

SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY

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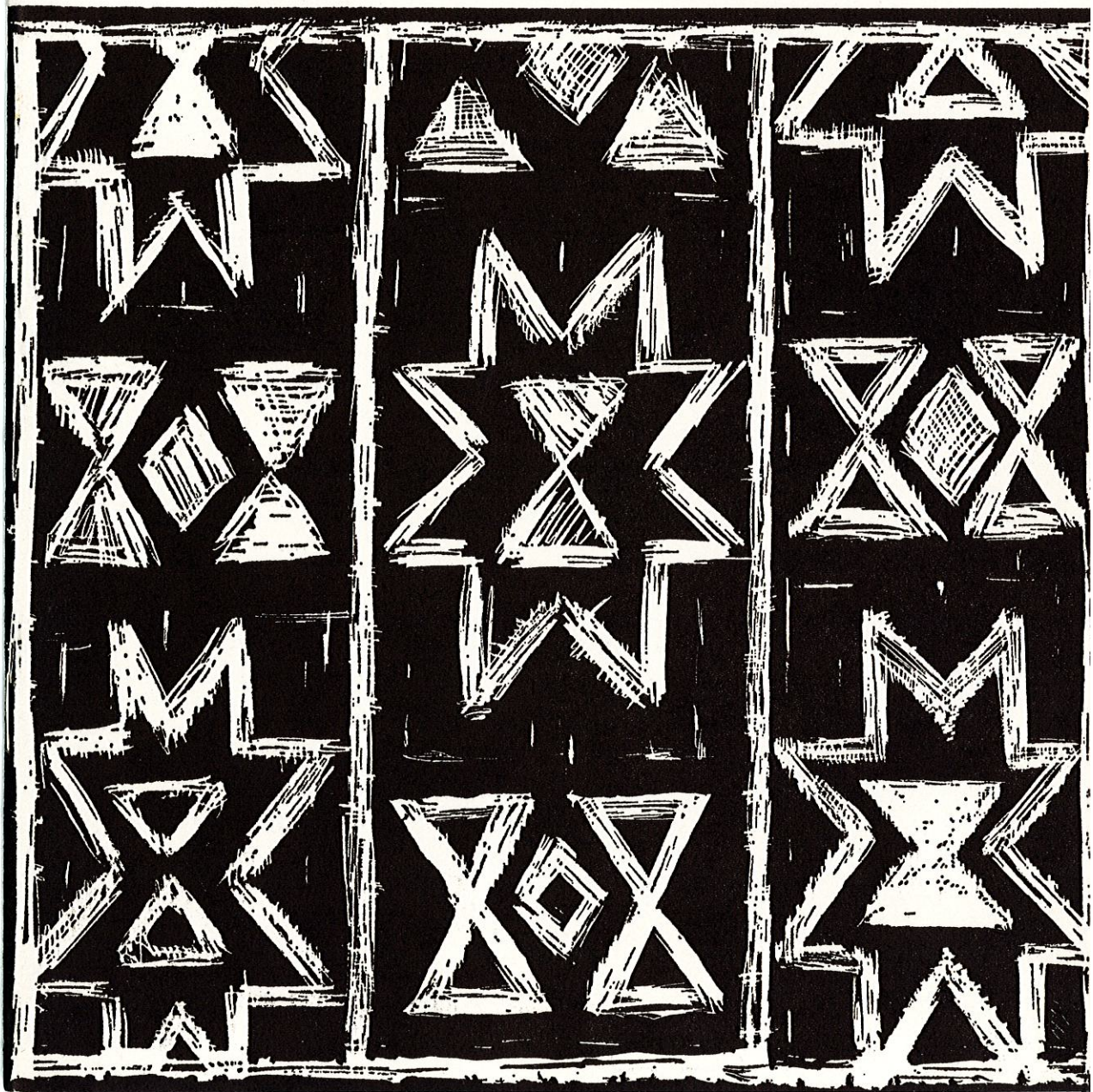
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Winter 1968

THE JOURNAL OF GEORGE M. DAWSON by A. R. Turner

A GLIMPSE OF 1885 by C. B. Fergusson

CANADA'S OLDEST KNOWN PICTOGRAPH? by Z. S. Pohrecky and T. E. H. Jones



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NOTES ON BOOKS RECEIVED

COVER BY MARY LOU FLORIAN

Based on a design from a Cree Indian fire bag
collected at Batoche in 1885.



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SURVEYING THE INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY

The Journal of George M. Dawson, 1873

Although the 49th parallel was recognized by international treaties in 1818 and 1846 as the boundary between British and American territory west of the Great Lakes, it was not until 1872 that joint British and American commissions began the work of delineating the prairie section of the boundary line. In the ensuing two years the line was surveyed from the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains. Among the scientists nominated to the British Commission was George Mercer Dawson (1849-1901) who was appointed naturalist and geologist at a salary of \$2,000 per year. In 1875 Dawson joined the staff of the Geological Survey of Canada of which he became assistant director in 1883, and director in 1895. He was responsible for numerous pioneer geological reports, including those on the Lignite Tertiary Formation of the North-West Territories, published in 1875 and 1880. He also directed the first geological survey of the Yukon Territory where Dawson City was named for him.

Dawson's manuscript Journals are deposited in McGill University. We are grateful to the Director of Libraries, McGill University, for his kind permission to publish the following section, recorded while Dawson was a member of the British Boundary Commission. It relates largely to the Saskatchewan area, commencing on September 13, 1873 at the Souris Depot, Manitoba, about 170 miles west of Red River, and concluding some five weeks later in the same area, during which time Dawson travelled nearly to Wood Mountain and returned. The Journal entries provide a record of his daily progress, references to the other parties involved in the survey, illuminating comments on the Indians and Métis, and descriptions of topographical features, flora and fauna, and of hazards such as prairie fires and blizzards. The editorial notes include some aspersions to his experiences the following year when he made more intensive geological investigations. The sentence structure and spelling is reproduced as it appears in the manuscript. No attempt has been made to plot Dawson's route precisely, but the mileages cited west from Red River on the boundary line will serve to orient the reader.

For a scholarly, book-length account of the survey of the international boundary, see John E. Parsons, *West on the 49th Parallel* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1963). Parsons' work has been invaluable in identifying the many officers of the Commissions whose names appear in Dawson's Journal.

ALLAN R. TURNER

SATURDAY SEPT. 13. Did not manage to get supplies at Dépôt¹ & get off till 8.45. Ascended the side of the Souris Valley, which is nearly 100 ft. high, steeply sloping & bounds a flat depressed area about 3/4 mile wide through which river meanders. Followed the Commission trail which leaves the S. Antler Creek, & strikes W to the N Antler, which it follows to a point about 13 miles from the Dépôt. Here it strikes S.W. to return to the S. Antler which it crosses & follows for about 5 mi. on the S. side.

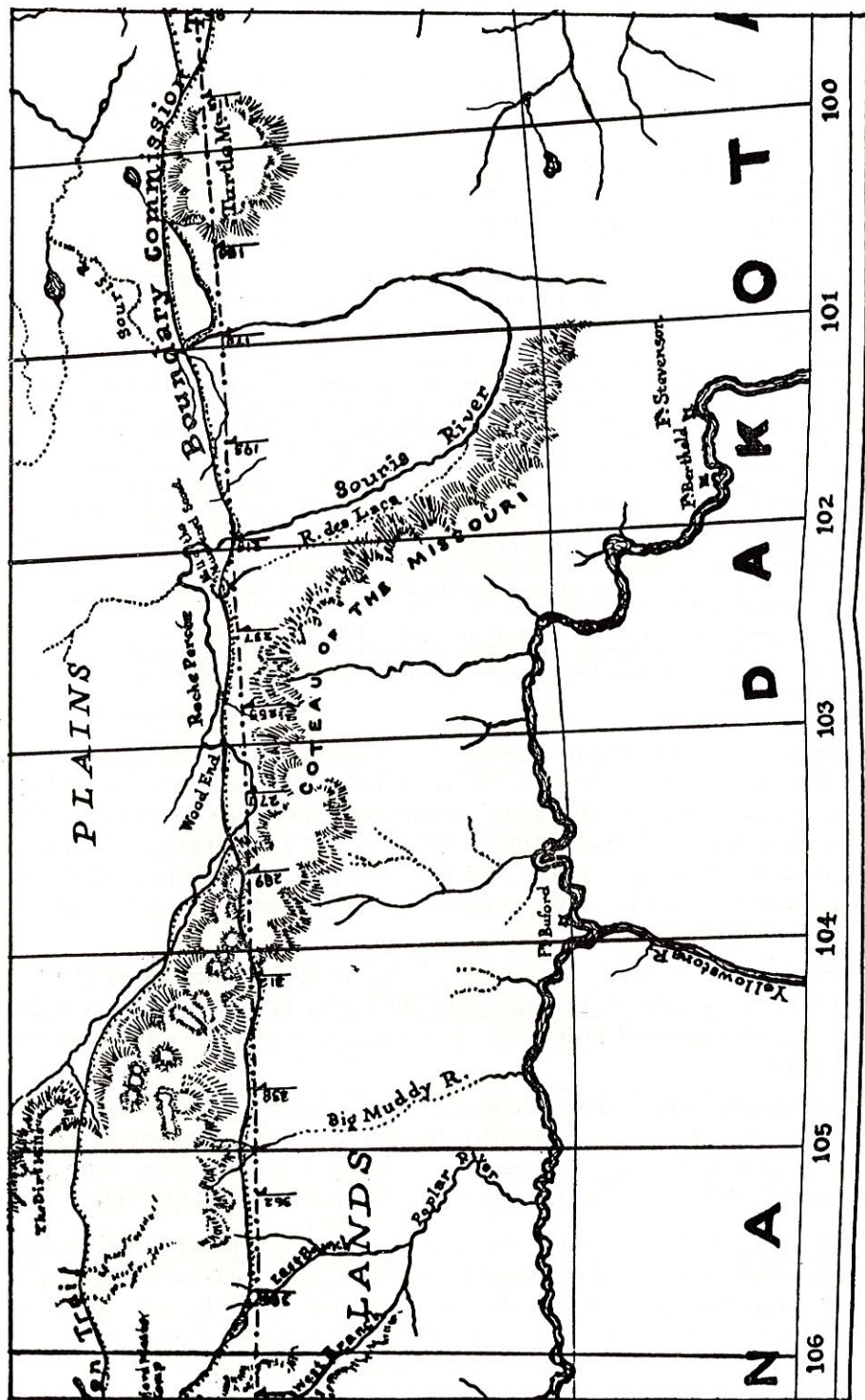
Saw 3 antelopes today, one on the N. Antler & two more where the trail first strikes the S. Antler. In both cases they were beyond rifle range before observed. They contrived to increase their distance stopping every few seconds to look back.

Prairie passed over today undulating, the undulations generally having their greatest extension E. W. The soil rather thin & gravelly but everywhere covered with a strong sod. The grass now nearly dry except in hollows where quite green still. The only shrub seen *Shepherdia*² forming thickets scarcely 2 feet high.

The N Antler Creek a wide shallow valley with a winding brook coursing from side to side & now nearly reduced to a chain of pools. Banks generally sloping & where steep and bare showing only rolled gravel & sand. The same words will describe the S. Antler Creek which only differs in being partially wooded.

¹ The First Souris Depot, an astronomical station, 170 miles west of Red River.

² *shepherdia* (buffalo berry).



Map showing Boundary Commission Trail and mileage west of Red River.

Many buffalo bones & all the lateral valleys & gulleys of the creeks scored with buffalo paths. Also a great number of their sand rolling holes forming shallow oval depressions 12 to 15 feet in length. No water along road from N to S Antler Creek.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 14. Made a pretty good start taking wood & water for 20 miles. Stopped after about 13 mi. for dinner. Shortly three Red R Carts³ & several men appeared. Learned that they belonged to Capt Cameron's⁴ party & were some hours in advance of him. Rode on in advance for about 7 miles & found Capt C. still at the W. Souris Dépôt,⁵ which he did not leave till about 4 o'clock & just as my carts with the mail arrived. Collected a few shells in the river. Evening a scout going & passed through on his way to overtake Cameron's party. Wrote home by him.

Arranged to start tomorrow at noon & take parts of 3 days to Wood End. Gave mail to Lewis⁶ to forward by scout tomorrow morning.

The prairie passed over today gently undulating, soil dry & sandy with much gravel & boulders in places but everywhere covered with sod, though now of a whitish yellow colour & quite dry except in hollows.

Valley of the Souris wide & deep with steeply rounded green hilly banks at the sides & well wooded with elm along the river. River rapid shallow sandy & stony bottom.

Heard a large flock of geese flying overhead long after dark & making a great clangor, reminding one of the stories of fleets of vessels keeping together during a fog by sound of drums.

