessary to very briefly recall the establishment dates, and the history, of the posts that existed at or very close to the Souris mouth. They were really posts on the Assiniboine; not on the Souris.

According to the late Dr. Stewart, Pine Fort was established in 1785 some fifteen miles below the Souris mouth on the Assiniboine, and until 1795 enjoyed a monopoly on fully half of the Assiniboine trade, sharing it with Fort Esperance on the Upper Assiniboine. But it had one region all its own, the Missouri with its village dwelling Mandans, and all of the Souris river country.

In 1793 this Pine Fort monopoly of the North West Company was broken, when Ronald Cameron, a free trader, went above the Souris mouth on the Assiniboine and established the first of the posts in that area. Cuthbert Grant, Sr., countered this move by sending "Old Auge" to trade alongside Cameron. Then the Hudson Bay Company sent Donald MacKay to represent it in the same district. The three posts were all built within a year, and less than a year later there were five "oppositions" working against one another.

It is quite reasonable, therefore, to suppose that it was this keen competition for the trade of the Souris river and plains, that brought about the establishment of the Ash House (near Hartney) in 1795, just two years after the opening of the first post on the Assiniboine near the Souris mouth. It seems certain that it was simply a move on the part of the North West Company to meet the growing competition of the Hudson Bay Company.

After the amalgamation of these two companies in 1821 the competition was between the Hudson Bay Company and the American Fur Company, with also a considerable number of independents. This later competition brought into existence a number of small posts along the river in the Melita area of today. Some of them were quite likely still farther south in what is now North Dakota. But it is with regard to the posts along the Souris, in the Hartney district, that I would like to try and summarize what is at present known.

## The Ash House

First the Ash House. It was established in 1795 by the North West Company, and only operated for a year or more, for, as David Thompson tells us in his narrative, "it was too open to the incursions of the Sioux."

The Hudson Bay records seem to have no knowledge of the post except that it is marked as a North West Company post on a map attached to a "Notice Respecting the Boundary between His Majesty's possessions in North America and the United States; with a map of America, between latitudes 40 and 70 degrees north, and longitudes 80 and 150 degrees west; exhibiting the principal trading posts of the North West Company. (London Printed by B. McMillan, 1817) The position of Ash House on this map in the Hudson Bay London archives as being on the left or north bank of the Souris river, above the Plumb river."

Thompson gives its latitude as 49 degrees, 27 minutes and 32 seconds.

Latitude 49, 27, 32 intersects the Souris river about two miles southwest of Hartney. But as Thompson in his journal account (not his narrative) of his return trip from the Mandans in January, 1798, gives the distance from the Old House to the mouth of Plum Creek as only 13½ miles, it has been somewhat difficult to understand his latitude observation of 49, 27, 32. Either his observation record is wrong, or his distance from the House to Plum Creek is wrong. The distance from his latitude reading to Plum Creek is actually about 8½ miles.

Coues in his published interpretation of Alexander Henry's Journal, makes repeated references, in his accompanying notes, to Thompson's Journal, which he says he at one time thought of editing. In one of these notes he thinks the location of the Ash House was in the vicinity of Menteith, a few miles below Hartney on the Souris. In this he was undoubtedly influenced by David Thompson's journal entries which, as already noted, give the distance from the Old House to Plum Creek as only 13½ miles.

This seeming contradiction of Thompson's latitude observation by Coues' interpretation of the unpublished Thompson journal, resulted in S. H. Forrest, E. G. Hetherington, and others of Souris, searching the Menteith district for some years without success. The district has all been cultivated, and early residents of the district do not seem to have had much knowledge of ruins or other indications of a post. A few relics have been found, such as this key and flint iron. But they were found some distance from the river on section 18-7-22, and the north half, by Mr. R. J. McBurney. They had evidently been lost by someone travelling the old Yellow Quill Trail.

Now let us examine evidence in favor of Thompson's latitude of 49, 27, 32.

In a letter to the Souris Plaindealer in 1935 from Saskatoon, the late Prof. A. S. Morton had this to say: "With regard to Ash House, Thompson's latitude which you give, places it within about 1½ miles of the Hartney (Grant) site. The great astronomer's observations are usually within about half a mile of our own survey. The diary of his return trip (from the Mandans) puts Ash House 13½ miles from the entry of Plum Creek into the Souris. But Thompson's miles are usually 1½ miles so taking it the indication is again the neighborhood of Hartney."

Mr. Morton in the same letter says: "In Thompson's narrative edited for the Champlain Society in 1916, he made the distance from Macdonnell's House near the Souris mouth to Ash House as 46 and 45 miles respectively. Here again he may have worked out the distance with some reference to his observations and be very correct."

### Alexander Henry's Evidence

Now, let us consider Alexander Henry's evidence. Henry, according to his diary, left the North West Company post on the south bank of the Assiniboine, and opposite the Brandon House of that time, on his 1806 trip to the

Missouri. He had been ferried across the river by the Hudson Bay Company men. And Dr. Stewart says Brandon House at that time was six miles above the mouth of the Souris.

In Henry's diary of 1806, and I quote at some length as I think it is both important and interesting, he says:

"At 8.00 o'clock we mounted and kept on a slow trot. Our course was W.S.W. for the Moose Head where we arrived at 11.00 o'clock and stopped at a small lake to refresh our horses. Here we shot a few ducks and at one o'clock saddled and proceeded in the same general direction through a very hilly country destitute of wood. From the summit of these high hills we had delightful views. In some spots were clusters of poplars; to the north (and I think this is important—G.A.M.) we could see the Assiniboine north of which we could trace the source of the Rapid River (the little Saskatchewan of today) which comes from the Dauphin Mountains."

The important part of this quotation is the fact brought out that in order to see the Assiniboine river, Henry must have been on the northern side of the Brandon Hills. They were then known as the Moose Head. To follow a W.S.W. course, as he says he did, Henry must have left a point some miles above the Souris mouth, even above the point where the late Dr. Stewart says the Brandon House of that date was situated. He simply could not travel W.S.W. from nearer the Souris mouth and reach a point on the north side of the Brandon Hills where he could see the Assiniboine.

Incidentally the lake mentioned where he shot the ducks, is undoubtedly Lake Clementi, the Lake of the Hills on some early maps, about ten miles south of Brandon.

Henry's journal continues: "at 4.00 o'clock we came to the Riviere la Souris at the junction of the Plumb river (Souris park today) which comes in from the W.N.W.. We crossed it and came along the north side of the Riviere la Souris until sunset when we put up for the night near Fort de la Freniere (Fort of the Ash). Our day's journey was about 14 leagues W.S.W. by the compass."

Fourteen leagues, or 42 miles, is exactly the distance as the crow flies from the point on the Assiniboine where Henry must have crossed, or at least started his day's journey, to the site of the Ash House latitude given us by Thompson.

If Alexander Henry's starting point that day in July 1806 was a point, or post, nearer the Souris mouth, the distance to his Ash House stop would have been some miles more than the 42 that he says he travelled. But, as already noted, he could not possibly travel W.S.W. from the Souris mouth, or even some few miles above the mouth, and reach a point on the northern side of the Brandon Hills where he could see the Assiniboine river.

### David Thompson's Diary

Now let us consider David Thompson's journal and narrative records. His narrative was written when he was about 70 years of age and living in retirement in Montreal. This narrative was edited and published many years later by J. B. Tyrell and the Champlain Society. Thompson's journal or diary written day by day by the great explorer during his years of wandering the prairie and mountain wilds of the west, has never been edited or published. Coues undoubtedly made a close study of the more than 4000 pages of closely written notes while he was editing Alexander Henry's journal, and makes repeated references, in his Henry edition, to entries by Thompson in his unpublished diary. Coues says that he actually considered editing the voluminous notes but decided that he could not recommend to any publisher the work of publishing them.

References and quotations which I make in this paper are from a photo-

stat of the original Thompson notes, which the Department of Records in Toronto had made for me, and are now in my possession.

The great explorer tells us that he left McDonnell's House near the Souris mouth, on November 28th, 1797. McDonnell's House was on section 19-8-16, and the north east quarter, about six miles north and somewhat east of Wawanesa.

His first course, according to his unpublished journal, was south by west one mile. At the House he had crossed the river Assiniboine. His next course was south 60 degrees west seven miles to a point of woods. Then south 50 degrees west six miles. During this course he says he was about six miles southeast of the Moose Head or Brandon Hills. At the end of this last course he must have been a little south of Nesbitt and somewhat west of that village. He records the fact that it was 20 below zero with a W.S.W. gale. A cold day and he froze his nose.

Until Monday, December 4th, he had to forego travel as the thermometer was as low as 36 below with S.E. gales. Their tent was smoky and they apparently put in four miserable days. They were able to kill four cows (buffaloes).

It is scarcely possible for us today to imagine or realize the courage and determination of Thompson and his handful of companions, in facing the storms, dangers and hardships of this midwinter tramp of hundreds of miles across the treeless, snow-white, windswept, uninhabited wastes of the Souris and Missouri plains. Farther north they would have had shelter and fuel in the timber lands; and also food. On the plains they had no assurance of any of these necessities. Yet they never faltered, although Thompson does occasionally record his feelings and thankfulness in a briefly written "Thank God."

I might here remark that Dr. Stewart in his excellent booklet on "The Early Assiniboine Trading Posts on the Souris Mouth" says that David Thompson spent three days storm-stayed in the valley at Wawanesa on his trip to the Mandans. He was in all probability influenced by the statements made by Thompson in his published Narrative, where he briefly says: "We went about six miles and put up in the woods of the Mouse River which joins the Stone Indian river about two miles below the House."

Quite naturally Dr. Stewart would conclude from this that the great explorer put up very near Wawanesa. But Thompson's diary, or journal, gives details which do not confirm this conclusion. In his journal Thompson very distinctly says that he went some 13 miles south 50 degrees west from McDonnell's before he put up; and was storm-stayed.

It should be remembered that Dr. Stewart was not so much interested in the wanderings of Thompson along the Souris, as he was in the Forts at or near the Souris mouth on the Assiniboine. His conclusion that Thompson spent some days storm-stayed at Wawanesa had no bearing on his study and findings with regard to the trading posts near the Souris mouth. And he probably never saw Thompson's unpublished journal.

The weather moderated on December 4th to 4 below, but with a strong west by south wind. At 9.00 a.m. they set off southwest by west  $10\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the Mouse river. They would then be somewhere between Bunclody and Souris of today. They stopped about a quarter of an hour with five tents of Stone Indians and then went W.S.W. half a mile up the river where they crossed to the south bank.

The next course was west by north six miles and they "put up below the bank close to the river." One mile short of the course, he continues, "crossed a brook. At beginning of course river comes from the N.W. two miles of course distant about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles then approaches nearer to end of course. Put up at 3.45 p.m."

The only creek emptying into the Souris river along this part of its course, is the one that crosses the Souris golf course. Thompson apparently spent the night of December 4th, 1797, "below the bank" just south of the

present town of Souris. He does not mention Plum Creek. It is therefore unlikely that he crossed the river into what is now the Souris park, although he would indeed then have been "below the bank." In any case he would have a very sheltered spot for one night.

The next day, December 5th, he proceeded, to again quote his diary, "four miles south to a bunch of aspens alongside of the brook we crossed yesterday and which we re-crossed at the end of the course."

These points are all very easily identified by anyone who knows the district between Souris and Elgin. Also his crossing and re-crossing of the same creek on his next course which he tells us was  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles south. Then he went south by west 7 miles. He would then be about four miles south and somewhat west of Elgin as the rising ground which he mentions in his notes is just about that distance south of that town.

To again quote from his diary or journal: "Turtle Mountain not appearing and the weather seeming likely to change we struck off (1.30 p.m.) for the woods of the Souris river and went W.N.W. six miles, then north west by west seven miles, all plains without the least woods. At 6.30 p.m. we most providentially came to a fine hummock of oak and ash close to the stream of the river and put up. A stormy day, wind south; at 5.15 p.m. the wind changed to a gale and by 7.00 p.m. increased to a storm."

His narrative, which was written as already noted when he was about 70 years of age, gives more details of this day, December 5th, 1797. It says: (and remember this is again from his camp near the town of Souris) December 5th, 7.00 a.m. Thermometer 13 below, became mild in the afternoon, a W.S.W. gale came on and increased to a storm by 6.00 p.m. Mons. Jursomme, our guide, informed me that he would now take the great traverse to the Turtle Hill; we were early up and by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  a.m. set off; he led us about south 4 miles to a grove of aspen on the banks of a brook thence about six miles to the Turtle Brook from the Hill; thence south by west seven miles. We now came on a rising ground at 1.00 p.m. but the Turtle Hill was not in sight and all before us and around us a boundless plain, and Mons. Jursomme could not say where we were. The weather appeared threatening and pre-paring for a storm; our situation was alarming and anxiety was in the face of every man for we did not know to which hand to turn ourselves for shelter."

"I mounted my horse and went to the highest ground near us and with my telescope viewed the horizon all around but not the least vestige of wood appeared; but at due N.W. from us there appeared the tops of a few trees like oaks. They anxiously inquired if I saw woods. I told them what I had seen and with my old soldier I should guide myself by the compass and proceed as the woods were far off. McCracken and a Canadian joined us; the other six conferred among themselves what to do, but had no faith in the compass on land and thought best to march in some direction until they could see woods with their eyes; but had not proceeded half a mile before all followed us thinking there would be better chance of safety by being all together. The gale of wind came on and kept increasing. The snow was four to six inches deep with a slight crust on it. We held on almost in despair of reaching the woods; fortunately the dogs were well broken and gave us no trouble. Night came upon us and we had carefully to keep in file, at times calling to each other to learn that no one was missing. At length at 7.00 p.m., thank good Providence, we arrived at the woods very much fatigued; walking against the storm was as laborious as walking knee deep in water. Although we had taken six hours on this last course I found by my observations we had come only 13 miles."

They apparently considered two miles per hour very slow travel. I think this may later prove important.

