

Journal of Miles McDonell 1816 – October 16th to December 31st

From Fort William to Fort Daer¹

LAC Selkirk Papers, C-16, Vol.64

Tuesday October 15th 1816. – Left Fort William at 2 p.m. have with me Mr. Donald McPherson,² Mr. William Laidlaw³ & Charles Roque Interpreter for the Sioux, Assinihoin, &c. 16 Canadians, & 4 men late of the De meuron Regt⁴ in 2 N.W. Canoes, & one old one to lighten us as far as the Mountain Portage – at dusk we reached the foot of the rapids – but our third Canoe had lagged behind & did not come up till after night fall – they were in liquor having pierced our rum Keg – the crew were Antoine Plante, Boucher, Maurice, Basil Larance, Cassimir Piette, & _____ Boucher, L'Ecureu informed on the other & took no part himself. – It rained in the night –

Wednesday Oct^r 16 – Three men of my Canoe took from the Fort a Kettle which is useless they cooked nothing for supper on this account. I procured a Kettle for them in exchange from the fisherman – The fishing party here from the Fort caught 500 white fish last night. – The Corporal, Kuffen had come from the Fort in McPhersons Canoe, I ordered him into mine which Bonneau, MrPhersons deviant opposed; but seeing me determined on it he said that he would go no farther & would return to the Fort & took out his bag, all the

¹ Fort Daer/Dair was established by Miles Macdonell, the agent for Lord Selkirk, in 1812. It was named after the eldest son of Lord Selkirk who held the title of Lord Daer. It was located on the south side of the Pembina River near its junction with the Red River and near to where the town of Pembina now sits. After the union of the HBC and NWC, and the determination that the fort was in U.S. territory, the fort was abandoned in 1822.

² Donald McPherson (d. 1819) was born in Scotland and entered the HBC service 1811 as a Writer/Clerk. He was posted first to Albany Factory and then its inland post, Henley House until 1814. Thereafter, he appears to have been posted to Lac La Pluie where he wrote the District Report for 1816-18. He was by this time categorised as a Master. He was captured and imprisoned by the NWC in 1816. On February 24, 1819 he drowned at Lac la Pluie. HBCA BS; B.3/d/133-139; B.105/e/1; B.239/d/204.

³ William Laidlaw, the son of a Scottish farmer, was born around 1798. He was recruited by Lord Selkirk in 1815 to manage the home farm at Red River and accompanied Selkirk to Fort William in 1816. He arrived in Red River in January of 1817, and searched for a location for the farm which he located on the east side of Red River, a few miles south of Fort Douglas. The farm, which Laidlaw called "Hayfield", however, failed to show a profit. As a result, Laidlaw abandoned it in the fall of 1821. He blamed grasshoppers, drought, the lack of tools, and poor manpower. He left for the United States where he joined the Columbia Fur Company, and later the American Fur Company, trading on the Upper Missouri. He retired to Liberty, Missouri with his Sioux wife and five daughters. He died there in 1852. J.M. Bumsted (ed.), *Dictionary of Manitoba Biography* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 135. Kathy Alexander, "William Laidlaw – Most Able Trapper." <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/william-laidlaw/>

⁴ De Meurons was the name applied to the members of one of two demobilized regiments of mercenaries which fought on the British side during the War of 1812. Some were hired by Lord Selkirk to serve in the Red River Settlement as a protective force for the colony and settlers. They were a medley of Germans, Swiss, Italian, and French and were quarrelsome and hard to control.

men of that Canoe followed his example – so that I was obliged to give up the point to them for the present. In consequence of all this we were late in setting [p. 17,130] out in the morning – Found the water of the river exceeding low – all our people had to walk ashore except 4 men to each Canoes, & these were as often in the water as out of it – We had often to stop to gum the Canoes, to do which every thing must be taken out – after dusk reached Portage du Paresseux – carried the luggage over in the night & encamped at the Upper end. It was too dark to carry the Canoes – Our 3rd Canoe has not arrived. Light showers of rain fell occasionally thro the day. –

Thursday October 17th – Water froze last night in a vessel outside of the tent 4/10 of an Inch & inside 2/10 I sent off at day light 6 men to meet our 3rd Canoe they did not return with it till 12 o'clock when we left our Encampment together – proceed on our route the same manner as the preceeding [sic] day – our people walking on shore except 4 with each Canoe – at dusk reached Campment du Rocher Rouge where we put up. Shortly after our arrival a Canoe from Lac la Pluie arrived in which were ____ Remhard Serg^{t5} late de Meureon's Reg^{t6} now in the N.W. C^{os} service, sent a prisoner by Capt D'Orsonnens⁷ & also 2 Canadians for the murder of Owen Kiveney⁸ Esq^r about 11th Sept^r. – La Branche was the Guide of this Canoe; they left L.L. pluie on the 8th Ins^t – The murder as the prisoner informs me was perpetrated

⁵ Charles de Reinhart (or Reinhard) was a colour sergeant in the Regiment de Meuron. He was discharged 24 April 1816, and was employed by William McGillivray as a clerk with the North West Company. He was found guilty of the murder of Owen Keveny.

⁶ De Meurons was the name applied to the members of one of two demobilized regiments of mercenaries which fought on the British side during the War of 1812. Some were hired by Lord Selkirk to serve in the Red River Settlement as a protective force for the colony and settlers. They were a medley of Germans, Swiss, Italian, and French and were quarrelsome and hard to control.

⁷ Proteus D'Orsonnens (1781-1834), was born in Fribourg, joined the Regiment de Meuron in 1801, advancing to lieutenant in 1803 and to captain in 1814. He was hired by Selkirk to accompany him on his journey to Red River in 1816.

⁸ MacDonell here is referring to Owen Keveny, who as killed by NWC men on the way to Fort William in September of 1816. He was a native of Sligo, Ireland, and was employed by Lord Selkirk to recruit colonists in Ireland. He then was chosen to lead this second party to the Selkirk Colony in 1812. He stayed in the settlement as Governor Miles Macdonell's second in command, but in 1813, Keveny travelled to York Factory to make arrangements for a third party of settlers about to arrive. He then returned to Britain and, in 1815, he requested Selkirk obtain an appointment for him in the HBC. In 1816, he set out for Red River from Albany House to restore order there, but was arrested at Bas-de-la-Rivière by the NWC in August of 1816 and sent under guard to Fort William. On 11 September he was murdered by a Métis named Mainville and Charles de Reinhard, an employee of the North West Company. Hartwell Bowsfield, "Keveny, Owen," *DCB Online*.

by order of Mr. Arch^d McLellan⁹ & Alex^r McDonnell,¹⁰ proprietors in the N.W.C^o & Cuthbert Grant¹¹ a Clerk in the concern, who had previously divided Mr. Kevney's property among [p. 17,131] themselves. Mr Kevney was on his way to Red R. from Albany – taken prisoner under a Warrant from A.N. McLeod¹² for a breach of the peace & was on his way to Canada to answer for the charge – but after learning the fate of Fort William, they judged it best to kill him on the way – for this purpose he was sent ahead in a small Indian Canoe along with Reinhard and a Metif called Mainville – & when at a distance from the party Mainville shot him thro' the neck & the Sergeant finished him with repeated stabs of his Sabre. – I sat up to write the Earl of Selkirk indeed I slept none all night, reflecting on the horrid murder of poor Kevney. –

Weather had been fine & clear all day. –

⁹ Archibald MacLellan/McLellan (d. 1820) entered the NWC in 1792 and became a partner in the concern in 1805. In 1815 he was sent to Lake Athabasca, and took a prominent part in NWC attack on the Selkirk Colony. In 1818 he was tried in Quebec for the murder of Owen Keveny. He was acquitted and retired from the fur trade in 1819. He died in Upper Canada in 1820. W. Stewart Wallace (ed.), *Documents related to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 479-80.

¹⁰ Alexander (Greenfield) Macdonell (1782-1835), was the second cousin of Miles Macdonell, and in the employ of the NWC. He was born in Greenfield, Scotland, and immigrated to Canada in 1792 with his family. He became a clerk in the NWC in 1803, and in 1809 he was posted to the Red River department. His initial relations with his cousin, Miles Macdonell, were cordial, but when he became a partner of the NWC in 1814, placed in charge of the Red River Department, these relations became bitter and violent. He played a prominent part in the fur trade wars there between 1814 and 1818, and he took the lead in organizing the Metis resistance to the Selkirk Colony in 1815, leading to the first dispersal of the colony. In 1816 he recruited a Metis force, led by Cuthbert Grant, to seize HBC forts at Qu'Appelle and Brandon, leading inexorably to the Battle of Seven Oaks. He was allowed to escape prosecution, and was never tried. When the NWC and HBC merged in 1821 he retired from the fur trade and moved to Upper Canada. Wallace (ed.) *Documents Relating to the North West Company*, 464-65. J.M. Bumsted, "Macdonell (Greenfield), Alexander," *DCB Online*.