MONDAY, SEPT. 15. Collected some Unios in the Souris R. Found among other things a helical shell a few lines (say $\frac{1}{4}$ "') in diameter formed of sand grains agglutinated together. Thought at first it might be a mollusc but found that the inhabitant some sort of arthropod, probably a caddis worm.

Got away by 2 p.m. & camped after 6 at the River Lake,⁷ near the "Hill of the Murdered Scout". Met the ox train of 8 waggon on their way E.

The prairie today may be described as gently undulating, rather dry, with sandy & gravelly soil & thin sod. A large area burned about a month ago & now

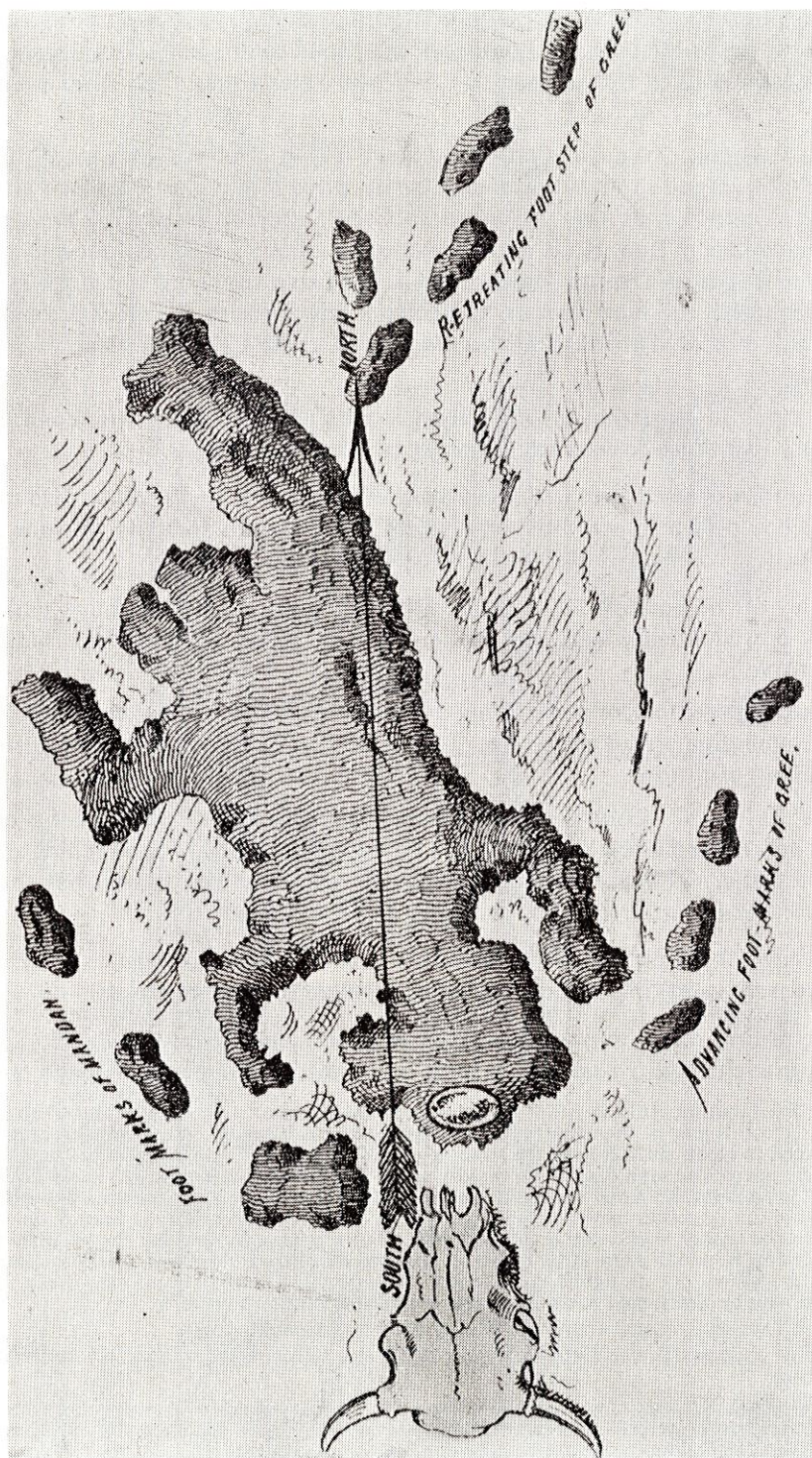
³ Elsewhere (Journal, July 8, 1874) Dawson elaborated that "Red River country carts are little use in this part of the country to anybody but the half-breeds. When broken there is no hard wood to repair them & from the stony & rough character of the 'roads' breaks are necessarily frequent. The sand & grit also rapidly wears away the axles, unless iron hasps are used, & then a poplar axle has to be substituted at risk of breakdown any moment. The extreme dryness of the air causes them to split & crack in all directions, especially the hubs & when this happens the spokes work loose & nothing will save the wheel. By keeping the wheels always wet this may be avoided but water is scarce. With the half-breeds time is no object & cheapness everything. They put on light loads & travel in large trains so that if one cart breaks down its load may be distributed & the fragments retained for future repairs."

⁴ Captain Donald Roderick Cameron, British Boundary Commissioner.

⁵ The West or Second Souris Depot, a supply depot and astronomical station, 215 miles west of Red River.

⁶ Not identified.

⁷ The Commission established as astronomical station at Rivière des Lacs, 237 miles west of Red River, but Dawson's camp may not have been precisely at its site.



Indian figure on Murdered Scout Hill (from a drawing by H. Julien for the *Canadian Illustrated News*)
Public Archives of Canada.

looking beautifully green from a distance but black & bare when travelled over. The soil seems to become uniformly coarser with sand & gravel westward.

Many buffalo bones & quite a number of the animals seem to have died of disease or otherwise, so that the bones are not dispersed but all lying near the same spot. Many well marked buffalo paths, general directions N. W. ward and N. E. ward.

At camping place the edge of the valley in which the "River Lake" lies is very steep & stony. It has evidently been a favourite Indian camp as there are many more or less perfect circles of stones about 20 ft. in diameter. The stones now deeply sunk in the sod.

From the hill at sunset an immense prospect of prairie perfectly treeless, & with an edge purple, & perfect as the sea round the whole horizon. Blue hills visible during the day very far off to S°W°. After dark the glow of a distant prairie fire reflected in the sky far to S.

No wood & only 2 water holes between W. Souris & Wood End. (Several after St. Peter's Springs.) Mail sent on by scout this morning.

SEPT. 16. 73. Broke camp moderately early. Morning cold & cloudy. Intended to go as far as St. Peter's Springs & there camp. The "Hill of the Murdered Scout" quite a prominent object both before reaching it yesterday, & after having passed it today. The story that some Sioux were camped on the S. side of the "River Lake", Assiniboines on the N. An Assiniboine ascended the hill & lay there watching the Sioux camp but unfortunately fell asleep. A Sioux, wandering round, but unarmed, found him, & killed him with a large stone. Said that the Assiniboines have cut the figure of a man in the turf on top of the hill & the footsteps of the Sioux as he ran away.⁸

When about 12 miles out saw a dark object coming behind which on inspection through the telescope turned out to be an ambulance wagon drawn by four mules, & proved to contain Major Twining⁹ on his way to Wood End.¹⁰ He kindly offered to take me on, so putting in bedding & toilet apparatus deserted horse & carts. He had started from W. Souris in the early morning & drove over the whole 54 miles to Wood End with the same mules allowing them only $\frac{5}{4}$ hour rest at noon, & arriving at the end of his journey about 4 p.m.

⁸ Cf. Henri Julien, artist with the N.W.M.P. expedition: "Some sixty or seventy years ago, the Crees were at war with the Mandans, a tribe frequenting the hunting grounds of the Missouri. A party of each was on the war-path about this part of the country. One morning before sunrise, when the mist was not yet off the ground, a Cree left the camp to examine the surrounding country from the highest point of land in the vicinity. This was Butte Marquee, as it was afterwards called by the French halfbreeds, or, in English, Murdered Scout Hill. There he perceived a Mandan in a sitting position also anxiously looking about him for enemies, his back turned to the Cree. The latter took a large round stone weighing about 15 lb., crawled silently up to his enemy, and killed him. To memorialize the place with his tomahawk he dug out the form of a man lying on his back, his legs spread out and arms stretched back of his head. The figure measures about 12 feet in length. The approach is also marked out for some 60 feet by dug out foot marks. Such is the story as related to me by old hunters on these grounds". (Julien Diary, entry for July 23, 1874).

⁹ Major Wm. J. Twining, U.S. Engineers, Chief Astronomer, American Commission.

¹⁰ A principal supply depot, approximately 260 miles west of Red River, later site of a N.W.M.P. post.

Found Ward¹¹ & Russel¹² the only officers at the English Depot Camp. Ward just on the point of going W. Russel in search of Capt Anderson¹³ to complete business with him before leaving the Commission.

The country passed over from River Lake to here may be described as rather dry, gently undulating prairie. Good feed still in the hollows but most of the grass quite dead & yellow & looking thin at the best. The dead prairie grass, however, is said to form not innutricious feed as on account of the dryness of the air it becomes cured on the ground into a species of natural hay.

The *Missouri Coteau* forms a distinct feature bounding the prairie southward & westward & resembling in appearance the front of the Pembina escarpment.

St. Peter's Springs are two well marked water sources filling small pools in the upper end of a coulé the water having a *slight* alkaline taste. Where the road passes the springs it runs along the upper edge of a well marked plateau which stretches far to the S. & W. & apparently forms a first step of the *Coteau* level. *Short Creek* which the road crosses about 10 miles E of Wood End is very picturesque, being wooded, a deep valley, & with many rugged banks & abrupt knolls (?) in it. Many good sections of Cretacious clays & one small lignite deposit. The Roche Percé is situated at its confluence with the Souris. The foliage now assuming beautiful autumn tints with the steep banks of somewhat brilliantly coloured clays, & sloping banks of grass in various stages of autumn decay conspired to make the valley look really beautiful.

Wood End Dépôt is situated on a little river flowing in a deep valley well wooded northward. The stream is called Long Coteau Creek but is really the Main Souris R.¹⁴ Heard wonderful accounts of "coal" deposits in the neighbourhood & found a heap of lignite near the smith's forge. Saw that many good exposures along the valley.

SEPT. 17. Rain sleet & snow with bitterly cold wind all day. Carts arrived about noon. Could not do any out of doors work & occupied most of day trying to keep warm over a fire of Souris lignite in a little sheet iron stove. The stove pipe necessitated the keeping open of the tent door which somewhat took away from the comfort. The lignite which is from the exposure nearest the camp appeared to be almost absolutely free from sulphur but yielded a rather copious light, yellowish ash which rather smothered the combustion in our stove which had no grate below.

Dining under an awning beneath a tree in such weather as this with a servant waiting in a waterproof coat is rather trying in such weather.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 18. 73. Got various little arrangements made intending to start W. tomorrow. Started about 11.30 with Russel in a spring waggon to visit some lignite exposures about 6 miles N or here where the N. W. bend of the R. is.

¹¹ Lt. Arthur Clitheroe Ward, R.E., Secretary, British Commission.

¹² Alexander Lindsay Russell, Deputy Surveyor General of Canada.

¹³ Capt. Samuel Anderson, R.E., Chief Astronomer, British Commission.

¹⁴ Dawson, and Boundary Commission maps, so indicate the main Souris River, but it is today's Long Creek, a tributary of the Souris River, into which it flows north of Wood End. The dépôt site is now covered by the waters of Boundary Dam on Long Creek.

Passed many stone circles of old tepis, the stones being laid to keep the skins down in old days when skins were plenty. Now generally pegged down for their better preservation. Also many Indian graves consisting of piles of stones or small cairns built on prominent points along the banks. Some of the more recent with some sticks still standing among them. Picketed the horse, made a fire & ate lunch & then proceeded to work at exposures. Left before sunset & arrived at camp before dark. Found that Capt. Anderson had got in from W. Ward Left for W about Noon today.

SEPT. 19. 73. Wrote up notes a.m. Afternoon went N with Russel & examined lignite deposits. Visited new American Camp. Saw Maj Twining who gave me some fossil leaves he had found. Sent Paul¹⁵ to get about a bushel of lignite from 7' seam for a sample. Mail from Dufferin¹⁶ with Letters & papers.

SATURDAY SEPT. 20. 73. Got packing done before breakfast. Left various specimens, insect net & can of alcohol with depôt man. Got tracing of route &c from Capt. Anderson. Left Camp about 11. Camped for night 14 or 15 miles to West. Day stormy with high cold wind.