The next day, December 6th, according to his journal, warm, with a heavy W.S.W. gale. To quote him again: "We were obliged to lay by not only for the weather but to hunt provisions and refresh the dogs and horses."

About 2.00 p.m. the Stone Indian men paid us a visit of about ten minutes and then went off to their tents which are a distance from us."

And here I think is the most important entry as far as we are concerned: "We find ourselves about three miles below the Old House where people resided two years ago." Undoubtedly a reference to the Ash House or Fort de la Frieniere.

In his journal entry of December 7th he alters this position with regard to the Ash House, slightly, when he says: "At 7:30 a.m. set off. Course S.W. along the river  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles, S.W. by S. two miles to the House at which we put up at 9.45 a.m. as we had not time to cross to the Turtle Hill."

They apparently remained at the Ash House two days, as under date of December 8th he says: "A fine clear day. Would set off but I wished to give my yellow horse in care of the Indians to take in to the House (McDonnell's). At 10.00 a.m. an old man came to whom I gave the horse in care with a note to Mr. McDonnell."

And here again is the important part of his entry that day: "Observed latitude and longitude, sun, sun, moon, N.W., at night Jupiter."

On December 9th he went two miles up the river and crossed to the right bank. Then W.S.W.  $4\frac{1}{4}$  miles, then  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to 8 tents of Stone Indians and put up at 11.00 a.m. He says "a fine high sand knowl bank of river close to us."

His narrative account varies somewhat from this journal account, but without importance; he merely says that he went beyond the Stone Indian tents three miles to a point where 15 tents of Assiniboines were massacred by the Sioux the year previous. His narrative gives the mileage travelled that day as 9 miles while his journal says  $10\frac{1}{2}$  miles. But in both cases he says the Turtle Hill was visible S. 30 degrees E.

His travels on December 5th after leaving his Souris camp "below the bank" and the details he has left as to the various courses that day, seem to me to prove conclusively that he struck the Souris river, in the storm the same evening, providentially as he says, somewhere between Hartney and Menteith. Likely not far from Hartney. On December 7th he says they travelled  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles up the river to "the old trading house called the Ash House from the plenty of those fine trees. It had to be given up from its being too open to the incursions of the Sioux Indians" which is quoting from his narrative.

In my humble opinion these interpretations of his journal, and his narrative, all tend to prove his astronomical observations of 49, 27, 32 taken at his Ash House camp.

### The Site At Campbell Duthie's

If we admit the correctness of this interpretation of the Thompson and Henry diaries and visit the location today, we find very little to identify the site. But we must keep in mind the fact that the post was not occupied for more than two years, probably about a year and a half. There would be no great accumulation of ashes around a house occupied for so short a time. It is quite reasonable to think that it wasn't a post of great size or strength. It was really an outpost of the Assiniboine river establishment; an attempt as we have already noted, to meet the competition created by the growing number of traders near the Souris mouth. It may not have even had a stockade. Before it was completely established the decision may have been reached that it was too exposed to be fully developed.

Today there is only a pile of stones to mark the spot, in an area where there appear to be few if any other stones. There is little evidence of ashes or other remains. There are no depressions or cellars, and no mounds. Nothing to outline a stockade or even a building such as exist at Fort Mr. Grant nearer Hartney, and Fort Desjarlais north of Lauder. Col. Dana

Wright of the North Dakota Historical Association, visited the site in 1934, did some digging, and found one very interesting relic—part of an old flint lock.

One other feature of particular interest is the existence of a very high sand knoll a few hundred yards north west of the site, and very close to the old Yellow Quill Trail still easily identified winding through the sand hills north of the river. From the top of this knoll the whole country can be seen for miles and miles. Surely such a high knoll close by would be considered of marked strategic value at a time and in a district threatened by the Sioux.

The site, or the stone pile, is about 40 or 50 feet from the river bank which forms a crescent shaped protection to the south. The bank of the river is actually to the west of the site, so that the House, if this is the site, was circled on three sides by the river although it was some few hundred yards distant on the south and east.

To the north and only a few yards distant a shallow slough still exists in wet seasons. This slough may have also been considered a protection from attack. The Yellow Trail, as we have already noted, passes to the north of this slough, and I am inclined to think that the slough is an arm or short cut of the river in times of very high water. This feature may indeed be the reason for the Ash House appearing on early maps some times on the north side, and some times on the south side of the river. In times of very high water the wider stream may have been to the north of the House. In dry seasons the only water would be to the south.

Although the evidence is far from conclusive it is doubtful if we will ever be able to secure much more. If the stone pile is not the actual site, I am convinced the Old House, Fort de la Prensier, Fort of the Ash, or Ash House was somewhere in the immediate vicinity.

Thompson tells us he made repeated observations by the "sun, moon, at night Jupiter" when he spent two days at the Ash House on his outward trip; and that he made another observation when he made a brief stop "opposite the Old House" on his return trip in late January. And then he spent two weeks at McDonnell's House according to his journal, in "calculating the astronomical observations made to and from the Missouri river."

The latitude record he has left is 49 degrees, 27 minutes and 32 seconds, and this is almost exactly the latitude of the stone pile on Mr. Campbell Duthie's farm, section 12-6-24.

Alexander Henry, Jr. travelled 14 leagues, 42 miles from his Assiniboine starting point to the Ash House. And Tyrell tells us that Thompson's survey places the Ash House  $16\frac{1}{2}$  miles south and 39 miles west of McDonnell's. All these mileages simply confirm Thompson's latitude.

I think we can therefore safely decide that the Ash House was on the S.E. quarter of 12-6-24. Only one piece of evidence seems to contradict Thompson's latitude and that appears in his journal where he says he travelled only  $13\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the abandoned Ash House to the crossing of Plum Creek where the town of Souris now stands.

The late Prof. Morton did not think this contradiction important; and his colleague, the late Prof. Sigfusson, did not think so either. And I personally think it possible to present an argument that there is something wrong with the  $13\frac{1}{2}$  miles; that it should be longer. Here it is: On February 2nd, the day in which the distance travelled appears to dispute his latitude, they travelled only  $19\frac{1}{2}$  miles in  $8\frac{1}{2}$  hours, yet he says they "walked fast on a good hard track without the need of snowshoes." About  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles per hour. They made as good time as that in the storm of December 5th. Evidence, I think, that the  $13\frac{1}{2}$  miles should be longer and therefore not at all contradictory to his latitude.

I have taken a good deal of time, too much I feel, on this matter for the simple reason that it has been a source of study and debate for years.

## Other Known Sites

In the same stretch of the Souris, however, we do know the exact location of three other old posts. In 1934 Col. Dana Wright of St. John, N.D., learned that an old lady, Mrs. Filoman Lafontaine, over 90 years of age, was living in the wilds of the sand hills near Grand Clariere, and that she could remember when one or more of the old Souris river posts operated. He visited Mrs. Lafontaine and from the information she gave him, was able to locate Fort Mr. Grant, as she called it, on section 7-6-23 near Hartney, and Fort Desjarlais on section 31-5-24 north of Lauder.

Later the same summer S. H. Forrest, E. G. Hetherington, Harry Forrest and myself made a number of trips to these old sites, and on one of the trips we located, or rather visited, another site on section 31-5-24. We were guided to the site by Mr. Geo. Landreth, of Lauder, who had known of the site for years. A French half-breed by the name of Gladu had told him that this one was older than the Fort Desjarlais site on the same section. This site is actually in Mr. Landreth's pasture field.

At that time it was considered likely that this old site was that of the Ash House, but there seems to be no evidence to prove this possibility. It is quite likely an older site than the Desjarlais as there are indications of its being in use for a lengthy period, but it is too far west and slightly too far south to meet any of the information given us by Thompson and Henry. It must have been a post of some size and consequence for there were still cellar holes and chimney mounds to be seen in 1934. But just who operated it is still a mystery.

About fifty feet from the river bank there were five very distinct cellar holes, and another hole nearer the river was filled with ashes to a depth of fully three feet. Mr. Landreth told us that in his time the river bank had been cut away about 20 or 30 feet by the water, and as a consequence part of the stockade and indeed some of the old building foundations are now likely in the river bed.

The site of this old fort is almost completely encircled by a depression to the east, the river being to the west, and at times is likely surrounded by water. In times of very high water it may have been entirely covered by water. There was another bed of almost pure ashes just west of one of the principal cellars; it was about a foot deep, covered an area some yards square, and was about six inches below the surface.

## Fort Desjarlais

At Fort Desjarlais the site was more open to the wind and the ashes seem to have been scattered over the prairie on which the fort stood. In 1934 the Souris party succeeded in locating the eastern boundary of the stockade. In this we were assisted by finding a layer of ashes extending at varying depths of one to five inches for a distance of at least a hundred and fifty feet in the bank of the river. At the eastern end of this layer of ashes we located the remains of three oak pickets, presumably the corner of the stockade as no fences had ever been known in the neighborhood. Following this line of pickets two more pickets were found a hundred or more feet north. On the river bank, and presumably fallen from the layer of ashes above, were found fragments of crockery, glass and the stem of an old clay pipe.

According to Mrs. Lafontaine, Fort Desjarlais was built by Joe Desjarlais about the year 1836, 112 years ago. It was burned about 1856, she told us, perhaps in the great prairie fire that Prof. Hind tells us swept the whole country from the Rocky Mountains east in that year. At the Fort, Mrs. Lafontaine also told us, besides Desjarlais, were his son-in-law, Charles Demontine, his son Baptiste Desjarlais, Eusebe Ledour and Simon Blondin. In all she told us there were always 75 or 80 men at the Fort.

One incident she distinctly recalled was the killing of two Assiniboine Indians by the Crees at the Fort. They were buried in or near the stockade.

Her father, Francois Jeauvette, worked in both Fort Mr. Grant and Fort Desjarlais.

According to the old Indians living in the Turtle Mountains in 1934, Desjarlais was known as "Mitche Cote" or "Hairy Legs" and at one time operated a post on the Mouse river near where Minot now stands.

Madame Lafontaine, to whom we are indebted for information that otherwise might never have been obtained, was born at St. Francois Xavier, and lived as a young girl there until she married. Her parents she told us kept a home in the Fort Garry or Red River settlement for many years, spending the winters there. The summers were spent with the buffalo hunters and it was during this period of her life that she spent some time at Fort Desjarlais and Fort Mr. Grant. In 1880 they moved to Oak Lake and in 1886 to the sand hills of Grand Clariere close to the scenes of her early life.

### Fort Mr. Grant

The site of Fort Mr. Grant can still be easily distinguished near Hartney, although the casual visitor would not notice anything unusual. It is on the north bank of the river, perhaps fifty yards from the water, with a gentle slope from the stockade remains to the river's edge which is now well-treed. A lovely spot indeed. The cellars and chimney mounds were still visible in 1948, with only a few shrubs partially covering the low mounds. A few minutes digging at this site in 1934 brought to light many of the hard clay chinks moulded to the shape of the logs, and a small leaden tag or whatever it may have been used for.

Both posts, Desjarlais and Grant, had stockades and judging from the cellar holes and chimney mounds the usual assortment of buildings common to all the establishments of that period.

The remains of these old cellars and mounds are indeed interesting. After the passing of a century or more they are merely depressions a foot or less deep. But when a spade is used at the Desjarlais post or Fort Mr. Grant the baked clay used in the construction of the chimneys and in the chinking of the log buildings is unearthed. At the two sites mentioned the clay chinks are distinctly moulded to the shape of the logs; at the older site on section 31-5-24 the clay has either disintegrated from greater age, or from the fact that it was not baked as hard in the first place.

### Cuthbert Grant

The late Douglas MacKay, editor of the Hudson Bay Beaver, had the Hudson Bay archives in London searched in 1935 for the Souris Plaindealer. We are therefore indebted to Mr. MacKay and the Hudson Bay Company for the following information with regard to the operations of Cuthbert Grant, Jr., on the Souris river. Here are a few quotations from his letter to myself, dated November 7th, 1935:

"We have no record of a Hudson Bay Company post called Fort Grant in our archives, but the following facts will probably throw some light on the statements made by Mrs. Lafontaine and recorded in the Souris Plaindealer of 19th September, 1934.

"After the abandonment of Brandon House in the spring of 1824 the Company met the opposition of the Americans who were trading near the Boundary Line by permitting settlers to trade with the Indians who would otherwise deal with the Americans. This system was in practice in 1826 and on 25th July, 1827, Governor George Simpson wrote to the Company in London informing them that Cuthbert Grant and Louis Giboche were provided with an outfit to trade from Turtle Mountain to Qu'Appelle." Simpson added:

" . . . . as they have a number of Indian and half breed relations and are intimately acquainted and connected with all the different tribes in that

quarter and not directly in the service of the Honourable Company they have it more in their power to harass our opponents than could we with a formidable establishment." (Simpson Report, No. 511, para. 36, p. 59)

Mr. MacKay's letter continues: "In 1827 the Company sent George Taylor on a journey to ascertain the American Boundary Line and in his journal of 1827-28 (Hudson Bay archives B.235/a/9) Taylor records arriving at the site of Old Brandon House on 3rd November, 1827, where he met Cuthbert Grant's people. Taylor arrived at "Mr. G. Fort" on the 5th of November and rested there before continuing his journey to the Turtle Mountain. He stated that the mean of three observations taken at "Mr. G. Fort" give the latitude as 49 degrees, 28 minutes, 45 seconds N. The facts probably account for "Grant's House" being shown on the Arrowsmith maps of 1832 and 1850, where the position is indicated as being on the right or south bank of the Souris river."

"At the beginning of trading season 1828-29" the letter continues "Cuthbert Grant was appointed Warden of the Plains by the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, and as it was decided to re-establish Brandon House the practice of allowing settlers to trade with the Indians near the Boundary Line was brought to an end."

