

Ex Cadets on Patrol to the Klondike

by 3646 F.B.D. Simpkin

Gold in the Yukon

In August 1896 a drifter called George Carmack, his Indian wife Kate and his two brothers-in-law Tagis Charlie and Skookum Jim discovered gold on a tributary of the Klondike River, known as Rabbit Creek but soon to be renamed Bonanza Creek. It was a fantastically rich strike, a quarter of an ounce to the pan, and soon by canoe and word of mouth, the news spread to the isolated communities along the Yukon River. The rush was on as miners and prospectors scrambled to stake claims on Bonanza or one of the adjoining creeks.

In July of the following year, the steamers Excelsior and Portland reached Seattle and San Francisco filled with jubilant men who had struck it rich along the Klondike. They brought with them large quantities of gold and word of the sensational discovery in northern Canada flashed out like a crowning forest fire, from newspaper headline to newspaper headline, across the continent and then around the world. So it was in 1897 and in the following year, tens of thousands of men and some women, all carzed by gold fever braved danger and hardship to reach Dawson, the rickety frontier town that had grown up overnight at the edge of the gold fields. Some (those with money) went in by paddlewheel steamer up the Yukon from St. Michael's at its mouth, while others set out by land from Edmonton or from Valdez over the glacier. Most though came in through Skagway, across the White or Chilkoot passes and on down to Lake Bennett where a raft or a scow could be built to carry them on to their destination. Eventually some forty thousand adventurers fought their way through to the Klondike and , of these, it was estimated that seven-eighths were citizens of the United States.

These thirty-five thousand Americans were to cause problems for the Canadian Government and for the North West Mounted Police who were thinly dispersed over the vast territory.

(Source: How the Klondike was Held - Ex-Cadets with the Yukon Field Force by 2717 Capt. John Windsor from As You Were! - Ex Cadets Remember, Vol I 1876-1918, 1877 R. Guy Smith Editor, Published under the auspices of the RMC Club of Canada, 1983)

[Pierre Berton in Klondike](#)- "Of every five men who set out for the Klondike by the overland routes, only one reached his destination. One party that did get through, for which there is a complete record, was not composed of gold-seekers at all but of North West Mounted Policemen".

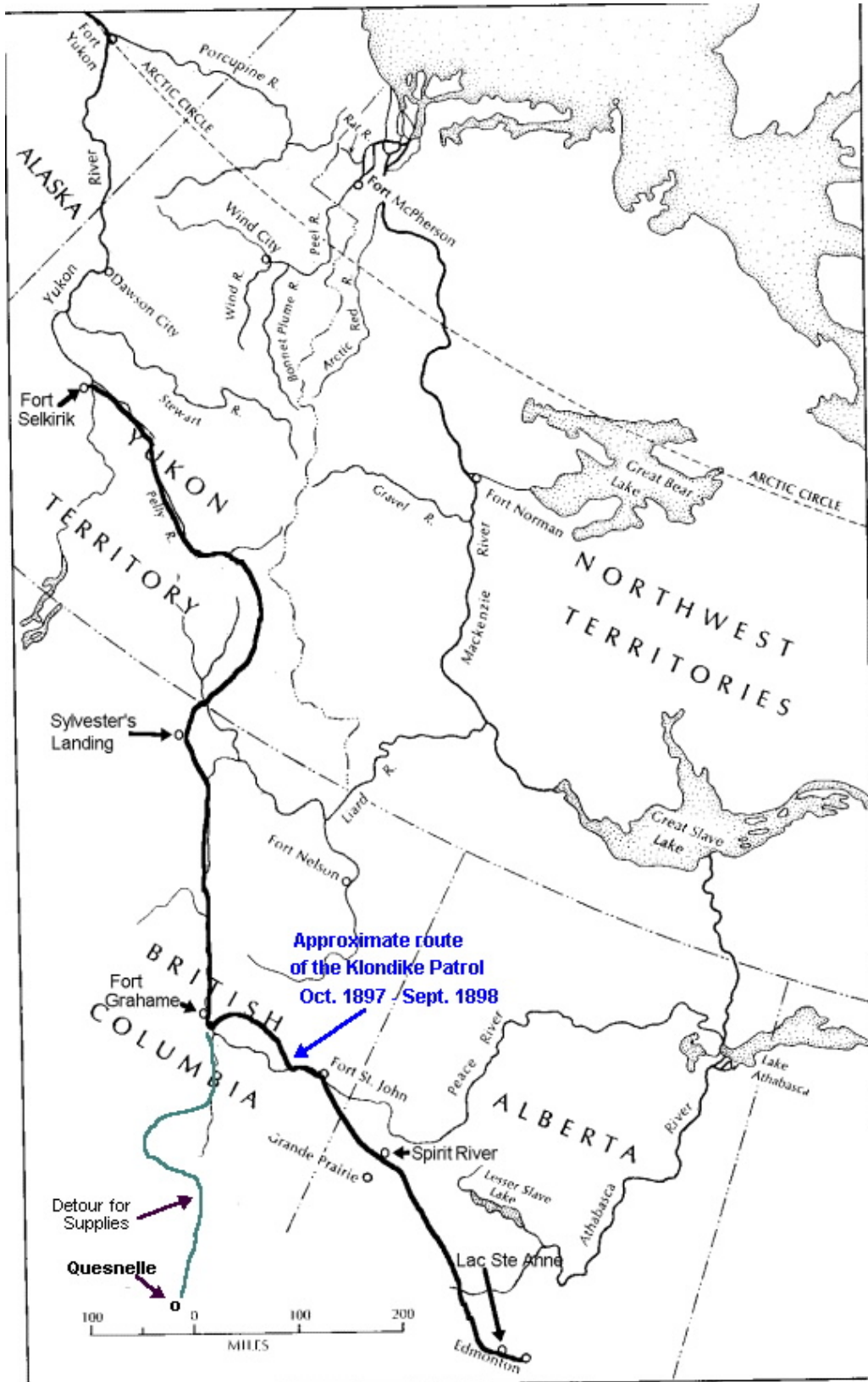
The patrol consisted of 5 Mounties - Inspector J.D. Moodie, Constable Frank Fitzgerald, and Special Constables Baptiste Pepin, Frank Lafferty and Henry Tobin. The latter two were right out of RMC. They went along as mappers.

[Moodie's Orders](#)

"You have been selected to command a small party about to leave Edmonton for the head waters of the Pelly River, the object being to collect exhaustive information on the best road to take for parties going into the Yukon via that route. you will be expected on return to supply such reliable information that a party leaving Edmonton will know exactly what they must expect at all points en route".

(Source - Sessional Papers of Parliament for 1899, National Library of Canada- Report of the Commissioner, North West Mounted Police)

[Pierre Berton in Klondike](#) - "Moodie started out in September, 1897. It took him almost fourteen months to cover the sixteen hundred miles to Fort Selkirk on the Yukon. He and his men chopped their way through the wilderness, paddled, climbed, waded, and trudged, their clothes in tatters, their horses half dead, their packers constantly deserting them, and their constitutions weakened by illness."



Route of the Klondike Patrol

Moodie's report and diary of the patrol are published in the Sessional Papers of Parliament and are available in the National Library. One has to read between the lines and study maps of the route to imagine the difficulties the party had to overcome just to get through alive. In researching Moodie's career I came across Lafferty's memoirs of the trip. He had dictated them ten years later when he was Staff Adjutant at RMC. His son had given the document to the Yukon Archives.

347 Brigadier General Francis Delamere Lafferty



Frank Lafferty graduated from RMC in 1896. His record sheet at the Royal Military College Club of Canada has the following career information:

- Lieut. N.W.M.P. 1896,
- Lieut. RCA 1899,
- Bvt. Capt. 1901,
- Capt. 1903,
- Major, 1908,
- Lt. Col. 1915,
- Bvt. Col. 1917,
- Brig. Gen'l., Nov. 20, 1919.
- He served in the South African war;
- was Staff Adjutant at RMC, 1905 to 1908;
- was at the Ordnance School, Woolich, 1908-1911;
- Gunnery Instructor at the Citadel, Quebec, 1912;
- Supt. Dominion Arsenal, 1913-1919

- He died in Quebec City on Nov. 29, 1919, of heart failure, 9 days after his promotion to Brigadier.

375 Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Seymour Tobin, DSO



Henry Tobin graduated in 1897. He volunteered for the Klondike Patrol shortly after graduation. On completion of the patrol Tobin stayed on to serve in the Yukon. He served in South Africa in Lord Strathcona's Horse in 1900 and 1901, earning the Queen's Medal with four clasps. He was admitted to the Bar in the Yukon Territory in July 1902 and had a career as a Barrister and Solicitor as a member of the Bar of The Yukon, Alberta and British Columbia. His RMC Club record sheet records his further military service as:

- Captain Corps of Guides, Yukon, 1903,
- Major - 1907,
- Major - 72nd Regiment Seaforth Highlanders,
- seconded Bde. Major 23rd Infantry Brigade Sept 1913 to Oct. 1914,
- Lt. Col. 29th Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force, Oct. 1914,
- Overseas to France in Sept., 1915,
- returning to Canada in May, 1919.
- He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1919.
- According to his obituary, "he was best known as Commander of Tobin's Tigers, the 29th (Vancouver) Battalion, that he organized and led during World War I".
- He was an industrialist in Vancouver, where he died on Aug. 8, 1956 at age 79.

Lafferty's Memoir

With permission of the Yukon Archives. (MSS 092 f.6 78/69 - Coutts Collection)
 (Note: I have reorganized the document to fit chronologically with Moodie's diary)

Preface - dated 21st December, 1964 (by Lafferty's son)

When my father was 20 years old, he graduated from RMC in June, 1897ⁱ. and left in September of the same year as a mapper for an expedition to

the North

Copy of Dad's own report of this trip is attached. In reading it you will gather, as I did, that he dictated it several years after his return, and in two parts, I have not tried to edit his account, but have had it copied just as mother received from dad. The only comment I will add is that the party were assumed lost and dead for six months, and that the hardships endured were undoubtedly responsible to some extent to the deterioration in Dad's health which resulted in his untimely death at 42 years old.

From Kingston to Edmonton, via Ottawa

I was a lad just out of College in 1897 when the gold mine rush was talked of. The Government was sending out a party to explore the district and a number of us applied for a position on the party. Next news was for me to report at Ottawa. The note was signed by Fred. Whiteⁱⁱ. I got notice to go to Edmonton and from there to the Yukon. I got the telegram at Kingston at 3 in the afternoon. Went down to Ottawa that night and left there next day at noon on the C.P.R. We got our outfit from Wood Ltd. in Ottawa. Had all sorts of things in our outfit. At Edmonton we added other things such as knives, axes, etc. and we were each given a Winchester 44.

