

VARIOUS NOTES

ALASKA

Mt. Marcus Baker (Mt. St. Agnes). The highest point (13,250 ft.) in the Chugach Mountains at the head of Prince William Sound, Alaska, appears alternately as Mt. Marcus Baker or Mt. St. Agnes on U. S. Government maps. The mountain was climbed by Bradford Washburn's party in 1938. He referred to it as Mt. St. Agnes in subsequent written accounts. All authorities agree that the two names refer to the same identical point. An inquiry addressed to the U. S. Geological Survey in 1941 elicited the following reply from Mr. Philip S. Smith, Chief Alaskan Geologist:

Search of the Alaskan Branch records reveals no basis for the use of name *Mt. St. Agnes*, which appeared on the 1923 edition of the general map of Alaska issued by the Geological Survey. I can only assume that some member of the Branch may have intended to recommend that name and so placed it on the manuscript copy. However, the name was not submitted or administratively approved, and evidently slipped through unnoticed in the course of proof reading and publication of the map.

The Survey's record shows that the name *Marcus Baker* was proposed by Alfred H. Brooks in a letter to the Director of the Geological Survey dated February 18, 1924. Mr. McCormick, in a memorandum of February 26, 1924, apparently questioned the desirability of this name, because of the number of geographic names already named for Marcus Baker. Brooks, however, pressed his original recommendation in a memorandum of February 29, 1924, and at a meeting of the Geographic Board on March 5, 1924, the name was officially adopted. Since that date, therefore, Mt. Marcus Baker has been the only name officially recognized for this mountain. You will find specific reference to the decision regarding the name Marcus Baker on page 501 of Vol. VI, U. S. Geographic Board for the Years 1890-1932.

The name, Mt. Marcus Baker, is used on the 1940 edition of Alaska Map 25, the southerly sheet of the topographic map of the Alaska Railroad.

H. S. H. Jr.

ROCKY MOUNTAINS OF CANADA

Notes on the Early Exploration of the Canadian Rockies. Various discrepancies between Coues' *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest* (Henry-Thompson Journals) and Tyrrell's *Thompson's Narrative of His Explorations in Western*

America, make it desirable that a summary of certain events be put down for the benefit of students who wish to avoid the mass of confusing detail in the two works cited.

In 1786 the Hudson's Bay Co.'s most advanced post on the North Saskatchewan was Manchester House, established in that year with Thompson's assistance at a point 42 miles north of Battleford. In 1784 the uppermost post of the North-West Co. on the Saskatchewan was that kept by Edward Umfreville, 40 miles further up the valley. Buckingham House, 60 miles above Umfreville's post, was built by Mitchell Oman of the Hudson's Bay Co. in 1780, but was abandoned about 1782.

In 1789 Peter Pangman ascended the Saskatchewan as far as the site of Rocky Mountain House, and three miles beyond this blazed a tree from which he was the first white man to view this portion of the Canadian Rockies. Pangman had been one of the founding partners (with Peter Pond, Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher and Simon McTavish) of the North-West Co. in 1783.

David Thompson, after thirteen years of service in the Hudson's Bay Co., resigned in 1797 in consequence of being forbidden to continue his surveys, and joined the North-West Co.

On March 28th, 1800, Thompson reached Fort Augustus, near Edmonton, and on the 31st left for Rocky Mountain House, which had been built in the preceding autumn by John McDonald of Garth (Bras Croche). This was on the north bank of the Saskatchewan, a mile and a quarter above the mouth of Clearwater River, and was strongly fortified against the Blackfeet. Thompson spent three winters there (1800-01, 1801-02, 1806-07). The trading post which the Hudson's Bay Co. established nearby at a later date was called Acton House.

In 1800, Thompson sent two of his men, La Gassi (various spellings) and Le Blanc, westward with Kootenay Indians (to protect them from the Piegans), and they were the first white men to cross the mountains at the head of the Saskatchewan to the upper waters of the Columbia River.

Also in 1800, Thompson went with Duncan McGillivray and four other men up Clearwater River, crossed Red Deer River and reached Bow River at the site of Calgary, later following up the Bow to the site of Exshaw, where McGillivray killed a mountain sheep, the first to reach the hands of scientific naturalists.

During the same year McGillivray made a traverse westward from Rocky Mountain House, across country to Brazeau River and lake; three miles beyond the latter, and probably by Poboktan Pass, crossing the mountains separating the Brazeau and Athabaska Rivers.

Bow River is a translation of the Cree Indian name Manachaban Sipi, on account of the growth of Douglas fir on its banks, as from this wood bows were made. The Stone or Assiniboine Indians are a tribe of Sioux which separated from the parent family

before the advent of the white man, and went north and formed an alliance with the Crees.

In 1801, Thompson ascended the Saskatchewan for 28 miles above Rocky Mountain House and explored Ram River to its source in the frontal range, but did not discover a new pass across the main watershed.

