

Women in Kootenay history

by Donna Cabeldu Cumming

David Thompson is well known in this area for his explorations. There's even a university centre named for him.

Less known, however, is the fact that during his travels he was often accompanied by his wife, Charlotte Small.

It is documented that during Thompson's explorations to this area in 1807, Charlotte and their three small children were with the party as far as the Columbia River. Charlotte Small was a Cree Indian woman from eastern Canada and a skilled navigator. What part did she play in the exploration of this area?

Could it be similar to the role played by Sacajawea, another Indian woman whose leadership and navigational skills were vital to the explorations of Lewis and Clark?

Only recently has her importance been recognized. She was sold as a slave to a fur trading company and worked for Lewis and Clark. Their recognition of her skills led them to halt travel during the birth of her



Photo: BC Provincial Archives

Mining on Wild Horse Creek, Jim White, Charlie Smith, Pete Lum, Theirsa Johnson.

winter at the National Exhibition Centre in Castlegar and are currently on a cross-country tour. The photos depict pioneer women - frilled hats, but shotgun in hand.

In the early 1900's, Alice Jowett set out from the coast with her two children to make a life for herself. She settled in Trout Lake and started a general store. Soon she was making