

BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL NEWS

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Special Issue:

Fur trade days on the Lower
Fraser

The Fort Langley journals
and the Coast Salish

Family life at Fort Langley

Archibald McDonald

Yale's early years

The name of the Cowichan chief called "Saw-se-a" by Paul Kane has been recorded in the Fort Langley journals and elsewhere in many ways from "Shashia" and "Josia" to "Old Joe." He came from one of the smallest of the Cowichan villages, but because of his demeanour and his abilities as a trader, Europeans considered him to be an important Cowichan chief.

Left: "Saw-se-a, head Chief of the Cowichin," by Paul Kane. 1810–1871. Watercolour on paper, 1847. Slightly cropped. We gratefully acknowledge the generous permission of the Stark Museum to make use of Paul Kane's watercolours shown in this issue.

British Columbia Historical News

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EDITOR:

FRED BRACHES
PO BOX 130
WHONNOCK BC, V2W 1V9
PHONE (604) 462-8942
BRACHES@NETCOM.CA

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR:

ANNE YANDLE
3450 WEST 20TH AVENUE
VANCOUVER BC, V6S 1E4
PHONE (604) 733-6484
YANDLE@INTERCHANGE.UBC.CA

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR:

NAOMI MILLER
BOX 105
WASA BC VoB 2K0
PHONE (250) 422-3594
FAX (250) 422-3244

SUBSCRIPTION SECRETARY:

JOEL VINGE
561 WOODLAND DRIVE
CRANBROOK BC V1C 4H3
PHONE (250) 489-2490
NISSE@BC.SYMPATICO.CA

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE:

TONY FARR
125 CASTLE CROSS ROAD,
SALT SPRING ISLAND BC V8K 2G1
PHONE (250) 537-1123

LAYOUT AND PRODUCTION: FRED BRACHES

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British Columbia Historical Federation

PO BOX 5254, STATION B., VICTORIA BC V8R 6N4

A NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATION UNDER THE INCOME TAX ACT

EXECUTIVE

HONORARY PATRON

HIS HONOUR, THE HONORABLE GARDE B. GARDOM, Q.C.

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LEONARD McCANN, VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: RON WELWOOD