The Start of the Patrol, Life on the Trail in the first Month

We left Edmonton on 4th Sept. 1897. We took a band of 35ⁱⁱⁱ horses. Some of the Police accompanied us as far as Lake St. Ann. The party was made up of Inspector Moodie, Constable F.G. Fitzgerald, H.S. Tobin, Baptiste Pepin and myself. Baptiste was an Indian half-breed who had been down the Mackenzie River 30 years before with a Roman Catholic bishop (I cannot remember his name now) who had explored there. This man went down to the mouth of the Mackenzie or thereabouts. When we got to St. Ann we were joined by Mr. Richard Hardesty of Edmonton. The object of myself and Tobin going was to put the route on paper. Fitzgerald represented the Police and Hardesty came as packer, etc.

After leaving St. Ann we had a nice trip. It was in the fall and there were no flies except a few large flies which bit the horses. We did about 15 or 20 miles that first day. The first 10 miles every pack was off at least a dozen times. We were following all sorts of trails and of course as a consequence we were off a good deal, going ahead on foot trying to see where the trail we were following was going to lead to. However, everything went on smoothly. We camped the first night on the banks of the Pembina River. There was a good deal of discussion about tents. Some suggested that we do without them, but some of the youngsters

strongly objected to this. Finally we decided to put up the tents, Mr. Moodie advising us to do it to satisfy the youngsters. After pitching our tents and unloading our horses we have supper. The "grub" was not so bad. We had lots of everything - some bologna sausage, potatoes, bacon marmalade etc. We were up at daylight next morning packing and making ready for the day's journey. Had some difficulty in packing. After putting on a pack and being satisfied that one had it on securely the packer would come along and examine it, and say it was "No good" - must come off and be put on properly.

We crossed the Pembina River this morning and, as it flows in the shape of an S, in the course of our travel we crossed it three times^{iv}. We were now following a hunting trail. The ford was easy. We traveled about 15 or 20 miles that day. Still had difficulty with packing - hard on the horses, as they were not used to this. We had lots of water and everything went on well with the exception of the packing. Camped that night and on again next day. We were now traveling through an even, thinly wooded country. Came to the Athabasca River.

All through we saw lots of ducks and geese. We had muzzle loading guns. Baptiste carried a shot gun. His method of shooting was to crawl up on his belly and snoot with both barrels. It was a case of getting as much as he could with the fewest number of shots. By this time we had finished our bread and had got down to bacon, beans and bannocks. The cook was getting tired. We got to camp about 7, 8 or 9 at night, up about 4 in the morning. In the morning we would go at once out for the horses which had been let out to graze at night. While we were doing this the cook got breakfast. When the horses were in we got breakfast. By the time we had the packs arranged the cook had washed dishes and his kitchen things ready to be loaded. We got on the road about half past 6 or 7. We traveled until about 12 and then we stopped to feed.

If in the course of travel we came to muskeg we stopped and calculated how long it would take to "brush" it over. If it would taking long we unpacked our horses and went to chopping. When the road was laid we went on. Everyone carried axe and knife strapped to saddle. The axe had a short handle. We were not used to handling axes and found it rather difficult as well as rather dangerous. At noon, as I said, we unpacked. We might have bacon or bannocks, we boiled the kettle and had tea and gave the horses an hour without packs on. As soon as a horse was unpacked he would lie down and roll. This was invariably the first thing he did. This is as essential to a horse as a bath to a man. After dinner, packing again, which was a process. It took us quite 20 minutes to pack horses. We all had Mexican saddles. We would travel on until 6 or 7 and then if we had come to good feed we stopped.

Packing a Horse

We camped at St. Ann for the first night. The next morning we were up early saddling and packing the horses, and in connection with this, throwing what is known as "the diamond hitch." You put the saddle on the horse carefully, seeing that no part of it touches the horse in such a way as to hurt it when traveling. This is accomplished by padding under the saddle. Say you are going to put 400 pounds load on a horse. You divide the load so that there will be about 200 pounds on each side. You then put a light load on top of that in the middle of the saddle and lash all this on the horse with the "diamond hitch". It requires two men to do this and a man requires a month's practice before he is an efficient packer. In arranging packs for ordinary trail packing the same strongness and firmness is not required as for bush traveling. In following a bush trail if the pack is not put on well it will be off half the time - as it strikes the trees on each side and loosens and comes off - and the horse will have no back left. We were all green at this work but Dick Hardesty. An experienced packer must go with every train.

First Encounter with Indians - at Athabaska River

Here we saw our first Indians and also saw how they gamble. They had a camp here, and after we had got our own camp settled we go to look at theirs. In their tepees one sees a fire burning in the middle, bunches of "kinnikinnic" hanging over it to dry - (this kinnikinnic is a grass which grows in damp ground and which, when dried, the Indians use with their tobacco) - the teepee full of smoke, squaws in the background singing, and in the foreground a group of Indians gambling silently and smoking. Every few minutes the Indian reaches into the pouch hanging by his side and draws forth a pinch of kinnikinnic and mixes it with tobacco in his pipe, and goes on gambling. There is very little talking, in fact one might say none. Hardly any sound but that of squaws singing and perhaps a drum beating. The Indian is essentially a gambler. I actually saw an Indian gamble his wife away. His horse, his gun and all he had, except his wife, went and finally he put her up and lost her. He showed no sign of emotion. I don't remember whether she did or not, but think not. An Indian is perfectly expressionless. One can never tell by his face what is passing in his mind. He is always quiet, never surprised and never shocked. The game they play when gambling is generally "bank". The dealer is banker. He plays against everyone else. The Indians we met here at the Athabaska were Cree. An Indian never calls anyone by his name. Always has some term of relationship for those he meets. The greatest possible compliment an Indian can pay you is to call you his brother. If he calls you brother you can depend on him absolutely, he is to be depended on until death, if need be. The usual term however, is "cousin" - "thuwa".

At the Athabasca River we swam our horses across and took our goods across in dugouts which the Indians lent us. They stole our goods in the meantime which we had to leave on the shore while we ferried part of them across. The horses go in easily enough when swimming across lake or river. We just drive them in. Where the current is swift in a river they are carried perhaps half a mile down by the current before they land on the other side.

The Long Muskeg

We crossed the Athabasca just below the mouth of the McLeod River. There was good feed and grazing but in some places the horses got into the goose-grass which made very difficult traveling. This grass is hollow and tubular - about the size and shape of a tulip stalk. We traveled on this way for a couple of days then we reached the most heartbreaking part of our horse-travel. There were miles and miles of "muskeg". This is very much like a lake with a little water in the bottom covered by a crust of sod grown up with grass and vines, moss and also small ragged spruce trees. The horses walk on this for few paces then goes through. As he flounders he goes deeper down. The way used to get over at all is by laying down spruce boughs until you make a sort of bridge on which the horses walk. The pack has to be taken off the horse, when he gets into the muskeg you build up underneath him with brushwood, lever him up and build a way on for him. The horse does nothing - lets you do as you like, but you must take off his pack. The horse seems to know he makes matters worse by floundering about and, when he breaks in the muskeg, remains perfectly quiet. When you repeat the operation of getting the horse out of the muskeg a dozen times in two miles it is very distressing. We had probably over a week of almost constant muskeg. We used to try walking round it and through it, but we finally gave it up and found that it was best to first lay down a road and then go over.

Sturgeon Lake

We picked up all the information we could from the Indians as we went on. At Lake St. Ann we got enough information to take us to Lake Athabasca^v and there enough to take us to Sturgeon Lake. We were still pitching out tents. By the time we got to Sturgeon Lake, we "chucked" the tents and slept outside. Sturgeon Lake is really two lakes - twin lakes. The trail we picked up took us across these. On the 29th Sept., 1897 we reached Sturgeon Lake. Had been steadily traveling. In muskeg we seldom made more than 10 miles a day. There was a beaten way up by Lesser Slave Lake but we went as the crow flies. We reached a beautiful spot on our way - Prairie Lake^{vi}. Here there was any amount of fine hay probably 1,000 tons. Plenty of water.

Ghost Creek, Trapped in Deadfall, Wilson Lost

We crossed Smoky River 4 1/2 days after coming to Sturgeon Lake. We crossed in the afternoon and camped on the other side. The rivers at the time we crossed were low. Some of them would be impassable in high water. You would then have to swim horses across. Some of them run 16 miles an hour. In this country there is always lots of grazing.

We got to what is known as "the Ranch"^{vii} 10 miles South of Dunvegan on the 6th of October. At Dunvegan we picked up a man by the name of Wilson Who had gone up prospecting, married an Indian and stayed there. He under-took to take us to St. John by a trail on the South side of the Peace River. He started from Dunvegan with us on the 7th October. We went through a lot of burnt timber - came to this after crossing the Red River. Wilson wanted us to camp here while he went ahead to pick up the trail again, We did so and Wilson went off. At dark he had not turned up. He had his gun with him and some provision so we were not alarmed when the next morning he had not yet come back. As the day wore on we became anxious and parties went out in different directions but got no sign of him. Next day we searched. Baptiste and I finally came upon Wilson's trail and traced it until it came to a place where there was a mass of fallen timber. Here he had made his camp. We saw where he started off again and where his trail led off in different directions as if he had been bewildered, but we did not find any trace of Wilson. Nothing has ever been heard of him since. We waited for a day and a half but never saw him. We then went back and joined the rest of the party. We expected to meet Indians and send them back to search as we were not experienced enough in woodcraft to find our way about as they could.

Near the Kascabiscowsep^{viii} we found an Indian and his squaw. We told them about Wilson and the Indian said he would look for him. The Indian and his squaw had been hunting when we met them. Had got two bear cubs which we bought from them. Bear meat is not pleasant eating - is very greasy and has a peculiar taste.

Crossing the South Pine and Peace Rivers to Reach Fort St. John

We went on until we came to South Pine River 6 miles above its mouth where it discharges into the Peace River. This was our first experience of crossing a big river without boats. We drove the horses into the River and compelled them to swim across. On arriving at the bank of a large river you look for dry timber after having settled upon a good place for embarking. You get 6 or 7 big logs, then get cross pieces and pin them over. Get light dry logs for floor. Cut saplings in shape of oars, pile everything on and go across. If you land one or two miles down you do

very well. If the current is strong 3 or 4 miles. Then pack up again. We drove the horses into the river after unpacking them and compelled them to swim across. When they land on the other side they generally congregate together and do not try to roam or get away. A foal when crossing puts its forelegs up on its mother's back and she carries it across. This crossing is a matter of many hours. A big river with a swift current is a distinct obstacle and takes much time and labor in crossing. We reach the Peace River opposite Fort St. John. At Fort St. John we have some difficulty. The weather is cold and the water is cold.