An entry in the Company's Fort Garry journal of February 1825 tells of Grant's first winter trading: "It appears that a general scarcity of buffalo has prevailed this season all over the Country as we are informed by Mr. Grant who arrived this day from Brandon House (Grant's House would only be considered an outpost of Brandon House) that he was from mere necessity obliged to kill his horses and dogs on which he himself and his people subsided as long as they lasted and were forced to abandon the place."

Here is another entry under date of March 15th, 1826: "Mr. Grant, it has been reported to us this morning, has succeeded in pacifying the Stone Indians about his trading post near Brandon House and is making excellent trade."

Again under date of May 5th, 1828: "Mr. Grant has arrived at his establishment at the White Horse Plains, from his trading post near Brandon House, with his returns in three bateaux amounting to 50,000 Musquash and other furs, besides a considerable quantity of provisions, robes and leather."

Cuthbert Grant was made Warden of the Plains in 1828, when it was decided to re-establish Brandon House, and his duties were cited as "the prevention of the illicit trade in furs within the district." His power and influence were simply extended by this appointment, and Grant House must have continued to harass the independents and Americans even after the reopening of Brandon House. Mrs. Lafontaine knew it as late as the early 1850's.

It is interesting to quote here the late Prof. Morton's opinion with regard to a probable connection between the operation of Grant's House and the appointment of Grant in 1828 as Warden of the Plains. Here is a quotation from a letter written by Mr. Morton to myself in August, 1939: "In the spring of 1822 Cuthbert Grant acted as guide and bodyguard to Governor Simpson on his journey from the Upper Assiniboine towards the Red River. Thereafter, viz on May 20th, from Fort Garry, Simpson wrote to Andrew Colville on the Board of the Company, that Grant was a very able young man, had remarkable control of the half breeds, and was capable, if not happily occupied, of making trouble; he recommended that he be quietly slipped into the service of the Company. As a consequence he was employed in a post on or near Lake Manitoba. But he proved too restless a soul to be content with the dull routine of a fur post. Accordingly, Simpson, who was never at a loss to find expedients, arranged that he should become Warden of the Plains with the special duty of preventing the half breeds from smuggling furs across the line to the Americans. This along with the policy which you mention of giving licenses to settlers to trade on the understanding that the furs secured were brought in to Fort Garry, goes far to explain the existence of

Grant's Fort. As Grant became Warden of the Plains in 1828, it is possible that his building of the fort had something to do with his being appointed Warden."

We now know of course that Grant's House was built prior to 1826, and that therefore, as Prof. Morton suggests, it probably had something to do with his being appointed Warden of the Plains. Fort Mr. Grant on the Souris river would naturally become his headquarters, as Warden, on the Souris Plains.

Brandon House was re-established in 1828. And according to Mr. Douglas MacKay's letter, Chief Trader Francis Heron, in his report from the new house on May 6th, 1829, stated that he had sent Mr. George Setter and six men to pass the winter months at Oak Lake situated a little to the southward of Mountain la Bosse." Brandon House was finally abandoned in 1832, and Mr. MacKay says "we have not found any record of outposts on the Souris river at this time other than that of Oak Lake during the winter of 1828-29 and referred to above."

"In June 1855 a post called Souris River is listed for the ensuing winter to be in charge of an interpreter. It does not appear in the lists for the following year but from trading year 1857-58 to 1860-61 it is listed as in charge of J. Sinclair, interpreter. It is not clear from these minutes whether his post was maintained all the season, or as a winter post only.

"Capt. Palliser when exploring in the region in August 1857 arrived at a small post of the Hudson's Bay Company on August 11th, when it was deserted, and in his report he states that it corresponded to Grant's House on Arrowsmith's map. According to Palliser's description of his route, and his accompanying maps, the small winter post was situated on the north or left bank of the Souris river and not on the right or south bank as on the Arrowsmith maps of 1850 and 1852. Henry Youle Hind covered this ground in June 1858 and he too indicated a small winter post in the Souris Sand Hills, and according to his description of his route would appear to be identical with that mentioned in Palliser's report. There is no reference in the minutes of Council to any post on the Souris River during the season of 1861-62."

It is interesting to note Prof. Hind's reference to this old post. He was at the time travelling on the left or north bank of the river. He says in his report: "The Hudson Bay Company has a post on the river among the sand hills which is maintained only in the winter during the absence of the Sioux, those savage barbarians being altogether opposed to the approach of civilization near their hunting grounds." That was in 1858.

From all this I think we can safely conclude that Fort Mr. Grant just west of Hartney was established in 1824, and that for four years it "harassed the Honourable Company's opponents unofficially under special license to Cuthbert Grant for that purpose. I am inclined to think that it continued to do so for some years after 1828, under Grant's extended power and influence as Warden of the Plains, and after the re-establishment of Brandon House.

Then in 1855, when a post for the first time is officially mentioned as on the Souris River, it became a winter establishment of the Company, and continued as such until 1860-61. After that date there is no further reference to a Souris River post in the Company's minutes. According to Mrs. Lafontaine it continued to be known as Fort Mr. Grant.

#### Lena's House

The Hudson Bay Company did not have any posts on the Souris River prior to 1824 when Fort Grant was established unofficially by Cuthbert Grant under special license; but during the winter of 1801-02 it operated a post at Turtle Mountain. According to Mr. Douglas MacKay's letter the site was probably south of the International Boundary, which I doubt. The post was

outfitted from Brandon House, was in charge of Henry Lena, and became known as Lena's House.

The records of Brandon House state that on November 25th, 1801, the men set off, and that on December 14th John MacKay and his men followed, went 20 miles to the Souris river and slept. At sunset on the 15th, the following day, they arrived at Lena's and found four Canadians also building a House in opposition. A month later, January, 1802, the XY Company was in opposition to Lena's. Likely the one built by the Canadians.

Subsequent entries show that there was some "come and go" between Brandon House and the new Turtle Mountain post. But there is no further mention of Lena's in the minutes of later years. It was apparently, like the Ash House in 1795, in too dangerous a district.

Although Mr. Douglas MacKay in his letter says that Lena's House in 1801 was probably south of the United States border, I think there is rather conclusive evidence that it was in the edge of the Turtle Mountains and not too far from the south-eastern shore of Whitewater Lake.

In the summer of 1805, John Pritchard, lost on the plains of the Souris and the Pipestone for 40 days, found himself when he stumbled on two old wintering houses which he recognized as outposts of the Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company Houses at the Souris mouth. For some days prior to his stumbling on the two old houses Pritchard had been in the neighborhood of Whitewater Lake. In a letter to his brother, telling of his harrowing experiences, Pritchard told of seeing an island in a large lake. Undoubtedly Whitewater. For days he had kept close to a small river, likely Turtle head Creek southeast of Deloraine. He thought he saw Indians, left the little river to go to them, found the two old wintering houses, and immediately recognized them and realized that he was at Turtle Mountains and about 60 miles from home, Brandon House.

The point of particular interest for us in this is simply that Pritchard records the two houses as Hudson Bay and North West outposts which he knew, and about 60 miles from the mouth of the Souris. Douglas MacKay's letter and the Hudson Bay archives tell us that only one Hudson Bay post (Lena's) was at that time in the Turtle Mountain region, conclusive evidence I submit that Lena's House was somewhere between Whitewater Lake and the Turtle Mountains, some distance east of Turtlehead Creek.

John MacKay, we have already noted, says that the XY Company was in opposition to the Hudson Bay Company at Lena's in 1802. But the union of the North West Company and the XY Company came in 1804, so that Pritchard would still be right in calling one of the two houses he stumbled on a North West post. The XY Company post after the union would be a North West Post.

### Turtle Mountain House

Lena's House, we have noted, was not in operation for many years, and that it was likely on the northern edge of the Turtle Mountains. It may, however, have been succeeded many years later by Turtle Mountain House.

On the 18th of June, 1846, Governor Simpson wrote to the Company in London and informed them that a new post was to be established during the season of 1846-47 at the Turtle Mountain. According to the minutes of council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, the appointments to this post were: 1846-47, H. Fisher, Jr., interpreter; 1847-48 an Interpreter; 1848-55, Antoine Desjarlais, interpreter.

From this it would appear that Turtle Mountain House was in existence from 1846 to 1855. The Arrowsmith map of 1857 shows Turtle Mountain House in the north-eastern part of the Turtle Mountains; which is the same

location of Lena's House if we accept the evidence already given or left us by Pritchard.

It is perhaps worthy of note here to remark that the early settlers of the Souris district, while hauling wood from the Turtle Mountains in the early 1880's, used to pass an old house in this very same locality. It was then known as the Wassewa House; and there is now a C.N.R. station by that name.

### Garrioch's Post

Just one brief note with regard to Peter Garrioch's post on the Mouse River. Garrioch, whose diary covers the years 1843 to 1845, was one of the most bitter opponents of the Hudson Bay Company monopoly. He tells us of his Mouse River post and his numerous trips between it and Red River. The site of his post is still unknown, and Garrioch has left us very little to work on.

It was likely in the Melita district south of the American boundary. In one of his diary entries he tells us of experiencing "a March thunder storm off the tail of the Turtle Mountains." His trail to and from Red River must have therefore, been along the Turtle Mountain, probably to the south, and thence by way of the Back Fat Lakes, the Rock Lake chain of today.

In another place he tells us he was deprived of his Mouse River post due to the authority given its agents by the United States Congress to seize all posts that "sold ardent spirits." His post must have been in American territory.

There were undoubtedly many other small posts along the Souris, some of them merely winter shelters. The Metis and old Indians of the Turtle Mountains, according to Dana Wright of St. John, N.D., have many stories of being storm-bound for the winter at various places on the river, and of building little rude shelters with mud chimneys and small cellars. Sites of this kind seem to be rather numerous in the Melita district and are apt to be taken for the sites of trading posts as indeed some of them probably were.

### Summary

We know the site of Fort Mr. Grant, or Grant's House, on section 7-6-23, near Hartney. We also know the site of Fort Desjarlais on section 31-5-24, north of Lauder. And if we agree with David Thompson's repeated observations of 49 degrees, 27 minutes, and 32 seconds, as against his mileage of 13½ miles from the old house to the crossing of Plum Creek, we can conclude that the Ash House, or Fort of the Ash, was on section 12-6-24, and probably where Mr. Dana Wright found the old flint lock at the pile of stones on Mr. Campbell Duthie's farm.

The Ash House, Fort Mr. Grant, and Fort Desjarlais were in all probability, the most important establishments on the Souris river between 1795 and 1861.

From all this we can summarize as follows:

1795—The Ash House established by the North West Company on section 12-6-24, or in the immediate neighborhood. Abandoned in 1797.

1797—Abandoned Ash House visited by David Thompson and again in January 1798. Latitude 49 degrees, 27 minutes, 32 seconds N.

1801—Lena House established as an outpost of Brandon House at Turtle Mountain, about 60 miles south of the Souris mouth.

1806—Alexander Henry, Jr. visited the Ash House in July.

1824—Brandon House on the Assiniboine abandoned. Cuthbert Grant given permission to trade on the Souris and "harass" the opponents of the Hudson Bay Company.

1824—Fort Mr. Grant probably established on section 7-6-23 near Hartney.

1825—Fort Garry journal tells of first winter trade at Grant House.

1827—Governor Simpson reported to London that Grant had been authorized to trade the rich Brandon area under license. Evidently a belated report or action taken three years before.

1828—Hudson Bay journal reports that Grant's trade at his Souris post as good.

1828—Brandon House re-established late in the year, and the practice of allowing settlers to trade with the Indians brought to an end.

1836—Fort Desjarlais built by Joe Desjarlais on section 31-5-24.

1843-45—Peter Garrioch operated a small post on the Mouse River south of Melita on the American side.

1855—A post called Souris River is listed in the minutes of the Hudson Bay Company. Probably the same as Grant House. Listed again for 1857-58 to 1860-61.

1857—Capt. Palliser in August visited a Hudson Bay post when it was empty, and says it corresponded to Grant's House on Arrowsmith map.

1858—Professor Hind saw a Hudson Bay post in July in Souris sand hills which he says was maintained only in the winters during the absence of the Sioux.

1861—Fort Mr. Grant probably closed for good.

1879—Eighteen years later, first settler reached the mouth of Plum Creek.

1881—Sowden colonization party settled the Souris district.

# Brief Biographies of Early Explorers

## DAVID THOMPSON

David Thompson was born in Westminster in 1770 of humble parents and was an orphan at the age of two years. He was placed in the Grey Coat school by a kindly gentleman and when only 14 years of age, was one of two boys picked by representatives of the Hudson Bay Company for service in America. In May, 1784, he sailed for the new Churchill Fort where he spent his first winter. The next season he was at York Fort at the mouth of the Nelson learning to be a writer and trader.

A year later he was on the Saskatchewan river north of the city of Saskatoon of today. The winter of 1789-90, when not yet 20 years of age, he spent at Cumberland House where he received his first training as a surveyor from Philip Turner.

The next two winters were spent at Cumberland House and York Fort, and then his career as a surveyor, and explorer, commenced in earnest.

David Thompson left the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1797 when the company informed him that exploration and survey work were not the services they required of him. With Peter Fidler he had received extensive survey training from Philip Turner and as a result was intrigued with the possibilities of exploration. He therefore left the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company and travelled to Grand Portage where in July, 1797, he entered the service of the opposition, the North West Company.

A month later, in August, 1797, he left Grand Portage with express instructions from his new employers to determine the location of all the company's trading posts, to locate the 49th parallel, to visit the Mandan villages of the Missouri, and to gather information in general of the whole western country.

According to A. S. Morton, he was also instructed to reach the mouth of the Columbia ahead of the American Fur Company (John Jacob Astor). This he failed to do, and Morton is inclined to be critical, as a result, claiming that he lacked aggressive courage and initiative in this one instance. At any rate on leaving Grand Portage (near Port Arthur) in August 1797, he received orders from the North West Company on all of its agents and trading posts for both men and whatever else he required. And in the next fifteen years he travelled almost continuously, establishing posts, exploring and observing, keeping a daily record. His diary covers some 4000 sheets of foolscap paper.

