

mouth of the Muskoka River. Buried in a labyrinth of islands and channels, its exact location was not precisely known at the time, but by the afternoon of the next day, he had entered the river and was on his way upstream. On August 13 at 11 a.m., after ascending 12 waterfalls and portaging 2180 yards, he reached Lake Muskoka, or as he called it, Swamp Ground Lake (from the Indian name Muskako-skow-oo-sakahagan) and set up camp at the head of Bala Falls.

By relying on Thompson's journal, I have retraced his route through the region and pinpointed landmarks and campsites, particularly on the three lakes I know best—Muskoka, Rosseau, and Joseph. To provide a glimpse of what Thompson saw during his 12 days on these lakes, I have selected passages from his journal of that time. Because the journals also record his surveys, much of what he wrote was a series of courses and distances or changes in a river's elevation. For clarity I have omitted these and indicated their removal with three-dot ellipses. As well, I have expanded some abbreviations and replaced his symbols for right and left with words.

AUGUST 14, MONDAY. At 9:32AM set off, came to Swamp Ground Lake and held on to 11AM, put ashore. Rain came on and we dined. At 12:10PM, set off and held on to 1:35PM, when very heavy rain with loud thunder came on and we had to keep under the shelter of a point of rock and let it fall on us to 3:15PM when we crossed N46E to an islet 500 yards and camped where the Indians have been [the southeastern point of Charybdis Island]. At 3:30PM, the rain ceased but the weather cloudy and threatening. By 4:15PM, got to writing up my journal. Everything again wet and my papers for drawing wet. From the camp about due south there appears a fine body of hardwood and gentle rise of land, but all the shores and isles hereto are bound with grey sienite rock, as per specimens, with red fir and pines and have a soil of worth except for red oak, which is everywhere in the bays and on all the Carrying Places, but often of low growth. Cloudy weather and in the evening 6PM showers of rain. Wind SE and East 1 to 1/8. Several loons about us. Showers of rain in the night but somewhat cool.

AUGUST 15, TUESDAY. Wind Southerly, cloudy. Breakfasted and at 7:10AM set off. Sketched the lake about us, many islands &c [etc.]. Course South. At 7:53AM put ashore to examine the woods and the soil at a place not looking favourable. About 30 yards within is a small

meadow with white birch and beech, very fine woods of that kind, but yellow sandy soil. Many showers with dark dirty weather and gusts of wind to 11AM, then tolerable fine. At 12:23PM dined. At 1:15PM set off, all grey sienite and quartz sienite. Examined the soil. About 2 or 3 in. black vegetable mould, then a good rocky, sandy clay, bass-wood &c &c, good land. Saw an Indian lodge and in hopes of getting information went to it about 1 1/2 miles off, but no person, suppose they have gone to Lake Huron for presents &c [the southeast tip of Eileen Gowan Island]. They have left a cat and many utensils &c with many rolls of very good birch rind for canoes. I asked my men if they would have a birch rind canoe made, they said not, as it would not stand the required rough usage which our business must have. We returned to where we came from and continued the survey of the lake. At the Indian lodge, fine ground and hardwood and small patch of potatoes look well but the potatoes are yet very small. At 2:50PM, we commenced the survey, when finding no camping place, we returned from the bay to near the end of N2E, course 250 yards [Firebrand Island], grey sienite.

We have had a day of wild weather. Showers of rain, gusty wind with thick dark mists to 11AM, then moderate and fine with changeable winds to West and NW. Loons calling all night. Most of this day, the lands have been very good in soil and timber, but all the points and most of the shores have a ledge of yellow fir and red oak on grey sienite rock and look very forbidding, but about 50 to 100 yards within, the land is good and mostly all hardwood. The islands are mostly yellow fir and rock of no use to the farmer, but for the timber for building which is small and handy. About full moon. But the land is very poor, as well as the water. We haven't heard or seen a squirrel and hare or a mouse, yet there are many tracks of deer in the hardwoods &c.

AUGUST 16, WEDNESDAY. A calm night, lightly cloudy. Musketoos. Heard a few birds singing, quite a novelty. At 6 3/4 AM set off, having breakfasted went to an islet of N2E and began the survey of to day. At 8 1/2 AM examined the ground. At a distance it looked well but the shores are all pines and rocks, except a few bays, about 4 or 5 in., sandy black vegetable mould, then approvedly deep reddish sandy clay. Warm, but not rich. Hardwoods good as usual about 80 to 100 yards from the water. At a narrow [Light-house Narrows] which leads to the Matchedash River by a CP [carrying place, or portage] &c &c found a piece of birch rind with several names of 1831 but could not make them out. Further in the narrow, about 300 yards, small horns of deer on the left, we then examined the bay and found the CP leading to the Matchedash River of about 1000 yards length, a small brook crossed the path twice or thrice and entered a small lake at end of the CP, the brook is from this lake. Returned and about 1/2 m from

WHEN THOMPSON BEGAN HIS SURVEY OF THE MUSKOKA LAKES IN 1837, DID HE ENVISAGE THE CHANGES TO COME? SIXTY YEARS LATER, BALA WAS A BUSTLING RESORT TOWN, THANKS IN LARGE PART TO THE UNTIRING EFFORTS OF ITS FOUNDER, THOMAS BURGESS.