We reach here on the 1st of November. We shout across the river until they bring across boats. We load our "grub" and stores on these and paddle across. There was trouble here in getting the horses into the water as it was cold, so we took one of the big boats, manned the oars, put a halter on the horses and dragged them across behind the boat. We nearly drowned one horse in the act.

[At Fort St. John Preparing to Cross the Rocky Mountains](#)

The Hudson Bay Co. people had told us we could get lots of dogs at St. John. However, there were none there when we got there. None nearer than Lesser Slave Lake. Dick Hardesty went down to Dunvegan and got 35 dogs and came up with us at St. John 3 or 4 days after we got there.

We met a man here by the name of Gunn a Scotchman who had come out from Scotland years before. His wife came out alone afterwards - traveled from the Orkneys to Montreal, from there to Edmonton and from there to Lesser Slave Lake, a stranger in a strange land. They were very hospitable, generous people.

Our next query was how to get Indians who were willing to help us. We had parlays with them, which means a long time. You first ask the chief of the tribe or the head man to feed with you which means a ceremony of hours in duration. You must wait for them to speak. They tell you then what they like and no more. Indians must first and always be fed which is important in dealing with them. Gunn told us when we arrived in St. John that a priest had just left there. St. John was the headquarters of the Beaver Indians. This priest had visited all the camps and they had fed him and used him well. They listened to what he had to say with the greatest attention. He got gentlemanly treatment in every way. He thought he was doing splendidly. After a time he got on well enough with the people to build a little church. When the Indians came down to the Fort to trade in spring they went to his church and listened attentively, but the next Sunday there was no one there. They were invited to come but refused. The priest asked Gunn what was the matter. Gunn said "You go to their camp and they give you the best they have and use you

well and listen to all you say, they say they go to your camp, but on the contrary are not fed and you do all the talking." You should let them do the talking". The Beaver Indians here had a civil war years ago. On the North side of the Peace were what were called the North Beavers on the South side the South Beaver Indians. These two factions fought and the North Beavers were victorious.

An Indian never rebukes a dog nor a child. Never whips his children, although his squaw may do it when he is out of sight. If a dog bites him he kicks it away but never says anything to it.

As I said before there were no dogs here but Dick Hardesty had brought some up. The next thing was to make dog-sleighs. We got the Indians working at these. Squaws working at snow-shoes, moccasins, dog-harness.

One must always wear clean moccasins in the cold weather. When traveling in winter one always carries two or three extra pair of dry clean moccasins and dry clean socks. If your moccasins get the least bit wet you must at once change them for clean, dry ones, as your feet will instantly freeze if you do not. When you get into camp you take off your clean moccasins and put on old ones. Many a time when on the trail I have sat down and changed my moccasins and have gone on all right. We always wore long buckskin leggings. These served to keep the snow out of our clothes. When you get into camp you take those off. We wore both toque and hat - toque and hat on top. The toque kept the snow off our necks.

We were very busy here at St. John for some time getting our sleighs ready and preparing our grub for packing. We had to cut our bacon into strips and dry it and pack our beans, flour, etc. We had to make our bacon and flour up into parcels to fit the sleighs and then sew these parcels into canvas covers. We all worked at this. We took the flour out of the large bags containing about 100 pounds and put it into small bags. While we were doing this the Indians were working at the other things - dog-harness, snow-shoes, moccasins. The dog-sleighs are constructed very much like toboggans. They are about 15 inches wide and about 10 feet long, turned up at one end, cords along the sides.

At St. John we found candy for sale the common striped variety of sugar-stick. We ate pound after pound of this. We were too strong and tough for it to hurt us. Every day we took a certain amount of exercise to get ourselves into shape.

Dick Hardesty had brought several half-breeds with him when he brought up the dogs. One went by the name of Napoleon. He is a French half-breed; another, Tom Sinclair, a Scotch half-breed - was a mixture of

Scotch, English and Cree - spoke both the latter indifferently. Napoleon spoke French and Cree - Baptiste could speak Cree. Moodie took on Napoleon Thomas, a half-breed Iroquois. He also spoke Cree. The only information we could get as to the route ahead of us was from a chap by the name of Dick Eggs, a full blooded Beaver. Took a lot of coaxing to get him to come. He said he could take us through the Rockies. We asked about dog-feed. He said there were lots of dried salmon to be got at Fort Graham. We could not get dog-feed at St. John. We had to make dough-boys for the dogs. One of the horses we had to kill and its meat was cut up and dried for the dogs.

Leaving Fort St. John - into the Rockies

We left St. John on the 1st of December. After traveling a day and a half we got a chinook which took off all the snow so we had to stop. Right in front of us in the distance was a pass through the Rockies. We were traveling North-West up one of the sources of the Halfway River. After traveling about 20 days the snow got too deep for the horses to travel in so we decided to do without them. To the right there was rather a high mountain which sloped up evenly on the East side and ended abruptly on the North side. There is a superstition connected with this mountain. The Indians believe that the Great Spirit once camped here. South of St. John is a circular piece of prairie 2 or 3 miles in diameter. There is a cluster of boulders nearly in the center of it and the Indians say the Great Spirit made his first camp here. Forty-five miles North of St. John there are two enormous boulders with a great pine tree growing between them. All the bush was burnt there years ago - only these two tall trees left. This was the second camp. At the mountain which we could see looming up in front of us the Great Spirit is supposed to have dropped all the material he had left after creating the world and took his departure. This place is therefore called "The Jumping-Off Place". Indians will not take you to any of these places to camp because the Great Spirit went there - they are sacred places.

Christmas at Laurier Pass

We reached here about the 18th of December. We found the snow too deep to travel in so we camped. We started to kill our horses. It was sad business shooting, cutting up and eating horses we had ridden and taken care of for over four months. We dried some meat and ate some fresh which was the first we had had for a long time. It was very good. The uninitiated cannot tell horse-meat from beef. It is but slightly different in taste. We killed ten horses, let the rest run. We had about 18 or 20 with us. (On the way up the Half-Way River we met some Indians and got some moose meat from them, this was the only exception until we killed

our horses and had their meat). Our guide deserted us about the time we killed the horses. These people get homesick on journeys like this and are overcome with the longing for home and have to go back. This chap did like the others. He was sick however - in the last stages of consumption. We heard he died shortly after. In any case he left us but not before we had defined Laurier Pass. We called it so. We went up a gradual easy slope until we got to the summit which is rock.

We got to Laurier Pass on the 25th December. We made camp on the night of the 24th about a quarter of a mile from the Pass. The first thing next morning we wished each other "Merry Christmas". Then we gave each other gifts of what we had: for instance one gave pipes - ordinary wooden pipes - another gave his friends moccasin strings, I went to the moccasin bag and got several pairs of new moccasins which I presented to my friends, Moodie gave us each pipes - in fact we gave to each other to keep up the spirit of the day. All done in a joking way. We always fed at noon but in this case we held off for evening when we sat down to our Christmas dinner. We had fresh roasted horse-meat, plum-pudding - flour and water dough with raisins, beans a la Boston, bannocks, and tea. In place of liquor we had extract of ginger. Moodie had brought for this occasion a dozen. We probably had 3 or 4 dozen bottles and in this ginger extract we drank our toasts which were "The Queen", "Laurier Pass", "Absent friends", "the ladies - God Bless them". We gave the half-breeds a dozen bottles of ginger extract on which they got drunk. They will drink a barrel of it for the sake of getting drunk. You must give them enough to get drunk on. Then they are happy and contented for weeks after. You are treating them alright then. One man would finish a case - a case holds about a dozen bottles.

Each of us had a cup of ginger tea then we filled our pipes and each one in turn told what he would have liked for his Christmas dinner. One started off with caviar, and mock turtle soup, another Roman punch, everyone included turkey and plum pudding with brandy sauce in his bill-of-fare. If one had gone through their menu, and some one suggested something which he would have liked in addition one would immediately say "oh yes, I would have that too". We were not grumbling or finding fault with what we had. This was our principal amusement in the evenings. We had nothing to talk of. It was hard to make conversation. We had been 4 months out of the outside world. We knew nothing of current events. The Spanish-American war had been begun and ended. No letters could reach us. No news could reach us. We were going faster than anyone could.

Our one object was to get through as quickly as possible. The Government said "Go as fast as you can" and this we were doing. We were contented, did not envy the people in the outside world sitting at

their Christmas dinners. The less of civilization one sees the less one wants it. The farther you are from you and yours the more of an animal you become. We had to go so many miles a day. In order to do this we had to eat and sleep. We thought of nothing else whatever. Our minds narrowed down to that. It was the "simple life" in a cruder, rougher form. We were handling dogs and associating with half-breeds, inferior to ourselves. Our object to get the most out of each and through contact with them we were descending to their level. Our competition with one another keeps us to our manhood. The farther on we got and the longer we were away from home and civilization the less we talked about it. All we had to talk about was dogs and "grub". All the time however, we were making notes and taking observations and track surveys.

When I left home I was 16. My first Christmas dinner after that was in Toronto, the next in Lanark, Ontario, the next in Toronto, the next in Kingston, the next at Laurier Pass, the next in Ottawa, the next in South Africa and my next one again in Kingston. No two Christmas dinners in succession in one place.

Where we camped to spend Christmas Day we were looking through the Pass. It was a magnificent view. Looking to the West one saw the Wolverine Range. To the right mountains, to the left mountains, in front mountains, one in the rear. Standing in the Pass and looking through one could understand the feeling of Arctic explorers - that one was looking upon something that no one had ever seen before. We had stumbled upon this. An Indian had started us on the right way. Then we got on the course of a waterway up to the mountains. There is certain to be a pass where these are. The water cuts passage through. If it goes through solid rock it cuts canyon.. The approach to the Pass was easy going, even grade, no difficulty whatever. Not much wooded.

Col. E.^{ix} -- Have You in your mind's eye some of the mountains as they stood.

Major L.^x -- One that impress is the Jumping-Off Place 60 or 70 miles North - the regular outline of the mountains with this one with an easy slope up, the others jagged. On the West side this one perfectly abrupt. Stands cut more distinctly on account of its odd contour. The story connected with it may have marked it in my mind. When you see these other ranges in front you have the feeling that when you reach the other side you will be able to see beyond but when you get there there are more mountains still in front. .As we look through the Pass there seem to be mountains and more mountains in front. From the summit of the Pass you look and see a huge mass of mountains beyond. It is not size so much as quantity which impresses you. There is variety of detail and profile. The Rockies recede as they go North. One always feels as if they wanted

some friend to see a sight like this with them.