The road follows along the S side of Long Coteau Creek, or as it is really the main W. Souris. The river represented by pools filling its bed & a swell stream running from one to another. Timber altogether ceases about a mile west of Depôt. The valley becomes much shallower as followed & shows no bank having any appearance of sections after about 3 miles W of Camp. Found a boulder with a few plant remains in the bed of the valley. (Sandstone)

The country greatly undulating dry, prairie with good sandy soil but grass thin & now quite withered.

Saw a buffalo skull today, with the whole of the skin attached, & which probably belonged to an animal killed last year. Many buffalo bones, tracks, & skratcking hollows.

Party consisting of spearman¹⁷ Paul & two photographers with 4 carts. Shot at some duck this evening but missed.

SUNDAY SEPT. 21. Rain in the night, morning cold with a strong N.W. wind. Met Boswell¹⁸ on his way back to Wood End after having superintended hay making. Got to edge of burned district & travelled on over a black burned wilderness the picture of desolation the whole day. The prairie fire is said to have run E & W first, then the wind having changed brought the whole line of fire down at right angles across the Commission trail. The prairie is gently undulating, at first but on coming to the edge of the coteau becomes quite hilly & continues to show bolder & bolder hills & deeper vallies. Saw many little marmots or ground squirrels of a light straw colour. Saw an antelope & tried a shot at it but unsuccessfully. Found no water for lunch & so had to be content with bread & raw pemican.

¹⁵ A Métis guide with Dawson.

¹⁶ Canadian post on the Red River, north of the international boundary, which served as a base of operations, and winter quarters, for the British Commission.

¹⁷ Spearman appears to have been Dawson's aide for the season.

¹⁸ Dr. William George Boswell, veterinary, British Commission.

Many stone rings of old tepés. Generally near a pool which might contain water & on the southern sides of the coteau hills. Often however in very exposed situations. Also many graves consisting of, or rather marked by, heaps of boulders on prominent hill tops.

The grass must have been thin & poor on this region (?), the soil light & sandy with a gravel subsoil. The badgers have brought the latter to the surface in so many places that an exaggerated idea of the poverty of soil is derived from the inspection of the heaps about these burrows.

This hilly Coteau country would no doubt be thickly wooded but for the prairie fires. Many Buffalo bones & now for the first time many buffalo chips of recent origin.

Dr. Burgess¹⁹ turned up at Coteau Dépôt²⁰ about dark on his way in to see the sick man at Wood End. Had supper & spent the night in my tent.

MONDAY SEPT. 22. Up before six, got supplies &c from the dépôt. Flour, baking powder, beef, oats, pemican.

Got away before nine. The country all day exceedingly hilly road rough & winding. The whole region burned & black. Here & there dried alkaline lakes, their surfaces flat & shiny like snow, surrounded by a scarlet fringe of *Salicorne*²¹ & then by a yellowish border of dried grass giving a most peculiar effect. Especially when viewed from a distance in the midst of the black waste. Found Col. Forrest²² at water hole where stopped for lunch, on his way West.

Camped at same place with his party tonight. Saw many flocks of geese flying in great triangles Southward at an immense height & often barely visible against the blue sky.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 23. 73. Left Camp by 8 o'clock. Morning dull & doubtful looking. Passed several alkaline lakes, some dry & some with water. Stopped for noon near an alkaline lake where a little fresh water stream runs in. Steady wetting rain with S.W. wind.

Shortly after noon the wind very suddenly went round to the N.N.W. & became cold. As we went on it continued increasing in violence till it blew a perfect gale the rain at the same time changing first to sleet & then to snow. Found it impossible to ride the horse being frightened by the storm & unmanageable. Tied it behind one of the carts & walked on. Reached Featherstone-Haugh's²³ old camp²⁴ with much difficulty & discomfort. Found a good sized wood pile with which made free. Got tents up. The ground soon white with snow. Horses very cold & crowding round the tents for shelter. A wolf seen near the camp about dark.

¹⁹ Dr. T. J. W. Burgess, surgeon, British Commission.

²⁰ Apparently Great Coteau, a depot and astronomical station, 289 miles west of Red River.

²¹ *salicornia* (samphire).

²² Lt. Col. A. G. Forrest, land surveyor, British Commission.

²³ Capt. Albany Featherstonhaugh, assistant astronomer, British Commission.

²⁴ This is probably the Mid-Coteau astronomical station, 312 miles west of Red River, but Dawson's failure to cite mileage travelled leads to uncertainty.

WEDNESDAY SEPT. 24. Morning fine, though still chilly with hovering clouds. Things generally disorganized so did not leave till two o'clock. Col. Forrest & party remained remaining to get a batch of bread baked & intending to make a short journey in the afternoon.

Came six or seven miles to the big coulé or ravine & camped to examine rocks & let photographers take photo of same. Also to get baking done while still in country where some wood. Wood struck here is the first timber W of Wood End depot. Afternoon Ward²⁵ of Forrests party rode in being in search of horses, six having strayed during last nights storm.

Examined rocks & collected fossils the locality being very interesting. The gully wild looking & very picturesque with steep scarped banks & knolls of pyramidal form & showing free sections.

THURSDAY SEPT. 25. 73. Morning very cold with fog. About 8 o'clock began to snow heavily. Managed to collect a few fossils. Thought day too bad to move in & so sent men for a good cart load of dry wood & prepared to make things as snug as possible. About 11 o'clock part of Col. Forrests party came along toiling through the snow having taken the North or American Trail in mistake. They reported two of their party had gone in search of the horses the afternoon of yesterday & had not returned. Col. Forrest himself with the rest of his party intended to camp in the Big Coulé where the English trail crosses. Those of the party who had come by mistake to my camp camped & we proceeded to determine the best course of action with regard to the lost men. Kingston, Aylmer, Crompton, Chapman &c,²⁶ & Spearman set off to scour the country in various directions on foot. Got my horse saddled, & rode down the valley searching the patches of wood & the numerous lateral vallies. Found Col. F. just camping about dusk. Rode back to my camp & arrived at dark very cold & wet, as it had been raining a cold drizzle with high wind all the afternoon. Guns fired at intervals all the afternoon. All searching parties returned having found no trace. Camp which had been dry enough at first turned out to be on a clay bed which with the snow & rain turned into a perfect mud hole involving great discomfort. Got a beacon fire lit on a prominent hill but the heavy rain soon put it out. Hung up a lantern in same place but before long wind blew it down. Saw some American teamsters going East during my ride, they promised to keep a lookout for the lost men, & as they intended to camp at the place from whence they had strayed away I thought they might do some good.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 26. Got packed up & moved camp down to Col. Forrests camp about 2 miles south along the ravine. Found a man of Corp. Maling's²⁷ party going E & gave him a note to Capt. Anderson telling him that the men lost & asking assistance of his scouts. Col. F. & 6 men besides his two scouts rode off to scour the country Southward & Eastward on a systematic plan. The day a little better though still snowing & blowing in squalls. About 2 o'clock one of the scouts

²⁵ Ward, "of Forrest's party", appears not to be the officer who is cited in the entry for September 14 and, again, in the entry for October 1.

²⁶ Members of Forrest's party, including George F. Crompton, assistant surveyor.

²⁷ A topographer of the Royal Engineers.

returned with the lost men. They having found their way back to the old Camp. They had been out just 48 hours without any food save some half withered chokecherries & rose hips. Most of the time a snowstorm varied by rain & all the while very cold. They had behaved very sensibly, on finding themselves lost they wandered until they came to a coulé with some little wood. They managed to light a fire & waited for a glimpse of the sun. This they got on the morning of the third day. Made North to the trail & found the old Camp. They arrived apparently not much the worse & soon got all right again. Fearing they might eat imprudently at first I got some beef tea made with Liebig extract & made them take that with some bread. They were glad to exchange this diet for the rose hips a few of which they still had in their pockets. They had shot at an antelope & broken his fore leg but he got away. All exceedingly glad that our gloomy anticipation concerning them had been unfounded.

Examined a section near the Camp & found lignite, selenite crystals, ironstone layers or I think equivalent to part of Sect B.

SATURDAY SEPT 27. Morning snowing heavily & damp. Decided to start however & got off with Col. Forrest & party. Had much trouble getting up the steep hill on the W side of the ravine having to unyoke horses & bring all the carts up in turn tandem wise. Got on slowly with snow overhead & on the ground to coulé about 6 miles W. Decided to camp.

Featherstone²⁸ & party camped about a mile S Corp. Maling & party about a mile N on the same coulé. Had visits from various members of both parties. Spearman having found a bears lair went over about dusk with him hoping to get a shot, but Bruin not at home. Snowing all day damp clammy snow. Got fire lit in tent & hung things up to dry. Sewed up MacKintosh coat which had been torn to pieces during Wednesdays gale & snow.

SUNDAY SEPT. 28. 73. Morning cold with gentle fall of snow. Tent frozen stiff as a board. Gave up idea of starting as from yesterday's experience very little progress can be made over the damp snow. Horses ball up & carts draw very heavily. Got various little things attended to, clothes dried & got a baking under way as pass last wood on tomorrows march.

Shot a number of blackbirds (of which great quantities haunting the camp), and had them stewed for dinner. They turned out pretty good, but rather tough for so small a bird. Capt. Anderson arrived about 10 a.m., having camped last night at 145.m. coulé. Much relieved to hear that the lost men found. Capt. A. starts West tomorrow morning if his provision train comes up.

Rode down the valley with Forrest to Featherstones Camp.²⁹ A high hill on the line gives a splendid view of the surrounding country. The whole region broken into bold hills evidently the remains of an old high level prairie. Hills beautiful in outline & covered with snow though most of that on the lower ground gone. Great coulé at feet with steep cliffy banks of stratified sands & clays of the

²⁸ Evidently Dawson refers here, and subsequently, to Featherstonhaugh.

²⁹ According to entry for Sept. 30, this camp was 351 miles west of Red River. The mileage for coulee where Anderson camped is in error, if it is a citation west of Red River.

lignite formation. Whole country breaking down into cañon like valleys toward the Missouri R., to which the water of the brook on which camped flows.

A very remarkable conical hill near Featherstones Camp caused by the wearing away of the softer clay strata with the summit protected by a small patch of hard sandstone. Much selenite & round cannon shot like balls of concretionary sandstone on the slopes. Many old camp circles, & piles of stones over indian graves in vicinity of prominent hill. The indians seem to like to camp in a sheltered nook near the top of some conspicuous elevation or hill on the prairie from which a good view could be obtained. Their graves are often on the hill above the camp, or along the salient angles & edges of the bank of some ravine.

MONDAY SEPT. 29. Got away about 9 o'clock. Always find that staying in one place even a day renders a punctual start impossible. Soon after getting out of coulé the ground was covered with snow, & on the hills it was about 3" deep. The deeper vallies when viewed from the hill tops were brown & grassy while the remainder of the country was a glittering white. Sun though shining did not appear to have a great effect on the snow. Stopped for lunch on the warm side of a snowy bank, & had to wait a long time for the carts to come up, the hauling being very heavy. Though animals so seldom seen on the prairie, there must be a great number on the aggregate. Today for instance saw many antelope tracks in the snow, also wolf, prairie dog, gofer, mouse &c tracks.

Saw three antelope at a great distance. The wind which in the morning was from the South about 1 p.m. was West, & continued running round till it came from the N.N.W. & became very strong & cold. Every appearance of a storm, squalls with flurries of dry snow the remainder of the afternoon.

Struggled on till nearly dark where camped in a sheltered valley where there was some feed for the horses.

Kingston, one of Forrests aides was heard to exclaim during the snowstorm "Oh! Isn't it romantic (?) to think that with 500 miles from the nearest house!" The stream where we are camped is quite an important brook or small river in a very wide open valley, with a strong current running away toward the Missouri.

TUESDAY SEPT. 30. Did not hasten the start this morning thinking that as it was a fine day it might be well to let the sun melt away some snow from the hills. Up a very long ascent with some bad side hills & steep pitches. Carts drawing very heavily through the snow, which on the higher levels scarcely melted during the heat of the day but remained hard & crusty. Some remarkable conical hills, or buttes by the roadside capped with hard concretionary & grotesque weathering sandstones. By the help of the sandstone the beds are seen to have a well marked, though gentle dip Westward. Pushed on without waiting for lunch & arrived at 385 mile point³⁰ between 3 & 4 o'clock. Found Galways³¹ camp deserted, but a large party of Americans under Gregory³² on their way home, or rather to winter quarters

³⁰ This was the East Poplar (Porcupine Creek) astronomical station.

³¹ Lieut. William J. Galwey, R.E., assistant astronomer, British Commission.

³² Capt. James F. Gregory, U.S. Engineers, assistant astronomer, American Commission.

at Detroit. Got tents up some supper & to bed. Fires small & comfortless as wood scarce having been carried on the carts from the camp before last. The nearest wood is 20 miles back & there is no wood for at least 30 miles ahead. Night clear, fine, & very cold.

