

# The Diary of Simon Fraser Tolmie

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Juvenilia is often amusing, frequently perceptive, and usually engaging, but it is not always great literature. Moreover, the keeping of a diary requires a special technique; a mere chronology of events, while perhaps useful, does not make good reading. Nevertheless, all journals, despite the caveat, have an intrinsic value in themselves, and even those which are somewhat mundane have a considerable charm with an intimacy that brings one closer to the time of the author. The world of Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer is almost as far away as is the world of classical antiquity; yet, even the most jaundiced cannot fail to be amused and entertained by "the real diary of a real boy" of this past age.

Simon Fraser Tolmie, who later became the twentieth premier of the province, was born on January 25, 1867, at "Cloverdale" near Victoria; he was the seventh son of William Fraser Tolmie and his wife Jane Work Tolmie. He was educated in the local schools in Victoria and, as a farmer's son he was expected to help with the chores after school and in the holidays. His father was quite strict, and young Simon Fraser Tolmie had none of the usual things which a modern youth would assume to be his right. Hence, a trip with his father was a great luxury and an event of real importance. Consequently, he would undoubtedly have felt the need to keep a permanent record of his experiences. This diary is the account of his trip in 1884.

Unsophisticated to modern eyes, the journal is jejeune but in its own way it recreates the simple world of the nineteenth century. The diary is written with considerable *élan*, and he tells his story well. It makes good reading and is a charming coda to the published diary of William Fraser Tolmie.

I am much obliged to Miss C. G. Ann Tolmie for permission to publish this little journal.

*Diary of Simon Fraser Tolmie*  
*Account of Expenses*

|         |                                     |       |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-------|
|         | Meals at Arlington Seattle Dinner   | 1.00  |
|         | Tickets for Hillhurst               | 2.20  |
|         | Blackey Boeish and Black<br>S.F.T.  | .35   |
| Sept. 3 | By Cash                             | 10.00 |
|         | Sept. 3 — 1884                      |       |
|         | Saw Spectacle in Tacoma             |       |
|         | Color Blue age of Lady 18 Right     |       |
|         | age 25 Bashful Looking for someone. |       |

Journal of S. F. Tolmie during Trip on Sound.

Sept. 1 Left Victoria shortly after 5 A.M. Had an introduction to a young Lady from Portland shortly after starting arrived at Port Townsend at 9.30 A.M. saw Judge Swan who was down on wharf and who introduced us to Mr. & Mrs. Dr. Hoffman of Washington, D.C. and on the staff of the smithsonian Institution and proved to be a very interesting companion for papa on the trip as far as Seattle being very much interested in the Indians. He also introduced us to Capt. Hooper of the U.S. Cutter Richard Rush we also saw Norma Smith of Port Townsend. The trip as far as Port Townsend was rather rough very few people taking breakfast. The trip from Port Townsend to Seattle was quite an improvement on the other parts got acquainted with a Miss Jones on the trip arrived at Seattle about 3.30 P.M. and put up at the "Arlington" rather a nice Hotel all the waiters being darkies and very obliging we got a buggy and called on the Hallers who live in a fine residence on the top of a long hill. We afterwards called on Danny the Banker and there got acquainted with his wife and daughter. We then went to dinner and afterwards called on the Yeslers whom we found to be very kindly people we there met a Mrs. Loman who formerly used to go to School with Will Huggins. She was a very bright lady and conversed very nicely. We staid at the Yeslers for about an hour and were about to leave when Morris Haller whom we had not seen before came in and after chatting with him for a while; he accompanied us to the Hotel.