Working with Dogs and Winter Camping

When you choose a place to camp in winter you choose a place where there is plenty of dry wood - dead trees - standing. If possible beside water. Snow water one cannot drink. We have chopped through 2 feet of ice to get fresh water. Snow water is exceedingly bad for goitre^{xi}. That is where I got mine. Then 2 or 3 men are told off to dig down through the snow to bare ground. We scrape it as clean as we can in the shape of a big square. Another half dozen men are chopping down trees into logs about ten feet long. Others are cutting pine and spruce boughs. The logs are placed in a pile in the middle of the square, the rest of the space is covered with the boughs laid one on top of the other a foot thick. Others unload the sleighs and they are put up in trees, otherwise the dogs would eat the "babishe" or cording in the night. The provisions are put inside in the cleared space beside us. Here the dogs are not allowed to come. If they are we have to look after them.

Every man has a certain number of dogs to look after. We had 32 dogs. That meant 4men to look after them. Napoleon Thomas was taken as a hunter, to kill moose and forage for us generally. Baptiste was a spare man for helping with the dogs. These dogs are handed over to you. You tie them up with you. They sleep beside you. Nobody gives them orders but yourself. You feed them and give them their names. You have sole charge of them. You carry a whip with you all the time. You have to shape them into submission as these dogs are half wild being half wolf. I have a scar on my wrist where one tore it with his teeth. I had trouble getting him into shape. The dogs are fed once a day. You throw the feed to them. If fish they swallow it at one gulp. After being fed they roll themselves up into a ball with their nose under their tail and sleep. In the cold weather a man traveling alone sleeps with four dogs around him.

The "wheel" dog always lies at the head with the others around. No other dog ever attempts to take that place. A dog sleeping on the snow all night will be found in the morning sunk out of sight, the heat of his body having melted a hole in the snow, which is soft and light. Dogs when hungry come to the men. There is always a "boss" in every pack. You feed the dogs with a whip in one hand and the food in the other. They all crowd about. You give a piece to one dog and whip the others away. While he swallows his portion another dog is fed. The men have to feed all the dogs at the same time, otherwise one man feeding them would mobbed.

On arriving in camp at night the cook has to stay up and boil beans enough and pork to last the next day. We had to share the cooking as the

cook was getting worn out. We got so we could make beautiful bannocks. In the morning we had boiled beans. At the other meals we had them fried. Bannocks are like baking-powder biscuits only made with water. They are baked before the fire. When one side is cooked they are turned. The kettle is put beside the fire with the lid on as it is easy to smoke water if the lid is not on, and then you have tea with a very smoky flavor. Each of us carried a little cup strapped to his belt also small bags of tea and sugar. An Indian when hunting will stop when tired, make a fire, and boil some water if beside a stream and have some tea.

Dogs are harnessed one in front of the other. Their harness consists of a collar, trace, and strap along his back. The next dog behind is hitched on to the same trace. You often find dogs hanging back in their collars and so have to keep the whip on them to make them do their share of pulling. If there is a willing dog the others let him do the work and will shirk as often as they can. There is hardly ever any trouble with the "wheel-dog". Very often he will snap at the heels of others who are shirking. The dogs do not like to be fastened up in the morning as a rule, though some go in meek as lambs. In front of the sleigh a thick rope is tied (1 1/2 inch rope) carried back and fastened under and over the load leaving a running end behind which serves to steer the sleigh in the hands of the driver behind. All this time you are on snowshoes. Sometimes the sleigh gets jammed between trees. Going down a steep incline let out the "running end" take a hitch around a tree and let the sleigh slowly down until you get to the bottom. It is very tiresome work to drive dogs on snowshoes. The language is shocking that is used on a dog train but used with excellent reason. Then in the middle of the road the harness will break and you stop and mend with a piece of leather or babishe.

Drying Meat

You cut up the moose or whatever animal it is as much like a butcher as possible. None of us knew much about this. Then cut the meat into strips about a foot long and about an inch wide and an inch thick. Hang this over the fire and let it dry. We called this "biltong". It gets as hard as a board and then pack it in canvas. When wanted for eating you boil it like so many chips. Feed a dog two or three of these strips at a time. The dog swallows it whole. Biltong is used mostly for dog meat. Bacon too expensive for dogs. We used bacon boiled - each of us had a bit in the morning. At lunch we had a little between bannocks as sandwiches. Man in civilization could not do this but there we ate it and relished it.

Meat on the trail

We ate Beaver once. We killed it somewhere after we left Edmonton, and we thought we would try it. The Indians had eaten it. We put leg into

boil. It came out a most horrible green, filthy stuff. Baptiste said "boil it again". We put it in kettle of fresh water. This time came out just as bad and horrible - about 20 minutes boiling in each case Baptiste said "boil again", so we put it in to boil again. It came out not quite so green but pretty bad. When you cut it, it is most delicious, not objectionable at all. Outside appearance horrible. We ate a dog in one case, ate ground-dog - got so sick of them we were ashamed to meet them - change from bacon. Ran out of bacon and ate this for some time before we got to Sylvester Landing. Ate lots of porcupine, moose and caribou.

Câching Supplies and Striking Out for Fort Grahame

After we left Laurier Pass about the 27th or 28th December, we got into difficulties. the snow was very deep - 8 or 10 feet - and so light that the dogs sunk at every step and so could travel but slowly. We camped on the banks of the Ospica River. We could see this River a little bit ahead. We were several days coming down from the Pass. Had very slow going. This was about the 1st of January.

Indian told us Fort Graham was a good place to get food. Moodie said "We are running out of dog - feed why should we not take ten days grub and run to Fort Graham, feed the dogs on Salmon and come back after our loads which we could cache here?"

We built a cache. They have to be built so wolves or wolverines cannot reach them. The wolverine is a little short gray animal, called the "trapper's devil". Has been known to gnaw its own leg off when caught in a trap in order to free itself. They are almost impossible to kill. They hide themselves before they die. I have seen them go 500 yards with five bullets in them. They steal everything. Can steal the bait out of a trap without being caught themselves. Wolverine has been known to steal a sack of flour and make off with it without leaving a track. It carried the sack on its back. The wolverine is about 2 1/2 ft. long and about 14 inches high. Something like a gray fox.

We started off for Fort Graham calculating about seven days journey. We allowed ourselves about three days margin of "grub" and ten days dog-feed. We had to get to Graham before the feed ran out. We were about 6 or 8 miles from Ospica near the head waters. The Commissioner in Winnipeg said he could give us no information about Graham. Commissioner's name was Chipman^{xii}. Two maps showed Graham in two places, one below the junction of the Finlay and Parsnip to form the Peace River. We made our cache not far from Laurier Pass. We thought we would have an easy run. It was three miles from the cache to the Ospica. It was terrible going.

Had an awful time getting through Devil's Canyon. Spent three days. This was the first rough going we had with snow shoes. We had had good going from St. John. Here it was rough country fully wooded. Every night we went to bed with blood coming through our moccasins. Our feet were cut by the straps of our snow-shoes. The snow being wet clung to the shoes - pounds on each one - and continued walking soon cut our feet and we suffered agony with every step. Putting on snow-shoes in the morning and going on with them on our cut and sore feet was misery untold, but we had to go on.

We got down to the mouth of the Ospica with six days grub gone^{xiii}. Then we turned down the stream to get to Graham and traveled on. We felt confident Graham was where we thought it was. We traveled 1 1/2 days down the Finlay looking for Graham. Napoleon Thomas said "There is no Fort Graham here." I know it from the other direction". So we had to turn back. He had never been to Graham. Ha had been up the Peace to near that point.

The weight of the snow was beginning to settle the ice and the water was coming up through. It was very hard snow-shoeing in this slush. The dogs got balled up. We kept stringing out the grub. The dogs were not doing well on short grub. Eventually the grub was gone. We arrived in camp with nothing for ourselves nor the dogs to eat. However there was nothing to do but go on next day which we did, but still no Fort Graham.

That night proved to me conclusively the comfort there is in tobacco. Tobin did not smoke. The rest of us did. We sat down and had a cup of tea without sugar and then filled our pipes and smoked. We felt soothed and comforted and said to each other that things were not so bad after all. We would probably get to Graham next day. Then we talked about what we would like to eat. One man wanted nothing else but turkey, another one bananas, another corned beef and cabbage. The man who wanted bananas would say "Why didn't I eat bananas when in civilization, if I could only get them now I would eat thousands. Another man wanted only potatoes. Then we would think of the people who enjoyed all the comforts of a well spread table and who would perhaps refuse things because they did not want them or did not like them. It seemed to us then incredible that anyone could do this. If they were only hungry like us they would eat anything set before them and be glad. At a time like this you feel the utter impossibility of getting these things. If we had millions we couldn't get it. There is nothing like it in civilization because there is always a possibility of getting it. With us there was absolute helplessness and it frightened us.

We had brought Napoleon Thomas as hunter. He could not get moose or caribou nor a rabbit. It is said that every seven years rabbits disappear.

This is a natural fact which no one can explain. There is no satisfactory theory which will explain it. One may see an occasional rabbit during this year of their exodus. We had happened upon one of these years. There is no hunter like a hungry Indian but Napoleon could get nothing. But at the same time there wasn't one of us that thought we would not get out of it.

Myself? I was not actually afraid of starving to death. We still had the dogs. Then we who smoked had a comfort. Those who didn't smoke would grumble. The man who smoked was comfortable, Indians and all. This didn't seem to have anything to do with the temperament of the man. In traveling where we could not get a place to feed or get water the rest of us would go on smoking and chatting, while the man who did not smoke was always more tired and anxious than the others. Tobin could chew tobacco and when doing this was all right till the chewing tobacco ran out.

Another day. Moodie talks with us about the situation. We all thought it better to go on. No grub. We chewed on biltong now and then to keep ourselves going. That night no grub. Things looked serious. As far up on the map as Graham should have been and still no Graham. We all began to feel a little bit blue. Feeling very hungry. Tightened up our belts. Tea ran out but lots of water. We were on the River. Hard walking on snow-shoes in the slush - lifted wet snow at each step. Each day we traveled less. Got weaker. There was a great deal of grumbling among the half-breeds. We decided if we did not do better we would have to divide up into parties and try different directions. Moodie again discussed the situation with us - the white men. We were still sanguine.