The country passed over from Featherstones camp (351 miles W) to here is very hilly. The hills however are of quite different character to those at the edge of the coteau first passed over. Here the hills are well defined ridges between vallies & systems of coulés belonging to them & all draining away to the South toward the Missouri. The hills are often from 300' to near 500' above the streams & form extensive broken plateaus intervening between them with here & there, especially northward sustaining ridges & peaks of still greater elevation. The whole showing the effect of prolonged denudation acting on nearly horizontal strata of unusual hardness, but generally soft clays & sands. The source of the fine deposits of the lower level prairies.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 1. Morning cold & temperature in shade not above freezing all day. Took a walk up the stream to get warm & shot a few ducks. Capt. Anderson arrived before noon & camped. Galway & Ward going East came in sight about same time & stopped for lunch. Afternoon examined some sections a short distance south of camp & got Paul to clear one with the pick from top to bottom of the bank for measurement. Found a leaf bed with well preserved leaves. Measured lignite &c. Discussed matters with Anderson & got some days rations from him. Decided to stay here a day longer & then return Eastward taking places of interest en route. Wolves (coyotes) bouting round the camp. Some of Col. Forrest's men suffering from snow blindness.

THURSDAY OCT. 2. Anderson started for Woody Mountain pretty early this morning & got from him rather short ten days rations for party, including the photographers who are to stay here six days, take any photographs they can & then start in for Wood End Dépôt. As soon as I leave here they will get their portion of the provisions & move on their own account.

Forrest's carts sent back for wood not yet having returned, that article very scarce. Lignite from the bank of the creek coming into general use. The lignite does not however form a very good fire to cook with as it crumbles under the action of heat, & this together with the copious production of ash soon clogs up the heap which continues to burn within in a smothered way. It would burn very well on a grate through which ashes might fall, & which would allow a draught from below & through the mass. No iron or any material for constructing grates being at hand, have to do the best possible by burning it on heaps of pebbles.

Rode off with Paul also mounted, about half past three, intending to get into the main valley & follow it some distance in search of geological exposures & wood. Was surprised to find Leut. Green³³ & a large American party camped about 3 miles S.E. of our camp & near where the main creek branches. Rode about 7 miles from camp & got a view at least three miles down the main valley

³³ Lieut. Francis V. Greene, U.S. Engineers, assistant astronomer.



Dr. G. M. Dawson, May 1885.

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beyond stopping place. Valley wide shallow & open with no sign of wood or good exposures. Saw a small pond on which two flocks of geese of different kinds. Half a dozen blue cranes & a great number of duck. Of course had no gun. Took a few shots at the crowd with revolver but with no effect. Turned to return to Camp at five. Took the West side of the main valley & followed it up feeling sure that it would conduct into the valley on which camped. As it turned out afterwards another valley running nearly due West (instead of W.N.W. as the right valley runs) branched off near the same place. In the twilight & not knowing of the existence of this valley followed the bank along into it & rode up it a long way till quite dark & I felt quite sure we must have passed the camp.

Moon came out & gave good light though very confusing as part of the ground covered with snow & part bare & brown. Valley rough & swampy in the bottom & creek winding too & fro rendering frequent fording necessary. Concluded at last that in right valley but must have overshot the camp. Worked back along the N side of the valley looking for peculiar clay banks which knew to be near the camp. Came down the valley about 6 miles startling an occasional sleeping duck or prairie chicken & coming unexpectedly on a porcupine which looked strange by the imperfect light. Horses nervous & afraid to cross the water when that was necessary. Of course found no traces of camp. Came at last where the valley opened out wide & the running stream which we had been following could not be found. Decided that must have got into some wrong place altogether, & that best thing would be to retrace course to a cliff which I knew we had passed on the way up from the main valley before dark. There to collect some grass & make ourselves as comfortable as possible through the rest of the night, & in the morning follow our trail back to country which I could recognise. Before adopting this plan determined to go about half a mile further to a slope which resembled or appeared to resemble one near the American Camp. By great good luck found that it really was at the American camp, & were challenged rather sleepily by their sentinel as we crossed the stream to it. Saw a light still burning Lieut. Greens tent. Got him to point out the direction of the mound on the Tangent line. Found the regular road & followed the wheel marks about 2 miles into camp, where we arrived tired cold & *hungry* at half past twelve.

Thermometer at 8 P.M. 26°.

FRIDAY OCT. 3. Having observed by the moonlight last night what appeared to be a very good section of bank, started on horseback with Paul to find way back into the valley in which had been lost & examine the section. Found the place about three miles up the valley & was surprised to see no less than 18 feet of lignite cropping out in one bed. Also found a fault cutting it off at one end. The first dislocation observed in these strata. Overlying the lignite a bed full of beautifully perfect ferns, & dicotyledonous leaves, but in very soft & crumbling clay. Rode back to camp over the hill. Saw several prairie wolves at a distance. Lost my pick hammer from the saddle to which it was tied.

Started about 4 with Col. Forrest & walked up the camp valley about 3 miles shooting & looking out for sections. Saw some but nothing of peculiar interest.

SATURDAY OCT. 4. The fossils collected yesterday at the 18' lignite exposure having on account of the soft & crumbling nature of the clay been all broken up on the way to camp, & having also lost my hammer. Decided to remain today for the purpose of collecting specimens & recovering the hammer if possible. Col. Forrest kind enough to give me one days rations for 3 men to allow me to do so. Morning fine but with a heavy storm of wind from the N.W. Got Paul to put horse in one of carts & set off southward to the creek on which the great exposure situated. Found hammer. Spent several hours collecting fossils, Paul bringing down the bank with a pick. Surrounded each specimen in wadding & wrapped in paper & then packed the whole carefully in a box before leaving the bank. Hope in this way to preserve the delicate fossil leaves till the clay dries, when it becomes comparatively hard. Disappointing work however at best. The fossils beautiful & often very perfect when broken out & moist. Loose much of beauty when dry & besides generally fall to pieces before they can be wrapped up.

Day becoming stormy with occasional flurries of snow. Got back to camp by 2.30. Packed specimens & made arrangements for start tomorrow. Mail with letters & papers for me arrived this evening.

Yesterday was very fine & warm & most of snow melted away. Today colder again but snow left only on the shady sides of hills & visably disappearing. Many dead antelope found this summer about this part of the country as though they were suffering from some infectious & epidemic disease.

SUNDAY OCT. 5. Got breakfast & away by 9 o'clock. Stopped for lunch at 368 mile creek. Found Corp Maling's party camped there. All afflicted with precious-stone hunting. Had numerous finds submitted for examination. Most quartz & rather poor agates. The latter found near Wood End & Westward, & derived from some rocks I have not seen. Probably connected with Siliceous pebble drift. Made the wooded ravine at 360 miles West before dark. Turned South into it & camped near Leut Green's party.³⁴ The weather today delightful & thorough indian summer. Sun shining brightly & warm in the vallies. Air beautifully clear & the distant hills very distinct & purple tinted. Wind gentle S.W. Patches of snow where drifts have been still on the hills & uplands.

Barom at camp 9.30 P.M. 27.38.

MONDAY OCT. 6. Left Camp about 9 o'clock & journeyed on about 10 miles to Pyramid Valley, where arrived a little after 2 P.M. Got lunch & then spent afternoon examining the sections in the valley.

Splendid view from the top of the "Pyramid". A perfect indian summer day. Gentle air from S.W. Not a cloud in the sky & sun almost oppressively warm. Panorama of picturesque outlined hills, grass covered & clear soft blue at horizon. Found a portion of a neatly made stone pipe on the side of the Pyramid hill. Made of the celebrated "red pipe stone". Many indian graves on the hills near & this probably washed out on the hillside by the action of the weather. Must belong to an old interment as a little patch of calcareous crust from the soil appears on

³⁴ This may have been the astronomical station at mile 363 west of Red River, called Bully Spring by the Americans because of the excellent quality of the water (Parsons, *West on the 49th Parallel*, p. 77).

one end of it. It seems very probable that the peculiar Pyramid hill capped by flat blocks of hard sandstone has been an object of superstitious veneration with the indians & the pipe may have been deposited there as an offering. Saw a herd of 11 antelope today as we came along, but far off. Yesterday saw 9 together. They must be quite plentiful in this part of the country.

Barom. at camp this morning 8 A.M. 360 m. W. 27.23.

Barom. at Pyramid Valley Camp 8 P.M. 27.23.

TUESDAY OCT. 7. Got away shortly after 9 A.M. & travelled E. by the Line trail to the 345 mile valley. Stopped to have a lignite bed previously observed uncovered. Then followed up the valley to old camping place. Afternoon collected fossil shells & plants.

Another beautiful Indian Summer day & quite oppressively warm. About 1 P.M. temp. 88° in shade. Light variable winds.

Got a tracing of the N bend of the Souris from Serj Kay³⁵ who is camped here doing survey of 6 m belt.³⁶

Two of his party by some mischance today set the prairie on fire about 9 miles from here. The wind fortunately not carrying the flames in this direction but a great area of flame visible from the hills & probability that it may spread as far as this valley before morning, especially if the wind happens to change.

WEDNESDAY OCT. 8. Left camp by 9. Followed the N. or American track. On gaining the prairie level found last night's fire still raging, & crossing the country rapidly in a line several miles long, under the influence of a gentle N. Wind. Approached the fire in a direction at right angles to the wind & got over the burning edge easily as the grass short, & the flames travelling.

The little unburnt area round this dépôt³⁷ only saved from former fire by unremitting exertions of officers & men. Working along the burning edge with empty oat sacks & finally drawing along the burning fringe a tarpaulin dished up & filled with water. This by its weight & by adapting itself to the contour of the ground crushed out the fire.

FRIDAY OCT. 10. Left the dépôt before 9 & travelled 17 miles over the burnt ground to Long Coteau Creek. Found Rowe & party camped there. Lunched. Travelled on till nearly dark & camped beside the stream. Saw the light of a fire a few miles to the W. The prairie fire which has been following along the S side of the burnt ground has now got past it to the E & shines very bright directly S of us. Up & out several times in the night watching it, as I feared a change of wind might bring it down to the Camp. Day fine though chilly in the morning & frosty tonight.

³⁵ Sgt. R. E. Kay, R.E.

³⁶ As part of the Commissions' work, topographical survey parties mapped a six-mile belt on either side of the boundary line.

³⁷ He probably refers to the Mid-Coteau Astronomical Station, at mile 312, rather than Great Coteau Depot, at mile 289, in the vicinity of which the next day he found Rowe camped.

SATURDAY OCT. 11. Off pretty early. Party of U.S. cavalry & wagons who had started at same time from 345 m. valley passed while at lunch. Their horses & mules much run down, no forage left. Several horses already abandoned by the way. Examined a section in the river bank but found only a great thickness of drift. Arrived at Wood End Dépôt about 3. Found Dr. Burgess & a few men only. All who could be spared having been sent East on account of loss of beef, of which still no trace. Those here on short rations of beef & probability that soon none at all. Day beautifully fine warm & calm.

After dark the Prairie fire to the S began to look very threatening. Bright reflection in the sky & lurid glare along horizon. Wind freshening up from S.W. & bringing it directly down towards camp. Sat up reading & watching the fire. After a time the reflection disappeared but smoke began to fill the air & the moon now risen, looked blood red through it.

Went to bed but before long B called me up. Found the air thick with smoke & falling ashes & fire evidently quite close. Got all hands called up & discussed best plan of protecting camp. Camp surrounded on all sides but one by the windings of the creek, & there a narrow grassy neck with bushes at the sides. Bushes & small trees along both sides of creek & much dry stuff & withered leaves among them. Thought however that if could stop fire at neck it would not cross the creek anywhere in unmanagable volume. Got clear space cut through bushes at both sides of neck & a broad track across it drenched with water. Got oat-sacks & tied on sticks for "beaters". Put buckets filled with water along the line to keep beaters wet. Wind strong S.W. & fire coming along at terrific pace preceded by volumes of smoke. Whole country to Southward seemed one blazing mass. Fire soon appeared like a thin red line over the edge of the valley, gaining the crest of the hill in two or three places almost simultaneously. All hands set to work beating but no easy job—as soon as put out in one place found rushing on in another. Smoke sometimes suffocating & when the fire in long grass impossible to stand near it. Dry buffalo chips once taking fire could hardly be put out & often served to set the grass going again. Fought the fire from place to place till about 3.30 when all danger seemed past for the time & the main body of the conflagration had passed far to the East. Turned in about 4 A.M.