¹¹ This is Cuthbert Grant, a Metis clerk of the NWC. He was born at the NWC post Fort Treblant around 1794 to Cuthbert Grant Sr. and Margaret Utinawasis. He joined the NWC in 1810 and by 1812 was a clerk in the Upper Red River department. By 1814 he was enlisted by the NWC to gather a group of Metis in the northwest to destroy the Selkirk Colony. As "Captain General" of the Metis, he took a prominent role in the destruction of the colony, and was one of the "Chiefs" of the Metis who signed the decree dispersing the Selkirk Colony in June of 1815. In 1816, he led a group of about 60 Metis who killed a group of HBC men and colonists at Frog Plain, leading to the second dispersal of the colony. After the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821, Cuthbert Grant was hired by the HBC as "warden of the plains". He thereafter founded the settlement of White Horse Plain/St. François Xavier in the Red River Settlement. He died there in 1854.

¹² Archibald Norman McLeod (c.a. 1772-1837) was born in Scotland in 1772 and entered the NWC as a clerk around 1793. He was made partner in 1796. He spent his early career in the lower Fort des Prairies department. From 1802 to 1808 he worked in the Athabasca department and retired as a Wintering Partner in 1809. Thereafter he became a partner of McTavish, McGillivray & Co as an Agent of the NWC and in 1809 became a Justice of the Peace for the Western Territories and then for the Montreal District. As such, he played a primary role in the fur trade wars at Red River between 1815 and 1818, and was one of the instigators of the Battle of Seven Oaks. After the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821 he retired from the fur trade and moved back to Scotland. He died around 1837. Wallace (ed.) *Documents Relating to the North West Company*, 480-81.

Friday Oct^r 18th – Water outside my tent froze last night 4/10 of an Inch. I could not get our people to embark till after Sun rise – They said that having put up so late last night they could not gum the Canoes, & have it therefore to do in the morning – I judged it best at the suggestion of my guide, to make two trips to the Mountain Portage distant about 2 leagues – Labrauche gave me a very discouraging account of the navigation. Labrauche & the Serg^t his prisoner informed me of a N.W. Cache which they had found at the Portage Ecarté consisting of 1 Case of Guns, 1 Keg Powder, & 1 Keg spirits; of the latter their men had taken a part & shewed visibly the effects of it. They were consequently late in setting out for Fort William – starting only at 9 am – One of my men Page returned with this Canoe & expects to overtake us again in a small Canoe along with Labrauche. [p. 17,132] By them I wrote for gum & some other articles our stock is going very fast. – It was ½ past 11 before the Canoes returned from their first trip & then McPhersons Canoe must wait to be repaired – I proceeded in the mean time to the Portage & got there by 1:30 p.m. McPhersons Canoe did not come till 4 p.m. the old Canoe was yet behind – at Dusk I sent Mr. McPherson with men & an Indian Canoe to meet it – After night fall they joined us on upper side of the Mountain Portage the old Canoe was left below the Portage. –

Weather fine & clear all day. –

Saturday October 19th – It was not easy to make our people turn out this morning. I have had all along to put them up while Mr. McPherson remained in bed – spoke to him to exert himself more, when he observed that his Lordship told him before leaving F^t W^m that he had nothing to do till he reached L.L. Pluie. I told him that I was certain he must have been misapprehended his Lordship – that he was now under my orders and must take a share of the troubles of the voyage – McPhersons Canoe requires a piece to be put in her bottom & his end men are not capable of doing it without the aid of mine. –

At the time of starting after embarking all in the 2 Canoes the old one being left behind, found them deep laden – a part of the men walked. At the farther End of the Portage Ecarte found the N.W. Cache which had been brought from Fort W^m & left by Blondin for the Iroquois to arm them against us. The Guns I had taken out of the Case 10 Guns & divided – among the men, as they could not storr [sic] otherwise [p. 17,133] in the Canoes the powder & rum I also took. After giving 2 drams to each of our men, our spirit & Depense Kegs took the remainder – the Keg found was about ⅔ full

– The Guns thus given the men were to be paid for or otherwise as his Lordship might direct afterwards. We embarked here all hands – Our Canoes were deep loaded within 8 Inches of the gunwales. – At portage du Recollet made 2 trips to Portage de L’Isle the spare men walking ashore – made Portage Acourci, where the Canoes were brot up in the water by the line. – At Portage la Rose the people wanted to encamp for the night but I prevailed on them to go to the next portage _____ by making 2 trips when we put up after nightfall. Our soldiers except the Corporal are quite sulky on account of going so late & refused to take their dram. – Wrote to Mr. Spencer – Weather fine all day. –

Sunday October 20th – Water froze last night 3/20 of an Inch. Our Soldiers with the exception of the Corporal, are yet Sulky – they however all took their dram except on Fricker. Sent off the canoes after being gummed with only half the cargoes – they did not return till 12 o’clock. Mean time wrote the Earl of Selkirk – After setting out with the 2nd trips made 2 portages & reached a a [sic] third one where the first division of our people were, carried over it & embarked on a piece of still water – Put up in the evening a little below the mouth of Shaw-bun-da-wa-nis-cipi i.e. the long Lodge or Bechers River – Weather fine all day –

Monday Oct^r 21st – It froze in the night 3/10 of an Inch – Left our encampment early, the Canoes not requiring to gum. – Passed the mouth of Bechers [p. 17,134] R. our spare hands walking ashore made 2 discharges at the Upper one Bonneau, McPherson’s boatman put a cassette ashore out of the Canoe threatening to leave it. I went on, & he was glad to take it in again at McPhersons instance. Breakfasted at the Portage _____ the upper most on this river, & reach the Dog Portage at 1 p.m. at night fall every thing was brought across. – Mr. Laidlaw caught the Corporal & Soldiers broaching our Keg of spirits on the portage – gave the men 2 drams each after they were done carrying. – Wrote Mr. Spencer – Weather fine all day. –

Tuesday October 22nd – It did not freeze last night. I had proposed to start on the lake at 4 this morning but it was very dark & rained – the rain ceases & we came off after daylight – a favorable light breeze of wind – it began again to rain – the wind rose – but before it rose so high as to impede us – we entered the Dog River – Mr. Dease¹³ N.W.C^o landed a little before us at the mouth of the river

¹³ John Warren Dease (1783-1830) was born in Niagara, New York, to John B. Dease, the Deputy Superintendent of the Indian Department. He was also the brother of Peter Warren Dease. He entered the service of the NWC in 1801, and in

– there were Indian Lodges here – We landed to breakfast & took it in Mr. Dease's tent which was already pitched – Ours could not be pitched without unloading the Canoes the poles being under the cargo – & I did not wish to give the people a pretence for stopping long here – the rain fell in torrents weather cold. – Mr. Dease left Lac la plue on 10th Instant after making everything over & giving possession of the Fort to Captⁿ D'Orsonnens taking all the men & families with him – Two Canoes of these were left behind under the charge of Mr. Sayer & Mr. Roussain for whom he intended to wait at this place. Mr. McPherson got some fish from the Indians here & employed their women to collect some gum for us of which we were much [p. 17,135] in want. Gave Mr. Dease a letter for the Earl of Selkirk, & 2 for Mr. Spencer – We came off at 12 in the rain – Bonneau Mr. McPhersons devant wanted much to remain – heavy rain all day. Intended to continue going till 4 p.m. but having run my Canoe against a Knot of a sunken tree which pierced her bottom was obliged to put up at 3:30. – We took all the evening to dry our things which were drenching wet our Sugar Keg also wet & much of its contents melted away. The pork in bags is all consumed, & we had to open the only Keg of this article we had to give some to the soldiers. The rain ceased in the evening & the weather cleared up.