We began to realize the seriousness of our position. Thought Graham must be there or the Indian would not have said so. An Indian who has been to a place once never forgets it. We were all hungry. The feeling of hunger is a terrible one. Not let-up. You drink and smoke and drink again. For a few moments in each case you feel relieved but back the feeling comes. The biltong we chewed we could not swallow. There was no substance in it.

Next day about 11 or 12 o'clock we saw smoke. We knew that meant the presence of man and went forward as if on wings. We were traveling on the ice. This man on the morning of the 5th day of starvation from the mouth of the Ospica. We saw the smoke and knew it was either Indian camp or Graham. Man anyway. We all shouted and yelled each in his own fashion and like crazy men. We came closer and saw a cluster of log shacks. We thought it a big village. Somewhat disappointed but there were possibilities now. We did not know whether it was Graham or not.

Hudson Bay Co. said Graham was there. We knew we were on the Finlay River. We felt we could find out everything where there were men. Then we came round the bend of the River.

Arrival at Fort Grahame

If it had been Noah's ark it could not have surprised the Fox, the inhabitant of the village more. No one else had ever seen Graham. Every year Fox went down with furs, etc. to Stunt's Lake 200 miles South. Traded with Indians. Saw no one but himself and squaw all winter. No one had ever come there, with the exception of a half-breed and his squaw. This was his whole life. The Indians had told us there was plenty of salmon and food but after preliminaries were over Moodie asked for salmon to feed the dogs and was told by Fox that he had only a little dried for himself. Said he had a haunch of moose-meat dried and some flour and lard. Moodie told him to give us something. We made dough-boys for the dogs while Fox and his squaw were preparing a meal for us. We fed the dogs before we fed ourselves. We had bacon, moose-meat, molasses, beans and some ginger. The half-breeds had the ginger. As soon as our hunger was satisfied we had forgotten our previous hunger. Fox asked us what we had come for. He had not heard of the Yukon when at Stuart's Lake the August before.

The Struggle to Feed the Dogs

Our next thought was "What are we to do"? There was no dried salmon here. A council of war was held. The next stretch was 400 miles. Our journey was divided pretty evenly into stretches of 400 miles each.

Fox told us the Indians were out hunting at this time but had poor luck. There were no rabbits. He told us there was a lake to the South over the mountains where we might get salmon. He said he had a net. One net was not enough for us so we set to work to make more. We worked all that first night at Graham and by 4 o'clock in the morning had 4 nets made. In the meantime we discussed ways and means - what was the best thing to be done. We came to the conclusion that Moodie would stay at the post and keep Napoleon and two half-breeds with three trains of dogs and would send them out to tap the Indian camps and try to get grub enough to carry us on the rest of the journey. The rest of us - Fitzgerald, Tobin and myself and five trains of dogs and two half-breeds Thomas and Baptiste would go on to try and get some fish.

We went 25 miles right over the Omenica Range to some lakes in the mountains. It was terrible traveling - took us three days to go. It would not be bad in summer but was very hard journey with dogs. We struck camp among lot of dry wood. The next morning we started off to put out

our nets. We suffered much - had to work under the ice in the water getting the fish out of the nets as we could not bring the nets out on the ice. They would have frozen instantly and it would have been impossible to do anything with them. I suffered terribly with my arms from working in the ice-cold water. Took two days fishing to get one day's dog-feed. The thermometer stood between 40 and 60 below. We never shirked work. Never gave the half-breeds anything to do we did not do ourselves. We took our share with them. We could not have got on with them in any other way. We shared our grub in the same way. One day a half-breed cooked for us and the next one of us cooked for them. The weather was so cold that in making bannocks the dough had to be mixed close to the fire to keep it from freezing and even then would freeze on the side of the pan furthest from the fire.

Notwithstanding the cold weather were exposed to not one of us was frozen with the exception of frost-bitten noses. At nights when sleeping we would wake up to find our noses freezing. We would reach out get some snow, rub our noses and go to sleep again. In a life of this kind you instinctively know and guard against things which a man in civilization would never see. After we had been out for a while we got to know what kind of weather we were likely to have and picked up all kinds of woodcraft from constant association with the Indians. I became able to follow blazed trails or pick up trails which I could not have done when I started out first. A "blaze" with an Indian is a chip out of a tree-trunk or a branch broken off. The uninitiated might mistake the path of a moose for a blazed trail. The moose goes through a bush as a horse would, breaking off boughs on each side of it as it presses through. An Indian blazing a trail would break off only one.

An Indian's method of hunting the moose is peculiar. He keeps to leeward of the moose making circles to the left. An Indian on killing a moose, if hungry cuts off a few choice pieces on the spot, leaves the animal and marches back to camp blazing a trail as he goes. He orders his squaw to go after what he has killed and she following his trail back cuts up the moose and brings it home. The Indian is a gentleman in all things. In his natural state his word is as good as his bond.

The last thing my father put in my pack was two packs of cards. Through the whole trip we played cards. Played "whiskey poker". Did not lose, any of us, more than \$3. Through the whole trip. When there was nothing to do we got a shady place and played. Baptiste did not play.

Mr. Moodie had these parties in about there hunting for Caribou and Moose. Near Graham we picked up a white man by the name of Inkster, who had been up there trapping and gold hunting. He had gotten in and couldn't get out. He went on trapping for Hudson Bay people. He had

been about that country for a number of years, farther south than we were. This man's sole ambition in life was to strike a gold claim sufficiently heavy to give him enough money to go out into civilization and buy a merry-go-round, one of the very best, nice horses, etc. and travel around the United States and perhaps Canada, for the rest of his life. That was the man's sole ambition, the height of his ambition; just going there to get that which, if he went to any ordinary part of the world and saved, he could do in a very short time. Yet he went through all the hardships of that country.

We kept running in occasionally to get fish, lake trout and salmon, and would get enough in two days to feed dogs for one day, and would feed them doughboys on alternate day. After we got trail beaten into the lake we could make a trip in a day. After a time we got a very good trail, and would run in for grub once a week. I saw there was no use in keeping this up. We were not getting enough to feed dogs, not getting ahead, only killing time. It was getting on to five weeks, on towards the end of February. I said there was no use in keeping it up and he agreed with me. In every way hard up for grub, could not possibly get enough to start off on 400 miles of country. The dogs needed just as much grub as we did. Therefore we had to collect enough dog feed for 35 dogs for 400 miles ahead of us. No possible chance of us getting far enough, no snow and nothing but dogs, no horses in this country. I suggested we run down to Stuart's Lake, 300 miles south, run down there with dogs, pick up horses and start on with horses.^{xiv}

[Lafferty Sent to C ache near Laurier Pass to bring down supplies for trip to Stuart Lake](#)

Moodie and Fitzgerald were going to go. Fitzgerald got hand jammed, always working the wires, blood-poisoning set in and he could not go, and Moodie could not go himself. He was looking after this, so I went instead. We had left our cache away back, if you remember. Fox's squaw told us there was a trail right across here which when we got would take us right to where we would be able to follow it over to the cache yard.

^{xv}I was sent off. I was only white man, three train of dogs and Baptiste, Thomas, Napoleon, Joe and Thomas Sinclair. We took eight days' grub with us. It was to take us a day to get across there, take a day up here, and a day at the cache to get grub out, a day here and a day on to Fort Graham. Everything plain sailing.

When we got to other Side of Speaker there was no trail to be found. Baptiste and Napoleon went up here, three or four miles, found no trace of it. Went out here three or four miles, no trace of it. A whole day gone. Went off to-morrow morning again, no sign. I began to shorten up

grub. I said "Napoleon, can you go ahead here"? He said "Yes". I said "All right, I will give you two days' grub." They went ahead beating the snow down, an hour or two hours frost, after that, would harden it, and makes a track. I thought I would give them a half day's start to beat trail, and I could easily catch up.

I started about noon. I traveled perhaps going until 5 o'clock and what should I come across but a fire and there they were. I said "What are you doing here, why couldn't you go on to cache"? They said it was impossible to follow trail. I said again "Can you get there"? "Oh, yes" - "All right you go and we follow you". We had been eating the grub half rations then. We were starting on our fourth day. I started off. We had gone over the most impossible bit of country, cliffs and cut banks, an impossible bit of country, had not been able to go on snow-shoes, absolutely played out, fed the dogs, rations got scarcer. One pack of dogs had gotten into one of the sleighs and got away with a lot of dog feed.

Tracked on another day. We were going in half day what they were doing in a day, caught up to them that night. They were in a great way, did not think it was possible. They were very down in the mouth, did not get enough grub and so on. I said "We have just got so much grub, can we get there"? I do not suppose we were making 5 miles a day - heart-breaking bit of country. Well we went on and on, grub getting less. A day without grub. Gave Napoleon and Baptiste all that was left in order that they could get on, kept a portion of dog feed. They did the best they could. No grub left except dog feed, gave one-half to dogs, put rest under my bed. In the night I saw one of these Indians coming after me with a knife. I got that scar from taking the knife away from him and I gave him a thrashing within an inch of his life. I was half mad with hunger, tired, discouraged and nervous. He just wanted to bag meat, probably would have taken knife to me if I had stood in the way. I do not suppose he would have hurt me. Probably carried the knife from fear. No grub nevertheless Fed dog.

Sent Napoleon and Baptiste ahead again, got on towards evening. We came along the side of a hill to a most beautiful valley, level evenly graded snow, beautiful high mountain on either side. It was beautiful, delightful. We saw a moose track. I said "There is grub all right." Went another half mile on moose track crossed the track again. Napoleon's track had gone off to one side. Baptiste followed on in proper course. Then we saw where Napoleon had driven it. When a hungry man gets after a moose there is not much chance for it. I worked them up to it. I eventually got them on. They had a terrible time, the dogs were tired and very trying too. There was that much to be said for them. They could not come any farther, too tired - no use. One white man to bully two or three Indians, cannot do it. However I coaxed them on a bit farther. I jollied them on a bit. I had

caught sight of where a snow slide had been, and I told them they knew what snow slides were, where one slide comes another will come and so on. It was very dangerous traveling at night, dark night.

