

Métis Historical Landmarks and Geographical Locations in BC - Part Two

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10. JOSEPH WILLIAM MCKAY PLAQUE & NANAIMO BASTION

Fort Nanaimo was built under the direction of the Métis Joseph William McKay of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1852 pursuant to the instructions of Governor James Douglas. The prior year McKay had learned from Chief "Coal Tye" of the existence of coal at this site. The Fort was located on Nanaimo Harbour on the eastern coast of Vancouver Island.

The settlement that grew up around this mining post has developed into the City of Nanaimo. The original Bastion is still standing today and bears a plaque honoring Joseph William McKay as founder of the City of Nanaimo.

The essential role played by Chief Coal Tye in informing McKay of the "black stones" is commemorated to this day. A bronze bust of Coal Tye nearby the Bastion was unveiled on June 29, 2002 at Mark Bate Memorial Tree Plaza in Nanaimo. The plaque on that monument states in part that Hay-Wa-Kum, the young cousin of Coal Tye, remembered Joseph William McKay:

... dancing on top of the coal seams with great joy.

On September 16, 1945 a crowd gathered at the historic Bastion in Nanaimo to honor this great British Columbian Métis. The occasion was the unveiling of the following bronze plaque commemorating Joseph William McKay as the Founder of Nanaimo. This plaque is firmly affixed to the outside wall of the Bastion in a prominent position.



The Métis in British Columbia: From Fur Trade Outposts to Colony p.55-56; 136-37; 144-45.

11. KOOTENAE HOUSE – NORTH LAKE WINDERMERE



Kootenae House (also known as Kootenay or Kootenai) was built by David Thompson, Finan McDonald and eight voyageurs of the North West Company (NWC) in 1807. The year prior to the expedition, Thompson sent a crew to clear a trail through the mountains at what was to become known as Howse Pass. He placed the Métis Jaco Finlay in charge of this work. Finlay was in charge of building a number of NWC forts west of the Rocky Mountains.

The post was located on the north side of Lake Windermere on the outskirts of the present day town of Invermere. David Thompson's Métis wife Charlotte Small and their three Métis children were with the expedition and spent the winter of 1807-08 at Kootenae House.

Although it ceased operations in 1812, today there is a large sign identifying the historic site of this House. Close by, there is also a cairn with a plaque erected by The Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada to memorialize Kootenae House.

The Métis in British Columbia: From Fur Trade Outposts to Colony p. 27-28; 42.

12. LOLO ST. PAUL LOG CABIN – KAMLOOPS MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Fort Kamloops (Fort Shewaps) was established on the Thompson River in 1812 by the Pacific Fur Company (PFC). Shortly thereafter Joseph Laroque of the North West Company (NWC) built a post nearby that was called Fort Thompson or Fort Cumcloops (Cume-loops). After the purchase of the PFC assets by the NWC, the PFC and NWC Forts were merged under the name of Fort Kamloops. After the merger of the NWC and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, it was re-named Thompson's River Post but still referred to as Fort Kamloops. In 1826 Archibald McDonald was placed in charge of this post and brought with him his Métis country wife Jane Klyne. From 1860 to 1866 the Métis Joseph William McKay was placed in charge of this Fort. This early fur-trading post has evolved into the present day city of Kamloops.

The Fort was rebuilt in 1842 on the west bank of the North Thompson River when John Tod was in charge of Fort Kamloops. His Métis country wife was Sophia Lolo. Her father was the renowned Métis fur trader Jean Baptiste Lolo, also known as St. Paul. There are a number of sites and landmarks in Kamloops and the nearby area named after Lolo including Lolo Lake, Lolo Mountain, Mount Paul and St. Paul's Street.

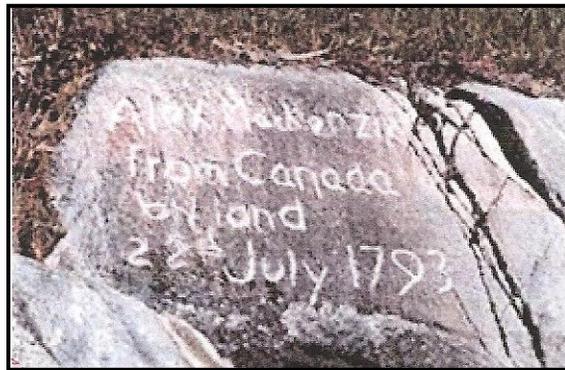
A lasting memory of this prominent Métis fur trader is his 1820s Lolo St. Paul Log Cabin. This historic artifact has been retained and restored and is presently housed within the Kamloops Museum and Archives located at 207 Seymour Street in Kamloops.