He went along the regular route from Grand Portage to Lake Winnipeg, passing the establishments on Rainy River and at the mouth of the Winnipeg River. From there he went up to the Dauphin district, by way of Lake Manitoba, portaged to Winnipegosis, and up Swan River to Swan River House. Leaving there in September he went across country to the Stone Indian or Assiniboine River where there were several posts one of which was in charge of Cuthbert Grant (Sr.).

His course was then down the Assiniboine to the Souris mouth. On November 27th, 1797, he left the Souris post of John McDonnell for the Mandan villages. His guide and interpreter was Rene Jusomme, who had lived with the Mandans for some eight years.

He remained at the Missouri villages until January 10th, 1798, trying to persuade the Mandans to hunt beaver and take them to the North West posts

on the Assiniboine. On February 3rd, he and his party again reached the post at the Souris mouth.

Staying only a few days to write up his journal notes, he reached Red River on March 7th and then followed that river to its source and then to the source of the Mississippi.

On March 21st, he was at the North West post operated by Baptiste Cadotte, latitude 47-54-21. which was perhaps the company's most southerly post in that region.

Leaving the headwaters of the Mississippi, he followed the North West Company's trade route to Lake Superior arriving in May, 1798.

Next he surveyed part of the south shore of Lake Superior and reached Grand Portage from Sault St. Marie early in June. Seven days later he started back for the country north of the Saskatchewan. He went by way of the upper Churchill River and Ile a la Crosse to Beaver river, up Green river and past a North West post at Green Lake.

He then crossed overland to Fort George on the Saskatchewan, and then built a fort at Lac la Biche where he spent the winter. In the early spring of 1799 he was at Fort Augustus on the North Saskatchewan. Then after exploring the rivers in the area, he visited Lesser Slave Lake, descended the Athabaska and crossed overland to Ile a la Crosse Fort, where on June 10th he married Charlotte Small, the 15-year-old half-breed daughter of Patrick Small, a North West trader.

They left immediately for Grand Portage, but were back at Fort George in September where they remained until March, 1800.

He then went to Fort Augustus and Rocky Mountain House. In October he left for the mountains where he met the Kootenay Indians on the upper Red Deer. In November he was on the upper Bow River west of Calgary. He wintered at Rocky Mountain House and the following June was again in the Rockies.

His journals for the latter part of 1801 and early 1802 are missing but in November of 1802 he was at Lesser Slave Lake. Early in 1803 he was on the Peace River where he wintered.

He then went down the Peace River to Athabaska House, and in the comparatively early summer was at Fort William on Lake Superior, the headquarters of the North West Company having been moved from Grand Portage. By early September he was back at Cumberland House, and until June 1806, was travelling almost continuously between the Saskatchewan and Churchill. During all this time he was mapping routes and establishing posts.

In June, 1806, he was at Fort William and by early September he was back at Cumberland House. In October he was at Rocky Mountain House, and on May 10th, 1807, he left Rocky Mountain House to cross the mountains.

On June 30th, he reached the Columbia and paddled upstream to Windermere Lake. He then spent the winter in that region after building a fort about a mile below the lake.

In April, 1808, he crossed by portage to the Kootenay river and was back at his post by early June. He then went to Rainy Lake House with furs, arriving on August 2nd and on October 31st was back on the Columbia.

In April, 1809, he crossed the mountains and was at Fort Augustus by June 24th. Crossing the mountains he went up the Columbia and down the Kootenay, and built a post on the shores of Lake Pend d'Oreille. In November he built a post on Ashley Creek in Montana. In 1810 he went again across the prairies to Rainy Lake, passing the ruins of Fort Augustus, on the Saskatchewan river, which had been destroyed by the Blackfoot Indians since his last visit.

When he reached the mountains he found the Piegans blocking the pass

discovered by Howse, so had to travel northward to the Athabaska Pass, narrowly escaping starvation. And on January 11th, 1811, he crossed the height of land, for all practical purposes, the first to realize the advantages of the Athabaska Pass.

He then explored the Columbia and Spokane rivers, and reached the mouth of the Columbia on July 15th or 16th, where he found that the Astor party had preceded him and established Fort Astoria for the Pacific Fur Company.

After remaining a few days Thompson ascended the Columbia, went up the Snake to latitude 46-36-13 and then crossed overland to Spokane House. He then ascended the Columbia through the Arrow Lakes to the mouth of the Canoe river, which completed his survey of the Columbia region, a task that had taken about four and a half years.

He then crossed the mountains by the Athabaska Pass, but was back on the Columbia in May 1812. In August he was at Fort William and then left the West.

After settling at Terrebonne, near Montreal, he spent two years on his great map of the West which is now in the care of the Provincial Department of Records in Toronto.

He died at Longueil near Montreal in February 1857, almost if not entirely destitute, and was buried in Mount Royal Cemetery. His wife only survived him about three months.

Thompson's map locates 78 posts of the North West Company, but it does not include the Ash House near Hartney, which he mentions in his diary record of December 7th, 1797.

## JOHN PRITCHARD

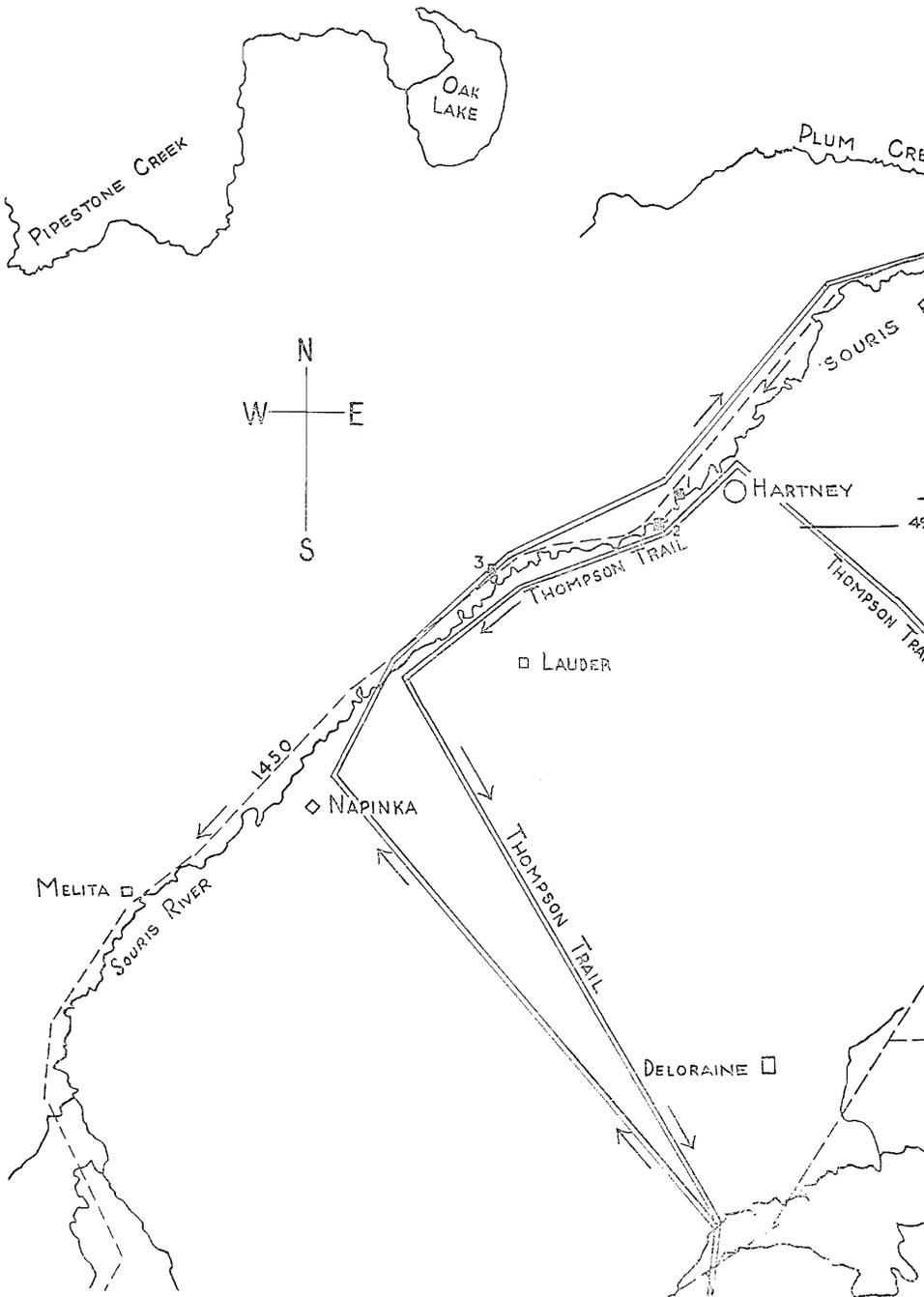
John Pritchard, whose remarkable story of his wanderings for 40 days lost on the Souris plains, is given in his letter to his family, was master of one of the trading posts on the Assiniboine near the mouth of the Souris in 1805 — the time of the incident. He was then about 28 years of age.

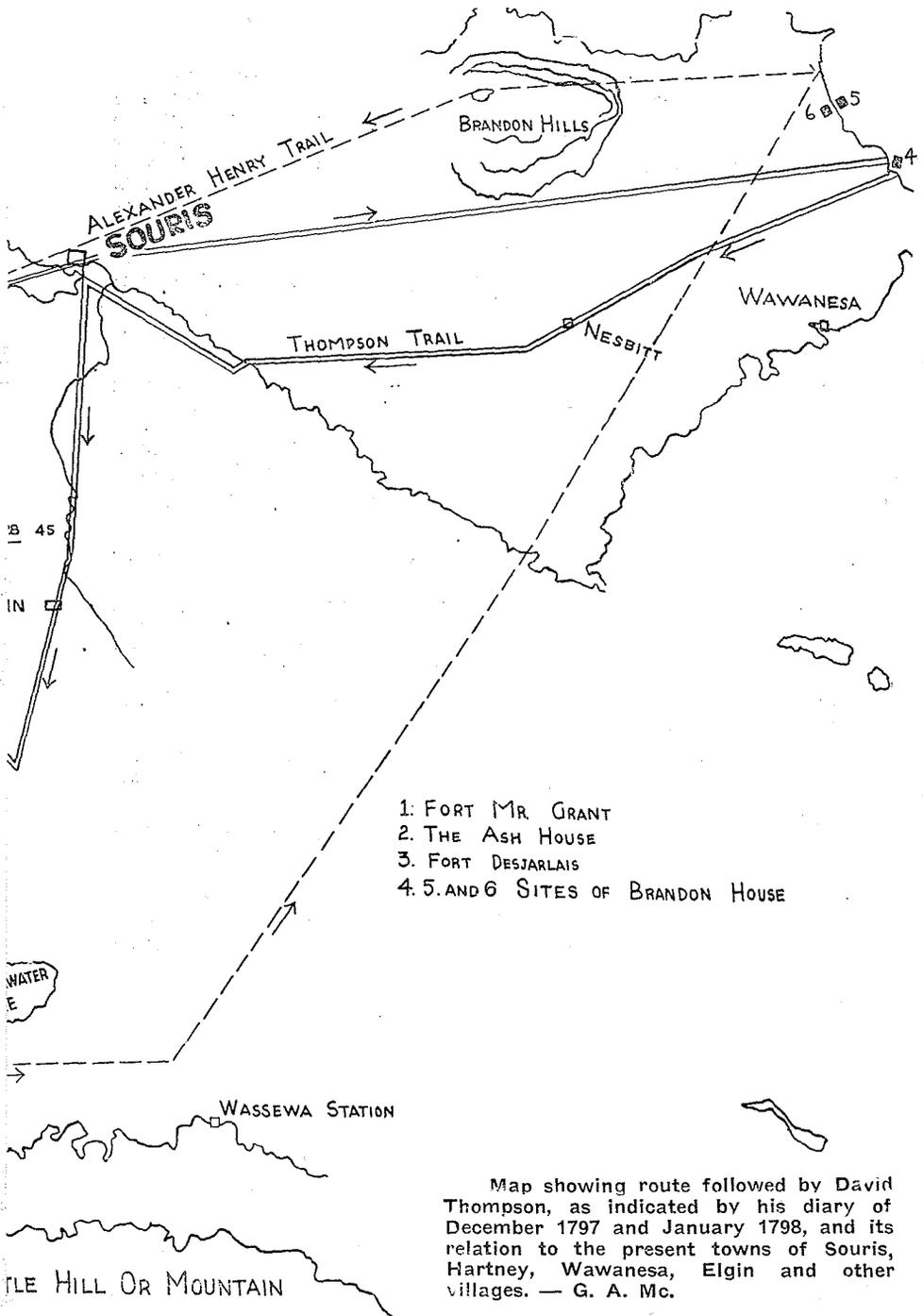
He was later a well-known resident of Red River. A son entered the church, and a grandson, Archbishop S. P. Matheson, became Primate of all Canada.

## PETER GARRIOCH

Peter Garrioch was born at Red River in 1811 and was educated at Kenyon College, Ohio. He was the son of a Hudson Bay man, his mother a native of the country. He was an uncle of Rev. A. C. Garrioch who wrote "First Furrows."

His diary covers at least a portion of the years when he had a post on the Souris river near where Melita stands today. The diary indicates that during the years when he operated the post (1843 to 1845) he was very much in love with Isabella Mackenzie, a daughter of Mackenzie of the American Fur Company. He later married her sister, Margaret, settled near Portage la Prairie and became the first postmaster at Westbourne. He died about 1890 and is buried at Westbourne. He was a bitter opponent of the Hudson Bay Co. At the time of writing there are still some of his descendants living near Westbourne.





Map showing route followed by David Thompson, as indicated by his diary of December 1797 and January 1798, and its relation to the present towns of Souris, Hartney, Wawanesa, Elgin and other villages. — G. A. Mc.