Wednesday October 23rd – Came off at daylight found much fallen timber in the river & the water very low – all hands except 4 men to each Canoe walked ashore got some whitefish from an Indian Canoe on which we & the men breakfasted – passed 2 Canoes in different places stopped ashore with the N.W. men & families from Lac la Plue young Roussain was with our Canoe & John Sayer with the other – the latter is going down a prisoner – they had a quantity of Whitefish & pressed some upon us which our men accepted of – Gave Sayer a line for Mr. Spencer to send me some bowls. Put up at the head of the 2nd Discharge – Shot today a hare, 2 musk rats & a partridge saw several flocks of Ducks – very shy – the river here is full of whitefish Spawning – Weather all day cool. –

Thursday October 24th – It froze last night 4/10 of an inch – At sunrise left our encampment, Passed an [p. 17,136] old N.W. establishment – a fire was still alive nearly opposite to this place left by some Indian. Found the water good to the next portage – about a league distant – some of our men walked ashore to warm themselves. – Fricker was so ill pleased with his walk that he threw

1816 was in charge of the Rainy Lake Post (Lac le Plue). At the time of the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was made a Chief Trader and transferred to the Columbia Department. He died at Fort Colville in 1830.

a partridge he had shot into the river. L'ecuren lost the line of Mr. McPherson's Canoe in the river. Embarked all hands at the Upper end of the portage – found the water good from here to the entrance of the little river where all hands went ashore to lighten the Canoes except three men in each. – We walked to the foot of the little lake where we made fires to have breakfast on the arrival of the Canoes – We were here upwards of an hour before the Canoes came up. The delay was occasioned by the 3 men in my canoe, Lalonde, Roquebrun & Larance having made free with the liquor & got so drunk that they were falling out of the Canoe, broke several of the bars & injured it otherwise materially – Having checked Larance he was very insolent; I threatened to chastise him when he made several blows at me, but was stopped by Mr. McPherson – he then stripped himself to the Skin, challenged me to fight him – he was however prevailed on by one of the men to put on his clothes – After which he still continued his abuse of me & the other gentlemen. I desired him repeatedly to hold his tongue but to no purpose; & was at last obliged to Knock him down with a stick. My bow & stern men were not in a condition to do their duty or even to stand in the Canoe – I ordered them to work ashore with the rest of the [p. 17,137] men – Mr. McPherson took the bow & another the stern – the rest of us walked to the portage at cold water Lake – when embarking from there Lalonde & Roquebrun did not yet make their appearance – I sent Roque in quest of them, he brought them to us after dusk to our encampment at the Height of Land. They were bewildered & could not have found their way without him – On landing here all the bars of my Canoe gave way & it was near filling before the Cargo was taken out. With Mr. McPhersons assistance the bars were fastened with watap & lines before dusk – His Canoe was carried across the Portage & I sent two soldiers to sleep there to prevent accidents. This drunkenness has greatly retarded our progress – we should otherwise have got every thing across the portage & have slept on the other side – Our encampment here is but indifferent, the ground being soft & boggy. The weather is fortunately mild – it rained all the evening – we found ice on the little river & at the cold water portage – one nights frost would shut up both places. –

Friday Oct 25 – It rained the greater part of last night – the weather quite mild. Our 3 drunkards are not able to do much work this morning. It was 1 P.M. before my Canoe & its lading was carried across – Mr. McPhersons people were done carrying two hours before us & had gone to next Portage. – After we

had made the Portage du Milieu & embarking the next lake we were like to have stuck fast in the mud [p. 17,138] – the Canoes stopped as soon as the paddles were taken out of the water – At the end of this lake some of the bars again gave way – At 4:30 P.M. reached the Portage de la Savanne – the Canoes & part of the Cargoes were carried across & we slept on the far side. The men of my Canoe slept on the other side. Our people are now out of grease for their Corn – Weather overcast in forenoon clear & cold. In evening a hard frost

Saturday October 26th – It did not freeze so hard last night as the appearance of the evening indicated – Our biscuit bag had not been brought across till this morning – One half of it was consequently taken out by my people – & they cut a slice out of our ham – I call all our people together – divided among those of Mr. McPhersons canoe & the soldiers the remainder of the biscuit keeping a few whole ones for ourselves – took this opportunity to speak to Lalonde, Roquebrun & Basil Larance of their late ill conduct in getting drunk &c the 24th Instant – lectured them on the example they set the rest as also of the theft committed last night – I then ordered all the liquor into Mr. McPhersons Canoe – & desired the Corporal & his Comrade to go into mine – as I had originally intended – Bonneau endeavoured again to oppose the last part – but I knew he could not now attempt to leave us – At 12 we were ready to set out – All the people walked ashore except 3 men to each Canoe, the River Savanne being very shoal – Lalonde wanted to make two trips with the luggage – but this I opposed – as it could be landed at any [p. 17,139] time when found necessary & the men walking ashore had orders to keep abreast of the Canoes to give assistance when required – We descended the river in this manner – but the water being very low & much fallen timber in the river the Canoes made slow progress – we cut before them from point to point & had always to wait for their coming up – Met an Indian & a boy coming up the river in a Canoe he belonged to Lake St. Anne Mr. McPherson got furs from him to the amount of 36 beaver Skins & paid him 1 – 2½ p^t Blanket – 2 fathoms Cloth ½ lb Tobacco & some ammunition & liquor. –

Mr. McPhersons Canoe got wrecked & we had to put up for the night – after coming about a ¼ of the river – Our Gum is all expended – but the people collected enough in the woods to repair them for this time – Weather fine all day. –

Sunday Oct^r 27th – It did not freeze last night – Left our encampment at day light – Met with much interruption from drifted wood – At 4 P.M. got to the mouth of the river & entered Mille Lacs At 5° 30' reached the new Establishment – Found here _____ Perrins & a little boy – he has two men & an Indian woman at a distance fishing – He had a parcel of fish hung up to dry of which I ordered some for our men. It was too late to send for Perrins men – the boy says they are 5 leagues off & was not sure of finding the place in the night – Loath as I am to lose time this trip must be put off till the morning – Gave Perrin a letter from the Earl of Selkirk ordering him [p. 17,140] to shift from here to Lac du Boisblanc on the Old Grand Portage road, – There is built here a snug dwelling House of 16 feet Square & a store of 29 feet by 20. These were built by Lt. A. McDonell¹⁴ before his departure with Capt. D'Orsonnens for Lac la Pluie –

Ult^o Weather fine all day even^s Cold.

Monday Oct^r 28th – Mr. McPherson went off at day light in a Canoe with 8 men to bring Perrins's people, with the boy Fra^{es} Demarais to guide them to the place. It did not freeze last night at 8 A.M. it began to snow – wind blowing strong from N.E. it continued to snow for the greater part of the day – At one 30 P.M. Mr. McPherson returned without being able to find the fisherman they having shifted their place – They are to come home next Wednesday but the season is so late that I cannot wait for them – The weather is so very boisterous that we could not stir this afternoon. I let Perrin have as many articles as I could spare – as per Mem: & gave him orders to proceed with his people to Lac boisblanc as soon as his fishermen return – I left our man Boucher a good axe man – there are but two small Canoes here – which could not carry more. –

Friday [Tuesday] Oct^r 29th – Stormy weather all night but without frost morning hazy & boisterous – snow on the ground. I called up the people early but they think that we cannot proceed – I desired them to prepare their sails the wind being fair but they make excuse that we are too many persons in the Canoes to carry sail with, but when I insisted upon sailing – they then & not before discovered that [p. 17,141] there was not a mast step to either of the Canoes. A bag Flour belonging to my Canoe was found $\frac{2}{3}$ taken out – Our men while here lived on excellent fish, but nothing can satisfy them – they must be thieving – We set out at 8° 30' after taking breakfast – Mr. McPherson

¹⁴ This might be Lt. Archibald McDonald. See previous citation.

took upon himself to divide the Cargoes before our departure but took the smallest part in his own Canoe – which consequently ran ahead at pleasure & then would wait my coming up – Passed the Point Aux Pines which I suppose to be the middle of the Lake – Passed Mr. Ademars old Establishment on N. side where the Lake is not above 40 yards wide – the mainland approaching from each side. Reached portage du Barril – high enough ground – Enter'd the Trout Lake called 3 leagues long – reached the portage de la panche, & put on west side of it – Rain all the afternoon & evening. –

Wednesday Oct^r 30th – It froze hard the latter part of the night – fine clear morning – had to make a fire inside the tent to thaw it for folding up – To Equalize more the Cargoes of the Canoes I gave a Cassette & shot bag to McPhersons people to take – but they refused to take them brought their Canoe ashore & would not proceed – Rocheleau was the leader on this occasion – I asked them one after the other individually to embark which the all refused to do except L'Ecureu, unless I desisted from giving them any additional Cargo – although my people were carrying an hour last night after they were done & my Canoe could not keep up with theirs the preceeding day – I therefore resolved to leave them if [p. 17,142] they persisted & divide my people in the two canoes – Got McPhersons launched & began to load when they saw that I would get on without them they came forward to proceed on the voyage. We lost a good part of the morning by this difficulty. In passing thro lac Manqueur d'homme visited the Island where Mr. La Croix had concealed 6 Rolls Tobacco & some ball, to take them along with us, but found they were already taken. – Breakfasted at Portage des Falcons which we left at 1 P.M. made 4 or 5 discharges of part of Cargo in the French R & reached the Portage at 4 P.M. where the people encamped for the night. I had my tent & equipage carried to the west side & encamped there – weather cold all day in the evening it snowed. –

Thursday Oct^r 31st – Some snow fell last night & this morning It was late in the afternoon before our people had every thing carried over & after collecting gum from the trees & repairing the Canoes it was too late to make a start. – Weather overcast all day – & occasionally snowing – Mr. McPherson set some rabbit snare in the evening. – Halloween – sat up with the Gentlemen till 12 o'Clock

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Friday Nov^r 1st – It froze last night weather overcast this morning – McPherson caught 2 Rabbits in his snares – Embarked at day light on lac des D'orés stopped at 10 to breakfast on an Island. this lake is called 8 miles long – [p. 17,143] Passed portage des Morts where I found a silk Umbrella in the water – left by Mr. Dease. – embarked on lac des Morts – Crossed McKays or 2 River Portage – shot a Partridge – Crossed McKays Lake – carried at the small Creek & entered the little Grassy Rivers – we were obliged to carry the whole length of it & drag the empty Canoes thro' the mud – this operation took up about 2 hours – altho' the river is not a league long I was all along afraid of this place. that we should find it froze across – Encamped for the night a little below. – The little gum that was yesterday collected was forgot at the Grassy R – in Rocheleau hat – Weather Cool all day wind Easterly. –

Saturday Nov^r 2nd – Left our encampment at day light – Wind fair – which blew strong all night but our people will not rigg sails. – Passed thro' Sturgeon lake called 12 leagues long – Breakfasted at the first portage at the entrance of Riviere Maline – Passed 2 portages & 2 discharges in this river – found the water extremely low – put up about a league above the lower portage – the men of McPhersons Canoe left their Corn bag at the last portage & went back for it in the night. Weather cold & overcast – spitting snow all day – wind Easterly.