In 1807, Thompson, with his wife and family, crossed Howse Pass to the mouth of Blaeberry River, thence ascending (not descending) the Columbia to Lake Windermere. Joseph Howse, for whom the pass is named, did not follow this route until 1809, having been sent there by the Hudson's Bay Co. as a spy to watch Thompson who was by then in the service of the North-West Co.

On the Saskatchewan Thompson had been through territory of the Piegan and Flathead Indians, who were constantly at war with the Kootenays and who objected to a trade that supplied their enemies with firearms. In 1810 they intercepted Thompson's brigade and prevented him from crossing Howse Pass, but, as the Piegans were Indians of the Plains, he was able to enter the mountains further north and inaugurate the new route by Athabaska Pass. He descended the Saskatchewan for 60 miles below Rocky Mountain House, where a post called Boggy Hall had been established. From this point an old Assiniboine hunting path led westward to the Athabaska River, near where the railroad now reaches it some distance below Brulé Lake. On January 26th, 1811, Thompson reached the Big Bend of the Columbia. He arrived at Astoria on July 15th of that year.

Fort Astoria, at the mouth of the Columbia River, had been built in April, 1811, after the partners of the Pacific Fur Co. had landed stores from the *Tonquin*, the post being in charge of Duncan McDougall and David Stuart, former clerks of the North-West Co.

It is not generally understood that, while Thompson gave up the Howse Pass route in favor of Athabaska Pass, the former pass was not immediately abandoned. Thompson had crossed Athabaska Pass in January, 1811, but Alexander Henry, after a false start down river to deceive the Piegans at Rocky Mountain House, turned and ascended the Saskatchewan, reaching Howse Pass on February 9th of the same year. He sent on five men to the Columbia and was back at Rocky Mountain House on the 13th.

Rocky Mountain House consisted of a group of log huts, comprising a dwelling house, stores and workshops, all surrounded by a palisade. By the time of Dr. Hector's visits (1858), the wood-work had become old and rotten, and the whole place was tumbling to pieces. "The place had a deserted look, the parchment windows being torn, the doors standing ajar, and the court-yard choked with weeds. We established our camp in the kitchen, and tearing down some of the half-rotten pickets, soon made a blazing fire, but I did not feel nearly so comfortable as if we had been encamped as usual."

The Indians told him that there was a greater display of flowers at that place than in any other part of the Saskatchewan valley.

J. B. Tyrrell photographed Rocky Mountain House in 1886 (*Thompson's Narrative*, facing p. 88), at which time two block-houses, four chimneys, and a cabin, possibly of recent construction, were standing.

The present writer visited Rocky Mountain House in 1942. From Calgary it is a long day's journey by rail via Red Deer, where one changes to a lone passenger coach attached to a freight. It is not necessary to ascend the Saskatchewan as far as the site of Pangman's tree in order to see the Rockies. They come into view at Benalto, 25 miles out from Red Deer, and are equally visible from the present town of Rocky Mountain House and the site of the old post. The mountains are less impressive than those seen from Calgary, and are in sight chiefly to the S. and W., from the point of emergence of Clearwater River to the North Saskatchewan notch. In August there were still some patches of snow to be seen.

Rocky Mountain House is a sprawling frontier village in the S. E. angle between the Clearwater and the North Saskatchewan, the latter river being crossed, a half mile N. of the town, by a railroad bridge and a government cable ferry. Following the road, known as the David Thompson Highway, beyond the ferry for something over a mile, a marker directs one down a branch road to the site of the old post on the bank of the Saskatchewan.

The site of Rocky Mountain House is overgrown by small poplars, and no building remains. A cairn with bronze marker, and two fireplaces built in 1931 from the old chimney stones, are all that can be seen. There are many flowers: broad strips of salmon-pink paintbrush, thistles, gaillardia and larkspur, margining the wheat fields. The farmer in a nearby house is well informed on the history of Rocky Mountain House, and exhibits hand-made nails he has found in the ruins, but nothing else exists of what was once a far outpost of the fur trade.

J. M. T.

The following data on the Lake Louise area correct and supplement the 1940 edition of the Guidebook and are based on information contained in the extracts from Christian Kaufmann's *Führerbuch*, printed in this issue, as well as in the account by E. Tewes of his climbs in that area in 1903 (*D. Oe. A.V.* xxxvi, 133).

Cathedral Pass, referred to in *A. A. J.* iv, 309, was first crossed in 1903 by C. E. Fay, E. Tewes, C. Bohren, C. Kaufmann, from Field to Lake O'Hara.

Mt. Collier. 1903 first ascent by G. Collier, his brother and C. Kaufmann. Collier's entry in Kaufmann's book merely states that they went "along part of the arête joining the west end of Vic-