

Pierre Hatsinaton called Yellow Head

To the Pacific Northwest in the before 1819

By Chalk Courchane

Pierre Hatsinaton called Tête Jaune (Hathawiton, Atawita, Thaawita), aka Pierre Bostonais. An Iroquois born about 1821 in Quebec. http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/yellowhead_highway.html As with others of this era there is some confusion who Yellowhead actually was?

Many people such as historian David Smyth think his real name was Pierre Bostonais, this he concluded in 1984 in his Jasper National Park: Some Fur Trade Place Names of the Yellowhead Pass. Smyth wrote that:

“..over the years such fur traders as Jasper Hawes, Francois Decoigne and, latterly, Pierre Hatsinaton have all at some point been argued to have been Tete Jaune. However, Hudson’s Bay Company records have proven that his real name was Pierre Bostonais.

<http://www.connect2edmonton.ca/forum/showthread.php?t=13785> He also said: In the above listed sources, Bostonnais was only listed once, in the Index to the NWC ledger (F.4/32). This ledger lists the accounts for NWC employees and has very limited information, just the year, the servant’s name and debits and credits on the account. Bostonnais is listed as Pierre Bostonnais dit Tête Jaune and the year is 1816.”

“In Smyths research he is Pierre Pangman Bostonais the son of Peter Pangman and his Saulteuse wife, Marguerite. <http://spstephen.wordpress.com/2010/03/01/who-was-tete-jaune/> Tete Juane died in 1828 and Pierre Bostonais Pangman, Sr. died March 4, 1850 in St. Francois Xavier, Manitoba, Canada. So I really doubt that the two are the same man. Pierre Bostonais Pangman could very well be Pegman Pelletier though. (Pegman Pelletier does not seem to have a history. "Bostonnais Pierre" born 20 October 1791 in the Red River Settlements, Manitoba, Canada. Died March 4, 1850 on the Saskatchewan Prairie, Canada...Bostonnais Pierre, Peter Pangman's half-breed Native American son, was a leader in the Metis Rebellion...he was prominent in the Seven Oaks Massacre on the Red River in 1816. ...It is said that most descendants of Bostonnais Pierre reside in the Western part of Canada. They use the Pangman surname. He had two sons: Pierre born 1834 & Louis born 1835.) Another blonde in those days was Francois Decoigne.

Pierre was a fur trader and trapper who guided for the North West Company in the early 1800s. Tete Jaune Cache (1825), the Yellowhead Highway, also called the Carlton Trail, and Yellowhead Pass (not before 1859) were named for him. Hatsination and David Thompson traversed the pass around 1805.

The yellow-haired Pierre Hatsination was named Tete Jaune by the French voyageurs because of his blonde-streaked hair.

In 1825 Hudson’s Bay Company governor George Simpson ordered chief trader James McMillan to explore the Yellowhead Pass. At Jasper House, McMillan hired Tête Jaune as guide. They left Jasper House on October 18, and by October 24, after a trip of about 120 miles, they reached Tête Jaune Cache. Between Jasper House and Tete Juane Cache lived the Shuswap Indians.

In his report to William Connolly, McMillan specifically mentioned “Tête Jaune’s Cache,” which is the first recorded reference to this place name. “The “Leather Track” (Yellowhead) Pass through the Rocky Mountains was first used by the Iroquois and Métis traders of the North West Company in the early 1800s. It was later named Tête Jaune (Yellowhead) Pass after Pierre Hatsinaton (aka Pierre Bostonais), a Métis, after he built a fur cache on the Grand Fork of the Fraser River in order to hide his furs.” It was used principally to transport leather, especially moose hides, from the Saskatchewan District to its posts in New Caledonia.

“The Hudson's Bay Company, a rival for the North West Company erected St. Mary's House on the Peace River in 1819. The post was at the mouth of the Smoky River. In December 1819, Ignace Giasson took charge of a push up the Smoky (*River*) and enlisted the help of what he described as "Tête Jaune a free Iroquois." Pierre Bostonnais assisted in the trek upstream and enlisted the help of some other Iroquois who lived on the Smoky in the spring of 1820. The party traveled across the mountains to make friends with the Indians who lived on the Fraser River, upstream from present-day Prince George. "On October 29, 1820, Giasson was back at St. Mary's House and planned to return for some furs that they were obliged to leave in a cache (*Grande Cache*). About that time, in the process of exploring the Smoky River, the Hudson's Bay Company built an outpost in the vicinity of Grande Cache; however, the post was closed in 1822." (Quote from "Overland by the Yellowhead" by James MacGregor.)" http://www.mountainmetis.com/pages/tete_jaune.html

He acted as a guide in the Rocky Mountains for Joseph Gaubin in 1819.

Pierre Hatsination traveled, hunted and trapped in the triangle between the Smoky River Post, Jasper and Fort George, and from time to time, he accepted employment with the Hudson's Bay Company.

“By the 1830s, the Yellowhead Highway was truly being used as a trans-Canada highway. Red River carts rolled along it in 1841, miners used it for the Caribou Gold Rush in 1856, the 1862 Overlanders followed it to Kamloops and Prince George, and settlers followed it to their new homesteads in the West.” Dictionary of Metis Biography, Volume H, edited and compiled by Lawrence J. Barkwell, 2013, pages 15-16.

Tete Jaune, his family and children, as well as his brother and his family, were all killed by a party of Beaver Indians near the mouth of the Finlay River, April 27, 1828.

James McGregor wrote about Hatsinaton's demise. “During the fall of 1828, Simpson called at Fort St. James on Stuart Lake to see Chief Factor William Connolly. About the time he was there, or perhaps soon after he left, Connolly received news about Tête Jaune. John Todd, writing from McLeod Lake, advised him that the venturesome Iroquois was reported dead. The Beaver Indians' enmity had finally overtaken him and somewhere in New Caledonia (B.C.) they killed Tête Jaune, his brother Baptiste and their wives and children. Tête Jaune who had served the white man well, the man who had led the way through the Yellowhead Pass had come to the end of his travels, all unaware that because of his cache, his name would pass down the ages.” Of course with his descendants all killed no one was to carry on his story.



The Leather Pass or Tete Jaune Cache Pass is named after Pierre Bostonnais, a Métis. Pierre had constructed a cache in a storage shed in the Pass. The above was painted by William George Richardson Hinc, circa 1862. http://www.mountainmetis.com/pages/tete_jaune.html