

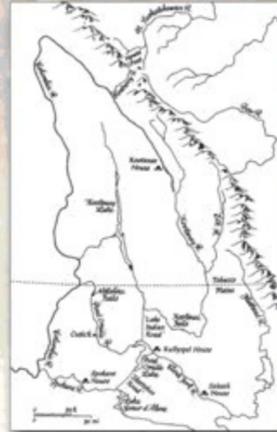
# KULLYSPEL HOUSE

Between 1807 and 1812, North West Company fur agent, David Thompson, explored the Columbia River basin and established four trade houses among the Salish and Kootenai people of the Inland Northwest. The Canadian fur trade reached Lake Pend Oreille in the fall of 1809 when Thompson arrived at the large tribal encampment at the mouth of the Clark Fork River.



## David Thompson's journal, 1809

**Sept 8** A fine day, but very cold Night - Ice was formed - but the Leaves are yet everywhere very green. At 7 1/4 Am set off Course South 20 East 1/2 Mile to a Brook of abt which we followed down...to the Lake



Trade route of the Columbia Brigade  
Map by Jack McMaster  
From Sources of the River by Jack Nisbet

David Thompson was the first person to describe Lake Pend Oreille in writing. In September of 1809, he traveled on horseback south along what he called "Lake Indian Road" from present-day Bonners Ferry to "the Lake." There he met Indian people with canoes to carry his goods, and by the next night they reached the large tribal encampment at the mouth of the Clark Fork River.



**Sept 9** ...the Canoes got off & we following... We all at length arrived in safety, thank God, at the mouth of the [Clark Fork] River where we camped for the Night. They all smoked - say 54 Flat Heads, 23 Pointed Hearts & 4 Kootanaes - in all about 80 men



Kullispel Lake or Pend Oreille Lake from View Point  
James Madison Alden, 1860  
National Archives



Non-native trappers that met annually to trade at a rendezvous was the system employed by the American fur trade. In contrast, the North West Company conducted business by working within the long established trade systems of Indian Tribes. Thompson relied on tribal leaders and guides to help him determine where he should build a trade house. Important factors were its proximity to a tribal encampment and main travel corridors, but also important to the success of a House was the traders ability to work cooperatively with the Tribes.

**Sept 10** A fine day. Early set off with 2 Flat Heads to look for a place to build a House on - at length found a place somewhat eligible

Kullispel House was built on the present Hope Peninsula a short distance away from the tribal encampment. The first building to be constructed was the warehouse to protect the furs and trade goods. Trade was being conducted the entire time the House was under construction. Thompson named his trade houses after the Indian Tribes living in that area. The name Kullispel is derived from the name of the Kalispel people who lived around present Lake Pend Oreille and River.



Detail of Map of North America from 84 degrees West  
David Thompson  
Public Record Office

**Sept 15** 3 Canoes arrived last night & put up at the Island - they made us a present of Berries...traded a Canoe for fishing &c

During his first few weeks at Kullispel House, Thompson noted almost daily business transactions. Out of necessity, he and his party of traders and trappers spent as much time securing their own provisions as they did trading for furs. His journal entries note trades for fresh and dried fish, deer (chevruil), berries, ducks, canoes, and horses. Indian people also traded their time as guides, hunters, and interpreters. Some of the most favored items for trade included needles, awls, kettles, metal arrow points, woolen goods, and guns.

**Sept 17** All the Indians arrived with what they have remaining to Trade...we spent the whole day in this Business

**Sept 27** ...At noon in company with Beaulieu & an Indian lad with 4 Horses I set off to examine the Country below us...

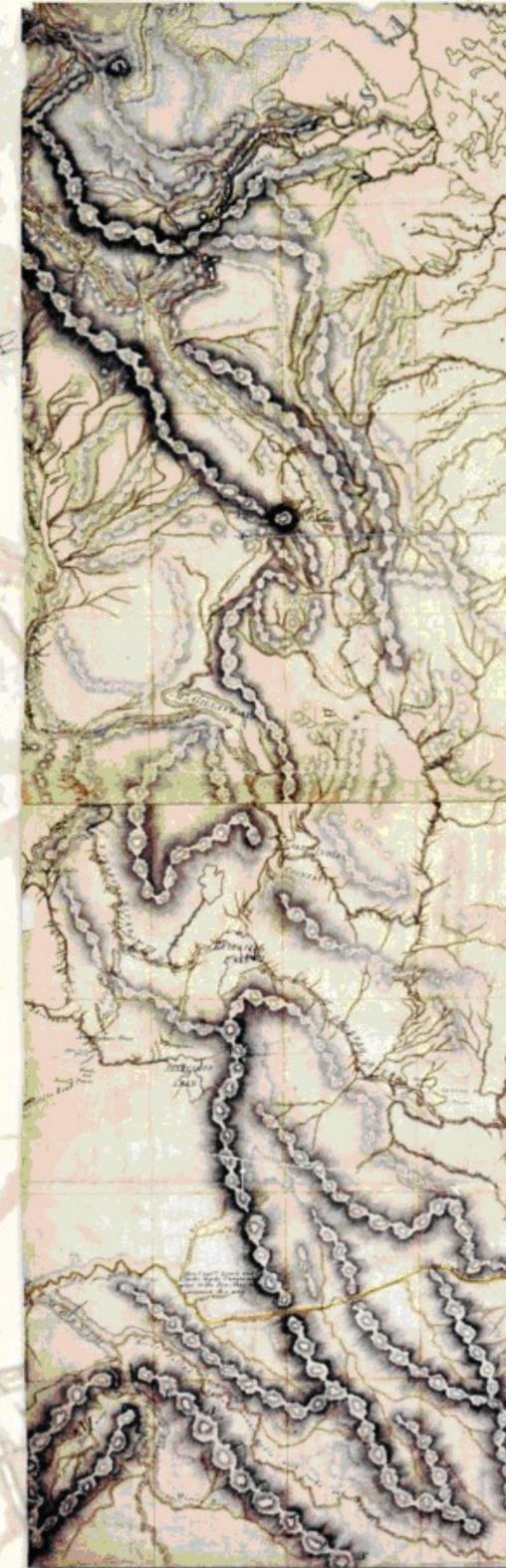
Before the last building at Kullispel House was completed, Thompson left to explore the Pend Oreille river as far as it could be navigated. Over the next year he established two more trade houses in the region, Saleesh House and Spokane House. In 1812, after exploring and mapping the Columbia River country, he retired from the fur trade and returned to eastern Canada with his Cree wife, Charlotte, and their children.

David Thompson drew up five large maps of the region that included several tribal trails between drainages. On all these maps Lake Pend Oreille is called Kullispel Lake, after the Kalispel people that he met here. The Flathead, Clark Fork, and Pend Oreille Rivers are marked as the Saleesh River after the Salish language spoken all along their course.



Indian Fishing Station on the Kalispel Lake & River  
Henry James Warre  
Archives of Canada

Portraits: Choits-kan (Pend d'Oreille)  
Pagh-Paght-sem-i-am "The woman of good sense" (Kalispel)  
Gustavus Sohon, 1851  
Smithsonian



Map of North America from 84 degrees West  
David Thompson  
Public Record Office



Tum-ne-se-ho, or the Man without Blood,  
a Spokane chief  
Paul Kane  
Stark Museum