- Sept. 2    Rose shortly after 5 A.M. took breakfast and then a short walk saw trains drawn by a steam Engine for the first time. Left on Steamer Messenger (Capt. Parker) for Tacoma at 8 A.M. and arrived there at about 11 A.M. had a very pleasant trip. Put up at Blackwell's where we lunched and then hired a Buggy and called on Otis Sprague, Mr. Urgant, Mr. Van Ogle, Banker Fraser and then on Mr. Mrs. Dr. Hoffman at the "Tacoma" which is a magnificent Hotel inside and out, but is losing money now at the rate of \$30,000 a year. We now retreated to the Hotel and after cleaning up a little I went out and found Ned Huggins who spent a good while with us, but had to go back to his engine. We spent that evening at Mr. Van Ogle's where we met his three stepdaughters and one son and after a passable evening we got returned to the Hotel at 9:30 P.M.
- Sept. 3    Rose about 5 A.M. and left on the Puyallup train at 6 A.M. (This was my first ride on cars). After a pleasant trip of about 45 minutes we arrived at Puyallup Station a lively little settlement pleasantly situated in the midst of the hop growing country. We went immediately to the residence and farm of Mr. Ezra Meeker the principal hopgrower of this territory where we were cordially received by Mr. Robert Wilson head clerk for Mr. Meeker, Mrs. Meeker and Mrs. Sphinix here we met Mrs. F. Meeker of Tacoma and the Misses Bonn also of Tacoma who come down here to pick Hops. We had a good look through the hopfields and dry house where things were explained to us by Mr. Rebilson (?). Lunched at Meekers and left for Tacoma on the four O'clock train where we arrived shortly afterwards and met Ned Huggins who dined with us and went with us to visit Mr. Van Ogle. Left at nine O'clock P.M. accompanied by Ned for Hillhurst where we [found] John and Thomas waiting for us we were recognized by John but Tom in[sisted ?] on calling me Jim. Arrived at Nisqually after a wet drive through the planes where we were greeted by all hands and the cook.
- Written at Forrest Grove ogr.
- Sept. 4    Took a ride with David in the morning to Orr's. After lunch started for Shannon with David to look at his Stock. Shannon was not [there] but saw Mrs. Shannon and her niece Miss

Young. Had a hot argument with Mrs. Shannon about Central Pacific and Oregon Lad. Had a look over Shannons Stock and farm he has a fine place; but his stock is nothing extraordinary, the four year old bull now at the head of his herd is about the same size as our two year old Reuben Butler with a coarse head pot belly and poor girth behind shoulder although good in length of hind quarter. In going to Shannon's we had to cross the Nisqually on a ferry. Got home about eight o'clock.

Sept. 5 Went out hunting with Tom and Peter Lagacie in the morning, travelled round the country till about 2 P.M. but only got 3 grouse shot by Tom. After lunch took a walk round the place with John Bull. Saw some very fine onions and cabbages, after that prepared for the ball. Started for the ball about 7:30 P.M. and had a splendid time danced with Mrs. Rogers, Miss Webster, Mrs. Clendining, Mrs. Lyons, Jane, Mrs. Goodacre, Mrs. Murray, Miss Frost, and some others. Took Mrs. Rogers and Mrs. Clendening to Supper which was at the Harmon House. After enjoying myself very much got home about 6 A.M.

Sept. 6 Rose about 9 A.M. did not do much started to meet papa with David about 2 p.m. he arrived in a buggy from Tacoma just as we got to town he hired a buggy for \$1.00 and drove to Nisqually David having some business to do before starting home. While waiting for a horse to be shod the Emma Hayward came in with Roderick on board he drove to Nisqually with us. He intended coming for the ball but was detained in Seattle.

Sept. 7 Started for Church with David, Jane & John Hart drove part Sunday of the way with us. David and Jane went into church while John and I put away the horses when John and I got to the church door the ch was just coming out. We went home with the Rogers and had dinner with them after dinner we drove down to the Lunatic Asylum accompanied by Miss Webster after being introduced to the principal persons and taking a look round that Institution we came home via Sheilacoom where [we] left Miss Webster after a very wet drive we arrived home about 7 o'clock.