We camped - we had no sooner got settled - grumbling like blazes - small amount of grub - the trip and all this sort of thing. I was smoking away in pretty bad humour myself, when I heard a shot - another shot - got moose sure. We tracked on again to follow out this shot, out this beautiful valley- must be magnificent in summer - traveled perhaps two or three miles, perhaps less than that, perhaps a mile. We found Napoleon and Baptiste reveling in hot moose meat. Moose calf had run up this valley and got into cut bank, regular water fall, and Napoleon got it. They were simply reveling in it. In two minutes Tom Sinclair was at it too. It is either starving or plenty with them. Well they started to gorge themselves. Now I was a little afraid of this. I had been eating nothing for a considerable time, and I was afraid to take too much. I took a very small bit, enough to keep me going, and a little of the soup. I left them there to feed and took enough on my shoulder to take back to the other two men, and also for the dogs. They had a feed too, and all in beautiful humour, absolutely rosy. Next morning we came up.

I said to Napoleon: "Where is this cache"? He took me on for 4 or 5 miles and then I recognized the ground myself. I knew it would be an easy job next day. I let the dogs gorge themselves on the waste part of the animals, the rest of the stuff we stored in a cache, just took enough to get to cache and back to this spot again. - old cache I mean - . Rather a funny thing the next morning when I got back to the moose meat I could not stand even the smell of it cooking. I had had this fresh meat, very fresh meat, without salt, and I could not stand the smell of it. They played cards all day, gambled their souls and everything. The moment I got my eye on cache I could not wait to get salted bacon. I had a piece of salted canvas in my mouth. Salt was all I wanted.

Moodie in the meantime was following after me. I was to bring back meat, make trail, bring back enough to bring them on to bring it all back. I had to make supply place. We got loaded up with grub, went back, met Moodie, took all the grub into Fort Graham^{xvi}. The only providence an Indian has is when he has gorged himself as much as he can, makes squaw build a cache, build one for themselves. Those caches are absolutely sacred. Nobody will touch a cache unless he is absolutely starving, and then he will pay it back at the first opportunity. He knows he has got his cache, if he is starving he will go to it. If he was at the mercy of every tramp or robber he would starve. A cache is absolutely sacred. The trouble was the Indians had eaten up nearly all their caches, had finished them nearly all.

Lafferty, Thomas and Indian Boy to Pièrre's Camp for Meat^{xvii}

After about five weeks I came in and reported this discussion went on, we got track of a moose between 30 and 35 miles up the river from Graham, and on another occasion some Indians killed one cow, bull and calf, promised to give us a little grub, so I went with this boy Thomas and Indian boy with two train of dogs to get the meat.

We started in the morning, uphill all the way, had to break trail, got in next evening and camped with the Indians. I was a white man to them, which is rather a big thing, As soon as I arrived at this camp, there were two or three Indians and squaws and a great many children, they made great preparations for me. One squaw was told just to wait on me. One side of the camp was swept cut and brushed, then a squaw got a lot of pine brush, took up a blanket, put down a bed for me; had the kettle put on and I was fed and looked after in the most hospitable manner before they attempted to feed themselves and look after themselves. In the meantime they had fed the dogs.

About 8 o'clock left, got back to Fort Graham the same night; left at 8 o'clock got back between 11 and 12 midnight. We had done that 36 miles since 8 o'clock. That is not an extraordinary thing because on snow-shoes you get into Indian gait. You just seem to fall into that gait. The only hard work we had to do was down level, and rest on the level. It is not hard to do under the circumstances. You just get into that tramp. I was in lead, Indian and boy looking after dogs. You do it just as a sort of jog-trot, a thousand times easier than walking. You could do it on snow-shoes when you couldn't do it on foot.

To Stuart Lake for Supplies and Horses

We collected grub, Fitzgerald left at Fort Graham. We send Indians back to St. John with outfit and flat sleigh, and packed them off. Thomas, Moodie, Baptiste and myself started down the Finlay, down Parsnip River across McLeod creek, down a bit of a divide to Stuart's Lake. Fort St. James' Hudson Bay post, Fox always came down here for supplies, just enough to run down to Stuart's Lake to buy horses.

Going up Parsnip to McLeod Lake, very hard hardly get enough snow to get on with. Barely on time to get in with the dogs. No dog feed at McLeod Lake, spearing fish. We took four days to go from McLeod over to Stuart's Lake a distance of 90 miles. We made shoes for dogs to keep crust from cutting feet. Made shoes and put them on every day, pull over foot and tie over ankle, like moccasins. Soft snow does not cut, only crust cuts. We picked up a man as permanent cook in here somewhere. Our instructions were to go by land, go by land. When you speak of

cutting trail, you simply chop enough for one horse to get over.

I should say that on route to Stuart's Lake to Fort Graham, Moodie got snow blind. We had to arrange a sleigh and draw him. For four days and four nights never took bandage off his eyes. He dare not. We made sleigh for him to ride in.

Our chief sleeping robe of comfort were the rabbit skin robes, not made of actual rabbit skin, cut in strips and worked in until one has a complete robe of it - thinnest covering you possibly can have -make a bag out of that and just crawl into it. It is warm and light, almost too warm. We did away with those on our way down to Stuart's Lake.

Arrival at Stuart Lake - April 19th, 1898

As soon as we arrived Ned Camsell^{xviii} - we arrived there and they were very glad to see us. Great surprise to them. During our time there while we were getting these things together we would go goose and duck shooting. You could shoot as many as you wanted to. We were living on ducks and geese. Geese, geese, hundreds and millions of them. That would be in April, beginning of May, 25 or 26th April. When we arrived there he offered us a horn of rum - just had last of ration left. They get a ration every year. He handed us one of whiskey, pour out liquor in one glass and water in another, take liquor first and then take a chaser, as it is called. It was excellent, magnificent stuff but our stomachs were not educated up to any delicacy, and this went to our heads; and we were tight, very tight, on a horn of rum.

At Stuart Lake the Hudson Bay Company took our dogs and gave us credit, ordered any horses we could get, saddlery, apparajo, etc.

The apparajo is like two huge bags of leather about 2 1/2 feet square sewn together at one end of each with a strap of leather across the end about six inches between two bags. A better way to put it would be two square bags of leather 2 1/2 feet square joined together at one end by a strap of leather about 6 inches apart. In both bags are stuck willow rods to stiffen them, about 1/2 inch in diameter. Between willow rods and inside bag pack hay and straw and this inside fits across the horse. This whole thing is strapped to the horse, blanket is put underneath it and strapped. It fits over the horse, so the apparajo when on the horse is like an inverted "V". The pack or load is strapped on to this in much the same way as a pack saddle and held there with the same diamond hitches. We had packed up a great deal with pack saddles, had to learn all over again with apparajo. These apparajo were all in rather bad shape, started to mend them, got rods and placed them, packed them with hay, bridle and riding saddles, packing robes and tackle of all kinds.

Now as to the trafficking, hand an Indian 50¢, he has not the faintest idea of what you are talking about, offer him a skin and he will take it. The Hudson Bay Co. might call it coinage. Beaver pelt worth 5, 7, 10, 11 or 15 skins, and that skin varies according to the cost of getting goods into a particular post. A skin at Fort St. John was, I think, 25 or 35¢. A skin at Fort Graham was 60¢. Their unit was unit of cost of bringing one pound of sugar into Fort Graham, or what post it may be. The skin is nothing but a currency. The unit of currency of the Hudson Bay Company. A beaver pelt worth 10 skins, a pound of sugar worth 10 skins. They would not take money, it is the unit of currency variable according to which post it is.

[Moodie goes on to Quesnelle with Camsell April 20th, 1898](#)

[Return from Stuart Lake to Fort Grahame](#)

We left Stuart's Lake 1.30 p.m. on 30th May. We did some fish spearing here. There was also a Factor at McLeod Lake. We went out on this fish spearing expedition, had a boat on the Lake, each got a spearing pike. We got lots of pike and occasionally a white fish, but couldn't get trout at all, half-breed would do it occasionally after practicing a bit, but we could not do it at all. (The spear fishing may have been at McLeod Lake on the way down)

Between Stuart Lake and Manson Creek, there were miles and miles burned-over - a number of years ago, perhaps 100 or 150 - fire running through green timber burns the roots, and the first wind brings them all down. This dries, it is beautifully sun dried and lying above the ground. You come to miles and miles of it. You cannot go round you have to chop right through. You can walk through with a horse in 1 1/2 hrs. what it takes two days to chop. Your axe flies right off it is so dry.

We struck four days of rain, no tents or anything of that kind. I do not think during that three days we ever had a dry stitch, everything soaked. For three days and three nights never had a dry thing to eat or wear or sleep in. It was terrible - worst in my experience except when without tobacco. I do not think I was ever more uncomfortable, crawl into wet blankets, - soaked saddle, oh! it was beastly - it was rotten. Completely lost. We came down a place one time - We got to the top but when we come to get down we tumbled or slid right down. It was a terrible piece of country, something shocking. That is as far as going was concerned. 6 saddle and 9 pack horses with 10 apparajo, mosquitoes very bad.

Crossing the Nation River^{xix} we had an awful time, nearly lost a lot of our horses. This river went up very rapidly - heavy rains - and got into this

heavily swollen river - current took us down a mile or a mile and a half, river not more than 150 feet wide. What made us very nervous we started across this river and we landed at the river and it is flowing there, everything looked rosy - hear a fall below us - If you had seen us work to get that raft ashore. That is where we nearly lost 8 horses, horses got on a bar just above the fall otherwise they would have gone sure. We just had to drive them off, they were glad enough to get off. The mosquitoes began to get up, mosquitoes and flies of all kinds, absolutely impossible for a man to live without a mosquito protector, you would die for want of rest, mosquitoes extraordinary, bad - very, very bad indeed - night and day, always building smudges for horses, never any need of herding them, they just stayed there, never wandered away for a minute, one man kept smudge going.

At Manson Creek we were a little bit surprised to find as large a settlement as there was. Manson Creek had been the scene of a gold rush somewhere in the seventies, I think '78 or '79 and we had a sort of a trail to travel from Stuart Lake to Manson. It was all mud holes, slues, and muddy creek remnants of an old, old road. On arriving we went to a mine. There were two opposition companies. The 43rd Mining Company of Ottawa under the management of Col. Wright. We stopped at their camp. The chief engineer was brother of Col. Cotton. We all had something in common at once. They were getting in their summer squads of men. It cost them 18¢ a pound to fetch in every pound they ate. A bag of flour, 100 pounds, cost \$1.80 to fetch in there. On other side of creek were two mines. Omenika Consolidated Co., with two long sluices which carried water about a mile from head of creek to bottom, where they sluiced out gold. Capt. B Superintendent of Omenika Co. took out a pan of dirt, and washed out a Pan going 20¢ to the pan while we were there. How much of this or how little we do not know.