13. MACKENZIE ROCK & CAIRN – DEAN CHANNEL

In 1793 the great explorer Alexander Mackenzie of the North West Company (NWC) made an epic overland journey to the Pacific Ocean. His crew of ten included Métis and French Canadian voyageurs and two Indians.

The voyageurs in the MacKenzie party were François Beaulieu, Baptiste Bisson, Joseph Landry, Jacques Beauchamp, Charles Doucette, and François Courtois. The most prominent Métis member of this group was François Beaulieu, who has been designated a person of national significance by The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

The NWC Expedition reached an arm of the Pacific Ocean at Dean Channel on July 21, 1793. The following day, with a mixture of vermilion and grease, Mackenzie painted on a rock (now known as Mackenzie Rock) an inscription relating to this journey to the Pacific Ocean. Over the years his inscription faded. As a result, in 1926 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada chiseled the following words into Mackenzie Rock:



Also in 1926 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada erected a 40 foot cairn with a plaque above Mackenzie Rock. In addition in 1944 the Board erected a further plaque at this site to memorialize this historic Expedition. Reached only by boat, the Rock is situated in Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park along the central coast of British Columbia near Elcho Harbour on Dean Channel approximately 65 kilometers northwest of Bella Coola.

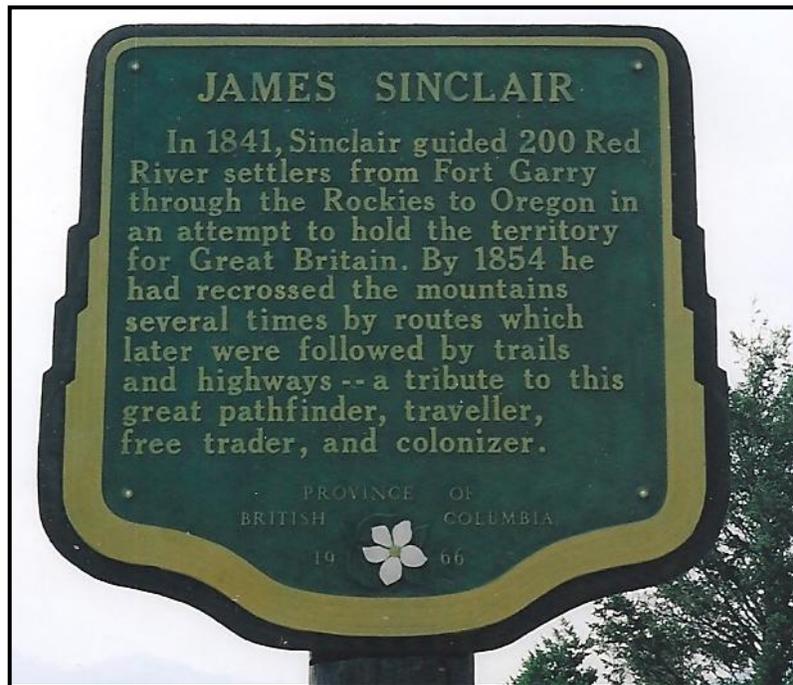
The Métis in British Columbia: From Fur Trade Outposts to Colony p. 24; 187.

14. RED RIVER EXPEDITION PLAQUE – NEAR RADIUM HOT SPRINGS

In the first half of the 19th century the disputed Oregon Country was the area west of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean stretching from the northern boundary of modern-day California to the southern boundary of present-day Alaska. This included New Caledonia, which would later become part of British Columbia.

In the early 1840s this area was under a temporary Joint Occupation Agreement between Great Britain and the United States. Since the Americans had started coming into the area, the Hudson's Bay Company decided to send a group of Red River Residents, mainly Métis, to settle there in an attempt to save this area for Great Britain. In 1841 a group of Métis families led by their intrepid Métis leader James Sinclair journeyed overland for over four months from the Red River Settlement to the Oregon Country in an attempt to save that disputed territory from being taken over by the Americans. Under frequently hazardous conditions, they traveled to this destination by crossing the majestic and lofty Rocky Mountains through passes previously unknown and never before traversed, except by Natives.

In 1966 the Government of British Columbia erected a plaque south of Radium Hot Springs (formerly Sinclair Hot Springs) to commemorate this historic Expedition. This plaque is located two kilometers south of the junction of Highways 93 and 95 and overlooks the beautiful Columbia Valley. This Government plaque, pictured below, commemorates one of the most spectacular feats in the history of the Métis people.



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