- Sept. 8 Did very little else today than clean and pack my clothes and write my Journal. Started for Lakeview about 4 P.M. where we arrived shortly after 5 P.M. departed on train at 7 p.m. for Kalama where we arrived at 12 M. and got on board Steamer R. R. Thompson bound for Portland where we arrived at 6 A.M. next day.
- Sept. 9 Arrived at Portland this morning at 6 oclk and repaired to St. Charles Hotel. After breakfast called on Judge Deady McCracken and one or two others. After lunch hired a hack and called on Judge Deady again. Mrs. McCracken, Mrs. Townsend, Mrs. Smith and daughters, Mrs. Carson, Mrs. Holbrook, Andrew McKenzie MacLeary Henry Failing Ladd (of Ladd and Fithon) S. G. Reed and Honigman the machinist in the evening went to Reading Room where we were introduced by a letter from Judge Deady. Portland has some splendid residences and business buildings it is divided into East and West Portland connected by a ferry across the Columbia River its Streets were very muddy when we were there.
- Sept. 10 Spent the day almost altogether in my bedroom reading books and writing to Nisqually and Home it rained hard all day.
- Sept. 11 Left on 9 oclk train for Forest Grove papa met Old Nesmith on the train and had an interesting talk with him about old times the country we passed through was mostly farming country of a rolling hilly nature often intersected by small creeks. Arrived at Forest Grove at 11.30 and went to the "Forest Grove Hotel" a small boarding house situated in the middle of the town. Forest Grove is a pretty little town situated on a plane and in the centre of a rich farming country; it has about 200 Inhabitants and is almost a town of schools altogether. Here is situated the Indian school and the Pacific University. We visited the Indian school in the afternoon and were quite surprised to see the progress they had made. While we were [there] they were put through exercises in Arithmetic Reading and they also sang a hymn very well. They publish a monthly newspaper, learn Blacksmithing Carpentering printing and Agriculture. The manager to whom papa had a letter of introduction was away but we saw

his wife who gave us an introduction to the teacher. In the evening we visited a man named Smith who had been in the country a long time but who had never before met papa, they had quite an interesting chat and about 9 oclk we returned to the Hotel and went to bed.

Sept. 12 Rose this morning about 5.30 and after breakfast went again to the Indian school and after a short interview with the teacher we went to the Pacific University where we met Prof. Marsh and the other Teachers. Papa addressed the pupils and then we looked through the library and the professor's botanical specimens. We then left and departed for Whites Junction on the 11 oclk train had lunch at McMuirville and arrived at Whites about two P.M. passing on the way numerous fields with grain in the shock and soaking wet. Took the narrow guage here and arrived at Broadmeads at 3.30 P.M. Mr. Waddle the Supt. was away at Salem; but we were very cordially received by his Mrs. Took a look round the place and went to bed about 8 p.m. Next morning had a look at the sheep and the horses. The farm consists of 2700 acres they [have] a very complete stock of machinery, a Durham and Jersey bull and 5 Clyde stallions. The cattle were nothing extraordinary the sheep a long wool and merino cross were extra good.

Waddel arrived home at 4.45 and after a chat with papa he started for Amity taking me with him; returned home at 6.30 and soon went to bed.

[There is no entry for September 13.]

Sept. 14 Started for Grande Ronde at 8.30 A.M. after a very muddy drive of 25 miles through fine agricultural Districts we arrived at Grande Ronde at 3 oclk staid with the Catholick Priests eating in the Convent and sleeping in the back of a Catholick Church.

Sep. 15 Papa has been busy all day with Indians principally "Orgon City Joe" I wrote home and walked about the place which is beautifully situated in an elevated valley surrounded by hills it is twenty five miles from the pacific and 15 miles from Sheridan the terminal of Narrow Guage Railroad.

- Sep. 16 Left Grande Ronde at 5.30 oclck before any body was up the morning was very cold. After a tedious drive we arrived at Sheridan at 10 oclck where we had breakfast and had our horse fed; arrived at Broadmeads at 2 P.M. spent the balance of the day walking round the place.
- Sep. 17 Left for Salem at 8 oclck crossed the Willamette on a steamer ferry and after getting letters from the Post Office and leaving our things at the Chemeteka Hotel we arrived at the Fair Grounds at 12 M. We first looked round the horses accompanied by Mr. Waddle; there were some very fine Clydesdales exhibited Reed's Brutus taking first prize in the aged class. There were also some Canadian horses exhibited. I think they would make the best farmer's horse of any that I have seen. The Trotting and running horses were far more numerous than any other; some very fine ones being exhibited. We next took a look at the cattle Meyers and Dimick exhibited Shorthorns. They had some very fine heifers and cows; but the bulls were rather poor especially an aged bull that was shown in poor condition these cattle are mostly descended from the stock of Col. Younger of California. Carey of Salem showed some polled Aberdeens. The bull a two year old appeared to be rather pot bellied and to have a sway back and coarse head otherwise he was very fair. The cow was very small probably caused by breeding too young her calf a pure red also exhibited was nothing extra of an animal has since been sold to a stock raiser for \$400. Stuart exhibited some Holsteins, the bull and the calves I thought very large for their ages. I do not like either the Aberdeens or Holsteins as well as the Shorthorns. The display of Jerseys was much larger in number than any other class of cattle. I did not like them at all. Much to my disappointment there were no pigs on exhibition. The display of sheep was very poor those that were there were all merinos with the exception of a few long wool shown by Withycombe. The fair this year was said by many to be a great failure. Saw Sam Kelly and John Cameron of Victoria at the Fair they seemed to be much disappointed with it.
- Sep. 18 Papa and I walked about Salem in the morning and went to the bank, and visited the Capital Flouring Mills where we were

