

Junction of Athabasca & Slave River
Tuesday 16th Sept - '79.

My Dear Mr. Dawson,

While I was delayed at Slave Lake last week, waiting for the first opportunity to proceed to Edmonton, Mr. W. Cornell arrived with his small pack train. It came on Wednesday. On Thursday we rode along the north side of the Lake about 13 miles from the Fort but found no bed rock nor anything among the shingle worth noting. On Friday Mr. C. rode out about 20 miles on the trail leading to White Dish Lake, but with no very special results beyond confirming the accounts we had received of that part of the country as swampy & shilly by turns. On Saturday I left, the winds during the first part of the week having prevented me from coming by a canoe. I waited till the end of the week to get the Company's boat which is to meet carts from Edmonton on the 18th at the Landing.

Before leaving I discussed plans with Mr. Cornell. He was most anxious to go by the north side of the lake to the Athabasca Landing with the needles. Mr. Young who has been very willing & active in assisting us, said there w^d be no difficulty in getting to the East end of the lake, but from that point to the Landing was unknown country to him & there was only one man connected with the Fort who could act as guide; this one was on board a boat already due from the Landing; perhaps he w^d go when he

arrived. Mr. G. determined to wait till Monday for this possible
guide. When coming down the lake with a very strong westerly
wind, I met the boat on mt. this guide was, windbound &
likely to remain so for a day or two: probably it w^d not reach the
I do not meet this evening; even if it reached before Mr. G. left
it was doubtful if this man w^d go. Following the route of the
north side of the lake to the Landing, Mr. G. intended to go by the
old trail to Edmonton, which he w^d probably reach in 14 days
or less from Slave Lake, I think he has most likely gone by
this route; so when I reach Edmonton as I expect to do on
the 20th I shall ask the Agent there to send out two carts
or else three or four horses to meet you at the Athabasca Landing
on the 1st Oct; starting them not later than the morning of the
28th next, unless Mr. G. may by that time have turned up at
Edm^o & be able himself to go out to meet you.

I am taking some provision & an apparatus for him to the
Landing, so that his travels may go light. There you will find in
a small house, near the Gov^t's store, where Mr. Young told me I
could safely leave them.

There is very little that is noteworthy about S. Lake or Teren Slave River,
The lake-shore shows us bed rock; it seems to be very shallow, at least
for a considerable distance from the beach, if not throughout its entire width.
The land on either side is very flat for several hundred yards from either
shore, & beyond this irregular flat there are low undulating hills, varying in

altitude from 150. to 800 feet above the lake. The length of the lake is about 70 miles, its width probably averages about 15 miles. The river is like a very tortuous canal - about 20 or 25 yards wide, with gentle or even current until a series of small rapids is reached not far from its junction with the Athabasca. The banks are low, fringed generally with willows, in rear of which is a growth of poplar & occasional spruce. The soil is light & sandy, ^{loam} but from the river one cannot see much of the country, indeed scarcely anything for the unbroken growth of poplar & spruce & the many frequent windings of the river obstruct all views except those of the sky: it is uninteresting as viewing on a canal. ^{Landing at several points, however, I found excellent prairie in small patches, with abundance of rich pasture.}

I shall leave your odometer & your vol. of Carle's Essays at Edmonton, taking on the pack in case anything sh^d occur to prevent your having a cart. from the Landing & your being able to use them yourself. I trust you may have a pleasant continuance of your trip & that in every way you may enjoy your winter to "fight our battles over again" With best wishes

Believe me, dear Mr. Dawson,

Yours most faithfully

Daniel Mc Gordon

W. M. Dawson Esq. U.S.S.A.

Junction of Vermilion Slant & Athabasca Rivers,

P.S. I enclose a note from Mr. Conwell.

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Picture of early
Explorations
Sept. 1799

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