Sunday Nov^r 3rd – It did not freeze hard last night – left our Encampment at day light – breakfasted on lower side of the last portage in this river – some time was lost here in procuring [p. 17,144] gum for the Canoes. Entered lac la Croix which is called 8 leagues – about $\frac{2}{3}$ of it passed the division of the old & new road – Made a portage into little lac la Croix called 2 leagues long – made a portage again into the river La Croix, & put upon west side of it for the night arriving at this portage – saw 2 large Flocks of Geese going Southward – we are now reduced to 2 small pieces of pork one of which I gave the soldiers with all the remaining flour – had the other piece boiled for ourselves. Our men have only another days Corn left – I put my Sword standing to a bush against the fire to thaw some ice off it – & while shaving in the tent it was thrown down in the fires the hilt & part of the belt burnt. – Weather overcast & threatening snow all day; some fell in evening –

Monday Nov^r 4th – It blew a storm in the night & froze hard from N. Left our encampment at daylight – at the next portage in the river found an old Indian Canoe off which we got about 2 lb Gum – a valuable acquisition – took

breakfast at the mouth of the river – this river is called 3 leagues long – the Upper part of it stony & shoal our people walked ashore – the lower part very winding thro' meadows – a fine place for game in the proper season – I shot 2 ducks here – Entered Lac Vermillion – one league across – passed thro' a small Channel full of sharp stones into Lake Nemeyean – Wind N. right a head blowing a storm – had to put ashore to gum our Canoes being [p. 17,145] very leaky – Set out again at 3:30 P.M. & put up after dusk at 5° 30' having come about 3 leagues in this lake – Wea^r overcast all day blowing hard from N. & very cold snowing part of afternoon – We stumbled on a very fine encampment – Sand & short grass plenty of dry wood – Fricken was very angry to be out so late.

Tuesday Nov 5 – It froze hard in the night but the wind moderated – we could not however leave our Encampment till day light as our guide could not find the way in the dark. We passed thro' some narrow Channels among Islands & afterwards made a wider traverse – left the common route to our right to gain the portage of the Chaudiere – My Guide shewed me the way to a portage in this lake of 20 acres which would save the making of a circle of 5 leagues of navigation – We wandered about for upwards of 3 hours went to the end of a deep bay when we dined – & had afterwards to return snowing all the time. At 2° 30' P.M. reached the Portage of the Chaudiere & left it at 3° 30' when we entered Lac la Pluie – Lake Nemeyean is called 9 leagues in length we continued thro' lac la pluie till 8 at night when we put up – weather cold & snow falling the greater part of the day – The Soldiers were Keen for putting up sooner than we did – We are now past more than half the lake – We have only a small portion of wild rice to give the people for supper, & nothing for tomorrow. The Soldiers kept for themselves a goose which I had shot this afternoon – the weather was overcast – a partridge [p. 17,146] drummed in the night near our encampment.

Wednesday Nov 6th – It froze very hard in the night & is very cold this morning – Left our encampment at 7° 30' after making fires under the Canoes to thaw them & running over the seams with fire brands to unite the cracked gum – It commenced snowing shortly after we set out. Wind S.W^{ly} & fair – Found ice had formed in different bays – in one place we had to break ice of upwards of an inch thick formed between an Island & a point of rock that we had to pass through for about 30 yards – weather severe – Our men wished to put ashore in different places to make fire for warming themselves – but being anxious to get forward & having nothing to eat or drink (the soldiers got the

last dram of our stock of rum this morning) I would not permit any stop which might occasion our laying out another night. – At 1° 30' P.M. reached the entrance of the river – this lake is called 18 leagues – Put ashore at the freemans hut for intelligence – Left our people there to warm themselves of which they had much need, & proceeded on foot Mr. Laidlaw accompanying me to Lac la Pluie Fort which we reached at 2° 30' P.M. & entered without being previously perceived by any one. –

Found Capt. D'Orsonnens here with all his people also Lt. McDonald – Mess^{rs} Chastellain,¹⁵ Witschy,¹⁶ Brun & Nolin¹⁷ – They had given up all thought of our arrival – The Canoes arrived shortly after us. Our people had nothing to eat till they reached the Fort – which occasioned their making so short a stop at the freemans place – Weather overcast & stormy, snowing all day & very cold – [p. 17,147]

Lac La Pluie Fort.

Capt: D'Orsonnens met Mr. W.J. Dease at Lake Vermillion on 1st October, going to meet his family, & requested of him to return to the Fort, but not to proceed fast than his party – He detached Lt. McDonald from there with 8 men to Secure Charles Reinhard whom he learnt was at the Fort. – arrived himself with the rest of the party at the portage on 3rd October – In the meantime Lt. McD had secured Reinhard, when he confessed to Capt^d D'Orsonnens the horrid murder of Owen Kevney, by order of Mess^{rs} Arch^d McLellan Alex^r McDonell & Cuthbert Grant who had previously divided the effects of the intended victim among them – while Capt D'Or: remained encamped with his party on the portage, he so skilfully manoeuvred with Mr.

¹⁵ Jacques Chastellain was born in Canada and was an employee of the NWC in the 1790s. In 1815, however, he was recruited by Colin Robertson to help establish the HBC in the Athabasca. He joined the HBC in 1816 and worked the first at Fort William (1816-17), and then at Cumberland House (1817-18). In 1818 he was transferred to the Peace River, where he was imprisoned by the NWC at Fort Vermillion. In 1819-20 he was at Fort St. Mary's, and in 1820-21 he was at Fort Wedderburn. He retired to Montreal in 1821. E.E. Rich (ed.), *Journal of the Occurrences in the Athabaska Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 433.

¹⁶ Jacob Witschy was a sergeant of the disbanded De Meuron regiment which Selkirk had hired to retake the Selkirk Colony from the NWC. He would stay in the Red River Settlement until the early 1820s.

¹⁷ This is Louis Nolin, the son of the French fur trader Jean-Baptiste Nolin (1742-1826) who operated in the Sault Ste. Marie region. In 1815, Louis was a clerk in Colin Robertson's expedition to Athabasca, and he was with Robertson when he re-established the Selkirk Colony in 1815-16. He acted as an interpreter there for Robert Semple and the Colony, and he was at the Colony when the Battle of Seven Oaks occurred in 1816. He made a disposition about those events to Lord Selkirk at Fort William in August of 1816. In 1817, he went to Montreal and in 1818 he was tried and acquitted with Colin Robertson for their capture of Fort Gibraltar. He returned to the Red River Settlement and he and his brother (Augustin Nolin) and Father would eventually settle there. E.E. Rich (ed.), *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1939), 237-238. Donald Chaput, "Nolin, Jean-Baptiste," *DCB Online*.