shown round by Archie Stewart an apprentice and son of one of the principal shareholders. The mill is six stories high and we had a fine view from the highest story.

Papa brought some books and I took them out as a present to Waddell at the Fair Grounds he was very much pleased with them. Parted with him at about 11.30 A.M. and went to Salem left Salem at 1 P.M.. Left the Station at 1.30 P.M. for after a very pleasant ride passing through French Prairie the Willamette Falls and through Oregon City we arrived at East Portland at about 4 P.M. and crossed on the Ferry and put up at the St Charles went in the afternoon to see S. G. Reed about Bachelors Island. He could not go down with us but gave full directions about Steamers.

Sep. 19 Went again to see W. Ladd papa also going to see — Eliot a Unitarian preacher and spending a good part of the day with him. Andrew MacKenzie called for me twice during the day once at 1 p.m. and again at 4 P.M. the book-keeper saying both times that [I] was out while I was up stairs all the time. He called again at 7 P.M. and took papa and I up to his house he paying for the street car passage. (This my first ride on a street car.) At his house we met Mrs. MacKenzie who we found to be a very pleasant lady of about twenty five. After spending about an hour at the house we returned to the hotel by way of the cars and retired immediately.

Sep. 20 Left this morning at 10 a.m. for Bachelors Island per Str Lucia Mason saying goodbye to Portland for this trip. We had a beautiful trip down the river. As we left Portland I saw a railroad ferry taking some freight cars across the river for the first time. We arrived at the Island at about 3 P.M. where we were heartily greeted by Gammie on receipt of the letter of introduction from S. G. Reed.

Bachelors Island (so-called from having first been occupied by three bachelors) is a small low island situated a short distance from the junction of the Lewis river with the Columbia. It is very damp and affords splendid pasturage for the cattle, 10 mos in the year it being flooded the greater part of May and June. The cattle at this time have to be transferred by steamer to the Mainland till the floods are over. It is partially intersected in several places by slews and wapato swamps. It

was at one time covered by willow trees but now the greater part of Ladd and Reeds claim is cleared. The soil is of a very porous nature; underdraining would therefore be impracticable. The cattle are the finest lot I ever saw together in my life; headed by the fine bull Watermann Boy the only animal approaching Reuben for shape that I have seen in Oregon. They had a young yearling there for which they asked \$200 he was good sized but poor in the hind quarter and coarse in the head and horns.

Some of the cows were very fine especially a dark red 5 year old and some young roans. We saw some of his original stock among them Old Honeysuckle at this time a suckling bull calf. They still showed their fine points but were showing signs of age. The calves were not as good as I anticipated after looking at their dams the most of them being sired by Reeds California bull

Written in Dec. 1885

Duke of —— a failure as a sire and very poor to look at. We  
& 1 Lincoln

also saw a fine band of Cotswold and Leicester sheep we purchased a ewe and a ram. We staid at the island two or three days and while there got acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Rob Roy McGregor and son of Portland who were staying at Gammie's. We were rowed up to St. Helens by Gammie where we got on the steamer "Wide West" and went to Kalama arriving there in the afternoon. Here we saw the new ferry boat "Tacoma". On the trip to Kalama father got acquainted with a Mr. Blaine of Boston who called on us afterwards in Victoria. Left Kalama in the evening for Tacoma father got off at Hillhurst where he was met next morning by one of the Huggins' and taken to Nisqually. I came on straight to Victoria getting on the Str North Pacific at Tacoma. Got acquainted on the cars with Mr. and Mrs. Reiffenstein of Ottawa who were on their way to Victoria. Was met on my arrival by May and Ettie. Father Jane and Mr. Huggins arrived next day from Nisqually. I enjoyed the trip very much and think I was much benefitted by it. I arrived home on Sep. 25th.