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SECTION II, 1916

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*Place-Names in the Rocky Mountains between the 49th Parallel and the  
Athabaska River*

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(Read May Meeting, 1916)



As the writer was assistant to the late Dr. George M. Dawson during his explorations in the Southern Rockies in 1884, and to Mr. R. G. McConnell in the same region in 1885, he thus acquired personal knowledge respecting the derivation of many of the place-names of this region and these data have been incorporated in this paper.

For a proper understanding of these names and the circumstances attending their naming a brief statement of the principal explorations is given below.

In 1807, David Thompson crossed the Rockies by the Howse pass. He descended the Blaeberry to its mouth, thence up the Columbia to its source and down the Kootenay. In the area under consideration, practically the only name that he contributed was Lussier river, named after one of his men.

Though the pass bears his name, Joseph Howse did not travel through it till 1810. Howse was a writer in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Co., and wintered in 1810-11 near site of present Kalispell, Montana. This is noteworthy as the only attempt by the Hudson's Bay Co. to compete with their great rivals, the North-West Co., in the country west of the Rockies.

Although Arrowsmith's map of North America was the best geographical authority respecting the region, the 1824 edition contains only ten names in the area included in this paper. This is a measure of the information available ninety years ago respecting place-names in the area under consideration.

Devil's Nose of Arrowsmith's map is the present Devil's Head, Pyramid mountain can not be identified and King mountain, just south of the 49th parallel, is now Chief mountain. The map also included seven names of rivers, viz: (1) Moo-coo-wans, now the Belly, (2) Spitchee, now Highwood, (3) Hokaikski, probably present Fish creek, (4) Hopikski, probably present Elbow river, (5) Bow or Askow, (6) Red Deer and (7) Saskatchewan, present North Saskatchewan. The Athabaska river in and near the Rockies is shown as a tributary of the North Saskatchewan and is designated "N. Branch."

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