Two English financiers came in to look at these two mines with thought of purchasing them. They came in on a couple of English saddles. The consequence was backs were torn to pieces, horses backs in shocking state. They came in from Ashcroft, Rathbun and George were the two names. They were the sort of Englishmen who would learn nothing. They are not all like that but they happened to be that sort though.

We picked up some more horses there and went on, and it was from there on we found this terrible going - up and down cliffs, up a mountain and down other side of mountain. We came simply sliding down almost an incline, I think, of 45 degrees, simply down on haunches, simply moss and rolling stones, only right on haunches that he could keep going at all. One of worst places we were ever in, no trail, just stick to and keep going, not a dry spot to sit down, mossy ground, if you sat down for a second that part of you was soaked, never had a dry stitch on us.

Lafferty Almost Lost

Just before we came to Omenika River - of course we still wore moccasins, winter and summer wore moccasins - flies here were very, very bad, mosquitoes and black flies and great big bulldog. They drove the horses nearly crazy. Got to Omenika River, which is a fairly biggish river. We were traveling through a very heavy fallen ground, I was going ahead with party to chop and clear trail, then the horses followed afterwards. I was on with this party. I thought I saw a bit of clearing ahead.

Went to look at it - just mile upon mile of fallen logs, just sticks. I got somewhere off, there were mountains in front and mountains behind. I thought mountains in front were farther away than mountains behind. I went on and sat down and filled my pipe. I turned back, I thought mountains in front not as far as mountains behind. The ones in front were farther I thought. Well, I thought, you are lost. I sat down and I smoked for an hour without moving, and I tried not to think of anything - then I just remembered jumping across a little brook and remembered my moccasin stuck in the mud. I marked the spot where I was, and then I said, "Now Lafferty you walk this far in the same direction. If you do not come to that little stream you go back here again." I walked down, did not see stream, came back again. Started in opposite direction and I struck a brook which I thought was it, so I marked that spot. Now I said "You go half a mile this way and half a mile that way, up and down stream. I struck for half mile, I got the wrong one first - went back - went the other way, had not gone 200 yards when I struck moccasin track, just as I remembered it. Absolute sameness of miles and miles of this fallen stuff. If you took all the telephone poles in Kingston and piled them up in College grounds you would have an idea of what fallen ground is - all the telephone poles for 25 miles around Kingston. If I lost my head I was gone. That is the way that man Lewis^{xx} got lost. If you lose your head you are done, you are a dead Indian.

The Impact of Injuries on the Trail

Just before we got to Omenika Tobin looking around at one horse's back caught on stiff branch and this branch flew back and caught his eye.^{xxi} We thought he had lost his eye. Here is a thing we never once thought of at the time. If any one of us had broken our legs or anything of that nature, we would have had to leave them. If we could get them to an Indian's all right, but many weeks would pass without seeing an Indian's camp. We would simply have had to leave him. He would have crippled the whole party and meant starvation of the whole of us. If anything happened to any of them we would have had to leave them. A serious

proposition that. If we had stopped for one it meant whole expedition given up and whole of us starved. It is all very well to say why did you not hunt for game? We had not the time to hunt for game. we could not spare a man. We could not leave our horses. We have to get on, cut trail, keep moving in one direction - got up at four and went till dark and that whole day was taken up in making that distance as far as possible.

We fired at Omenika and we found steep cut bank, and canyon called Black Canyon. We traveled away down it, we found crossing, got horses across, built a raft, then we crossed the Finlay and went to our cache, and we loaded up and ready to go on with our journey.

North from Fort Grahame

All the traffic to Fort Graham was done by water. Where the indefiniteness of Fort Graham came in, the Commissioner could tell us nothing about it, and a general want of description of it from the outside world was because the common name was B.L.O., the common name among the Indians, which I think was "Bears Lake Output". If you talked to an Indian about Graham he did not know what you were talking about, but he would talk for a week about B.L.O.

The cause of this trip being organized was because people with the gold enthusiasm were commencing to get into this country in all sorts of ways. When we started from Edmonton a number of other parties, individual parties, syndicates and groups started out ahead of us. Between Edmonton and St. John we passed all these. At St. John long before them. We left St. John and went on. They, however, came on and eventually got to St. John - a great many turned back - got to St. John and wintered there. Winter broke a little sooner there than where we were. They followed us. We had tracked the way. They followed our trail down south at Stuart Lake, got on to Graham and passed Graham. When we got back to Graham they were ahead of us. We kept meeting these people and overtaking them. Some turned back and some plodded on, but we only heard of two California miners who ever followed us right through. The others all turned back. They got in 5 or 6 months after we did to Fort Selkirk.

It was between Graham and on up the Finlay that we kept passing these parties, kept catching up to them again. From then on we met these bush fires. It was a terrible time. These things were happening every day where we would have to run from fire.

After that we stuck to rivers and never left them. We went on traveling up the Finlay with a certain amount of speed. Flies were bad and country

going sort of the same. That part of the trip is rather monotonous, same incidents and same round of travel until we came to the Sifton Pass. It is a height of land dividing the head water of the Peace and head waters of Liard River.

We were getting down to regular traveling. We had been traveling down to a fine point. We understood our business well. We had got to be efficient travelers. We decided from Fort Graham we would take one day off a week if it happened to be Sunday well and good. When we had good feed we would take this day off and mend up harness, mend apparajos, mend our clothes. In one of these places I made a pair of trousers for myself. We would do our sewing for ourselves. One day was all given to this sort of thing - scrape all the saddles, blankets, and apparajoes, and mend sore backs. We would take all the horses and bathe their backs with clean cold water and then the horses would go and roll. Very few days passed without our doing this. We got to be so efficient in packing and unpacking that we had time to do it. In the early days we had no time. It took all our time to pack and unpack the horses.

We picked up a man Brewster and took him on as cook. Brewster was an excellent cook. We had fritters always on this day of rest. We always looked forward to this day for we knew we would get the fritters. I just forget what they were made of. However they were flavored with extract of ginger. Needless to say they were not banana fritters.

We had no other idea in our minds but to get on, and get a rest at night, did not care a hang one way or other, all lost from the outside world. Our conversation did not dwell so much on the grub of the outside world. Our whole conversation was what we had that day and what we would do the next day. We were all then a very sober, hard, serious lot of men. We had all the snap taken out of us. We were not frightened. I do not think any one of us ever thought we would never get through.

I do not think that any one of us were at any time frightened. I think we would have been very justified in being frightened, but I do not think our intelligences were working to make us thoroughly appreciate what danger we were in. I do not think we ever thought we would not find our way out. Our instincts had worked to such an extent we could track a horse. We knew the way to light a fire quickly. We could chop a tree down quickly. Each took turn in going in front and chopping away, chopping and clearing. This man chopping in front you have to chop - just like lightning - and he will take down large trees and smaller size.

Bush Fires

We were told Indians were antagonistic to us going through there. We had not been able to give them any help, and we were quite fair to take anything they had, but could give nothing. They rather resented this. We have always thought that they set all the bush on fire, and we had some very, very close shaves. In once case, tracking along through nice even bush, rather large trees and no cutting, horses working way through without chopping. After we left Graham we met bush fire after bush fire, crossed river until we got into a good bit of country.

We saw one of these bush fires coming down on us. We were having lunch at this place. The first thing we knew this fire turned right on us. These bush fires travel rapidly with the wind. The fire will be burning up above and nothing below and the wind catches it and drives it on. We had just camped by a little slue and this came right straight on us. We prepared to lie down on our backs in the pools with mouths above water. There was also the danger of these trees coming down on us. We had just jumped into the water when the breeze changed and carried it off, just off to the right hand. We at once commenced to pack and get out, horses all getting restless. However, we started to pack them - the fire turned in our direction again. You never saw men work like we did. I cannot say how many minutes we were. It seemed an eternity to us. However, we got them all packed. We saw fire right back of us - made horses go at full gallop with whips, etc. - fire following right behind us. it was a race for life. We went at this rate until we got down to a stream. It did not matter whether that stream was 100 feet or 150 feet deep we put our horses right in and got across. That was as close a corner as we were ever in. One of the other parties lost a lot of horses in that fire. We must have done about half a mile at this pace. We knew river was there, no necessity for any directions, everybody worked as quickly as could to get to that river. We finished all packing of horses, got them all packed.

The fire after destroying the tops comes on and eats up the whole undergrowth and always running in the root at the same time. Fire going through green timber, it is only green and pine in it that is burning and roots. The wood itself is actually too green, just burns all the sappy part, just the oil and turpentine. Pine and spruce and, occasional poplar. That was a little corner that was a very tight one. You do not appreciate these things being dangerous until you are out of them. We afterwards crossed a bit of this country that had been burned up. The ground was cool, but when wind was blowing it was exceedingly dangerous. The wind brings down the trees in every direction. An extra puff would bring them down. I was a good deal more frightened then than I was in the fire. You thought they were all tumbling over, seeing a good many of them coming down you imagined every one was coming down. It was

very, very nervous work and very dangerous.

Sifton Pass to Lower Post via Sylvester's Landing

We got on to the river that we followed down to Sifton Pass. The river we struck on the West side of this is Kachiki, it joins the Turnagain river and they flow together down to the Liard. The maps were most indefinite. It was entirely a question of trusting to our luck. We followed down one, I should say, 40 miles, then we decided to strike across to the Turnagain. In this we struck fine going, lots of good water, excellent grazing, in most cases open bush. We forded Turnagain River about 100 feet deep. Many lakes drain into Turnagain River.

We followed up to Deadwood Lake, lots of good water and good feed; crossed foot of Deadwood Lake, followed down to Rapid River to Sylvester Landing, Hudson Bay Post.

That is the next jog in our journey. Here we found miners and prospectors that had come in from the East. We picked up Hudson Bay Boat here. We have got to go down to Sylvester itself and we can send all the loads by boat. We tracked out trail on horseback. Moodie sent me off with boat party with Brewster and Tobin. They struck a straight line for Sylvester lower post and we followed the openings of the River. It was a delightful trip, except in the occasional rapids we would get into, when we would have an uneasy time. We had had experience in the East with boats and that was the reason we were sent. At one stage it was agreed that the boat outfit and horse outfit would meet. We did, and we handed them grub and went on. At Sylvester Landing we found a little German chap, highly educated man. We wanted a fourth man for fourth oar and Moodie agreed to let him have his passage down to Sylvester lower post provided he worked on the boat. He spoke very broken English and wore glasses, and there is a story thereby.

We crossed Liard River without much difficulty, got our horses across and all our grub across. We replenished our grub there. The difficulty was to get a guide.