SUNDAY Oct 12. 73. Wakened by a fresh alarm of fire between 7 & 8 A.M. The fire which had crossed the Souris, (or Long Coteau Creek) miles to the W was now coming down on the N side of the stream & threatening the camp in another direction. All hands turned out again & hard at work fighting the fire along the edges of the hills & bushes for a couple of hours. Managed to save a piece of grazing ground (such as it is) on the Eastern side of the Camp.³⁸ Breakfast about 11 & then all turned in. Reading & rest of day. Leut Green & party passed about 10.30 having been camped about 10 miles W of here last night on the creek & having had a hard fight, the fire at one time 18 feet of his tent. Day fine but strong W wind driving the fire along Eastward. Evening strong glare of fire to

³⁸ The following year, on June 11, 1874 Dawson noted: "Wood End now very different from when seen last autumn. Valley full of trees & beautifully green contrasting finely with the bare yellowish & reddish clay banks which so frequently occur."



Boundary Commission 1872-74.

Major Cameron, the Commissioner is seated third from the left with Captain Featherstonhaugh next to him holding the white hat. In the back row L. W. Herchmer is fourth from the left, with Captain Anderson and G. M. Dawson next.

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S & E, & burning patches in all directions. Stoves extemporized from camp kettles & preserved food cans.

MONDAY OCT. 13. Leut Rowe³⁹ arrived on way in about 10 & stopped an hour or two. Went up on the hill with Dr. B. & unearthed several indian graves. Found nothing in the first & second, probably not having gone deep enough. In number 3 after removing a great quantity of large & small stones, found a few fragments of a very thin & delicate skull which had evidently lain in the ground a great while. Could find no other bones & no implements &c. Seems that only fragments of remains can have been buried at first. Below the surface of the ground large flat slabs of stone were lying, one directly covering the fragments of skull found. Grave appeared of great age.

Afternoon got arrangements for rations &c made. Went with Dr. B. down the valley. Got Paul with cart to take in good sample of the 7 foot lignite. Then went about a mile further to a section on which Russel had left a note. Found it a good one & got quite a number of fossil shells the presence of which he had noted. Evening making various little preparations for departure in the morning.

Prairie fire reflected in the sky still in three directions S.W. S. & E.

The lost cattle found & driven in today.

³⁹ Lieut. Valentine F. Rowe, R.E.

TUESDAY OCT. 14. Making preparations for start & packing up specimens &c. Packed a box of lignite samples from the 7 foot bed & left it with Dépôt man Mitchell to forward to Dufferin when the horse train & all hands go in. Left Wood End 11.20. Met a scout & waggon of Bell's train on way to Wood End to carry beef to Coteau Dépôt. Followed the road East till within about a mile of Short Creek, then Turned North a little over a mile & struck the Souris R. Chose a good camp with an unburnt patch of grass & plenty wood at hand. Got some lunch & then saddled up & went to examine a good section in the river bank. Spent some time trying to find a ford over the R & at last succeeded in getting a place not too miry or deep. The section of the usual character & showing thru thin lignite.

Day overcast & threatening. Cold wind in morning & early afternoon. Evening calm & mild with a little rain.

The valley of the Souris R is here wide with many & complicated lateral coulés. Main valley about 150 feet deep & flat bottomed with the river flowing sluggishly from side to side in a deep trough of its own. Banks in many places showing sections more or less perfect.

Many muskrat in the R, & the banks covered with long grass, trees & bushes. A party of traders with 24 carts & vehicles passed Wood End yesterday on their way to spend the winter at Woody Mt. Today another large party on their way to the same place, which is at present on the edge of the buffalo country. Apparently much frequented by indians, & inhabited by a colony of French half breeds.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ On June 22, 1874 Dawson "arrived at Woody Mt. Settlement & Dépôt before noon. The road approaching it being very hilly & tortuous. Only two or three families here now the others being 'out on the plains'. The settlement consists of a few log shanties in a valley which has a small stream. . . . Woody Mt. has probably seen its palmy days. Buffalo & Indians already too far west. Most of the families speak of wintering next at Cypress Hills." On July 19, 1874 Dawson visited the summer Métis camp, at Milk River Lake, south of the Cypress Hills in what is now Alberta: "Must have been at least 200 tepés most of skin but some of canvas. A great many carts. The carts arranged in a great circle enclosing a place for the secure keeping of the horses & into which they are all driven at night. The camps arranged around the outer edge of the circle. Each family with its own tent or group of tents & camp fire. Being Sunday all in best clothes & no work of any sort going on. They have a priest in the party who holds service on Sunday & no doubt conducts all marriage ceremonies &c. He also teaches the children to read & write &c & helps to settle any points in dispute. Told that part of the camp now separate & hunting on other grounds so that not so many as usual. The half-breeds say that they have about 2,000 horses & ponies & certainly it appears not improbable. They speak French & some of them indian. Most understand a little English & all were anxious to know about Red R. Troubles &c. They spend the summer hunting on the plains making pemican during the summer & collecting robes when they are prime in the autumn. They are mostly well armed with repeating & breech loading rifles. In the winter they resort to Woody Mt. & such places where there is timber & they have shanties built. Most of them winter on the *White Mud R s.* of Ft. N. J. Turney & consequently well into U.S. territory, & take goods out via Missouri. They guard their camp with great care having two or three lines of scouts out. The Indians, naturally do not like the half-breeds to come out hunting like a separate tribe, though they do not object to trading. They have just held a council & decided to go N to the Cypress Hills scouts having reported plenty buffalo in that direction. They have not come from these hills more than a week or two & were then engaged in an indian fight. They took sides with the Sioux against the Blackfeet & drove the latter off killing 8 or 9 of them. It would appear however that the Sioux did the hardest part of the fighting. About 6 m. E of our camp we found the trail of their cart train & were at a loss to account for the fact that instead of following in one road & making a well beaten track for at least some of the carts, they had made 10 or 12 parallel roads within the distance of a few hundred yards. Learnt however that this a precaution against indian attack. So many hundred carts would offer but a weak line, but by travelling abreast if surprised they can draw up in a solid phalanx & put the women & children in the centre in comparative safety."

WEDNESDAY OCT. 15. 73. Heavy rain & some sleet during the night. Began to clear up about 8 A.M. Got away before tea. Regained the road to South & Crossed Short Creek. Measured a section in the bank. Camped near Roche Percé shortly after noon. Spent the afternoon examining the Roche Percé vicinity. Made a sketch of it & copied various indian designs cut upon it. This remarkable rock, or rather group of rocks is on the S Bank of the Souris just west of the valley of Short Creek. There are many "pierced rocks" though one in especial is remarkable on account of its prominence, size, & the large openings which have weathered in it. The opposite bank of the Souris Valley is also fringed with castellated & fantastic rocks of the same series. Evening beautifully fine. Scout arrived from Wood End to call in Bell's waggon train which camped near here for sake of grass. Capt. Anderson Col. Forrest having arrived & it being decided to break up the Dépôt & move in.

Told by one of the scouts that many if not most of stone heaps which we have taken for graves are remains of *deadfalls* for wolves &c. That the plain indians proper do not bury, but have their dead up in trees, or leave them sitting in lodges. The crees however said to bury & have often been in this part of country.

THURSDAY OCT. 16. Left Camp before 9 & proceeded down the Souris valley, keeping in the level bottom. Found an old hunters road which we followed, & which took us along very comfortably for about 4 miles. Then came to a place where the river in its winding makes a bend very close to one side of the valley & leaves no level low ground. Gradually mounted the hill in trying to pass this & at last at a very steep & stony place among bushes Paul's cart upset, turning completely bottom upward & laying the horse on his back. All luggage & specimens tumbled out on hill. Got horse out & things put to rights. About fifty yards further the accident was repeated, & the process of getting the animal on his legs, turning over the cart, gathering up specimens & restoring to box, had to be performed again. Obligated at last to go up to the prairie level. Ground covered with multitude of boulders which rendered it very difficult to get the carts along. Found a long & straight coulé running E. & followed this down to the valley of the Souris again. Followed the valley a few miles further, & found some difficult corners till at last fairly hemmed in between the river & a steep & very stony hill side. Decided, as the banks of valley here show no section & do not appear likely to do so, to strike South in morning for the Line Road. Camped. Made sketch of valley.

Nearly four miles below the Roche Percé another remarkable group of castellated rocks exists, the banks of the valley this far E. are also often bare & show good sections. Further E. the banks though steep, are grassed from top to bottom & strewn with a profusion of boulders.

The valley where we are camped is considerably narrower than farther W. Saw today several more specimens of the curious bird which is called here the magpie. It is large, black & white in patches & has a long & straight tail.

Day in the morning remarkably fine & summer like! Evening clear & rapidly becoming cold. Last night a very heavy hoar frost, & water frozen more than an inch thick.

FRIDAY OCT 17. Left camp pretty early & went back up the valley about quarter mile to find a place to get up the bank. Had a hard job even at the best place we could find. Tried "doubling up" the horses, tying one in front of the other. Could not get the horses to pull well together so obliged to unload the carts & carry up the load, then get the carts up light. Scout Pruden wanted to "double up" by making fast the front horse by the tail as is always done in such cases by the half-breeds. Said horses pull far steadier & better by their tails than in traces. Asked him if the horses did not often loose their tails. He replied gravely "No, he never saw a horse strong enough to pull his tail off".

On attaining the top of the bank struck S.E. toward the hill of Murdered Scout which clearly visible. Had to cross numerous deep & steep sided stony vallies branching from that of the main river.

Reached the trail about a mile W. of the Scout's Hill. Met a waggon going W with flour & found they had a mail with letters & papers for me. Told that Col Forrest &c on the way E. ahead of us. Stopped for dinner at River Lake. Then started off again & after a long & cold ride reached the Souris Dépôt⁴¹ about an hour after dark. Crossed the river with some difficulty. Found Col F &c camped. Accepted his invitation to sleep in his tent instead of getting mine put up.

Day though fine in the morning cloudy in the afternoon & with a strong cold N.W. wind all day.

Several miles along the Souris Valley so encumbered with boulders as to be quite unfit for cultivation.

Talking to Pruden about the mandan indians. The last of the tribe living under U.S. protection near Ft. Benton. Becoming somewhat civilized & cultivating land. Pruden has seen them & says they look much like the Sioux, but many part white among them. Driven gradually W. & destroyed by continual wars with the other tribes, which combined against them. They lived more in one place than the other indians, & in lodges of a different kind, being partly dug out underground then sticks & sods built up over the top. Thus the site of their villages marked by mounds. Says their chief place was near Red Deer Head Dépôt & vicinity. Remains of a village there, & a little further S. Traces of a large village protected by an earthwork.

SATURDAY OCT 18. Got arrangements about rations &c made. Found plenty of everything but oats, of which had to take short quantity. While Spearman baking walked up the R in search of Prairie chickens but found none. Left the Dépôt about 11 & came through to where the road crosses S. Antler creek (about 22 miles) without stopping, lunching by the way on a piece of raw pemican & bread. Found Col F. camped on the creek. Day cold with strong N.W. wind in morning dying away about sundown. Reflection of a large, though very distant prairie fire to the E & N.

Quite half of the prairie passed over today & yesterday burnt & black. Pruden says these fires vex indians by driving away all game & attributes partly to this the loss by the Scouts at Souris Dépôt of three horses.

Saw a large wolf this evening skulking away over the prairie.

⁴¹ 215 miles west of Red River.

SUNDAY OCT 19. Made an early start. Followed the usual road for some miles, then struck off E. till reached the S. Antler Creek again. Followed the creek from bend to bend all day & camped at dusk some 5 or 6 miles from Red Deers Head Dépôt. Found an indian grave of pretty recent date near the stream. The body had been buried & a roof like erection of stakes, strongly constructed placed over the spot. The stream of the S. Antler is exceedingly tortuous & meanders in an extensive shallow valley, which in some places has steep banks, but often merges gradually with the plain. This main valley also has its own proper windings so that the actual course of the stream is far from straight. Much good timber chiefly elm along the stream. Muskrats innumerable.

A beautiful quiet indian summer day, quite warm at noon, & the air hazy with smoke of distant prairie fires. The purple tracery of the bare trees along the valley contrasting beautifully with the sunny yellows of the ripe grass.

The country passed over, gently undulating good soil bearing rich grass, gravelly subsoil. Soil specially good in the wide shallow valley of creek.

Noticed many large boulders today & yesterday lying in hollows, as observed before. Found from Pruden that this due to the buffalo, which scratch around them, & rub their horns upon them about the pairing season. This also accounts for the beautiful polish which many of the larger boulders show on their angles & edges. Found no geological sections.

MONDAY OCT 20. Prairie fire raging not far off on both sides of creek. Hastened departure that it might not overtake us in the long grass of the bottom. After travelling about two miles found the fire rapidly coming up, behind us, urged by a strong W. wind which bore volumes of smoke & ashes. Found it necessary to fire the prairie & remain on the burnt patch till the main fire had passed ahead. This it did with amazing rapidity & we travelled the whole way to dépôt⁴² over black burnt ground which half an hour before had been covered with thick prairie grass. Fire raging in bushes, & grass of river valley all round the dépôt & kept in anxiety some time by it.