Dease that the Fort with the stores, Cattle, & Crops were surrendered to him & taken possession of on the 9th after regular Inventories had been made out signed & interchanged – They had no intelligence yet from Red R. Capt: D did not think it prudent to send Nolin, as was originally intended particularly as Nolin himself doubted whether the Half breeds would allow him to return – Eleven free Canadians had left this 11th October after being furnished with ammunition & other articles – by one of these B^{te} Demarais, Mr. Johnstone letters & the Gov^r Generals Proclamation were sent – This man was to have returned with intelligence & is yet looked for. – Capt: D’Orsonnens has considerably strengthened the Fort by having 2 bastions built at extreme Angles on which the 2 brass guns are placed – he has also got a good part of the Fort lin’d with earth & [p. 17,148] Casements built to lodge the soldiers – He did not send to establish a post at Chemin de Guerre judging it prudent to keep his force concentrated – & sent for all the Fol avoine¹⁸ from Lac du bois – for fear of falling into the hands of the enemy – His men refused to proceed to Bois de la Riviere Winnipique from reports being spread to magnify the danger even at the time he was treating with Dease but the report was carefully kept from transpiring. –

Lac la Pluie Fort Thursday Nov^r 7th – Walked with Captⁿ D’Orsonnens to visit the batteries which he got erected & the Casements where a part of the Soldiers are lodged very warm & comfortably. –

Gave Mr. Chastellain L^d Selkirks letter ordering him to go to the Northward – The Goods brought here from F^t W^m as well as those got from the N.W.C^o at this post are chiefly expended – Given to the Indians on Credit – Capt D’Or: – has for the sake of economy the Clerks & interpreters &c altogether in a mess with him – of which the gentlemen of my party & self became members. Spoke to Capt: D’Orsonnens on the necessity of an expedition to Red R. rather than keep so many people inactive here all winter – which meets with his full concurrence – he is full of Zeal for Lord Selkirks service – Conclude on the route by the Roseaux R. as the most practicable. 1st to take possession of F^t Daer as the Key to the Buffalo Country – & afterwards to proceed to the Capture of F^t Douglas. [p. 17,149] Propose to Lt. McDonald to take charge of a party for establishing a Depot of provisions immediately on the Chemin de Guerre to facilitate the intended expedition – He is to be off in a small Canoe tomorrow if the weather permits to meet the

¹⁸ Folle avoine is Canadian French for wild rice.

3 Canoes coming up with the Fols Avoine & take two of them with their lading along.

Mrs. Chastellan is in despair on hearing that her husband is ordered to Cumberland House is falling from one fainting fit into another. He declines the journey on account of the situation of his wife & incapacity from ill health. It would be needless therefore to press the matter further upon him.

The weather is unusually stormy & cold for the season & blowing hard from N.W^d. Had we not arrived yesterday we could not have moved in Canoes on Lac la Pluie today. It is in vain to attempt to send a party to Lac du boisblanc on the Grand Portage route the severity of the weather rendering it quite impracticable. We have here only one room which is quite a thoroughfare for every body & full of lumber where where [sic] we all mess together & sleep at night on the floor, except the married gentlemen who have each separate appartments [sic] to retire to Capt D'Orsonnens sleeps in a Cott Witchie in a Slaubunk the rest of us on the floor. –

Lac La Pluie Fort Friday Nov^r 8th – There being no gum here sent people to collect some – L^t McDonald cannot go off till the rice Canoes arrive as the people have not their luggage [p. 17,150] with them. Sent 2 men in a small Canoe to meet them to order the rice to be left below, as it will be so far on the route to the Chemin de Guerre – & the men to come up light. They met the Canoes at the Forks 5 leagues below this and arrived in the evening bringing their lading with them – The river is taken across at the Forks from side to side – the people had to break the ice for a considerable way to pass. La Greu who had charge of the Canoes brot us intelligence which came from one Indian to another that the English have arrived from H.B. in great force at the Drunken R. that they afterwards entered Red R. & are in possession of F^t Douglas & took Arch^d McLellan prisoner with some others – That the Half breeds of Fort des Prairies had returned there – & that Alex^r McDonell had made his escape either to the Northward or the Missouri – An Indian called the American is encamped at the Forks & told his news to La Greu. I fear it is too good to be true. – Mr. McPherson has taken possession of the Stores & is getting Inventories taken every thing is found to be in the utmost state of confusion from Mr. Chastellans negligence & incapacity in keeping Acc^{ts}. Mr. W^m Laidlaw took possession & charge of the Cattle & Crops – Weather severe –

Saturday Nov^r 9th – L^t McD cannot proceed on the intended expedition for the weather, till the river either opens or freezes sufficiently hard. – Projected some improvements in the quarters – Chimnies to be built – Our men are straitened for room – propose in the meantime to send Bruce¹⁹ [p. 17,151] & Nolin towards Red River for intelligence but wait the arrival of the American who is soon expected here – weather very cold –

Sunday Nov^r 10th – Had our large Flag hoisted on the Staff & Saluted a discharge from the 2 Brass Guns on the batteries. –

The freemen went in quest of our Horses & brought them to the opposite side [of] the river – Weather cold. –

Monday Nov^r 11th – Commenced Chimnies in the large House Mr. McPherson & Laidlaw are noisy about getting quarters for themselves – the former is already in a very good room – they wish to turn Nolin out of his – which I will not agree to – Began to thresh out the wheat which turns out but poorly – 16 Sheaves to a bushel, by Mr. Laidlaws account. – to relieve our general room Bruce & Roque go to sleep in the Barn among the Hay – Wea^r cold – the river is taken across before the Fort an unusual Circumstance. –

Tuesday Nov^r 12th – Our stock of liquor cannot long support the table consumption three flasks with different Kinds being set down every day On entering into an explanation with Capt D’Ors: on the matter he approves of its being discontinued – The weather is become mild & I have hopes of sending off L^t McDonald by water. –

Wednesday Nov^r 13th – The Thaw continues – the requisite articles are getting ready for L^t McDonalds departure [p. 17,152] tomorrow – Had the potatoes in the outer cellar measured & found to be no more than 98 Kegs instead of 400 given in by the N.W. Acc^t – A serious quarrel took place this afternoon between Mr. McPherson & Nolin – The latter had an order to get a lb Salt & went to take it out of the Store having a Knife in his hand. McPherson opposed this – They grappled & a scuffle ensued – but they were parted –

¹⁹ Charles G. Bruce left Montreal to go to Red River with Miles McDonell in 1816, to serve as interpreter for the “Sautoux” (Ojibwa) language. Deposition of C.G. Bruce sworn at Fort William 23 August 1816. *Statement Respecting the Earl of Selkirk’s Settlement upon the Red River* (London: John Murray, 1817), xlvii-xlix.

Thursday Nov^r 14th – Weather changes to snow & cold L^t McD cannot set out. An Indian arrives to acquaint us of his having Killed 2 Moose deer & to send for the meat –

Friday Nov^r 15th – Sent 2 men along with the Indian for the Venison. –

Saturday Nov^r 16th – Our two men returned this morning with the Venison about 250 lb only In the evening two Indians arrive from the forks of this river with a few furs. –

Sunday Nov^r 17th – Sent 2 men La Greu & Lalonde to fish at Lac la Pluie. –

Monday Nov^r 18th – Two men are sent to procure timber for Sleds – all that can yet be spared for this work –

Tuesday Nov^r 19th – There is much talking among our people even the Gentlemen & a great deal of it is traced to Mr. Chastellain – it [p. 17,153] is judged best to stop such if possible. We are all spoken of maliciously to one another – Reports are spread among the soldiers unfavorable to Red R to prevent their going there in winter. – Capt D – concurs with me in the propriety & necessity of a public examination of the matters as far as we have discovered. – Consequently, Six articles were drawn up with the evidences on each annexed – Mr. Chastellan was called to be examined upon them – The evidence were duly sworn & given before him – Any person however innocent would feel mortified to be questioned upon & suspected on such occasions – Mr. Nolin alone declined to be sworn he is Chastellains intimate friend –

Our fishermen at the Lake sent us 12 fish viz: – 8 Tulibeas – the rest Pikes &c – Tulibee is a fish resembling much the white fish but inferior in Size & quality –

Wednesday Nov^r 20th – A double chimney being now finished in the large House affords abundance of room for our men the Canadians particularly were hitherto very much crowded. Jourdain²⁰ who has a family & his wife ready to lyin has permission to have 3 men to assist in building him a chimney. I had Mr. Chastellin removed into a lesser quarter & gave his room the best in the Fort

²⁰ Joseph Jourdain/Jourdin was born at Noré, Lower Canada, and was a guide for NWC at Rainy Lake in 1804. He later became an engage/voyageur for the NWC at Red River in 1815-16, and was at Pembina in 1816 when it was captured by the HBC. In 1816, he was engaged to hunt for the Selkirk Colony. He was a witness in the Semple Trial in Toronto in 1818. Elliott Coues (ed.), *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and David Thompson*, Vol II (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1897), 965. Deposition of Joseph Jourdain, 14 September 1817. LAC Selkirk Papers, C-15, Vol 161, pp. 16327-163-32.

to be occupied by Mr. McPherson & Laidlaw; these Gentlemen have all along made a stir to get a choice of quarters notwithstanding the inconvenience they saw us all [p. 17,154] submit to wishing some of the families to be turned out for them – this quarter they are to divide into two – Lt McD is in a small room with Bruce & Roque. –

Mr. Nolin took a parchment Skin, of which we are very scarce for snow shoes, to put in a window even after Capt: D'Orsonnens had forbid him – I had him sent for & checked him mildly for taking any thing without leave, particularly after being forbid & a thing we had such need of – He had all along been accustomed to do as he pleased having the principal charge of matters, & got in high dungeon for being checked.

