

## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

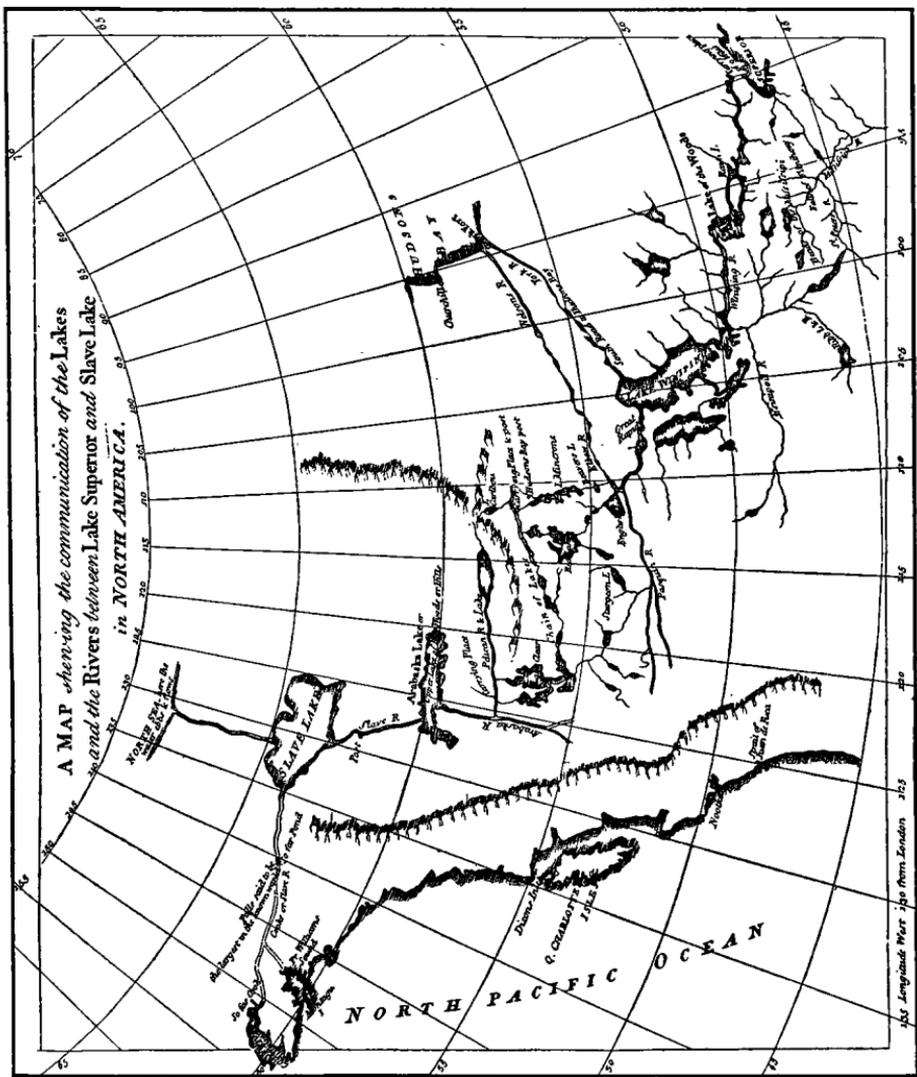
### A PETER POND MAP

At least four copies of Peter Pond's map of northwestern North America illustrating his explorations from the Minnesota Valley to Lake Athabasca in the third quarter of the eighteenth century have been known for some time. They have led to endless discussions and speculation as to what Pond's purpose was in preparing them, as to the reasons for major differences in them, and even as to the period when they were drawn. The numerous writers who have published opinions on Pond and his services in opening the Northwest appear not to have chanced on a fifth form of his map, which is published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1790. It accompanies an "Extract of a Letter from ——— of Quebec, to a Friend in London," dated November 7, 1789. The letter itself need cause no flurry. It is merely a contemporary printed form of Isaac Ogden's letter to David Ogden, the original of which is in the Colonial series of the Public Record Office in London. It is also printed in the *Report* of the Canadian Archives for 1889, from a transcript in the archives. The letter contains a description of the region as made to the writer "by a gentleman of observation and science, who has actually traversed it, and made his map in it," and with whom the writer "this week had several conversations" with the map before him. Later in the letter the name of the cartographer is given as Peter Pond. The fact that a plate of Pond's map accompanies the article in the magazine and is not found with the manuscript makes the item well worth a careful investigation. Gordon Davidson, who mentions the printed letter, does not refer to the map, though it is difficult to comprehend how he could have missed it.

The chief interest of the map lies in its representation of a river flowing *west* from Slave Lake into the Pacific Ocean and marked "Cooks or Slave R." On that stream nearly half way between the Pacific and Slave Lake is an indication of an interruption of navigation. At this point occur two legends: "Falls said to be the largest in the known world"; and "So far Pond." Beyond that point toward the west the lines indicating the river are broken, showing that the details of its course were only conjectured.

This map is evidence of Pond's influence on Alexander Mackenzie's explorations in the Northwest. Ogden's letter ends with this statement: "Another man, by the name of M'Kenzie, was left by Pond at Slave Lake, with orders to go down the river, and from thence to Unalaska, and so to Kamskatska, and thence to England, through Russia, &c. If he meets with no accident, you may have him with you the next year." We know from Mackenzie's printed account of his travels, from his manuscript journal, and from the official report of his trip that he thought, when in 1789 he started down the great river that now bears his name, that he was on the river whose mouth Captain Cook had discovered on the northwest coast of North America. We also know that he expected to find an immense waterfall in that river. There is no river flowing from Slave Lake into the Pacific and no waterfall of any unusual size in the entire region about Slave Lake. Pond could not have secured his information from Mackenzie, for the latter was still in the West when Ogden got his information from Pond. It would seem, therefore, that Pond was Mackenzie's source of information for the course that he expected to follow in 1789, and that Pond, in turn, was relying on Indian reports, especially in the matter of the waterfall.

Whether or not Pond traveled as far as this map would appear to indicate is open to question, for he would have discovered the exaggeration in the Indians' report, had he



From the Gentleman's Magazine, March, 1790.

really visited any waterfalls in the region. Mr. Burpee believes that the cataract that was reported to Pond was a waterfall about twenty feet in height near Fort Vermilion on Peace River. The Falls of St. Anthony appear on the map. Pond had seen these, and though they were nearly as high as those on the Peace River, he did not exaggerate their size in his report of them. Moreover, though the map seems to show that Pond claimed to have reached the falls, because of the expression, "So far Pond," beside them, yet the reference to the falls is that they were "said" to be the largest in the world. Probably the words, "by the Indians," should be inserted after "said."

Just as the *Gentleman's Magazine* of March, 1790, was going to press, Mackenzie's report of his travels must have been reaching England to prove that Pond had been misinformed and that the only river running out of Slave Lake was the stream that is now known as Mackenzie River. This the discoverer himself called "River Disappointment," because he had been disillusioned as to Pond's theory that it would prove the long-sought Northwest Passage, a highway to China for the lucrative furs of the Northwest Company in the newly opened Athabaska country. Pond thus missed fame in his lifetime, but he should not be denied recognition of the fact that it was he who thought out and planned what Mackenzie accomplished.

G. L. N.

#### THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY'S POST AT THE GREAT OASIS

Though fire destroyed the American Fur Company's post at the Great Oasis a century ago, and the debris has been exposed to the elements for the past hundred years, there remains today sufficient evidence to mark the exact site of the trading post. The post, which was in charge of Joseph Laframboise, was abandoned by the company in the fall of 1837 and was burned by Indians in 1838.



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