Capt Hallet⁴³ with scouts & Bell's wagon train arrived on way to Dufferin shortly after noon. Also found Maling's party here, & that Col. Forrests had left E. this morning.

Pruden pointed out to me several "*Mandan houses*" along the N. bank of the S. Antler near here. In the afternoon went with him to see the big Mandan village, on the S. bank of S Antler & about a mile from here. Many of the so called "houses" scattered at somewhat wide intervals over a rather large area between S Antler Creek & the Souris. The "houses" are mounds from 2 to 4 feet above the level of the plain, approaching to circular in outline. There is also a long mound or earthwork which at its N.W. end is near the bank of the river, & gradually diverges from it Southward. At each end of the long mound is a larger pile, like a good sized house, & rather nearer the N. end than the middle is a gap 20 paces wide. At one place there is an indication of a second inner mound. The whole bears the mark of very great antiquity, especially when the permanence of any disturbance of the prairie level is considered.

⁴² First Souris Depot, 170 miles from Red River.

⁴³ William Hallett, commanding the Métis Scouts recruited by the British Commission.

May these erections have some connection with the more southern mound builders, & may not some at least of the so called houses be graves.⁴⁴ Capt Hallet who has seen the remnant of the Mandans in the West says they still build such houses. A circle say 20 feet in diameter is dug out to 3 feet deep. Then sticks placed together as for a wigwam & sods & earth piled outside. The fireplace in the centre of the floor. The houses are made large as it is customary to bring the horses into one half of the building at night to prevent them from being stolen.

TUESDAY OCT 21. Left the dépôt pretty early, crossed the Souris together with Bell's Waggon train. Great part of prairie burned, & a cold cutting NW wind blowing up clouds of black dust. Reached Turtle Hd. Creek & camped, long after dark.

WEDNESDAY OCT 22. Night exceedingly cold & everything frozen this morning, even to the bread. Left camp about 9 o'clock & travelled on all day across burnt prairie. Very cold W & N.W. wind & air full of flying snow-flakes. Passed Corp. Maling & party who obliged to leave two horses behind, played out. Walked nearly all day, it being too cold to ride. Reached Turtle dépôt⁴⁵ after dark & just as the snowstorm which had been threatening all day came on. Found Col Forrest camped here. Resting horses.

THURSDAY OCT 23. Snowing & blowing all night & ground quite white this morning. Snowstorm continued more or less all day, but pretty good shelter among the trees. Horses picketed in the bushes eating hay from the stack. Drew 9 days rations for party including Duckworth.⁴⁶ Go on tomorrow as far as Badger Creek if at all fine. Extemporised a stove, thawed ink & wrote up diary.

Had intended doing a little exploration on Long R & Pembina R. but now, unless change in weather must go straight in.

⁴⁴ On his westward trip, June 4, 1874, Dawson excavated one of the Mandan Houses: "The greater part of these mounds are situated on the tongue of land between the Souris & S. Antler Creek, on the general prairie level. A few are on the N side of the Creek & near the road. One of these chosen. Diameter of mound a little over 50 feet. Height above general prairie level about 6 feet. The ground round the mound showed evident traces of having been dug into for the materials. Found remains of three skeletons. One probably adult, but much broken up & not much of it found. Another that of an infant. The third nearly perfect appeared to have been buried in a sitting or crouched position. The dimensions of the bones very small though from teeth &c evidently adult. Very probably a woman. Skull short & broad. Sloping in front. The interment did not bear aspect of very great antiquity. Sticks of wood with which a sort of covering had been built up over the bodies being still visible though rotten & crumbling. Found near the skeletons a flat smoothed piece of deer skin, used perhaps as a scraper & a Unio shell. The ground near the skeleton comparatively soft & yielding. From this was at first tempted to conclude that the interments found had been made long subsequent to the construction of the mound. It may however very well be that the ground has been kept from contact with the bodies at first by the woodwork & has subsequently tumbled in & loosely filled the space. This seems rendered more probably by the fact the ground is not only hard below & at a little distance around the skeletons, but above them. . . .

June 5. . . . Rowe by aid of interpreter asking some Sioux who came into camp about the old mounds. It seems that they belong to the Sioux themselves & that they still bury there. Pointed out mounds as being graves of so and so. A strange departure from the habits usually ascribed to the plain Indians. They said that in mound we had opened a woman & child buried. This was correct, but (seemed?) also as stated yesterday the remains of a third skeleton, possibly an older interment. . . .

June 6. . . . Filled up mound opened day before yesterday, in passing that the Indians prejudices might not be offended."

⁴⁵ Turtle Mountain Depot, 120 miles from Red River.

⁴⁶ Sapper Duckworth, taxidermist, British Commission.

A Glimpse of 1885

The unforgettable experiences of the deputy sheriff of Prince Albert during the fateful months of March, April and May, 1885, are related in the following letter which he wrote to his parents on May 28, 1885. Born on January 21, 1889, at "Rose Bank", Sherbrooke, Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, Harold Aubrey Edward Ross was the son of George and Mary Ellen (Barnaby) Ross. His grandfather, Captain William Ross, who had exchanged a lieutenancy in the 16th Regiment of Infantry for a captaincy in the Nova Scotia Fencibles, was one of the founders in 1816 of a military settlement at Sherbrooke, now New Ross, Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia. Captain William Ross and his wife Mary had been born in Ireland, and he became a deputy surveyor of land and a superintendent of roads at Sherbrooke. His son George and Mary Ellen Barnaby were married at Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, by Rev. John Storrs, Rector of St. John's Anglican Church there. Their son Harold, who was deputy sheriff of Prince Albert in 1885, was born in the house which his grandfather built and which is still standing in New Ross, Nova Scotia.

Following his enlistment in the Royal North West Mounted Police at Toronto, Harold Ross went to Western Canada in 1879. He was stationed for a time at Fort Walsh, then headquarters for the famed police force. He visited Prince Albert as early as 1880 when he conveyed prisoners from Battleford to that community, and in 1882 he joined the Prince Albert detachment. After retiring from the Royal North West Mounted Police in 1884 he became deputy sheriff of Prince Albert. In March 1885, after the insurrection began, Ross took part in a scouting expedition, and he was captured by Gabriel Dumont and his forces on the morning of March 26th, the day of the battle of Duck Lake. Held by the rebels for seven weeks, Ross gained his freedom after the battle of Batoche. On one occasion he was saved from execution by the intervention of Louis Riel himself.

Subsequently, in 1887, Ross was appointed sheriff. Later he served as Collector of Inland Revenue and Registrar in the Land Titles office. He retired from that office in 1927 and he died at Prince Albert on October 23, 1935.

CHARLES BRUCE FERGUSSON

Prince Albert, May 28th, 1885

Dear Ma and Pa

I WILL now endeavour to give you a detailed account of the part I played in the late war in our country. During the past year Mr. Riel of Red River notoriety has returned to his native country, and has been holding a series of meetings around this vicinity ostensibly for the purpose of getting halfbreed rights settled. He had the sympathy of a great many of the white settlers but no one dreamed of war and as he is a very clever man, from the nice way in which he spoke and his many plain spoken good intentions, all thought him a good representative for the half breeds. There has been always a doubt regarding his peaceable intentions by the authorities and he had some private meetings between all the leading Indian chiefs all over the country. So they quietly watched all his movements, but could get no hold for to arrest him, but from what I can learn on reliable authority—it was the intention of this Government to send troops here early in the Spring in case of an emergency, and at the time of the outbreak there was already five hundred of the Queens own in Winnipeg. Mr. Clarke, the Hudsons Bay Factor of this place was in Winnipeg at the time these five hundred got there and he heard some rumour of watching the Riel movement—So on his road home, while passing the French settlements of Batoche and Duck Lake he told some half breeds there to be careful what they done as soldiers were now in Winnipeg for the purpose of arresting Riel and his followers.¹

From what every one knows now it was undoubtedly the intention of the half-breeds and Indians to murder every white settler in all the North west and the

¹ The Queens Own did not arrive in Winnipeg until April 7, 1885, twelve days after the battle of Duck Lake. Rumours did get around that police reinforcements were being moved north although Clarke denied having said anything to the métis. The rumours caused a certain amount of panic among the métis which enabled Riel to form his provisional government. For a full discussion of this point see G. F. G. Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, University of Toronto Press, p. 443, note 69.

appointed time was "when the leaves began to come out". So this remark of Clarkes' made them begin hostilities sooner, and at this place they opened the ball by arresting the Indian agent of this district and his Interpreter stopping all freight for here and pillaging the stores around Batoche and Duck Lake (some twelve in number). On the evening of the 18th March the French made their first stand, they sent messengers around the outlying districts to gather in all the Scotch and English halfbreeds they could and those that would not come willingly they would force threatening them with instant death, and then they went to the Indian reserves and got all them, and a lot of the Sioux (renegades from across the border) also, making themselves about 500 strong. About sixty police were stationed at Carleton and the night the Indian agent was arrested they sent teams here with spare rifles for this place and asked for some volunteers to help them. The next morning about sixty of us left here for Carleton.² We stayed there three or four days and sign of an attack on Carleton but all sorts of rumours were afloat, so a fellow named Astley, a surveyor, a man of good influence and lots of money, old chum of mine and splendid company, we started out to see what the French were doing. We left Carleton on Monday the 23rd of March, went near Batoche could see all the gang from this side of River, and finally they saw us and gave us a run, we "caught the trail" for Duck Lake pretty lively, turned to our right and went to the St. Laurent Mission Church, seven miles down the River from Batoche. We went carefully up to the Church saw no signs of men, Then went as bold as you please. I met one of the Nuns outside and asked her if we could feed our horses and get some dinner. She replied in the affirmative, So we tarried representing Astley as looking for his freight, (me they knew) and I was travelling merely for pleasure, also gaining a good deal of information. We left the Church after dinner crossed the South Saskatchewan to Batoche side and went up in sight of Batoche again, and got chased away, then we travelled down the River about twelve miles, and as there is lots of french houses I stopped at all and asked questions from every one. Five miles from Lepines crossing we crossed a big plain and looking back we saw the gang after us. So we rode fast and got across the river to this side, and rode within ten miles of P. A. Astley stayed at a house here all night and I hired fresh horses and came in to P. A. for to tell P. A. scouts that at a certain point we would meet them occasionally and tell them the movements of the French. (At this time they had six prisoners) I turned right back from P. A. to join Astley and as I was longer away than what I promised, he had gone on ahead of me. I caught up to him at the St. Laurent church on his way back to Carleton. We went very cautiously in to Duck Lake for the night of the 24th the french were to occupy that place. It was about dark when we came there and not a soul was stirring so we waited around till near ten o'clock and we then went back to Carleton. The next day I felt tired and was slightly snow blind so we concluded not to go out—but at ten oclock that night Astley came to my bed and said "Major Crozier wants us to go and watch the enemys movements the commissioner and 100 men will be in tomorrow from

² Fort Carlton or Carlton House stood on a bench of land overlooking the North Saskatchewan River west of Duck Lake. Carlton had been an important supply depot for the fur trade of the Saskatchewan and Athabaska regions and it was on the main route between Winnipeg and Edmonton. In 1884 the post was garrisoned by the North-West Mounted Police.

Regina and the report is that the French intend to cut him off in the "pines" a place about half way between P. A. and Carleton". It was near twelve o'clock at night when we left Carleton and just outside the fort we met a promised loyal halfbreed of Scotch origin, and from him we asked if the country was safe. He replied no one is at Duck Lake but be careful passing "Beardy's" (an Indian Chief) reserve³ for he says he does not like people passing over the road so much at night. I said to him—Is there any French at Duck Lake. No was the reply Astley and I rode along quite leisurely chatting away and were going down a hill in sight of Duck Lake I heard a sort of noise from behind and looked and saw a band of twenty half breeds after us, (they having been in some Indian houses about 100 yards to our right) and they were headed by the notorious Gabriel Dumont. I struck Astley on the leg and said the French are on us. He put spurs to his horse and started to "light out" My horse got frightened and would not run so I whirled about and faced the music, Gabriel rode to my left and called out "Surrender" and Indian got off his horse on my right. Seven galloped past me after Astley. Gabriel took hold of my legs and said "dismount"—I refused. He then fired and shot the horse behind the front shoulder, I came off the horse pretty lively about this time, and Gabriel looked at my face and said, "Ha Ross scout ha" and then he saw a revolver which I had. He then made a grab to take it from me. The Indian on my right cocked his gun and pointed at me. I said to Gabriel hold on I handle that revolver and drew it out of the holster at the same time caught hold of G. by the throat intending to shoot the Indian but just as I drew the pistol Astley galloped back the gang still after him and he told me to hand over the revolver, we would get off all right—I did so and both of us were taken into Duck Lake while going along I noticed that it would have been folly to have fired for we were completely surrounded. The following day six other prisoners were brought over to Duck Lake from Batoche and all of us were shut up in an upstairs room.⁴ At three o'clock of the same day the battle of Duck Lake was fought right in sight of our prison we could hear the shots plainly but a small wall prevented us from seeing the men fall. The fight lasted about half an hour when the Indians came howling back and began to call out in Cree we have killed nine volunteers and three policemen, and old Gabriel Dumont who got a bullet wound on the head in the first of the action and was unconscious during the fight said "bring out the prisoners till I have my revenge" the Indians took up his yell and things looked pretty black for us about then. Riel rode in and after some talking and the interference of some sensible men saved us. The police had retreated in such a hurry that the nine civilians were left on the field and one wounded Riel saved. He was shot through the leg and an Indian was beating him on the head with his gun when rescued, poor chap had his head badly cut and two fingers broken. The next day Riel called to see us. I had seen him lots of times and knew him well. He said, "How to you do Mr. Ross, God has sent me to establish a new code of laws in the North West and has placed you in our power. You shall not suffer for I will give you the same position under the Provisional Govern-

³ Indian Reserve Number 96 and 97 near Duck Lake.