Thursday Nov^r 21st – The Indian called the American arrived from the forks of this River – He tells the news which Le Greu brot by Indian report on 8th Ins^t with the additional circumstance that the H.B.C^{os} post at _____ is destroyed by the N.W.C^o. – I engaged this man to be our hunter at & a guide for the Chemin de Guerre. – Our horses are brought home by the freemen across the river. –

Friday Nov^r 22nd – The Indian, American, returned to his tent to be ready redy [sic] there for accompanying the party to be sent immediately to the Chemin de Guerre. I expect to send this party tomorrow under the command of L^t McDonald, with Bruce & Roque, Interpreters, & for this purpose ordered 4 of our Horses to be shod to send along with a stock of grain &c ahead – [p. 17,155]

Saturday Nov^r 23rd – I took all this day to get the necessary articles in readiness for the party – Ten Canadians are warned with 3 Soldiers late of the Glengarry Reg^t – the Canadians prepare themselves cheerfully for this first expedition but reports are circulated among the De Meurons to deter them from going to Red R & to render me unpopular among them – We have strong suspicions of Chastellan & Nolin the principal instruments of this but cannot bring it pointedly home to them. By Capt D'Orsonnens desire I had a talk with Bruce respecting what wages he may expect without naming any sum for his services. –

Sunday Nov^r 24th – The leaders of our party are much disorganized since last night – reports are circulated to create dissatisfaction among them & our people in general. I am represented to the Meurons as a bad man – On which account they say openly that they will not go with me to Red R. Bruce is quite

dissatisfied & will serve no longer till he sees Lord Selkirk. L^t McDonald talks openly against going himself to oppose the N.W.C^o as he says, for fear of being hanged. I reason with him, but to no purpose; & cannot even get him to conceal his sentiments. He now declines going with this party, & will have no hand in our quarrels as he calls it – Nor will Bruce act – Secret means are taken to thwart our projects – Our men are told that they are to be sent forward to be starved – that this expedition is entirely of my seeking – for having already lost Red R. by misconduct I wish to recover it again for my own gratification – These stories have considerable effect [p. 17,156] with the Meurons but very little with the Canadians who all seem inclined to go forward. Capt. D. is however certain of getting some to follow him – Every thing is now got ready for the party & two Blacksmiths are employed for the Horses. – In the evening I had a talk with Roque & Bruce & got them confirmed at last in their duty – learnt from them different stories that are industriously spread among our people; & their effects upon themselves which I found means of defeating. – My suspicions of Chastellan & Nolin are thereby strengthened as being the Authors – Nolin from some cause is much against going to Red R & Chastellain is silly enough to be made his tool. –

We learnt among other matters that the Meurons have threatened not to let any Rum go with this force & to seize upon it by force. To prevent the possibility of this being attempted which might have very serious consequences with Capt D's concurrence I employed two trusty Canadians to take out of the Fort at midnight the 2 Kegs intended to be sent by the party & to conceal them some distance down & across the river to be picked up tomorrow on their way. – One of our men, Le grue²¹ refused some days ago, pretending ill health to go with this party, even to sell or lend his dogs – he expects a farm next Summer. –

Monday Nov^r 25th – Got the men of the party ready early they were got away with 4 Horses by 11 A.M. L^t McD now goes with this party but with a public declaration that he would go no farther than the trading House – he shewed

²¹ This is probably François La Grave, a former North West Company trader, who travelled to the Missouri with a NWC party in 1793, and who remained behind when the rest of the expedition returned to the Assiniboine River. He, along with another NWC man, deserted from the Company. La Grave maintained his connections with the Mandan for many years, and, as here noted, had a wife and children at the Mandan villages. In 1818, he attempted to guide Archibald's McDonald's party of Red River colonists to the Missouri. Later in this journal, Macdonell also identifies him as Joseph Saufaçon. W. Raymond Wood and Thomas D. Thiessen (eds.), *Early Fur Trade on the Northern Plains: Canadian Traders Among the Mandan and Hidasta Indians, 1738-1818* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 50.

no alacrity to get the party or himself ready all the morning – no more than did [p. 17,157] Bruce & Nolin – They remained here after the party till 1 P.M. Our precaution for the Two Kegs spirits appeared to be unnecessary they might have gone from the Fort in the train – The Meurons though all out to see the departure did not examine any thing – & this is more credible to them after being told before hand that their allowance of liquor was to cease today.

After the party went off they teased Capt D' for a Gill each for this day only offering all to go with him to Red R, to which he consented – they afterwards came for another repeating the same offer of service – he consented to this request also – on condition that they would not ask for more nor expect any in future. But after feeling the effects of the liquor they came again but to me as Governor to get a dram – which with Capt D's concurrence I ordered being their first request to me. They then asked permission to hoist the Flag & saluted it with a discharge of all their pieces huzza'd to the Gov^r & Flag. After all they came to me again for more liquor offering their services to go with the Capt & me to Red R & put Lord Selkirk in full possession – After much entreaty & promises of good behaviour & consulting the Captain I complied – But it produced quarrels & broils among themselves for they did not molest the Canadians nor any others. – Poles Germans, Swiss & Italians all wrangling & talking with great vociferation. After some time they were all got quieted & took to their beds – The duty of the Fort was not however neglected the patrole went round as usual every [p. 17,158] quarter of an hour thro the night. –

This was upon the whole a day of much satisfaction to me – Our first party having gone off & the prejudice which had been instilled into the Meurons removed –

Tuesday Nov^r 26th – We have set all our handy men to work to make sleds for our intended expedition, & every other requisite preparation is going forward. – The Meurons sent me a letter couched in very respectful terms to get more liquor to cure as they said the effects of what they drank yesterday – My declining compliance with their request on account of the scarcity of liquor created no dissatisfaction among them. Several carry marks of yesterdays quarrel – One poor Pole was sadly mauled & was going to seek judicial redress but they made matters up among themselves. I have now thought of taking Cattle from here to Red R. along with us – They can travel now better than at any other season – But Mr. Laidlaw opposes it.

Wednesday Nov^r 27th – One of our Cows was found dead this morning in the Stable she was tied between the Bull & a large Ox – From a bruise & rupture on the left flank it is supposed one of the animals trod on her while laying down – She was with Calf – This is a heavy loss, but not without some small profit – her flesh may be ate [p. 17,159]

Thursday 28th Nov^r – Sleds and other preparations making for the Expedition. –

Friday 29th Nov^r – The same as yesterday. Took Capt D’Orsonnens with me to examine the position at the Portage. We find the North side the best adapted for having a Block House built on – it is naturally a strong position & will completely command the navigation. –

Saturday Nov^r 30th – St. Andrews day, but our Stock of liquor will not admit of celebrating it. –

December 1816

Monday December 2nd – Some days ago the issue of potatoes to the people ceased. – it being necessary to reserve what is left for seed. –

One of our men, Joseph Saufaçon, commonly called Legreu, an old servant of the N.W.Co. who engaged to serve the remainder of his engagement, one year, with us; is unfit for voyageing from infirmities contracted in the service of his late employers & being anxious to get leave to settle on lands I gave him a certificate to be free 1st April next & to receive 100 acres of land in this vicinity, subject to such conditions as the Earl of Selkirk or H.B.Coy may require of others of his description. –

Mr. Chastellan who is now desirous to go to the Northw^d is buying all the dogs he can get to [p. 17,160] bring his wife along – & to induce the people to sell to him – tells them that it is the intention of Capt D’Orsonnens & me to press all the dogs for public service – One of our men, Jourdin fearing this actually sold a dog to Chastellain – but took him back on being undeceived – Mr. Chastellain complained to me – Jourdin was sent for & the whole matter brought to light

Tuesday Dec^r 3rd – Took the deposition of Frac^s Nicolas Bonnet a freeman settled in this neighbourhood, respecting the operations of Arch^d McLellan Serg^t Reinhard & a party of Half breeds that were here about 10th Sept^r last – The horrid

murder of Owen Kevney – & their laying in wait to cut off any party that might arrive from Ft W^m &c – Bonnet, & his associate were determined to leave these parts on the opening of the navigation on account of Stories that that had been told them. – that this place was to be abandoned the Cattle were to be sent away &c &c – But on my & Capt D’Orsonnens stating the truth to him – they think better of it. – Capt: D. gave them a certificate for 100 Acres of land each before my arrival. – This mans associate met with a sad accident a few days ago – his gun which was laying behind him went off – & the whole charge of duck shot went thro’ his leg below the Calf.