Our next job was to go on to Pelly River. Nothing for it but to make another pull for the last jog of the journey. Rather a hopeless task trying to get guide. A little Indian came in with a whole batch of family to trade. He got him to agree to come with us. We had everything ready when he spotted the little German with glasses, and when the next morning arrived he had disappeared. We met Indians later on and they said "that man would not go with you, you had a man with four eyes. That had turned him off altogether. The man left without telling us

anything about it.

We were getting to be fairly hardened and experienced travelers.

Lower Post to the Pelly River

Left Liard 31st August. The flies were beginning to disappear more or less from now on. We traveled on the branches of the Francis River, more or less on the lower benches and occasionally touching in on the Francis, good feed and good water everywhere, always crossing little streams, somebody always ahead feeling the way, and no danger of getting lost, always got Francis River to go by.

I was on ahead in one case and came to a little stream. I thought I would go down towards the mouth, and I came to an Indian camp. I did not see a soul around. The kettles were on the fire, everything left just as they had left it. They evidently left in a hurry, looked as though they had just left five minutes ago. I happened to look up and saw a little gaffer in a tree, and a little way off, another gaffer in a tree. The only way to get at an Indian is to show patience, so I filled my pipe, walked over to the fire, took up a cinder and lit my pipe and sat down for a smoke. After a little while one of the gaffers got rather confidential and came down the tree. I immediately went over and patted my horse, finally he came over and patted the horse. Just then I saw squaws with their canoes coming. They had just cut across to Francis. Finally I got one of the old squaws on the horse, and she was absolutely delighted. They had never seen a horse before, had never seen a white man.

When the others came up we camped there. We got one of the old husbands to go on with us for a guide. These people had never seen a horse and had never seen a white man. I might have stayed there for a week and not one of them showed up. The women in canoes had just cut across to Francis. Canoe made out of cotton wood, hard to get big enough pine. No incident of any moment after we left Indians' camp. Passed Francis Lake, took West side of it. A beautiful bit of country.

Down the Pelly River

We made a dugout at Pelly River^{xxii}. We started down on 1st of October. We came to the divide in the Finlayson Lakes, just on the south side of the divide. We looked over and there was our goal. There was the Pelly River. We had reached our point. It was to reach the Pelly River by land. All our struggles, works, labors and hardships. Under excruciating circumstances we had passed everybody else; we had reached our object; fulfilled our mission. We had fulfilled our object and we could be able to

go back and say we had done it. They thought we could do it in six months. We were able now to tell them all about it. They would now know you could not go through there in six months. We could tell them what a horrible country it was, and at the same time what a beautiful one.

You cannot understand our feelings when we looked down and saw the valley of Pelly River. We were on a branch of a river running into it. Well we got down and got launched and started down river - ice running - first of October - got on merrily first day. Baptiste and I struck on a rock, knocked hole in side of canoe^{xxiii} - mixed some pitch pine and grease and with a bit of canvas tried to patch it. It was too cold for this mixture to congeal properly.

We had nothing but moccasins, no mitts - water with this ice running in it was very, very cold - current, of course, taking us at the same time, shoving ourselves over rough places. First day went merrily with exception of damage done to canoe. We were always changing from one boat to another just to change round. Peter going in front to see how much water. You come to bar in river this ice will gather on bar and form a natural ice dam. You arrive at one of these dams and first thing you know you are right among ice that is jambed.

Second day colder, ice thicker. We would make a dozen portages a day. If we sent man ahead it lost too much time. This went on time after time, heartbreaking work, very, very cold and wet, wet work. We got down a good many miles down the Pelly, and then we had this rapid experience. I was in boat with Brewster and Tobin. This was rather heavy rapid with a good deal of water in gorge, river about 200 feet wide and running very, very rapid current, exceedingly rapid, getting more rapid farther down. We are in midst of this and run up on boulder - cannot move an inch. We got out and got toes on boulder, worked and worked and shoved and heaved - we must have been there three-quarters of an hour - until eventually it gave a little, and then a little more, and then it went with a run and we had to jump for it. Brewster and I got in, and Tobin dragged behind - when we got to foot of rapid we hauled him in, soaked in this ice cold water.

We slept in a house for one night, all of us awakened up next morning with a cold, only cold we had the whole time. Cold only caught from drafts. If we got wet and soaked through we changed if we were doing nothing. If you are working there is circulation and warmth in your body. In that way not only drying yourself from the outside, but the heat from your body dries you.

This is most heartbreaking and trying work, in the water half the time, wet all through, no mitts, water very, very cold. We went some distance further until we struck big jamb of ice which appeared to be about 7 miles long.

The Last Stretch on Foot - a Race Against Winter

We gave up - no use portaging any longer. We thought it was hopeless. We left the boats, made a cache of all the stuff we had left, cut all the spare leaves out of our note books, each took ground-hog robe - left our brandy there that we had never pulled the corks. Corks not pulled because we thought we might need it. It was our last resource as a medicine. We left it there -walked into Selkirk. We took with us a little bit of moose meat, also extract of fluid beef. Each took our note books, divided up our extract of fluid beef and each with a ground-hog robe. Ground-hog robe very, very light.

We started off down the Pelly^{xxiv} each one with our pack, ground-hog robe and extract of fluid beef. Ate a good meal before we started and left the rest. Snow started in on the first day, soft, wet fall snow, about 6 inches, slush and wet, following banks of river, kept as much as possible on bench. Stopped for first night, boiled our kettles, had our extract of fluid beef, made a soup of it, excellent nourishing stuff, still quite hungry. Traveled from 23rd to 24th October on extract of fluid beef. We were just as hungry as when we were starving. We just lay down in the snow, two slept together, Moodie and I. Moodie's robe underneath one night and mine on top - mine underneath next night and his on top. Oh! it was beastly, beastly part was getting down on wet snow. That was the only experience I had of chilblains. Most trying work plugging along with these chilblains. First time old Baptiste got heart- sick, and wanted to turn back, many and many a time - did not want to go on, no use going on. He was a pretty old man and was heartily sick of it. Followed this on for seven days, at any rate until 24th October.

We arrived just here^{xxv} and right across here we could see men working in peace and plenty. We were on this cut bank as hungry as possible and could not get down, and just across we saw as it were "home and Sunday School", peace and comfort and a quiet life and we could not get to it. Traveled on down for nearly a mile until we eventually got a place, we got down and could not get across, could not get a boat to take us across. There was a man across with a boat but we could not get his attention. We shouted and yelled until we were hoarse, and eventually we got his attention and he took us across.

Arrival at Fort Selkirk and on to Vancouver

We got across and arrived at Selkirk, and Col. Evans was there, they had arrived in the meantime. Evans was buying dogs. We walked up to them. "How are you Evans", Col. Moodie said. "Who are you" said Evans. "Col. Moodie". Oh! my you are all dead 6 months ago. We were a pretty tough lot of citizens. They treated us on the fat of the land, canned corn and peas, bread and butter, the luxuries of the land. Here were these men grumbling about the rotten feed, and we were absolutely reveling in it. He just said "Good God you are all dead six months ago." They took us off and we all got tight. They had whiskey at \$10. a bottle.

They told us the news of the world. We knew nothing at all. Fitzgerald went to Policemen's quarters and we went to officers' quarters. Then Fitzgerald took us over to policemen's quarters and we had to be introduced to all the policemen and then we would have to sit down and spin yarns to them and then to officers and spin yarns for another hour.

At one of these lakes, Lake Laberge^{xxvi}, a policeman came up in a canoe, paddling an American. I saw the American hand him over a parcel and I looked at him for a minute, I looked at this policeman for a while, "Stewart" I said "You are sloppy Stewart" and you are Punchy Lafferty" We went to college together. He had paddled him across the lake for 200 Sweet Caporal Cigarettes. They would last him all winter. I met him there and have never seen him since.

We were a tough lot of citizens, no boots. At Skagway put on boots for the first time, and you cannot imagine what we suffered.

We went on to Vancouver just as we were. Also went to Victoria. I do not think the Victoria or Vancouver club ever entertained such toughs, just went in as we were. I had a young brother in Vancouver. He went around with the speech "My long lost brother, etc. Tobin stayed in the Yukon.

Flashback

One night from Fort Graham about midnight I saw the Northern Lights, absolutely magnificent and lasted from 1 1/2 hours to 2 hours. It met in a sort of circular dome in the middle. I just thought "If I could only take that back with me". I never saw anything like it again. It was a beautiful clear cold night. It was a beautiful sight.

ⁱ Lafferty's RMC Club record does not have his date of graduation. It does say he was in the RNWMP in 1896, it would appear that he graduated in 1896. Also note that there was no Royal in NWMP in

1896. 375 Henry Tobin, the other RMC graduate on the trek is shown as graduating in 1897. Since Lafferty's College Number was 347, it is probable that they were not classmates - the numbers are too far apart.

ii Fred White was Comptroller of the N.W.M.P. in Ottawa.

iii Moodies count is 31 horses.

iv This was more likely the Paddle River that they crossed next, after the Pembina.

v Lafferty must have meant the Athabaska River.

vi Probably now called Puskwaskau Lake, near Camp 22.

vii The Hudson's Bay Company Ranch at Ghost Creek, now known as Spirit River.

viii Probably now the Kiskatenaw River, Saturday, October 30th, 1897.

ix It appears as if someone was interviewing Lafferty.

x The record seems to indicate that Lafferty was still a Captain at this time.

xi Lafferty's health appears to be a problem in 1907. This may be why he wasn't overseas in WW I.

xii Chipman was the Commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Co. and he was located at Winnipeg.

xiii They reached the Finlay River on Jan. 13th, 1898. Based on information given by Dick Eggs, they traveled down the Finlay for 14 miles and camped. On Jan. 14th, 1898, Napoleon recognized the mountains near the Parsnip River and Moodie realized they had gone the wrong way. Fitzgerald was ahead breaking trail. He was recalled and the party turned North.

xiv Moodie reports that the decision to go to Stuart Lake for supplies was made at a meeting with Moodie, Fitzgerald and Fox on Feb. 13th, 1898

xv March 7th, 1898

xvi March 16th, 1898

xvii March 28th, 1898

xviii Camsell was Manager of the Hudson's Bay Co. at Stuart Lake

xix June 4th, 1898

xx I think he means Ed Wilson who was lost between Ghost Creek and Fort St. John

xxi July 2nd, 1898

xxii Moodie's diary says they had a folding canvas canoe.

xxiii Oct. 10th, 1898

xxiv Oct. 22nd, 1898

xxv The Yukon River across from Fort Selkirk

xxvi Lafferty makes no mention of the fact that they have left Fort Selkirk and are on their way up the Yukon River and home.