⁴ Astley and Ross were captured about 2:00 a.m. on March 26. The other prisoners referred to were brought over on the 26th and they were all confined in an upstairs room of Hillyard Mitchell's house.

ment as you hold under the Dominion". I thanked him and suggested he might raise me to full Sheriff. We asked him then what he would do to the dead, and could they manage to allow someone from P. A. to come for them and not leave them lying there at the mercy of the Indians and the beasts of the field. So he put the question before the council and they after a good deal of talk agreed to let one of us prisoners (Sanderson) go to Carleton and tell the police to come for the dead. I then asked for to go and carry the bodies off the field and at last got permission to do so, with an Indian guard. Wm. Tompkins and myself carried the poor boys, ones that I have known there for the past five years and laid them side by side in one of the small Indian house close by. Among the dead was Mr. Elliot, one of our lawyers, and from him I have had all my living for the past year. He was the leading one of the place, and a splendid fellow. The night after the battle word was sent to us that Carleton was on fire, and it was true, the breeds saw the fire but were afraid to go and see three days after they found out that the police had abandoned the place and our seven prisoners and almost two hundred men went there. We were kept there three days and very closely watched, and then they started back for Batoche, burning Carleton and Duck Lake on the road. I was then one week a prisoner. We came to Batoche and were confined in two rooms upstairs in a house owned by one Baptiste Boyer—There we stayed and had a terrible long time. Some wanted to kill us others not and the Indians were terribly bitter toward us. During the time we had a couple of false alarms and a more excited crowd never was seen. We were guarded outside of our rooms, in a large kitchen by six old men. In front of the house three done "sentry go" and behind the house six. Directly under us the Indians slept, no possible chance to escape. Then came the Battle of Fish Creek. All went out to meet General Middleton except a dozen old men, our guards. We were all put in a cellar under a store close by. The cellar was about 16 feet square and 9 feet deep. One of Riel councillors, who wanted to shoot us, came down in the cellar before going away to fight brought three men with him with guns and they tied us hand and foot and we were left that way for twenty four hours. Some of the Sioux Indians got shot at that fight and they thirsted for revenge. After the fight we were put back in our room and an old man whispered to us watch the Sioux for they want to shoot you and we dare not go near the windows for some of them watched for us all the time. About nine days after the battle of Fish Creek Middleton got in position near Batoche and we were again consigned to the cellar where we remained for ten days. At three oclock of the tenth day the troops charged the place and rescued us. They got their proper position taken up on a Friday and before fighting on Saturday at 7.30 oclock A.M. they kept up an incessant fire all that day and were so close to us that the bullets pattered on the floor of the building we were confined like hail and a shell from one of the cannon passed through the building shaking it terribly Sunday. Monday was the same story. The hf'breeds kept telling us all the time that they had killed all the or nearly all the white dogs and would then make an end of us. I can assure you the suspense was terrible, on Tuesday morning Riel came in the building and opened the cellar hatch and said, Astley, Astley, go up to Middletons camp and tell the troops if they advance and kill any of our families or shell the buildings we will massacre

you all in the cellar. Astley started up for the camp double quick, as he left a few shots were fired on the left. He got through and delivered the message and came back with the general's reply that he would not fire a shot if they would surrender. Riel and his council took four hours to think the affair over and finally agreed. By this time Middletons right division was just in action Astley found the general and told him all Riel said and he said he is to late we are just going into action. Astley then told him they are all turned in their pits watching your right division and think you have no more men. Send your left division in skirmishing order round on their right and they can get a good position unnoticed, and then Astley wheeled and came back to Riel and said "Middleton is stopping his men go you and do likewise" Riel was about crazy. Then Astley started back for the troops as they started to charge. His horse got two bullets and he had to leave it, but he run along on foot between two fires, the troops took him for a rebel and the hfbreeds fired at him. The white flag was shot out of his hand but he got there and followed the charge telling all we were in a certain building and not shell it but keep the bullets rattling around it. They did so and gave the rebels no chance to get at us. So they fled leaving all behind. They were so surprised when they got a volley on their right from Middletons left Division, that they let one ungodly yell the Indians especially, and then another volley came and then the troops chased them, Yelling like the Indians We all thought our "goose was cooked" when of a sudden I heard the welcome bugle call cease firing. We tried to Burst open our prison but the hatch was spiked down, and a dozen red coats rushed into the building and dragged us up. We were hard looking specimens, seven weeks prisoners and for the last ten days never saw the light of day, and each night at six our hands were tied behind our back. At the first start while the plunder lasted they used us pretty well but toward the last they were getting short of everything and it was a case for the last two weeks of boiled beef and water twice a day. It was a mighty close call but I stuck out game to the last, defied them in everything.

After the battle of Fish Creek I helped doctor some of the wounded, one chap lived half an hour, the other not as long, Astley and I washed the wounds put on a professional air, and gave them so much laudanum that they never woke up again. They would have died anyway so thought it best to make a quick job of it. Made good work of a broken arm on a Cree Indian. The arm is sett so crooked that he will have to go up backwards to say goodbye. Soon as we were released the general sent us up to his camp under escort and even then the bullets were flying in all ways. The next day I went over the battlefield and the way they had the place entrenched was something grand. The general said that two hundred men under a good officer could have held the place against as many thousand. I counted twenty six dead bodies, fifteen lying in one heap. In their haste to get away they were nailed by this Gatling gun which fires 1500 shots per minute. A lot of them came and surrendered that night Riel was caught next day. The troops took away everything cattle horses and all, and a more destitute lot of women you never saw. They were hunting up their dead and burying them. We stayed there two days and left for P. A. on the third. I got a horse and came in

ahead with one of Middletons officers a man who lived here once, and I never got such a reception. Some of the P. A. Scouts wired in I was on the road, and the street was lined and they cheered me, got invitations from every one. Never knew I was so popular until then—I have written ten pages and have only told you half of my frightful life in the hands of those beasts. . . . I am sending this to Nell to read and then to you. We had the first regular mail today, since the 16th of March, it leaves tomorrow. I have been busy identifying rebels since my return, they have 39 prisoners here. The Indians at Pitt and Frog Lake have murdered all the white people, and today the combined forces of Strange, Otter and Middleton attack Big Bear Will write soon again, kind regards to all friends, with love to yourself and all the children.

Believe me,

Yours Affect.

Harold E. Ross

Excuse mistakes it is to long to read over

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Canada's Oldest Known Pictograph?

PAINTED, carved or pecked drawings on rock surfaces are found in almost every corner of the world: from Alaska through Mexico to Argentina; from Sweden through Spain to South Africa; and from Siberia through India to Australia. Canada is no exception. Such paintings or carvings, called *pictographs* and *petroglyphs* respectively, are found from Vancouver Island to Nova Scotia. Yet this unique rock art is virtually unknown to most Canadians.

Interest in preserving at least a record of the rock art in Canada has grown just recently. Only since 1965 have grants from the Institute for Northern Studies and The Canada Council enabled our field crews from the University of Saskatchewan to study the rock art in Canada's Precambrian Shield. Recording these distinctive aboriginal pictographs in the Shield naturally requires journeys to widely separated and usually remote areas. However, many travellers besides researchers have seen the ochrous red paintings which decorate many rock surfaces along the waterways of the Precambrian Shield.

As recently as the 18th Century, one traveller wrote about some paintings that he saw on the Churchill River in Northern Saskatchewan. It may be the first historical documentation of a pictograph site in Canada. The traveller was Alexander Mackenzie, who is more famous, of course, for his exploration of the western and northern parts of North America than for his observations of pictographs. Indeed, Mackenzie mentioned them only twice in his journal. Both times, he dealt with the same stretch of the Churchill River.

Describing this part of the Churchill traverse in his "A General History of the Fur Trade from Canada to the North-West" (in *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans in 1789 and 1793*), Mackenzie wrote:

From thence [Dead Lake] a rapid river leads to Portage de Hallier [Birch Portage], which is followed by Lake de L'Isle d'Ours [Black Bear Island Lake]: it is, however, improperly called a lake, as it contains frequent impediments amongst its islands, from rapids. There is a very dangerous one about the centre of it, which is named the Rapid qui ne parle point, or that never speaks, from its silent whirlpool-motion. In some of the whirlpools the suction is so powerful, that they are carefully avoided. *At some distance from the silent rapid is a narrow strait, where the Indians have painted red figures on the face of a rock, and where it was their custom formerly to make an offering of some of the articles which they had with them, in their way to and from the Churchill**

It is not clear from his journal, unfortunately, just when he saw the paintings. It may have been in 1787, before his discovery of the great northern river named for him, or in 1792, just before his overland journey to the Pacific. What is clear is that there were rock paintings near Silent Rapid on Black Bear Island Lake at the end of the 18th Century. Taking the later date, the site he mentioned has a *minimum* age of 176 years. Such a minimum age is potentially valuable in dating other pictograph sites in the Shield. Of course, the date cannot be applied in-

*Parenthesis and italics by the authors.



Information in this part of Peter Pond's 1785 map was probably used by Alexander Mackenzie for his own explorations of the Mackenzie River. The circle near the center of the map approximates the location of Silent Rapid. Map copied from *Peter Pond—Fur Trader and Adventurer*, by H. A. Innes. Toronto: Irwin and Gordon Ltd., 1930.

discriminately to other paintings in Canada, but at least it is a clue that may give pause to some who might otherwise be skeptical of the historical depth of this art form in Canada.

Now, with a painting known to be at least 176 years old, the researcher may reasonably hope to use it for comparative purposes. That is, he may note subject-matter, style, fading of pigment, lichen encroachment and other items for comparison with hundreds of other painted symbols in the Shield. However, it is almost ironic that this particular site, which best fits Mackenzie's description, has no lichens on it. Others elsewhere, that may be more recent than 176 years, do have lichens. It is ironic that the paint, though smeared in places, is quite

vivid. Especially it is ironic that one cannot really tell just what the painting's subject matter *is*!

So much for comparisons, then, because this pictograph is most unique. The head of some animal is in the upper righthand corner. Dots suggest eyes, so that the face seems turned to gaze at the viewer, but other bits of pigment in the face ambiguously indicate a profile view with ears in twisted perspective. The remainder is even vaguer. Orange lichen colonies grow within an inch of a very faded figure that seems to emerge, barely visible, to the left and above what looks like the body of a large stick animal with internal organs shown through X-ray vision, or two animals in superposition, or something else again, because the inside of this large animal's body is smeared. Another animal is suggested by what seems to be a clearly defined back and what may be four legs.

Just above the back of the large animal are some short brush splayings, brightly pigmented still, and apparently running into each other as if to suggest a hairy hump. There is some variation in intensity of pigment here, but not so extreme as is evident in one continuous line that plunges downward along the rear of this large stick animal. This line begins in a vivid and bright rusty hue which soon shades into virtually transparent tones. Such a difference in fading is puzzling, but may be due here only to the amount or quality of the kind of binder which the painter had applied on his brush while impregnating the red ochre dye into the rock face.

In any case, the fading here cannot be due to varying degrees of antiquity, because this single line clearly does blend from a brilliant red-brown at one end to a dull grey at the other end. Nor does such differential fading seem related to degree of exposure to erosive elements, because the entire painting seems adequately and quite evenly protected. The bluish-grey granite-face slopes forward about three degrees, providing a gentle overhang which does not allow much seepage to flow over the painting. Furthermore, the snout of the painted animal is almost four feet above water level, so danger from wave action is reduced, especially since nearby rocks divert the modest current about twenty feet away from the cliff. The water is calm here.

