

# A JOURNAL OF THE YUKON IN 1848

## INTRODUCTION.

Alexander Hunter Murray, the author of this Journal, was born at Kilmun, Argyllshire, Scotland, in the year 1818. He emigrated to the United States as a young man, and joined the American Fur Company, with which he remained for several years. His service with the American Fur Company must have taken him pretty far afield, as witness his familiar references to Balize, Lake Pontchartrain, and the Red River of Texas, in the present Journal. In the spring of 1846, accompanied by the late Mr. Brazeau (afterward of Edmonton), he found his way from the Missouri to Fort Garry, where he entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company as a senior clerk. He was appointed to the Mackenzie River District, under Chief Factor Murdoch McPherson, and set forth almost immediately for his post in the extreme north. His way lay by Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan to Cumberland House; thence by Frog portage to the Churchill, and by Methye portage (famous in the annals of the fur trade) to the river and lake Athabaska. Descending Slave river to Great Slave lake, he entered the mighty Mackenzie, and reported to the head of his department at Fort Simpson. Some where on his journey—perhaps at Fort Chipewyan, on Lake Athabaska—he had had the good fortune to meet the daughter of Chief Trader Colin Campbell, of the Athabaska District. After a brief courtship, they were married *à la contract*, by Chief Factor McPherson—there being no clergy so far north at that time. Murray and his young wife spent their honeymoon descending the Mackenzie, a long and, under the circumstances, no doubt delightful journey. Finally they reached the mouth of Peel river, and turned up to Fort McPherson, where they wintered.

In the early spring Murray took his wife over the mountains to Lapierre House, on Bell river. Returning to Fort McPherson, he made all preparations for the important journey