

slowly moved from shore I staid at the bow of the Ark while Charles was aft in charge of the scow, my assistant at one of the sides. - The Ark was not a Clyde built steamer but a rectangular craft 7' 10" and 2' deep, stem & bow identical & each provided with a scow ~~was built~~ besides having an awl at each side. - It drew about 10 inches of water and carried probably 3500 lbs, as tho its capacity was considerably more. It was built of nice spruce lumber not planed, there were three longitudinal ribs of 2" x 4" scantling supporting the flooring, the gunwale was 2" x 4" also. - The locomotion of the scow was the current of the Saskatchewan it was too unwieldy to propel it by rowing, save to pull ^{or to} from shore or to pull away from some stone in the river. - After rounding the point below the fort we pass the town proper as also the coal mine, a drift run under the town. Strata of lignite are seen at numerous places along the face of the high cut banks. The mining is on a very limited extent, there being little demand therefor for want of people to burn it, besides wood is abundant. - The water in the river being high now and muddy in consequence there is a good current. The river is about 100 ft wide, has high clay banks with no outcrop of any rock formation. As we proceed the banks decrease somewhat in height, and occasional patches of open ground or prairie are seen. When night overtook us we had drifted about 15 miles, - and camped for the night. -

February 28
cool
cloudy
little rain

By 6 a.m. we were off again and had things re-arranged in a more convenient manner, this can never be done at the first go off. I found that we could easily do our cooking on board & thereby save a great deal of time. The sun being totally obscured we knew not whether we were drifting save down stream and from one bank to another. The scenery is monotonous to a degree, conversation flags & much credit & drift. Charles, who is somewhat of a character, broke the ^{silence} ~~monotony~~ by saying "we got lots of time to think." He has been in the country 30 years, has been for the greater part of the time in the H.B.C. service, "tripping" to York Factory, across the mountains &c, besides having been servant & cook for various factors. - At 8 a.m. Fort Saskatchewan is passed. Here are

July

The headquarters of the mounted police for this district, some 30 or 40 men under Capt. Giesbrecht being stationed here. Together with several other log houses inhabited by half-breeds and a deserted saw-mill make up the hamlet. Occasionally we pass some made log huts where occupants have deserted it. The sight of this adds to the loneliness of the scene. The few inhabited cabins that we see are occupied by half-breeds - people born in the country and who have little idea of civilization and the comforts of life, which if they did would greatly improve their lot and be a real benefit to the country. - The woods are nearly exclusively poplar, but stand like white-washed skeletons watching the course of nature. Besides these there are some rough-cut poplar or cottonwoods, some spruce & some birch and the all pervading gray willows. - Southern hares were hunted today without stopping. On the river we are not troubled with mosquitoes but the moment we land thousands are ready to greet us and eat us. They believe in the adage that "the beauty of the pudding is the eating of it."

Sunday 29
via
Cott

A little after 8 a.m. found us continuing our journey. We had scarcely left when it began to rain so that Charles had some difficulty in making breakfast. Being cold & raining I enjoyed the more the fat bacon & beans & cup of hot & strong black tea - the best of all beverages. After two hours of rain we were fairly wet, seeing a house on the bank I stopped to go there for shelter. When I got there the woman was just starting a fire, later the man and children put in their appearance. They were English half-breeds - Lincain - being one of that widely spread family. - I will here note a peculiarity of the half breed & Indian, and that is that in summer they will live in a tent even when they have a house. For instance Lincain's house is a well built log house 15' x 20' being one large room containing beside the iron cooking stove two home made bedsteads, yet beside the house is pitched a small cotton tent 7' x 9' and therein he, his wife, his mother and two children sleep, using the house only for eating. - Around the place I saw quite a number of cattle, belonging as I was informed to themselves and relatives close by. The woman speaking English well I asked her numerous questions, her husband spoke nothing but Cree. On the stove there was a pot of moose meat of the previous day, under the stove was a pan with a chunk of the same meat at which pussy was feasting itself until discovered & driven