Adding more natural protection is a natural ledge which juts out almost two feet, and acts as a barrier between the water below and the painting above. This ledge is almost three feet above the water, so that one could have sat and painted from here. Or one could have stood in a canoe and rested one's hand on the ledge, or else landed the canoe on the boulders to the right and walked along the ledge to this spot and painted while crouching on the ledge. Some of this outcrop also lies just under the water, so the painter could have stood on this, knee-high in water, and painted. There are many ways in which the aboriginal artist could have positioned himself as he prepared to paint here.

The ledge is separated from the paintings by a joint that is almost three inches wide at the opening, but narrows to less than an inch in width as one peers almost four feet into the crevice. This would have been a good place to have left sacred offerings, as Mackenzie indicates had been the practice even before his



Two canoes can be seen directly in front of the outcrop on which the pictograph occurs.



The rock painting is directly above the small boulder on the offering ledge, but only the head of the animal is visible from this distance.



The animal's head is most visible in this photograph, which also shows the texture of the granitic rock, and which may be compared with the reproduction of the painting.



The scale for this rock painting may be visualized by reference to the length of the animal's head, which is twelve inches.

visit here in the 18th century. However, no offerings were found here. They may have been dropped into the water or been taken by irreverent passersby. Only the vacant crevice above the ledge and the painting itself remain, somewhat enigmatically.

Further recording of other Shield sites may uncover similar paintings and perhaps even comparable settings. On the other hand, it may never be known just what relationship these figures at Silent Rapids bear to other paintings, because we already know that almost every painting in the Shield is too *individual* to be grouped easily with others, particularly if one also tries to match the natural settings.

Mackenzie indicates that this place was one where religious observance or propitiation occurred, holding great meaning not only for the painter but for others as well. He implies the paintings had been there for some time, and that the practice of leaving offerings was no longer carried out at the time he was passing through, or at least not in his presence. Such ethnographic details are important, because if the practice had really died out by this time, then its abandonment was very early indeed, much earlier than in the east. Perhaps his Cree guides simply wished to decry the "old and savage" ways in the presence of this European. Mackenzie's account also raises several other questions which belong to the more general historical studies of early Canadiana as well as to strictly anthropological studies.

It is also noteworthy that all of the pictograph sites of Black Bear Island Lake are on the shortest canoe route across the lake. The same route was used by early fur traders who themselves followed the major prehistoric highway through north-central Saskatchewan—the Churchill. This route is still being used today by various canoeing groups which travel downstream, starting from Ile-a-la-Crosse. Fortunately, all of these travellers have paid the paintings the respect they deserve, and have looked, but not touched or defaced them.

Silent Rapid is the official geographical name of *Rapid qui ne parle point*, but it is known to the present Cree Indians in the area as *Mantou Powstik*—"God" or "Devil" Rapid. The place holds a certain fascination mingled with a little fear for anyone going through the rapids here in a canoe, because the cross-currents are tricky, and there is no white-water or roaring sound to indicate just where the fastest water is. It is not difficult to understand what the present name may have meant to the people who were most familiar with this section of the river. Perhaps the name is as old as the pictographs, or even older.

The paintings here lie a little below *Mantou Powstik*—the deep and silent rapids that are linked by the Cree and other woodland groups to supernatural beings. The paintings have been seen by hundreds of passersby since Mackenzie's time, and before it. The artist is gone. The offerings have been taken from the ledge below. But the painted creature remains, gazing impassively on the humanity that passes by, either in the growling motorboats of the contemporary north or in the silent canoes that represent a yet-recent past.

ZENON S. POHRECKY AND TIM E. H. JONES

Book Reviews

BILLY BOCK: THE BEST OF BILLY BOCK. Ed. by John Archer and Robert Peterson. Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1967. Pp. 185. \$2.50.

THE BEST OF BILLY BOCK is a selection of pieces made by John Archer and Robert Peterson from Billy's two earlier collections, *The Book of Humbug* and *Skeletons*; together with a number of items from his weekly newspaper column, "Screenings", which will be new to most of his readers.

The story of Billy Bock's life, which can be gleaned from various of the selections, is an outline familiar to anyone who has ever listened to the talk or read the printed reminiscences of our early settlers: an eastern Canadian boyhood; a youthful response to the call of the new frontier; a period of aimless wandering (to the Rockies, the Coast, the Yukon goldfields); and then the settling-down on a homestead in the Eastend district which from 1910 to the present day has been Billy's home base.

But Billy Bock's writings—and herein lies much of their novelty and charm—are in no sense conventional pioneer reminiscences; they are the work of an authentic original, distinguished by the writer's eye for the infinite variety of human nature (and particularly its foibles, follies and eccentricities); by his disregard of the clichés and conventions of orthodox prose in favour of an authentic vernacular; above all by his passionate interest not so much in the past as the present and the future, and his curiosity about all things under the sun.

Items in the collection which suggest the range of Billy Bock's interests include vigorous defences of teenagers and relaxed divorce laws; advocacy of a plan to trade Canadian wheat for Russian vodka ("one drink of it would part your hair down the middle"); a poetical investigation of the activities of Miss Gerda Munsinger; and a vivid description—also in verse—of the tired old team captain gloomily contemplating the eager-beaver activities of the candidates competing for his place:

He watched Hees pitching sliders that caught the ladies' eyes,
While Stanfield in his underwear was battling Fulton flies.
Al Hamilton in centre field was chasing flying ants;
McCutcheon, stealing second base, got gravel in his pants—

A few of the selections are for P.F.R.A. alumni only, but on the whole the editors have done their work well. From the pages of this little book there emerges a vivid picture of a vivid personality—no conventional oldtimer dreaming of the past, but an intense individualist and lover of life in all its phases, who, whatever sum his years may reach (and they are now well past four-score), seems certain to remain forever young.

EDWARD McCOURT

ESTEVAN THE POWER CENTRE. By Andrew King. Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1967. Pp. 203. Illus. \$4.95.

WHAT better Centennial project could a city undertake than that of a record of its history! Fortunately for the people of Estevan, they had access to a skillful journalist, Andrew King. But unfortunately the book *Estevan the power centre* suffers from a few of the shortcomings that cause readers to bypass

local histories. An obvious example is that the author fails to critically discuss many of the events in the development of the community. In this case the skill of the experienced writer partially overcomes the lack of deeper analysis that is warranted when one writes this type of history.

The series of events that occurred as the village evolved into a town and leapt into cityhood are embraced in the book. The writer gives due credit to the people and organizations that helped to shape the failures and successes of Estevan. Because it was located in a belt of lignite coal the development of this prairie settlement was quite different than any other. Under the ground oil and natural gas provided the impetus needed to help promote the interest essential for a boom town to become a prosperous city.

Bearing Estevan's dependence on land in mind, Andrew King does more than just a commendable job of describing the relationship between man and nature. Within this framework the body of the book is permeated by an interesting discussion on the industries, government and city departments, schools, churches, service clubs, fraternal organizations and societies of the community. Other topics discussed include sports, music, communication, a background of the "Rum-Running" days, biographies of several prominent sons and an archeological story of the area.

Some facet of the story surely touches the lives of every present or former resident of Estevan. You feel that you are leafing your way through a school yearbook, glancing at the photos and reading the captions. Yet because it is written by a former newspaper editor, the style exemplifies real events. The story of the first school embellished as it is with nostalgic memories would stir the hearts of the old and not-so-old who attended the wooden rural and urban schools of another era.

Estevan the power centre is an example of an entertaining local history. In some aspects the book acts as a readable "Henderson's" that gives the history behind each institution, organization and person that it discusses. Because of this it is of great interest to the local people. On the other hand the general reader has to suffer through pages of unfamiliar names that probably can be skipped over. Still the book is and becomes readable when one does come to the historical narrative. Thus, it is saved from the fate of becoming just another local history.

ALEX A. SHORTEN

REMEMBER BUTLER. By Edward McCourt. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967. Pp. 260. Illus. \$6.50.

E. A. McCourt, well-known western Canadian novelist and teacher of English has written a very interesting biography of Sir William Butler. A Tipperary Irishman, Butler served in the British Army from 1858 to 1905 enlisting as a junior Lieutenant and retiring as a Lieutenant-General. Except for the Boer War his career does not encompass any major war. In fact Butler was mainly occupied as a soldier in keeping the flag flying in the far flung British empire. The

wars he fought in are probably little known and perhaps even of less interest to Canadians. Why then should Canadians remember Butler?

Strangely enough Butler did make a contribution to western Canadian history and we should remember him. His contact with western Canada began when he served as an intelligence officer with Wolseley's expedition sent out in 1870 to suppress the Red River rebellion. In the course of his service with Wolseley, Butler travelled alone through the United States up the Red River to Fort Garry and eventually rejoined the expedition as it struggled westward. To avoid capture by Riel at Fort Garry in an episode that might have come from a western movie, Butler jumped from the boat as it brushed against the shore in making a turn on the tortuous Red River and went into hiding. Eventually he had an interview with Riel who did not impress Butler. Quite obviously though Butler had little understanding of the complex problems of the colony.

Following the installation of civil government Butler, at the request of the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba and the North-West Territories made a trip in the fall and early winter of 1870-71 through much of present day Saskatchewan and Alberta. Among the multitude of tasks assigned to him was to find out what areas were infected with small pox and take medicines to combat the disease, to report on frontier disorders, to make recommendations on the need for troops in the area and to estimate the population. The excellent report Butler prepared recommended among other things the formation of a small well equipped force to bring law and order into the area. This recommendation undoubtedly influenced the decision to form the famous North-West Mounted Police. Aside from his report Butler wrote a description of the journey which he published under the title of *The Great Lone Land*. This book is a fascinating account of travel in western Canada and rates, according to Professor McCourt, as a classic in the literature of travel.

In 1872-73 Butler, for his own interests, made another and more extensive trip through western Canada and this trip he described in a book called *The Wild North Land*. With this journey his direct association with Canada ended and he returned to England and military service mainly in Africa. During his military career he participated in a number of campaigns quite often in association with Wolseley. In the end Wolseley and Butler were to part company primarily over the latter's attitude toward South Africa and the Boer War. Throughout his career Butler continued to write principally about his military experiences. In all he published fifteen books but none were as successful as *The Great Lone Land*.

I have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending this book to our readers. Not only is it a thoroughly researched biography, but it is also that rare commodity a well written one. Readers will find that reading this book is a pleasure, so much so in fact that they may find it hard to put it down once they have started to read it.

D. H. Bocking

Notes on Books Received

CANADIAN HISTORICAL READINGS, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

There are at present four volumes available in this series of historical readings. The articles are reprinted from the *Canadian Historical Review* and other volumes. Each volume brings together a number of articles on a particular theme. This series makes readily available articles which were originally scattered in a number of volumes of the *Review* and which were only available to the reader in a collected set of the historical journals. The four volumes available are:

1. APPROACHES TO CANADIAN HISTORY. Pp. 98. \$1.50.

Introduction by Carl Berger and articles by W. A. Mackintosh, A. R. M. Lower, F. H. Underhill, W. L. Morton, D. G. Creighton, J. M. S. Careless, and M. Brunet. The general theme of this volume is the various approaches to the writing of history by Canadian historians.

2. UPPER CANADIAN POLITICS IN THE 1850's. Pp. 88. \$1.50.

Introduction by Craig Brown and articles by F. H. Underhill, G. W. Brown, J. M. S. Careless and R. G. Cornell.

3. CONFEDERATION. Pp. 118. \$1.95.

Introduction by Ramsay Cook and articles by D. G. Creighton, C. P. Stacey, P. B. Waite, W. Ullmann, A. G. Bailey, and G. F. G. Stanley.

4. POLITICS OF DISCONTENT. Pp. 102. \$1.50.

Introduction by Ramsay Cook and articles by H. J. Schultz, Margaret Ormsley, J. R. H. Wilbur and B. J. Young. Included are articles on Aberhart, the Reconstruction party, the Leadership League and the Little New Deal.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF MEDICINE IN CANADA, 1867-1967. By H. E. MacDermet. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967. Pp. 224. illus. \$7.50.

Written under the auspices of the Canadian Medical Association this book traces the history of medicine in Canada during the past one hundred years. There are chapters on training, associations, societies, research and the future prospects. Perhaps of special interest to the general reader today is the chapter on "Health, Medicine, and Government".

THE COLOR OF CANADA; text by Hugh MacLennan. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967. Pp. 128. illus. \$4.95.

This book takes the reader on a tour of Canada from east to west through a series of beautiful pictures with introduction and notes by Canada's distinguished novelist Hugh MacLennan. Besides illustrating Canada this book is an excellent example of modern printing skills. This is a book the owner will be delighted to show to friends and equally pleased to look at again and again himself.

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