# CUTHBERT GRANT

Cuthbert James Grant was born in the Qu'Appelle or Assiniboine district about the year 1793. His father, Cuthbert Grant, was a Scottish trader of the North West Company, and his mother a Cree of the Qu'Appelle region. Grant, Sr., died in 1799 when his son was only a few years old. After his father's death young Cuthbert was sent east to Montreal where he was educated. He probably spent a few years in Scotland with his father's nearest relatives, the Stuarts, where he may have had some medical education.

About the year 1812, he returned to the West, and was immediately placed in charge of one of the posts of the North West Company, the company that had protected and educated him.

He was naturally a staunch supporter of the North West, and a bitter opponent of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Mrs. Margaret Arnett McLeod, well-known western historian, says that historians have found it easy to condemn him, but that "all through the conflict one sees in his actions a whole-hearted and loyal co-operation with his associates. Convinced that no law could disprove the North West Company's and Metis' right to the country through generations of occupancy, he led skirmishes, seized provisions and property, callously ordered the settlers' houses fired, and, after the Seven Oaks massacre, "threatened that not a soul would be spared if there was any resistance. He promised, however, that with the surrender of public property, all would be well, and he made good his word."

After the recapture of Fort Douglas, he was either arrested or went voluntarily to Montreal to stand trial. In 1818 he was in jail in Quebec City, but he never seems to have been tried, one record being to the effect that the Grand Jury returned "No Bill," and he was liberated.

In 1820 he was back in his western haunts and again waging the North West Company's war.

In 1821 the two warring companies, the North West Company and the Hudson Bay Company, amalgamated and two years later Cuthbert Grant was taken into the service of the Hudson Bay Co. at Fort Garry.

In 1824 he was given an outfit by the Company to trade from Turtle Mountains to the Qu'Appelle, and undoubtedly established "Fort Mr. Grant" on the Souris river.

About the same time (1824) he became a settler at White Horse Plains, about 12 miles west of Fort Garry, and the district became known as Grantown. After his death in 1854 the settlement was re-named St. Francois Xavier.

# ALEXANDER HENRY THE YOUNGER

Alexander Henry, Jr., is the other fur trader and traveller who has left us a record of his travels across the Souris plains and along the Souris river.

He entered the employ of the North West Company in 1792 and his di-

ary entries start in 1799 when he was building a trading post about 35 miles west-north-west of Portage la Prairie.

In 1800 he went to Grand Portage and returned via Lake Winnipeg and the Red River to Park River in northern Minnesota where he built a post.

In 1801 he abandoned Park River and built a post on the Red River on the north side of the Pembina.

In 1803 he was at Fort William at the mouth of the Kaministikwa river. He was there again in 1804 and 1805.

In 1806 he made a trip via the Assiniboine and Souris rivers to the Missouri following almost David Thompson's route of 1797-8. In 1808 he left the Red River area for the Saskatchewan. He wintered at Fort Vermillion but in 1809 went to Fort William and in September was back at Vermillion.

In 1810 he went to Rocky Mountain House, and in November of that year rode up the river to a spot on the north bank where Peter Pangman had cut his name in 1790.

In 1811 he was in the mountains as far as the source of the Blackberry river but was back at Lower White Earth House by May 17th.

There are no entries in his diary for 1812 and until November 15th, 1813, when he was at Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia, having come from Fort William. He records being present when the name Astoria was changed to Fort George.

On May 22nd, 1814, his career ended abruptly when he was drowned when, with Donald McTavish of the North West Company, he was on his way from Astoria to the company's vessel, the "Isaac Todd."

Elliott Coues (Washington, D.C.) published in 1897 his three volume interpretation of Henry's journal. Coues never saw the original journal which covered a period of 15 years, 1799 to 1814, but only a copy made and signed by one Geo. Coventry and dated February 20th, 1824.

Imagining that few readers would have the patience to follow all of Henry's literary wanderings, Coues tells us that he deemed it necessary to almost re-write a great deal. Henry's writing, he says, was something like this:

"I now once more found myself again under the necessity of being obliged to commence preparing for my intended departure immediately."

"I was, therefore," Coues says, "satisfied to make my author say what he meant to say in plain English letting him go on with equal pace to the massacre of his mother-in-law, or the setting of his yellow hen on 13 eggs."

Coues' opinion of Henry, based of course, upon his reading and study of the Coventry copy, is not very complimentary.

In 1801, he says that Henry was established as a winterer on the Red River of the North-Panbian. He says that here Henry was "engaged in the humble routine of traffic with the Indians, whom he cheated and debauched as a matter of course with assiduity and success, upon strict business principles and after the most approved methods."

"Meanwhile he fell into another habit of which Northmen were seldom guilty — for he took to the pen, and at his leisure — that is when he was not serving his coppery customers with diluted alcohol or other articles they desired at fabulous prices — he kept a diary."

This diary was kept until the day before he was drowned in the Columbia river — May 22nd, 1814.

Coues says: "The seamy side of the fur trade which Henry shows us with such a steady hand that we can scarcely follow him with unshaken nerves, is simply hell on earth — hell peopled with no souls above a beaver skin, fired by King Alcohol for the worship of Mammon."

## SOURIS RIVER NOTE

In Davidson's "North West Company there appears a map (original in British Museum) entitled "A Map of the Indian Territories in North America exhibiting the route of the Indian fur traders from Fort William to the Red River and to the other trading stations of the North West Company."

This map shows the "Ash Ho. (NW)" on the north or left bank of the Souris.

Davidson says: "It is not quite certain when English establishments were located in the Assiniboine district . . . They appear to have early explored the Assiniboine, its tributaries, the Qu'Appelle and the Souris and to have crossed the prairie to the Mandan villages on the Missouri. Trade in the latter region seems to have been conducted from Pine Fort. . . . In McDonnell's journal there are references to the journey of a band in 1793 from Fort Esperance to the Mandans and to one which had just returned in May, 1795. During 1793, David Morin, the North West Company clerk whom Robert Grant left in charge of Pine Fort, made a trip to the Missouri on the solicitation of three freemen, Morgan, Jassome and Cardin. While returning Monin and Morgan were killed by a Sioux war party. . . . The first detailed account of an expedition is that of David Thompson, 1797-1798."

# David Thompson's Diary

David Thompson's diary of his Mandan trip commences with an entry made on November 26th at the "House" of Mr. McDonnel near the Souris mouth.

November 26th. 1797. Sunday. A cloudy, snowy day. Thermometer 4 below. My men looking for horses all day but could not find them.

November 27th. Monday. A cloudy snowy day. Thermometer zero. Looked for the horses till 4.00 p.m. before they were found. Got all ready to set off the morrow morn.

November 28th. Tuesday. A fine, clear day. At 9½ a.m. set off. Course south 75 west one mile. At the house crossed the \*Red River. South 60 west 7 miles to a point of woods. All plain. South 50 west 6 miles. This course the woods from the Moose Head Hills which about centre of course lay about N.W. by W., 6 miles from us forms a line close on our right. Two low hills lie, one S.E. of us about 2 miles long, the other S.S.E., 3 miles long, each about 9 miles distant. About 4 miles on this . . . the Hills the River la Souris runs and discharges itself into the Red River below the House a distance. Very cold day. Wind W.S.W., a small gale. Froze a little of my nose. About 2¾ p.m. put up, about 9.00 p.m., thermometer 20 below.

November 29th. Wednesday. A very cold day with a westerly wind and about 7.00 a.m. thermometer 27 below at 9.00 a.m., 22 below. Lay by being too cold to proceed.

November 30th. Thursday. A very cold day, westerly gale. Thermometer at 7.00 a.m. 32 below, at 9.00 a.m., 32 below. A most horrible cold day. The men killed two cows.

December 1st. Friday. A very cold day. Wind W.S.W., a small gale.

Thermometer about 7.00 a.m. 37 below and at 8.00 p.m. 32 below. Vivier killed a cow.

December 2nd. Saturday. A very cold night at 8.00 a.m., thermometer 36 below, at 8.00 p.m. thermometer 15 below. A terrible cold day but moderated towards evening. Wind W.S.W., a gale. Vivier killed a cow. Tent very smoky.

December 3rd. Sunday. A cloudy, snowy day. Wind W.N.W., thermometer at 7.00 a.m. 3 below. We could travel this day were it not for the high drift which prevents us from seeing a ¼ mile beyond us, and we have a very large plain to cross. These several days worked a few observations. Tent smoky. At 8.00 p.m. thermometer 2 below.

December 4th. Monday. At 7.00 a.m. thermometer 4 below. Wind W. by S., a stormy gale all day, part clear and part cloudy. At 9.00 a.m. set off course by the sun S.W. by W. 10½ miles to the Mouse River. Went down the bank to 5 tents of Stony Indians, stopped about ¼ hour then went off W.S.W. ½ mile up the river at end of course crossed it, then course W. by S. 6 miles. Put up below the bank close to the river. One mile short of course crossed a brook. At beginning of course the river comes from the N.W., 2 miles of course gone the river distant about 1½ miles then approaches nearer to end of course. The river is about 14 yards wide. Banks moderate no woods but a little along the river and those of oak, etc. Put up at 3¾ p.m. Windy day.

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\*Now known as the Assiniboine.

December 5th. Tuesday. A fine morning thermometer at 7.00 a.m. 13 below. At 7¼ set off. Course about south 4 miles to a small hummock of aspens alongside the brook we crossed yesterday and which we crossed at end of course. Course south 5½ miles crossed and recrossed the brook which comes from the Turtle Mountains. S. by W. 7 miles. 1½ p.m. the Turtle Mountains not appearing and the weather seeming liable to change we struck off for the woods of the Mouse River and went about N.W. 6 miles N.W. by W. 7 miles all plain without the least woods. . . . At 6½ p.m. we most providentially came to a fine hummock of ash and oak close to the stream of the river and put up. A stormy day wind south at 5¼ a.m. (did he mean p.m.?—G. A. Mc.) the wind changed to a gale at W.N.W. with drift and by 7.00 p.m. it increased to a storm. Cloudy.

December 6th. Wednesday. A heavy gale from the W.N.W. with cloudy warm weather, the snow thawing. We were obliged to lay by not only for the weather but to hunt provisions. About 2.00 p.m. Stone Indian men paid us a visit of about 10 minutes and then went off to their tents which are at a distance from us. We find ourselves about 3 miles below the Old House where people resided 2 years ago. Vaudrill killed 2 bulls. Worked on observations.

December 7th. Thursday. A cloudy warm day. At 7½ a.m. set off course up along the river S.W. 2½ miles S.W. by S. 2 miles to the House at which we put up at 9¼ a.m. as we had not time enough to cross to the Turtle Hill. My yellow horse quite lame and too poor to continue the journey. Thermometer at 7.00 a.m. 25 above. Stepped the River la Souris in 19 steps, say 17 yards. Several small hummocks of aspens about us but mostly all oak and ash. An Indian paid us a visit and then went away. No success in hunting. Snow with a westerly gale. Horses that

have white feet have the hair soon come off with the snow especially if it be hard while those who have black hair on their legs, etc., care little for the snow even when it is hard. Mons. Jussome has a fine mare with us. One of her feet is white and other is black. The white foot has the hair off it with a small hole in the flesh while the other leg though equally exposed has not a single hair injured. My yellow horse has unfortunately all his four feet white which is at present the cause of his lameness.

December 8th. Friday. A fine, clear, day. Would have set off but I wished to give my yellow horse in care to the Indians to take to the House. At 10 a.m. an old Indian came to whom I gave the horse in care with a note to Mr. McDonnel. Observed for latitude and with sun, sun, moon N.W. at night Jupiter. No success in hunting. Our provisions all done. Thermometer 10 below.

December 9th. Saturday. A fine, sharp day at 7.00 a.m. Thermometer 26 below. At 8½ a.m. set off. Course west 2 miles crossed the river . . . at end of course close to the river. Course W.S.W. 4¼ miles course S.W. 2¼ miles to 8 tents of Stone Indians. This last course small hills of sand. Put up at 11.00 a.m. Met several of the Stone Indians going to the House with provisions and wolf skins. The old man had my horse with him. Took 10 pieces of meat from them. Hired a young Stone Indian to accompany us to the Mandan Villages. Gave him a pistol and 30 rounds of ammunition, 2 knives and 1 fathom of tobacco. The men are to give him on the return to the House a ten skin keg of liquor. A fine high sand knowl bank of river close to us. Viewed the river a part of it lies about S.S.W. 3 miles from us, it then winds to the westward. Sight the Turtle Hill S. 30 E. by the compass. We are on the right side of the river. No woods but a little along the river and on the Turtle Hill.

December 10th. Sunday. A fine, sharp, clear morning. Thermometer 20 below till 8.00 a.m. when the wind rose a gale from the S.E. and by 9.00 a.m. increased to a perfect storm with such heavy drift as obscured the hemisphere. It was little better than night as we could not see 100 yards about us. At 7½ a.m. set off course S. 30 E. by the compass distance 22 miles. The storm prevented us making a few shrubs of oak till 5¼ p.m., when we put up. Several of us much frozen. As bad a day as I ever saw in my life. Poor Hoal at 10½ a.m. lost his dogs and train and with them all his venture. At 7.00 p.m. showers of rain, hail, sleet and snow which with the storm continued all night.

December 11th. Monday. A cloudy day and southerly gale with showers of snow. The snow thawing. At 8.00 a.m. set off and went about 200 yards to a hummock of oak, ash and aspens when we put up. A bad snowy day. No success in hunting.

December 12th. Tuesday. A mild, snowy, cloudy day. S.S.W. gale with ???. Hoal set off for the House but thick weather coming on he turned about and followed us. We are each to give him 2 beavers worth of goods to make some amends for his loss. At 9.00 a.m. set off course along the W. side of the Hill. S. 10 E. 2 miles S. 2 W. 6 miles. At about 3.00 p.m. put up. These courses are corrected. Stopped about an hour for 2 men who were hunting but they having no success I took my mare, ran and killed a tolerable good bull. Took 2 sled loads of him. A stormy evening with snow.