Wednesday Dec^r 4th – The most of our Canadians are very lazy it is with difficulty we can drive them to work – Two men Frac^s Ouelle [p. 17,161] & Joseph Landril refused to Mr. McPherson to go to bring each a bundle of Hay – On being called before me & Capt D’Or: they acknowledged the charge & persisted in the refusal unless they got horses – it is necessary to make an example, there are so many Complaints of the same nature – We judged it best to turn them out of the service not to remain in the Fort – but to build a Hut for themselves – & one of them to come every day for their allowance of Fol Avoine. –

Thursday Dec^r 5th – An Indian & Son arrived from the Chaudiere where he left his family he brought sufficient to pay his debt of last fall, to purchase different articles & leave a credit of 22 Skins a proof of this being a good trading post. I endeavoured to get him to pilot a party to Waponewbun the nearest H.B.C. Post 4 days journey from here – but he declined, pretending not to know the way – The Indians are much attached to their families – he did not chuse [sic] to be so long from them. – Our horses returned in the afternoon from Lac du bois H^o – They took 8 days to reach there & 3 to return – Left it the 3rd Inst. the Canadians drove their horses too hard. – Abundance of Partridges on the way – Lt McD was to proceed to the War Road on 3rd with 6 men for intelligence – Meat & leather &c – to return to the Ho: by the 12th – So far our prospects are good –

Friday Dec^r 6th – We have got a parcel of Sleds made for our Expedition & are getting the Oxen [p. 17,162] shod for the road – but our blacksmiths are infernally lazy – the Cannon are ready mounted on trains. –

Saturday Dec^r 7th – We have got our Oxen shod & the Cattle prepared for the journey, they are to be off tomorrow – Mr. Chastellain has been some time getting himself ready to go to the Northward with his wife without any orders to do

so – indeed Capt D’Or: & I endeavoured some evenings ago to dissuade him from making the attempt in consideration of the delicate situation of his wife – I had a talk with him this evening & he is reconciled to remain – he could be of no use to us at Red R & he could not to a certainty go farther if he even reached there. –

Sunday Dec^r 8th – Got Mr. Laidlaw away about the middle of the day with the Cattle viz^t 3 oxen drawing trains loaded with provisions & provender for themselves – 1 bull – 2 Cows & a 2 year old heifer with 5 Canadians. – We are making preparations for following them tomorrow. –

Monday Dec^r 9th – Cannot yet get away for this day sent off 8 of the soldiers carrying their own luggage on Sleds & 18 days provisions for themselves with powder & shot for shooting partridges besides ___ rounds of ammunition in Cartridges. –

Gave Mr. McPherson orders for the management of the post viz^t: to get boards sawed for building [p. 17,163] batteaux in the spring – to prepare timber for a Block House at the Portage – to send 3 men with provisions to meet Mr. La Croix as soon as Sleds can be built &c I was obliged to defer this trip on account of the preparations requisite for our Red R expedition, which being a primary object, every other must yield to it. he is also to send to the H.B.C^o Post at Waponewbun the letters I wrote to Mr. Dan^l McKenzies friends & other intelligence. I leave 8 Canadians & 4 Soldiers with Mr. McPherson – also Mr. Chastellain. –

It seems that some of the Cattle escaped in the night from Mr. Laidlaw they were seen in the morning a little below this. –

Tuesday Dec^r 10th – Capt: D’Orsonnens, Witschy & the soldiers with Nolin & his family came off at different times during the forenoon as each could get ready – I had to remain 3 hours after the rest – Five soldiers now remain at the Fort viz: – 1 Serg^t (Meder) Corporal Kuffen (who pretended to be unwell this morning to avoid the expedition & 3 privates – also 7 Canadians to one of whom – Jourdin I gave a certificate to settle on land 1st April next – I set out with the Canadians 10 in number – about ½ past eight at night reached the Grand Forks where our people were encamped – It was necessary to come here on account of the Horses – there being hay made here by the N.W.C^o – Our forces consist of 1 Gov^r – 1 Capt – 2 Subs: Witschy & Nolin – 25 Soldiers & 10 Canadians making a total of 38 Effective men with 5 Horses –

[p. 17,164] 2 Cannon ammunition & provisions &c &c – Weather cold all day – distance advanced – 8 leagues –

Wednesday Dec^r 11th – Found this morning that our gunners had forgot a grate &c for heating balls & some other articles which Mr. McPherson had omitted to put up for us – I therefore sent 2 Canadians back to get them – they may overtake us before we get to the mouth of the river. – Left our Encampment late – having to put up hay & make other arrangements for our route. Capt D'Ors: – walks on foot to encourage & give a good example to his men – I have a horse & cariole – I had to give a dram of our little stock of Shrub to the Meurons, having no other liquor with us. – Weather mild & overcast all day encamped in the evening a little above the Manito rapid – distance advanced 7 leagues. – Mr. Laidlaw had encamped here the preceeding night with the Cattle – we found when one of the Cows had slung her calf. –

Thursday Dec^r 12th – Passed the Long Sault to-day which is called 3 Leagues & put up at 3 P.M. the Soldiers being tired unaccustomed to dragging Sleds. – distance advanced 5 Leagues – W^r thawing all day some snow fell –

Friday Dec^r 13th – It snowed part of the night with a strong wind from N. In afternoon found one of the Oxen left yesterday [p. 17,165] at 3 P.M. by Mr. Laidlaw with a man attending him. The poor animal could not travel on the ice, not being shod, & is strained in the hind parts by frequent falls – I had socks put on his feet & took him to our encampment but he is quite worried & loathes his food. Put up at 3 P.M. – Weather all day clear, cold & windy. Distance advanced 5 Leagues. – Sent a man forward to stop Mr. Laidlaw till I come up to him. –

Saturday Dec^r 14th – Put up at 2:30 p.m. The Ox is so exhausted that he cannot travel – so I had him Killed this afternoon – he is excellent beef. Weather mild & clear all day – distance advanced – 5 Leagues –

Sunday Dec^r 15th – The Meurons drank of our shrub every day & had the last of the Keg this morning before setting out – at 2 p.m. overtook Mr. Laidlaw where he had been waiting for us – The Cattle appear yet to be in good heart – the little Bull dragged a train in place of the Ox which we had Killed – reached the mouth of the river & put up on a little lake – Weather fine for the season – distance advanced – 4 Leagues –

Monday Dec^r 16th – We are always too late in starting in the mornings – Mr. Laidlaw with the Cattle went off before we did – [p. 17,166] Entered lac du bois –

continued our route – S. Westerly along its banks & put up at Sun set – found part of the ice very rough & bad travelling – Weather mild & overcast all day. – distance advanced 5½ Leagues – Mr. Laidlaw & the Cattle are along with us –

Tuesday Dec^r 17th – Reached the House at the South end of the Lake by 3½ p.m. distanced advanced 7 Leagues – weather overcast & thawing all day – The Country from Lac la Pluie to this place is all fine soil well timbered with _____ & fit for settling – the lake bank in some parts appear to be low land. –

The trading House here is built on a fine little river about half a mile from the lake but is not placed in the best situation – Found here – Roque & 5 Canadians left by L^t McDonald – they had done no work whatever; they were ordered to make trains but had no wood prepared; & not a stick of firewood to burn. L^t McD. left this 5th Ins^t with Bruce the American & men & have not sent back any intelligence – Roque has been careful of what L^t McD left him. – the Canadians had expended all the fat & half a Keg of Salt – The Meurons had 2 Gills & a glass of Rum given to each of them for a recreation. they were anxious to get more but our Stock could not afford it. [p. 17167]

Wednesday Dec^r 18th – We are all day making arrangements for getting away, mending trains &c &c in the evening L^t McDonell [McDonald] arrived with 2 men he left – Bruce at the Indian Lodges at Lac des Roseaux. –

Thursday Dec^r 19th – Sent off 6 Canadians, loaded with 11 bags Indian Rice – Had Maurice & Laferté called before me for not obeying L^t McDonalds orders & being idle while he was away – The Meurons were much dissatisfied all along for having to drag their luggage on Sleds – Capt D’Orsonnens thinks that we should now march them in a regular Soldierly manner carrying only their Knapsacks – to be ready at all times for action the Canadians have therefore to drag their bedding what of it cannot be put on the trains – this is a great encumbrance requiring a Horse train & 3 men Sleds. – The soldiers set out accordingly light – I remained to see the last of the luggage away – There is yet no account of the 2 men I returned to Lac la Pluie the next morning of our departure. They might well have joined us before we reached the Lake.

