North of Athabasca

Slave Lake and Mackenzie River
Documents of the
North West Company,
1800–1821

Edited with an Introduction by

LLOYD KEITH

McGill-Queen's University Press
Montreal & Kingston • London • Ithaca
Contents

Tables and Maps    vii
Acknowledgments   ix
Introduction      xi

PART ONE: OVERVIEW  1

Historical Background  3
The Distant Past    3
The Recent Past     6
The North West Company  9
Slave Lake District, 1786–99  13
Mackenzie River District, 1795–1800  14
James Porter's Journal, 1800–1  18
John Thomson's Journal, 1800–1  22
Arrival of Opposition in Athabasca, 1800–4  26
Early Journals of W.F. Wentzel, 1802–5  31
Alexander McKenzie's Journal, 1805–6  37
Alexander Henry Jr's Journal, 1806  41
vi Contents

George Keith’s Journals, 1805-7  43
W.F. Wentzel’s Journals, 1805-08  53
Declining Returns from the Mackenzie, 1807-15  57
Roderic McKenzie Correspondence, 1807-24  58
Aftermath, 1816-21  66
Wentzel’s “Account of Mackenzies River with a Chart,” 1821  70
Conclusions  76

PART TWO:
NORTH WEST COMPANY DOCUMENTS  81

James Porter’s Slave Lake Journal of 1800-1  83
John Thomson’s Journal of 1800-1  126
W.F. Wentzel’s Journals of 1802 and 1804-5  157
Alexander McKenzie’s Journal of 1805-6  207
Alexander Henry, Jr’s Journal of 1806  252
George Keith’s Journals of 1805-6 and 1806-7  259
W.F. Wentzel’s Journals and “Account of Mackenzies River,” 1805-21  288
Biographical Notes, Mackenzie River and Slave Lake Districts, 1795-1821  365

Glossary  451
Notes  457
Bibliography  479
Index  489