December 13th. Wednesday. A very stormy night and day with very high drift wind north clear sky. Could not proceed. Observed for longitude and latitude.

(Between December 13th and January 29th Thompson crossed the stormy, wind-swept plains south of the Turtle Hill to the Mandan villages

on the Missouri. On January 29th he was back on the western edge of the Turtle Hill.—G. A. Mc.)

January 29th, 1798. Monday. A very thick rimy day—light airs variable. Lay by. Vivian killed a good bull. Hoal and Vaudriel killed another far off ? ?

January 30th. Tuesday. A very close thick day. It was almost as dark as night the whole day without ever clearing. At 7.00 a.m. set off for the Turtle Mountains. Course N. 10 W. by the compass 24 miles to the woods. We put up at 4¼ p.m. about three miles E.N.E. of the place where we took tent poles. Thank God, as we made the woods which we did not see till we were within ½ mile of them the weather cleared wind easterly. Saw on the Hill 21 male deer. No cattle except a very few bulls.

January 31st. Wednesday. A very fine warm day light airs from the S.W. At 7.00 a.m. set off course N. 52 W. 2 miles N. 30 W. 4½ miles. The place where we put up when we killed the bull and where I observed is now N. 30 E. ½ mile distant. Course N. 7 W. 7½ miles. The weather so warm that we can hardly walk—put up at 2½ p.m. The place where we put up when we crossed from the Mouse River as we went is now about North ½ mile beyond us. Sight the woods a bold body of about 3 miles bears W. 24 miles. There also seems to be woods among the sand knowls W.N.W. 21 miles distant. The woods we have to make bears N. 44 W. and extends to N. 20 W. The woods of the N.W. seem to be 2 or 3 miles nearer than last course. All these courses by the compass. The sun set S. 50 W. tonight. Tolerable good horizon.

February 1st. Thursday. A very fine day. Wind a southerly breeze. About 6.10 a.m. we set off from the Hill to the Mouse River. Course N. 20 W. 19 miles to the Isle of Woods . . . of where we left the Indians at the sand knowls. Course N. 6 E. 3

miles to the sand knowles where we again found the same Indians in the same place. Near the end of Course crossed the Mouse River. Went beyond the Indians to put up N.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile. Put up at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  p.m. We made the Isle of Woods at 1.00 p.m. Walked sharply. Then found a pitching track and stopped to make a drink of water. 6 or 7 tents of Stone Indians. They behaved kindly to the Mandan young men.

February 2nd. Friday. A very fine day. At  $6\frac{3}{4}$  a.m. set off. Course N. 30 E. 6 miles to opposite and close to the Old House where I observed then course about N. 30 E.  $4\frac{1}{4}$  miles to the high sand knowl close to the river. Course about N. 35 E. 9 miles to the Plumb River. It is about 13 yards wide and comes from behind the Boss Hill. Went about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile beyond it to a gully close to the river and put up at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  p.m. Walked fast on a good hard track without snowshoes. All this day we have kept the Mouse River tolerable close on our right. It has very little woods. Met at our up putting place several Stone Indians—suppose 5 tents. The Mouse River is here about 30 yards wide and open in several places. All plains to the E.N. We still see the Turtle Hill bending to the eastward. But little woods to the westward. The English passed here about 8 days ago.

February 3rd. Saturday. At 1.00 a.m. got up and at 1.50 a.m. we set off for the House of Mr. McDonnell at the Red River. Course about N.E. by the compass 8 miles across the plain to the woods of the Moose Head then course N.E. 8 miles to the last woods and close to the high knowl of the Moose Head. Sandy ground.

Then course N. 75 E.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the House at  $10\frac{1}{2}$  a.m. Thank God. The last course all plain. A fine moonlight night and southerly gale. A very fine day.

February 4th. Sunday. A very fine day . . . drawing a horizontal dial. Hugh McCraghen, Minier, Murray and 2 other men set off for the Missouri. Observed for latitude.

February 5th. Monday. A very fine day westerly gale of wind . . . set the dial . . . writing my journal, etc., and making ready to set off tomorrow for the Calling River. Got a pair of blue . . . trousers from Mr. McDonnell and got a pair of jumping deer skin trousers also made—2 pairs of good shoes and 2 pairs of socks.

February 6th. Tuesday. In the night a N.W. gale of wind arose with snow. At 8.00 a.m. the snow ceased—and light thin clouds with a strong gale. The men thought it blew too hard and cold to proceed . . .

(Apparently written later)

Upon considering the long time it would take I gave over my journey to the Calling River and shall begin drawing off the jounries I have made.

From this time to the commencement of my journey down the Stone Indian River I employed myself wholly in calculations and drawings.

(David Thompson stayed at Mr. McDonnell's until February 26th when his diary is resumed, telling of his "journey down the Stone Indian River to its junction with the Red River and up to the House of the North West Company in charge of Mr. Cha-boelliet." — G. A. Mc.)

# Diary of Alexander Henry, Jr.

In July 1806, Alexander Henry, Jr., undertook almost the same journey that David Thompson accomplished during the winter of 1797-98.

Henry was a fur trader for the North West Company and according to his journal left the Company's post on the Assiniboine after being ferried across the river by the men of the Hudson Bay post. His journal entries, as edited by Coues, are given below. They picture the difficulties of summer travel, as well as the characteristics of the country, at that time.

July 14th. Early all hands were alert, preparing for our departure. Our party consisted of seven persons and eight horses: Mr. Chaboillez, Mr. A. McDonald; T. Viandrie; Joseph Ducharme, Hugh MacEacan (Thompson's McCracken or McCraghen), our guide, an old Irishman formerly belonging to the artillery; a Saulteur lad, Pautchauconce (Chaboillez' brother-in-law); and myself. We had provided ourselves with a few articles for the Missouri Indians, such as ammunition, tobacco, knives, beads, etc.; half a bag of pemmican and three pieces of dried meat formed our stock of provisions. We had 50 pounds' weight, which, with ourselves, our arms, blankets, and a little ammunition for present use, formed a heavy burden for our horses. The eighth horse carried my tent and some other baggage including a compass and spy-glass. At eight o'clock we mounted and kept on a slow trot. Our course was W.S.W. for the Moose Head, where we arrived at eleven o'clock, and stopped at a small lake to refresh our horses. Here we shot a few ducks, and at one o'clock saddled and proceeded in the same direction through a very hilly country destitute of wood. From the summits of these high, barren hills we had delightful views. In some low spots were clus-

ters of poplars; to the N. we could see the Assiniboine, N. of which we could trace the course of Rapid River, which comes from Fort Dauphin mountain. Herds of cabbrie or jumping deer (antelope, *Antilocapra americana*) were always in sight. At four o'clock we came to Riviere la Souris, at the junction of Plumb river, which comes in from the W.N.W. We crossed it and kept along the N. side of Riviere la Souris until sunset, when we put up for the night near Fort de la Frenier. Here we found many vestiges and encampments in concealed spots, where horse thieves had remained for some time, and, on looking about the sandy hills in search of fruit, we saw several fresh tracks. This put us on our guard, and we fettered our horses around our fire—or rather smoke, for we could get no wood. We therefore gathered quantity of dry buffalo dung (*bois de vache* or "bodewash") with which we made shift to keep the mosquitoes away; our provisions required no cooking. A strong breeze from the E. kept the mosquitoes down in the grass, our fuel sometimes emitted a gentle flame, and all was mirth until eleven o'clock, when suddenly the wind came about from the N.W. bringing a terrible thunderstorm. The rain soon fell in torrents, the weather became excessively sultry, and the mosquitoes were upon us in clouds. Our situation was truly miserable, having no other shelter than a small tent, into which was crowded all our baggage besides the seven persons, nearly suffocated by the heat and mosquitoes. Our horses could not remain a moment quiet, the flies kept them so enraged. Some of their fetters gave way, and off they went. We pursued them in the dark, and found them by means of the flashes of lightning. Our day's journey was about 14 leagues W.S.W. by the compass.

July 15th. When daylight appeared the storm ceased, but the weather was still hot and sultry, and with wet buffalo dung we could make no smoke. We therefore had much trouble to saddle our horses, that were dancing mad with mosquitoes. Every moment we were in danger of being crushed by them. After much vexation we mounted, wet to the skin, and proceeded along the banks of the river, here very high; the current is gentle and appears navigable for large canoes, except where reefs or rocks cross the river. The soil on both sides appears sandy, at some places intermixed with stones. Cabbrie were in sight almost every moment, but so shy that we could not get a shot. At nine o'clock we came to Butte de Sable. Here we stopped to refresh our horses, they having got little rest last night. From the top of one of these sandy hills we could see Turtle mountain bearing S.E., distant about seven leagues. At ten o'clock we proceeded, and having cleared the hills, fell upon the Assiniboine route from Montagne a la Bosse, which is only one short day's journey N. of us. The heat was intolerable, without a breath of air, and the mosquitoes tormented us.

At one o'clock we stopped at a small lake, as the excessive heat had nearly knocked the horses up. The water was cool and pleasant; we all bathed, which refreshed us very much. It is fortunate for us that water is plentiful. It sometimes happens in this country, in very dry seasons, that water is only to be found in some particular creek or lake. When this is the case we provide ourselves with small kegs or bladders. But this often proves insufficient; some people have lost their lives on this account, and others have had narrow escapes, being two days without a drop of water. This must be still worse than the mosquitoes; our thirst is perpetual, and at every pool some of us stretch upon our bellies to drink. But this year we are under no apprehen-

sions. heavy rains having filled up every creek, lake pond, and indeed every hollow spot in the plains.

At three o'clock we saddled. We passed several Assiniboine camps on the banks of the river; they consisted of from 30 to 70 tents. These people are remarkable for choosing the most delightful spots to pitch their tents, commonly on elevated places, where there is no wood to interrupt the view. They would be a happy people, were it not for their continual wars and the frequent quarrels among themselves, which generally end in bloodshed. The common causes of these quarrels are women and horses.

We attempted to cross the river, but found the water too high, and continued on the N. side. This lengthened our route some miles, as the river here makes a considerable bend to the N.W.; however, to make up for this, we pushed on faster than usual. The cool of the evening was in our favor, and at six o'clock we came to the little river of Tete a la Biche. We had much trouble to cross it, in mud up to our horses' bellies.

Here we stopped for the night on a beautiful high hill, at the foot of which flowed the little river. From Riviere la Souris we got some dry wood, and kindled a good fire. A cool breeze sprang up from the N.W., and kept down the mosquitoes. We had seen buffalo in great numbers westward of us, and as they were just entering the rutting season, they made a terrible bellowing during the night. We found great plenty of pears along the little river, almost ripe, and very good eating.

Our course this day has been about W.S.W., the same as yesterday, mostly along the banks of the river, excepting at some of the great windings, which we did not follow. Riviere la Souris, thus far up, is but thinly wooded; at some places, there is none at all for several miles. The land on each side is high, and stretches out

into the level prairie; as far as the eye can reach no wood is to be seen in any direction. The little river we have just crossed arises in a range of hills called Tete a la Biche; about 10 leagues W.N.W. from this the banks are very high and free from wood. From our camp we have a good view of Turtle mountain, about eight leagues E. of us. Our most direct route would have been along the W. extremity of that mountain but we had been informed that a number of Crees and Assiniboines were tented there, who would certainly steal our horses if they could—even pillage, and, perhaps, murder us, as they disapprove of our taking arms and ammunition to the Missouri to supply the natives there, with whom they are often at war. We, therefore, thought it prudent to make this circuit to avoid them. It is called 30 leagues from the establishment on the Assiniboine to our present camp.

We kept watch all night, each in turn. Some herds of buffalo passed near us; the noise they made startled our horses and made them uneasy for the night; they appeared in one body from E. to W., on a quick pace, as if lately chased by horsemen.

**July 16th.** At daybreak we saddled, but, on mounting, I found my seat very uncomfortable, having a blister the size of a hen's egg under each thigh, occasioned by the excessive heat of yesterday and the continual friction between my saddle and leather trousers. The horse I rode was a cruel beast, with the worst trot I ever saw; both blisters burst soon, and I was in great pain.

At eight o'clock we crossed another little river (South Antler creek), which takes its rise out of the same Tete a la Biche. This branch is much broader and deeper than the other (North Antler Creek). The banks appeared tolerably well wooded, as far as we could see. At its junction with Riviere la Souris the latter ceases to have any wood. The banks here diminish, so that only a few miles

higher up the water appears upon a level with the plains, and looks more like a chain of lakes surrounded by rushes and long, coarse grass. Here it also changes its course, coming from the S.E.; this direction it keeps for about 20 leagues, as far up as Riviere aux Saules (Willow creek), when it again assumes the appearance of a river, is well wooded upon both sides, and the banks are much higher. On this little river (South Antler creek) we found plenty of pears, nearly ripe; we gathered a good stock as our guide informed us that we had an extensive plain to cross, and should see no more wood until tomorrow, and even water would be scarce.

At nine o'clock we left (Mouse) river and directed our course S.S.W. on a level plain. We soon fell in with buffalo, all in motion, from E. to W., bellowing and tearing up the ground as they went on. We killed a bull, the flesh of which is more palatable at this season than the cow. We took each a few slices and continued on our journey. We saw numbers of cabbie of two different kinds, some almost as large as fallow deer, and others much smaller, red and white spotted; the latter had young, and did not appear so shy as those we had seen before. The young ones, sighting us, would run up to us within a few yards, while the dams would come on behind them with more caution, until their curiosity was satisfied.

At noon we stopped to refresh our horses; in an hour we were again on our march, and at four o'clock crossed Riviere Ple, which takes its rise in Moose mountain about 15 leagues W. from this, and, after a course of about 20 leagues through an open plain, empties into Riviere la Souris, a few leagues below Riviere aux Saules. Along this river no wood grows except a few stunted willows. At this place old Menard was pillaged and murdered by three Assiniboines in 1803, on his way to the Missouri. Having crossed this river, we pushed on as fast as possible, some-

times on the gallop, and never slower than a trot, until sunset, when we stopped for the night on the plains.