I came off at 3 P.M. leaving Mr. Laidlaw & L^t McDonald at the House to follow next day with the Cattle every thing is to be taken from the house as no man is [p. 17,168] to be left there – Went 2 leagues on the lake then ascended a small river to its source in the plain about half a league across a

plain of a mile & entered a close wood of small larch – Night fell – Overtook here the artillery trains they could get no farther the road not being opened altho' two men had been sent a head to do it. Had to encamp where we were – Capt D'Or: was forward with the soldiers but we had all their bedding – Had to melt snow for the horses – Weather freezing all day – some snow fell. – distance advanced 3 leagues –

Friday Dec^r 20th – Passed a small Lake & at a second small Lake found Capt D'Or: & the soldiers – L^t McDonald had been encamped here & left some fish (pike) with which the lake abounds. One of our Gun trains broke before getting out of the wood where I had encamped; another must be made before we can advance further – Mr. Nolin & others are employed at this necessary work – Mr. Laidlaw & L^t McDonald joined us here late in the evening. They brought every thing away from the House except two Fentes of Fol avoine & the Oxes hide. Weather clear & fine all day – distance advanced One League –

Saturday Dec^r 21st – At 9 a.m. sent off Roque & the Canadians loaded with rice – at 12 the new gun train was ready [p. 17,169] & we set out. After making 6 miles on a soft plain put up for the night – Wea^r fine thawing all day. –

Sunday Dec^r 22nd – Passed the encampment of Mr. Roque & our men who had gone ahead yesterday – Passed a plain of 2 leagues extent then a plain with a few scattered larch trees in it – This plain is covered the greater part of the Summer with water – after which passed a plain of 3 quarters of a mile at 2 p.m. reached River aux Roseaux bordered with hard wood of Elm, Oak, Ash & c similar to Red River both in timber & soil we had made 10 miles since morning – Our troops artillery & baggage carriages encamped here for the night, as did also Mr. Laidlaw & the Cattle – the latter being quite fatigued – Capt D'Or: L^t McDonald & our servants passed on down the river to the Indian Encampments. I followed after getting the Shafts of my Cariole repaired one of which was broke by accident. – Passed where Roque & some Canadians were encamped. At 2 miles passed a river falling in from the right. At 9 miles reached the encampment of Bruce & our people. Found here the Old Court Oreille²² Chief Shoyé-que-roo-shing-pauché waiting for my arrival – This Encampment is at the entrance of Lac des Roseaux – Weather

²² Lac Courte Oreilles was an Ojibwa band from Lake Superior. A portion of this band relocated from Michilimackinac to the Red River region in 1792. Elliott Coues (ed.), *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and David Thompson*, Vol II (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1897), 448.

overcast & thawing all day – light rain fell in the evening – distance advanced 19 miles – 10 m to the river & 9 upon the river. –

Monday Dec^r 23rd – There are 9 Indians here some of whom are absent hunting we must wait their return to bring them along with us. We supped last night & breakfasted this morning on Moose tongues furnished by the Indians. The navigation to lac du bois is made by going up the river which falls into the Roseaux R on the right. the Canoes are handed from the head of it without discharging the lading, over a small fall of water, & then navigated thro' dead water standing in a quagmire of extraordinary depth, for near a league when they are again handed down a small fall similar to the first, into a fine river flowing with an even current and deep water into lac du bois – The little river which they ascend has abundance of water in it at all seasons, but is very crooked & full of fallen trees which must be cleared out to make the navigation good. This route would then be far preferable to Red River than that by the Winipic R. The Roseaux might be navigated a considerable distance above this to where there is a convenient road thro' plains to the House at Lac du Bois & a short cut might be made from there to Lac la Pluie Fort across the Country, – One of the Indians here is a Juggler or Medicine man called by the Canadians Dresseur, he performed some of his witchcraft in the evening in a narrow hut constructed for the purpose – when he made a great noise imitating different animals & birds – he informed us that the French & English were at Pembina & answered different questions of curiosity put to him by the persons present – This same man foretold while at this place the night of our [p. 17,171] arrival at Lac du bois House. – The river here abounds with fish caught by Hooks let down thro' holes cut in the ice and baited with fish – the hooks are made of fish bones. –

Weather overcast & thawing all day – in evening 2 inches of Snow fell – The Indians out hunting are not yet arrived we shall however be off tomorrow – having the American, John Taylor to shew us the way – the old Chief & the others here are to accompany us. –

Tuesday Dec^r 24th – I mustered our forces & found them to amount to 60 persons collectively including the old Chief & 5 other Indians who were decided to accompany us – The other 3 Indians had not yet returned from hunting – One of them was the Indian that gave me in June at Lake de Bonnet the news of Red R. – Set out late in the day – are much loaded with rice venison & fish – but shall be every day getting lighter – followed the river – passed Lac

des Roseaux about a league only in length. Passed a river falling in from the left. to the Northward of lake are a rising ground there are fine pine woods in sight – passed where the Roseaux forms an Island below which we put up for the night – The Cattle are tired & heavy loaded must consequently make but short journeys Weather freezing moderately & overcast distance advanced 10 miles. –

Wednesday Jan^y [Dec^r] 25th – De[s]cended the river 4½ miles, then struck into the plain a S.W. course 5½ miles & put up dividing our people among two small Islands for the convenience of wood. – Wea^r thawing all day – frost at night distance advanced 10 miles. – [p. 17,172]

Thursday Dec^r 26th – Saw 2 Bull Buffalo or moose at a distance on the plain – after marching till 12 on the plain which we found heavy from the length & thickness of the grass, entered again in the river – no wood here on its banks put up early after getting wood. Some difficulty always with the Canadians lightening their trains – gave charge of them to L^t McDonald – Capt D’Or is quite unpopular with them on account as they think of his partiality to the soldiers. – Weather overcast, strong wind & cold from N.W. all day – Snowing – distance advanced 5 Leagues. –

Friday Dec^r 27th – The Meurons Drank the last of their daily allowance of rum this morning which had been continued since 17th Ins^t – We went about 2 leagues on the river & put up at 11 A.M. Our guide John Taylor, had gone a hunting this morning – we could not proceed till he joined us – the Canadians who drag the rice have wasted much of it – 14 bags have been used in 4 days – I am obliged to order them other loadings. – Weather mild all day [p. 17,173]

Saturday Dec^r 18th – The Meurons will not march till they get their allowance of Rum – they stopped the Artillery carriages and luggage train – all the rest of the brigade had gone on some time before – Capt: D’Or: spoke much to them but to no effect – they had already drank out one of y^e Kegs brought to the Chemin de Guerre; the other I intended to keep for the Indians, to purchase provisions &c. But we had to comply with their request before they would move a step – Corp^l _____ declined doing duty in his station on the other men – Our 3 Servants & the Glengarry men relinquished their allowance till it would be more convenient to give it to them – We entered the plain passed the head & horns of a moose of an extraordinary size – Passed thro’ different clumps of wood – Weather overcast all day snow fell in the evening dist. Advanced 12 miles. –

Sunday 29th Dec^r – Sent 2 Indians & Bruce ahead to trace the road – met with much obstruction from woods which greatly retarded our advances – Our guide by the advice of the old Chief brot us too low – had we taken the plains higher we should have met with less obstruction. – This part is a fine hunting country for deer – saw many tracks of original thro’ the day – The Woods of Red R were seen from our encampment from the top of a tree – Weather Cold all day – very cold & stormy in the night some snow fell – distance advanced 12 miles. – [p. 17,174]

Monday Dec^r 30 – After marching a short league entered the great plain – Red R woods in sight much of this is burnt. After crossing the plain our Guide shot a bull Buffalo a very seasonable encounter, being out of all species of meat – Put up early within 2 leagues of Pembina – Capt: D’Or: ordered a Gill extra to the Soldiers this evening out of our small stock of liquor – Our last bag of Flour also disappeared taken of course by the Soldiers who are very irregular & in the practice of helping themselves without asking permission. – Weather calm & thawing all day – dist advanced 15 miles. –

Tuesday Dec^r 31st – The Dispositions necessary for the attack of Pembina were decided on – & the men were accordingly put in movement. It was expected that some Brule would be at the place and it would be of great importance to secure them – At the little Lake, within a mile of the place all our luggage, Cattle & Indian women were left on arriving at the Bank of the river Capt D’Or: & L^t McDonald each at the head of a party crossed with the utmost dispatch – the first to the N.W. Huts on the North side, & the latter to F^t Daer on the S. side of the Pembina R while our 2 pieces in charge of Witschy were placed on the Red R. bank in front of F^t Pembina ready to cannonade & support our parties in case of need. But our people were quite disappointed to find only a few free Canadians & their families in both places. There were however abundance of provisions – the Buffalo close by. I directed a Cow to be given [p. 17,175] to the soldiers & another to the Canadians. Learnt here that Mr. Arch^d McLellan, Seraphin Lamar, Mainville, with 12 or 18 men are at Fort Douglas – that they feel in perfect Security, not expecting any attack till next spring – that Alex^r McDonell went late in fall to Qui Appelle with all the Brules & took with him all our Artillery pieces, as also our Wall pieces – that McD has been lately to the Missouri &c. –

We expected to get fresh horses here to bring us expeditiously to the Forks but these animals are quite scarce – it is said that about 50 of them died last

Summer – I am however promised three, all that belong to the place. – The Pickets of Fort Daer are still remaining as formerly – the main Bastion has been removed to Fort Douglas & put up there by our people last Spring. The shells only of the houses remain i.e. the roof & outside – the floors doors & windows are all taken away – We took up one quarters with Angus McDonald, who has fitted up for himself what was formerly the Blacksmith Shop – a vacant house which was the only one floored Capt D’Or put some of the Meurons into – it was not worth while to turn them out for the short stay we intended making – We were told that some men are daily expected here from the Forks in quest of provisions. Had a guard placed to secure them & prevent the departure of any person from the place that no intelligence of us might spread Weather fine all day. – [p. 17,176]