We found much water on this low and level plain, and, of course, mosquitoes in abundance. We fell to work collecting buffalo dung, of which there was no scarcity; it was damp from the late heavy rains, and would emit no flame; but, having set fire to a great pile, it made a good smudge. Having no kettle to cook with, we broiled our bull's flesh upon the dung and ate a hearty supper, though none of the most palatable or best flavored, as the meat tasted of dung. The weather was sultry and overcast, which increased the clouds of mosquitoes intolerably. Soon after dark it began to rain, and, not being provided with tent poles or any substitute for them, we were soon wet to the skin, and our fire, or rather smoke, was as soon extinguished. The night was so dark we could not see one another, and our horses, enraged by the swarms of mosquitoes which attacked them, were very unruly; we dreaded lest their fetters should give way, when they might trample some of us, or run off. About midnight the long line of one of them broke, but his forefeet were still tied together above the hoof, as we generally hobble horses in the northwest. In jumping and prancing about his hoof came down upon the shinbone of our guide, who was stretched upon his back. The horse was a heavy beast, and the poor old Indian complained bitterly of the pain. We were apprehensive the bone had been broken, but could give him no assistance, as it was impossible to strike a light. We passed the night defending ourselves from the mosquitoes and the horses; the poor fellow had a miserable time, moaning pitifully. When day appeared we examined his leg and found the flesh bruised shockingly, very much swelled, and of all colors of the rainbow. However, we got him on horseback; he was really an object of pity, and not such a sly scoundrel as that

old Indian we picked upon the road between Portage la Prairie and Riviere la Souris who, notwithstanding his groans and lamentations on our leaving him at Riviere aux Epinettes, arrived at Riviere la Souris about two hours after us. That old vagabond, perceiving that I had an extra horse, schemed to ride, that he might reach the fort the sooner, in expectation of getting rum for payment of his trip to Portage la Prairie.

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(Between July 16th, 1806 and August 4th, Alexander Henry, Jr., traversed the plains from a point south of Melita to the Missouri, and back to a point south and somewhat west of the Turtle Mountains. The Riviere la Souris, he says, was in sight about two leagues ahead of them. G.A.Mc.)

We quote again from his diary:

August 4th. At daybreak we were on the lookout for our horses, and found they had returned to their comrades that were tied near us. We lost no time in loading, during which several old bulls stood at a short distance to windward, staring at us with as much unconcern as if they were common cattle. We took our course north, and soon found an astonishing quantity of water, which overlaid the plains more extensively than we had before seen since the commencement of our journey. Buffalo continued to appear in every direction around us. At twelve o'clock we came to the Grosse Butte, which seemed to be their termination northward, as we saw only a few straggling bulls ahead of us. From the summit of these hills we could discern Turtle mountain like a low, blue cloud due N. from us, distant about 20 leagues. The hills are partially covered with short grass; the greater part being a barren, white sand, particularly on the S. side, where there is no verdure whatever. Upon the N. side, at the foot of the hill, is a beautiful lake about three leagues in circumference, with a beach of white gravel and sand. At the S. end, adjoining the foot of the hill,

is a delightful little wood, which runs about three acres up the hill, and for the same distance along the lake. This is a great resort for buffalo and other animals, to shade themselves from the heat of the sun, and may serve as a shelter from storms in winter. The state of the ground in this little wood shows there are always animals in it; for the grass does not grow, and the bark of the trees, to the height of an animal, is worn perfectly smooth by their continual rubbing. The prospect from the top of this hill is very pleasant; to the N. lies an extensive plain, bounded by a ridge that runs E. and W. over which Turtle mountain appears. On the left the country is one level plain, with many small lakes about which numerous herds of buffalo feed. On the right, the plain is also level for about three leagues, where it rises into many high, sandy hills; stunted willows and poplars grow in the valleys, but the barren summits display only white sand. In this direction saw no buffalo, but numerous herds of cabbrie supplied that deficiency. Southward stretched an extensive plain, with many small lakes, and buffalo moving in every direction; the view was only bounded by the small rising grounds we started from this morning. Upon the whole I found this the most delightful spot I recollect to have seen in any part of the meadow country. We determined to enjoy it for a short time; so we unloaded our horses, and having killed a good fat cow, our fire was soon smoking with as many fine appalats as we could crowd upon it.

At noon we loaded and began our march, but soon found the increasing depth of water upon the plains a great inconvenience; it was often up to our horses' bellies, and commonly knee-deep, excepting on the rising grounds. This made our progress very slow and tedious. At six o'clock we stopped for the night upon a small rising of ground, having the banks and woods of Riviere la Souris in sight, about two leagues ahead of us.

The buffalo dung was too damp to burn, the weather was sultry, with an appearance of rain, and mosquitoes so troublesome that our horses could not feed. We fettered and tied them with cords as usual; but eight of them broke their cords and ran off with their forefeet still fettered. We passed a very disagreeable night.

August 5th. No sign of our eight horses. Some of us remained to take care of the property whilst others went to search for them; but all in vain. Night brought no news of our strayed horses.

August 6th. At daybreak seven of our party started on horseback in different directions, whilst I remained with two men to convey our baggage to Riviere la Souris, by putting extra loads upon our remaining horses and making two trips. Having come to the river we found the water extraordinarily high, and, the land being low for some distance from the river, the water had soaked it to such a degree as to make miry places, which our horses could scarcely get through with their heavy loads. The banks, which here and for many leagues below are nearly on a level with the water at its usual height, were entirely overflowed, so that we could hardly get to the wood or find any convenient crossing. After wading through the water, and getting our horses several times fast in the mire, we at last passed over the W. extremity of the sandy ridge, which borders the river and runs parallel with it almost to the S.E. bend opposite the Dog's House. We fell upon the river at the lower end of the wood, a few miles below Riviere aux Saules; its course here is from E. to W. Here we employed the remainder of the day making a raft and crossing our baggage, which was done by means of two long lines—one tied to each end of the raft. With one end of a line in my mouth, I swam the river, hauling the loaded raft over, and unloaded it, when my companion on the opposite side would draw it

back. In this manner everything was got over safe, and soon after six o'clock our party returned, having seen no sign of our strayed horses. This evening was gloomy and silent; several of our party peevishly lamented their loss; some were so much cast down as to lose their appetite, and went to sleep in a very surly mood. At nine o'clock it began to rain and continued all night. Mosquitoes as usual.

August 7th. We were up early, preparing for departure in sullen silence. Those who had lost their horses had baggage to carry, and they did not relish the idea of wading through the water. Many were the "laches" and "sacres" uttered in vain. At seven o'clock we set off, having distributed the loads of the eight horses upon the remaining 17; five of our people were obliged to go afoot, much against their inclination. Soon after leaving camp three of them got into such a pet that they sheared off toward the Turtle mountain. We soon lost sight of them, and saw them no more this day. We followed down the river, which is here destitute of wood, and so continues until it receives the two little rivers of Tete a la Biche (North and South Antler Creeks). The water being very high, the current flowed gently on a level with the plains. It soon divided into several branches, which in turn spread into several small lakes surrounded with rushes, reeds, and tall grass; no wood, not even willows, was to be seen. At eleven o'clock we halted, after some difficulty in getting across small rivulets which fall into the river from the E. At one o'clock we were again on our march, leaving the river to our left, and directing our course N.E. toward the head or W. end of Turtle mountain. Night came on before we could reach it, which obliged us once more to stop in the open plain; but being on a rising ground the buffalo dung was tolerably dry, and we made shift to keep a smudge to drive off the swarms of mosquitoes.

August 8th. We were off early, and pushed on with speed. At eleven o'clock we came to the head of Turtle mountain, where we found the vestiges of several Assiniboine camps, one only a few days old; had we fallen in with them, our horses might have been all stolen. We halted on the brow of the mountain, which appeared to be a very eligible and convenient summer residence for the Assiniboines and Crees, judging from the number of old and new vestiges of camps we saw. It began to rain. I was determined to proceed, let the weather be ever so bad, but some of our party thought proper to shelter themselves from the wet and stop for the night. At one o'clock some of us loaded and pushed on, carrying our baggage. We soon came to small rivulets that issue out of the mountain and empty into a lake, that is situated on the plain about three leagues N.N.W. from the head of the mountain. This lake is five miles long and half a mile wide; in the middle stands two islands. We directed our course along the lake, which runs about N.N.E., found a great quantity of water, and had some trouble in fording the rivulets. At sunset we stopped near one of those banks, which were well supplied with excellent red cherries or cerises, of the largest kind I ever saw in this country, and delicious flavor.

August 9th. For the first time on this journey we were favored with a keen air from the N.W., which kept the mosquitoes down, and allowed us to saddle and load our horses quietly; indeed, we were obliged to keep up a good fire to warm ourselves before mounting. Wrapping our cloaks and blankets round us, we set off before sunrise, shivering with cold. Soon after leaving our camp we mired our horses in attempting to pass too near the N. extremity of the lake; we had some trouble and difficulty in getting them out, which being done we made a long circuit eastward to clear this ugly marsh, by going to the rising

grounds, where we crossed the last rivulet which runs from the mountain into the lake. It was deep and bad crossing, with a strong current. We then came to a more hilly country with a dry soil, and took what is called the Grande Traverse of Turtle mountain, directing our course N. At three o'clock, having forced our horses very much, we came to Riviere la Souris, which here runs from W. to E., and is very rapid. We crossed at the Grand Passage; a few milés below this place it forms a considerable bend at which it receives the waters of one of the Placotte (Rib Bone) lakes, and then courses about E. (nearer N.E.) into the Assiniboine. Having got safely over, we unloaded and gave our horses some time to rest, while we cooked a kettle of pounded corn, and at five o'clock were again on the march. The Moose Head was in sight, and we soon saw the woods of the Assiniboine. Night came on while we were still at a distance from it; but having a beaten path, to which my horse was accustomed, I gave him the loose rein, being determined to get in. We drove on hard in the dark, and the first object that struck my attention was the block-house of the fort, close under which my horse was passing. The gate was instantly opened, and we entered at half-past eleven.

Here we found those peevish fellow-travellers, who had arrived before us, having walked day and night and fallen upon Riviere la Souris at Plumb river. One of them, however, was so completely knocked up that he remained at the Moose Head, and Mr. La Rocque was obliged to send a man with a horse to bring him in; he had arrived just before me, scarcely able to crawl. We also found here a troublesome set of Indians, all drinking. A wash, shave, and change of linen was very acceptable, as I had worn the same shirt since leaving the Panbian River, it was not entirely daily efforts to destroy them. I went to sleep in clean blankets on a soft feather bed, and only those who have

experienced like hardships can form any idea of my delightful repose.

**Sunday, August 10th.** A curious circumstance occurred last night. One of the Indians had sold a horse, and when we arrived was about to return to his camp with the payment. During the bustle and confusion of unloading our horses and storing the property this fellow slipped into the yard with his comrades, whose horses were tied near ours, and in saddling theirs did the same with one of ours that had just arrived. The gates being locked one of them went to the Assiniboine interpreter Desmarais, and desired him to open the gate. This he did; the fellow rode away unnoticed with his comrades, whooping and hallooing, still half drunk, and the theft was not discovered till this morning.

This establishment is now in a miserable condition; they have neither flesh nor fish—nothing but some old musty beat meat, and no grease. They have had but 14 animals, including cabbrie, since the departure of the canoes in May last, and a few bags of pemmican, a mere trifle for so many mouths—say 3 clerks, 1 interpreter, 3 laboring men, and 47 women and children, or 54 people entitled to regular rations. The men are now employed in making hay for the winter for such horses as are stabled to do the necessary work at the fort, hauling firewood, etc. But the great quantity of water in the meadows renders their progress slow and tedious. They have to mow knee-deep in the water, whilst another man follows with a cart and carries the grass to the high grounds, where it is spread out to dry. There has been no trade whatever this summer. The Indians are starving all over the country, no buffalo being found within their limits. There are a few freemen around this place, who have actually disposed of their women and clothing to the H.B. Company's people in barter for beat meat. The remainder of our party, whom I had left at Turtle mountain, arrived this afternoon.

## John Pritchard's Letter

A record of the wanderings of men on the Souris plains would not be complete without including the letter written by John Pritchard in 1805 after being lost for 40 days in the district now known as southwestern Manitoba.

Pritchard was at the time employed at one of the forts near the mouth of the Souris river. On the 10th of June, 1805, he left his post, with a companion, to visit the post at Fort Qu'Appelle. At a camp west of what is now Virden, their horses stampeded, and the two men became separated.

In the letter which is given below Pritchard tells of the almost unbelievable hardships that he suffered until he "found" himself at the Turtle Mountains.

The letter was for years in the possession of the late Archbishop Matheson, and a few years ago was published in the "Beaver" a publication of the Hudson Bay Co.

The late Mrs. Thos. Beveridge, wife of Rev. Thos. Beveridge who for some years was editor of the *Melita New Era*, was a granddaughter of Pritchard. Mrs. Beveridge's maiden name was Letitia Pritchard. The late Canon E. K. Matheson, a cousin of Archbishop Matheson, was a grandson. Mrs. W. D. Ketchison, wife of the present editor of the *Melita New Era*, is a great granddaughter. Mrs. N. W. Erskine and Mac Beveridge of Winnipeg are also grandchildren. Mrs. Thos. Beveridge was married twice, her first husband's name being Cunningham, and children of this marriage were living in Winnipeg until recent years.

Here is Pritchard's letter to his brother as taken from the Hudson Bay Beaver:

Neppigone, December 20th, 1805.

"My Dear Brother:

"I shall now endeavour to give you an account of my wanderings and

consequent sufferings last summer. Had it not been for the request I made you in my enclosed letter from the Grand Portage, I should have even suppressed it, and I trust my dear parents will never hear of it.

On the 10th of June one of our clerks, having had one of his horses stolen, came and applied to me to assist him with two others. That not being in my power, we agreed to go to the Mountain la Bosse (an establishment distant about fifty miles) and from there he was to take a guide to the River Qu'Appelle. On our arrival at the mountain la Bosse we could by no means procure a guide and very foolishly risked the journey ourselves, it being a distance of about 70 miles across the plains. On the second night we plainly perceived our folly and consequently determined that if we could not find the River Qu'Appelle the next morning to return, and about twelve o'clock next day changed our route accordingly.

"My friend went to fetch the horses and I began to gather wood in order to light a fire. I, perceiving my friend's horse unfettered, called to him not to endeavor to go near him, or they would both run and we should lose them. I then made a fire to entice them as they were much tormented by the mosquitoes and in that case will immediately gallop to a smoke. My friend paid no attention to my advisement but kept running after the horses till I lost sight of them. It was in vain for me, who was still extremely lame from my misfortunes the preceding winter, to attempt following after him, therefore I thought it most advisable to make fires upon all the banks near me, which might be a guide to him, should he not be able to find his way to me.

"Twelve o'clock came but not my friend, I now began to be almost disconsolate, and perceiving a hill at a

considerable distance off which appeared to me to be in the plains, I determined to go there and make a fire. After having passed a thick wood, to my inexpressible grief I found the hill to be in the midst of another adjoining wood. When arrived at the hill from the top of which I had hopes of seeing the plains again, to my mortification I found myself surrounded by thick and almost inexpressible (impenetrable?) woods. I then determined to return to the encampment.

I had not advanced far before the sky began to darken, and a heavy storm of thunder and rain came on. It was now impossible to find my way back, having lost my guide, the sun. Towards night I found a small river with a considerable current in it. I determined to sleep there and the next day to follow its course, well knowing it must discharge itself with the great Red River. Next morning at break of day I began to prepare for my departure, but how dreadfully afflicting my situation, without even blanket, gun or knife, my shoes already worn out and nothing but my clothes to renew them with. It was then the fourth day, and I had eaten nothing except an egg and one frog the day before. The country was unknown to me and even had I known my way to my fort, the distance was so great I could have no hope, lame as I then was, of being able to reach it. I gave my soul to Almighty God, and prayed that His and not my will might be done. Seeing death inevitable, I became calm and resigned to my fate.

"Towards evening I discovered the plains and, as I thought the great Red River, which pleased me much as I should then die with the hope of my body being found by the canoes in the fall; but what was still more pleasant to me, I found a kite's nest with two young ones. They were still unfledged and about the size of a full-grown pigeon, I made a fire and singed the down off one, which I hastily

devoured, the other I subsisted upon two days. What appeared to me to be the Red River was nothing more than a point of the woods on the river where I was. I walked or rather crept along this river for about ten days more, living chiefly upon frogs except three young magpies. I now perceived my body completely wasted. Nothing was left of me but my bones covered with a skin thinner than paper, I was perfectly naked, my clothes having been worn in shoes. I now perceived at a considerable distance to the right of me a river which appeared large, and being almost certain it was the Red River, purposed the next morning to make an effort to get to it. Accordingly I set out. Having advanced a considerable distance across the plains, I became so thirsty I could not proceed. I then prayed to Almighty God that He in His great goodness suffer me to die of hunger and not of thirst, but if so it was His pleasure not mine, but His will be done. Our Heavenly Father was pleased to hear my prayer, and I found a small spring very near me and was determined there to die, being fearful if I left the spring I would find no other water.

"Oh, by dear brother, how shall I describe to you my feelings at this moment; what crimes, said I, have I committed to deserve so dreadful a death. My body I have seen wasted away by degrees. I have not a friend to close my eye or blanket to cover my body and far from a holy sepulchre receiving this my earthly frame, that wolf and yonder bird of prey wait only my parting breath to devour my poor remains.

"On the next day I arrived at the river, and found it to be much smaller than the Red River. I forded it, and advanced into the plains to a small lake, where I slept. Some days before, I had found a nest of small eggs about the size of sparrows, and I had eaten nothing else. How mortifying to me to see the buffaloes quenching their thirst in every lake

near to which I slept, and geese and swans in abundance whilst I was dying of hunger in this land of plenty, for want of wherewith to kill.

"After having wandered about for some days, I perceived some woods at a distance which I again supposed were upon the banks of the Red River, but was again disappointed, and found it to be a mountain or chain of banks. I proceeded along the same till I found some water in a small brook, and, supposing there might be small fish, devoted a part of the next day to making a fishing line with my hair, and the wire of my hat buckle I worked with my teeth into the form of a hook, but had no opportunity of making use of it, as I found no fish. I here passed two days without eating, and on the second evening began to arrange my bed in the best manner I could, in order to breathe my last. Pain, disappointment, and hunger had now given way to despair. I was now so weak I could not get up the bank of the river, in order to put a mark, but upon my hands and knees.

"I had not lain down many minutes, before my mind, or rather my soul, suggested to me my want of confidence in God's power and goodness, and the heinousness of my offence in thus abandoning myself to despair. I immediately rose and prayed my Heavenly Father to forgive, strengthen and support me. An old wolf trap being near to me, I took two sticks from it in order to help me up the bank. I was no sooner on its edge when a hen grouse flew directly in my face, as I suppose to protect its young. I threw my stick at it and she fell dead at my feet. It was not that I killed it, it was the Almighty, for I had not then sufficient strength. In an ecstasy of joy and gratitude, I threw myself upon the ground, and poured out thanks to the Giver of all goodness. I ate part of the bird that night and the next day the rest, and then continued my route, not leaving the little river as I dread-

ed the want of water elsewhere. A serene and pleasant calm had now taken possession of my mind and never after forsook me. I this day found a plant, whose root the Canadians call the turnip of the plains. But not having a knife or axe to make a stick, I had no hope of digging them up; the root being at least a foot in the earth, and the ground extremely hard. The root is from two to three and one-half inches long and one and one-half in girth, by no means unpleasant to the palate. I thought upon the sticks I had taken from the wolf-trap, one of which I still retained. It having been pointed for its former use was in every respect fitted for my purpose. I therefore set to work, which was very great labor for me in my weak state. Having eaten a few raw, I returned to my encampment with about half a dozen, roasted them for supper, and found myself greatly refreshed next morning. I continually wandered about this river, living upon those roots and with now and then a frog, in the hope of seeing some hunter or other.

"Every night I changed my encampment, each of which I supposed my last. On the thirtieth day, according to a stick upon which my teeth marked each miserable night, I perceived an elevated part of the plains, and immediately proceeded to it as from thence I could discover and be discovered at a greater distance. I found it to be an island in the middle of a large lake. Being, as before mentioned, perfectly naked I did not venture to sleep there, being fearful its night air would chill me to death; therefore I turned about and gained a point of the woods near, and slept or rather laid down under a fallen tree.

"I next day set off in order to regain the little river, but on my way, behold and admire, the Providence of the Almighty! I fancied, and was certain, I saw Indians at a distance, on a different line to the route I was taking. I arrived at the place and found it, to my great disappointment,

to be nothing more than a few bushes. I then went to gather grass to make a fire, being too weak to break the sticks for that purpose.

"I had not proceeded half an acre before I perceived two old wintering houses. You cannot conceive with what ecstasy I beheld the remains of human dwelling. I supposed these houses to have been those of my friend Allen McDonald and the North West Company, at the lakes of the river Qu'Appelle.

"I now went to set a mark upon a small bank near the houses, and to dig up a few roots to appease my hunger. On my return, I made a fire and afterwards arranged a bed, as far as my strength would admit, in the form of a coffin. Being so reduced I could have no hope of going on further, the soles of my feet, particularly that of my lame leg, being worn to the bones, I now sat upon the bed, and taking a piece of birch bark, began to mark with a nail the melancholy history of my sufferings. I had fixed upon the chimney being the bearer of my epitaph, the straw left by the winterers being my only shroud.

"Whilst employed upon this melancholy occasion, I cast my eyes upon the ground, and, without any meaning having taken up a piece of cord, found it to be tarred, and it struck me it must have belonged to the Hudson's Bay people. I then took notice of a sleigh that, from its make, I knew must have belonged to them. I know began to think I was mistaken in the place where I was, and that perhaps these were the Shell River houses. "But," said I, "there ought to be three, namely, the Hudson's Bay Company's, North West Company's and our own. 'Good God,' I again exclaimed, 'perhaps 'tis the Turtle Mountain, and that its lake, but I can soon satisfy myself.' The Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company passed part of last spring there, and if this is the place, I shall find wood cut in the spring, which must still be green. The houses I know are three years old. I directly

looked about and, to my inexpressible joy, I found a scaffold, for the purpose of putting meat upon, of green wood and many other marks of recent habitation.

"Being now fully assured I was at the Turtle Mountain, on outpost from the establishment of my own neighbors distant from my own fort about sixty miles, I began with renovated hope to look into all the holes and corners for rags of any description to tie upon my feet, which were now in almost a putrid state.

"I had the good fortune to find a pair of old shoes the under leather of which was worn away and several pairs of socks. I wrapped the whole about my feet, spent the night in prayer, and next morning at break of day, after invoking the Almighty to strengthen, guide, and support me, I took the road across the plain as near as I could judge homewards. That night I had the good fortune to find, and encamp upon, a small river where I had been to hunt buffaloes a few days before I left my fort, and from whence there is a beaten path to my house, which I was greatly in need of on account of my feet.

"Towards the evening of the following day I discovered a band of Indians crossing the plains before me, but I was too weak to call out or increase my pace to overtake them. I raised my stick upon which I put a shoe and had the happiness to find they observed my signal. I was quite overpowered and stood immovable. Two little boys came running up to me, but my appearance was so dreadful they were afraid to approach for some time. I encouraged them by signals to come to me, which they did. I gave them my hand but was so overcome at once more beholding a human being, that I fell senseless to the ground. When I came to myself, I found the little boys carrying me to their father; who, seeing something amiss, was coming forward to me with his horse.

"I was now helpless as a new-born infant, and too weak to ride on horse-

back, therefore the Indian carried me in his arms to his companions, to whom I was well known. On my arrival they came crying around me, one pulling off his shoes, another his stockings, and another covering me with his blanket; whilst my first friend was preparing a little pemmican of pounded buffalo meat and fat. Having eaten a little, for I was too far gone to have an appetite, and drank a cup of water; they prepared a kind of sleigh upon which I lay down, and was so drawn to their encampment, where we found about forty other tents of Indians.

"Whilst our tents were being put up, the men, women and children formed a large circle around me. They were extremely silent and afraid to come near me. It is impossible to describe to you what I was. I had not the appearance of an inhabitant of this world. Picture to yourself a man whose bones are scraped, not an atom of flesh remaining, then cover those bones with a loose skin, fine as the bladder of an animal, beard of forty days growth, his hair full of filth and scabs. You will then have some idea of what I was.

"The next day the Indians took me to my fort, in the same way as I was drawn to their tents. On seeing my fort I again became senseless. They carried me into my room, and you may suppose my people flocked about me, scarcely believing their senses. With tears in their eyes they kept a mournful silence around me. One of my men, an old man that greatly loved me, did not even know me.

"Having recovered sufficient strength of mind, I gave to each my hand and assured them nothing was amiss with me; that my intellects were as sound as ever, and that I was weak for want of nutriment. And now a universal joy played upon each countenance; one and all at the same time, putting questions to me. The news was soon at my neighbors. They and their men came running breathless to see me, my friend (John) Mc-

Kay of the Hudson's Bay Company (at Brandon House, a gunshot away) brought with him flour, sugar, coffee and tea and a couple of grouse and immediately set a cooking himself as I believe the people were so transported that no one would have thought of providing for me.

"Having taken a little refreshment, they washed, shaved and clothed me. McKay dressed my feet and he became both my surgeon and nurse. I had a long dispute with my people, who would not for some time, suffer me to look at myself in a glass, for fear I should be disconcerted with my appearance. For fifteen days I was obliged to keep my bed and to be carried about like a child. A few days after my arrival the clerk who had been my companion came to see me. He had caught the horses, but could not find our encampment and arrived on the fourth day in a most deplorable state at the Mountain la Bosse. Every effort I found had been resorted to in order to find me. It was very gratifying to me to learn I was so dear to my friends. Every one thought me dead. The Indians said it was impossible I could be alive, and when anyone spoke of me, it was 'the poor deceased Pritchard.' Even many of my people were afraid to pass near my chamber in the night, for fear of seeing my ghost.

"The Kinistino Indians call me the Manitou, or Great Spirit, and some of them (according to their superstitious way of thinking) got so far as to say I possess a certain stone, which preserves me from all danger; as they can never suppose a white man could endure such misery. Even the mosquitoes they say were enough to kill me; indeed being naked, I suffered much from that insect. The Assiniboine Indians call me the Cheepi, which signifies a corpse, as such was my appearance when they found me.

"I shall now make some general remarks. I suffered greatly by a kind of grass very common in the plains, called by the Canadians, and very

justly, the thorn grass. Even your shoes and leather breeches it finds it way through. At night when I encamped my legs had the appearance of a porcupine. I durst not take them out in the day, as others would immediately enter, and at night you may suppose the blood flowed. I once found a few raspberries, and I once killed and skinned a snake in order to eat it, but supposing it poison, threw it away and resigned myself to God. Both Indians and white people who saw me said they had seen the bodies of men dead from hunger, but never

saw one so disfigured as mine.

"I never saw two days without rain, and in that case could make no fire, the grass being too wet to kindle, and I too weak to break wood, therefore the wet grass received my naked body for the night. You may imagine I did not sleep, and that I anxiously watched for the rising sun to warm my blood. Let us admire God's goodness, for who, but He, made me to suppose that I saw Indians in a different route from that my ideas were taking me, and by that means brought me to the houses."