R.R. # 1, S-22 C-1, NELSON BC V1L 5P4
PHONE (250) 825-474 WELWOOD@NETIDEA.COM

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: WAYNE DESROCHERS

#2 - 6712 BAKER ROAD, DELTA BC V4E 2V3
PHONE (604) 599-4206 FAX. (604) 507-4202

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT: MELVA DWYER

2976 McBRIDE AVE., SURREY BC V4A 3G6
PHONE (604) 535-3041

SECRETARY: ARNOLD RANNERIS

1898 QUAMICHAN STREET, VICTORIA BC V8S 2B9
PHONE (250) 598-3035 WL545@FREENET.VICTORIA.TC.CA

RECORDING SECRETARY: ELIZABETH (BETTY) BROWN

473 TRANSIT ROAD, VICTORIA BC V8S 4Z4
PHONE (250) 598-1171

TREASURER: RON GREENE

PO BOX 1351, VICTORIA BC V8W 2W7
PHONE (250) 598-1835 FAX (250) 598-5539 PDGREENE@PINC.COM

MEMBER AT LARGE: ROY J.V. PALLANT

1541 MERLYNN CRESCENT, NORTH VANCOUVER BC V7J 2X9
PHONE (604) 986-8969

MEMBER AT LARGE: ROBERT J. CATHRO

R.R. #1, BOX U-39, BOWEN ISLAND BC VoN 1G0
PHONE (604) 947-0038 BOBCAT@DIRECT.CA

PAST PRESIDENT: ALICE GLANVILLE

BOX 746, GRAND FORKS BC VoH 1H0
PHONE (250) 442-3865 AGLANVIL@WKPOWERLINK.COM

COMMITTEE OFFICERS

ARCHIVIST: MARGARET STONEBERG

Box 687, PRINCETON BC VoX 1W0
PHONE (250) 295-3362

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: TERRY SIMPSON

193 BIRD SANCTUARY, NANAIMO BC V9R 6G8
PHONE (250) 754-5697 TERRYROY@NANAIMO.ARK.COM

HISTORICAL TRAILS AND MARKERS: JOHN SPITTLE

1241 MOUNT CROWN ROAD, NORTH VANCOUVER BC V7R 1R9
PHONE (604) 988-4565 JDS@VCN.BC.CA

SCHOLARSHIP (ESSAY) COMMITTEE: FRANCES GUNDRY

255 NIAGARA STREET, VICTORIA BC V8V 1G4
PHONE (250) 385-635 FRANCES.GUNDRY@GEMS3.GOV.BC.CA

PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANCE: NANCY STUART-STUBBS

2651 YORK AVENUE, VANCOUVER BC V6K 1E6
PHONE (604) 738-5132 NANCY_STUBBS@BC.SYMPATICO.CA

WRITING COMPETITION—LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S AWARD:

SHIRLEY CUTHBERTSON
#306 - 255 BELLEVILLE STREET, VICTORIA BC V8V 4T9
PHONE (250) 382-0288 FAX (250) 387-5360

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PUBLISHING COMMITTEE *see column on left side*

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Vancouver Historians at Work

In this issue of *BC Historical News*, I proudly present the text of talks given last spring at the FUR TRADE DAYS ON THE LOWER FRASER symposium at the Vancouver Museum and Fort Langley.

I hope that this collection of papers will be of interest to our readers, particularly to those living away from the Lower Mainland or who could not attend for other reasons.

The symposium, organized by the Vancouver Historical Society, attracted a large audience: members of the VHS, local historians, and descendants of the Hudson's Bay Company employees. Also present at the events were of course First Nations descendants of those on whom the fort people were so much dependent.

I owe the presenters at the two-day symposium a warm "thank you" for immediately agreeing to submit their talks for publication in *BC Historical News*. A special word of thanks goes to Adrian Clark, president of the Vancouver Historical Society, who wholeheartedly supported the project. I am also indebted to Morag Maclachlan, who shared illustrations used in *The Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30* and helped assuring the timely submission of all manuscripts.

This is a unique edition of *BC Historical News*. Enjoy it. Next time we are back to our usual format.

the editor

*Any country worthy of a future
should be interested in its past.*

W. Kaye Lamb, 1937

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A Word from Adrian Clark

President of the Vancouver Historical Society

Right: Heroic entrance. Morag Maclachlan follows Ken Smith (as Mr. Yale) and piper Colin Barret to the Big House. To her left side is Alan Cole, a direct descendant of Archibald McDonald, and to her right Gerry Borden (as an unnamed gentleman).

ON 20 MARCH AND 3 APRIL 1999 the Vancouver Historical Society produced a two-day symposium on fur trade history: FUR TRADE DAYS ON THE LOWER FRASER. The symposium coincided with the release of the soft cover version of Morag Maclachlan's edition of the Fort Langley journals and was conceived as a celebration of Morag's achievement and an opportunity to open up a dialogue on some of the earliest recorded history of the lower mainland of British Columbia. Morag Maclachlan, a former history instructor at Langara College, painstakingly transcribed and edited the journals. The book, *Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30*, was published in September 1998 by the University of British Columbia Press with an introductory essay by Morag Maclachlan and a commentary on the ethnographic significance of the journals by Wayne Suttles, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, Portland State University.

Planning for the symposium started in December 1998 and carried through until the dates of the sessions. Many volunteers from the Vancouver Historical Society—too many to name individually—contributed a great deal of energy to make the symposium a success. Two volunteers from external agencies deserve special merit. David Plouffe, Public Programs Officer, at the Vancouver Museum attended all of the planning meetings and employed the publicity arm of the museum to spread the word about the events. Gerry Borden, Partnerships & Volunteer Liaison Officer, at Fort Langley National Historic Site, also devoted a great deal of his time and resources to the success of the symposium. The Vancouver Museum provided the venue for the first day of the symposium and all of the collateral support arrangements. The second day was held at Fort Langley National Historic Site, where in addition to the excellent talks on fur trade history

presented, participants in that day's programme benefited from an opportunity to get a real sense of the historic place through the site's excellent artifact collection and knowledgeable staff. And, of course, by having two separate venues, the society was able to make the events accessible to a broader audience and thereby further its objective of promoting greater interest in local history.

The Vancouver Historical Society wishes to thank all of the presenters at the symposium for their intelligent and well prepared talks on fur trade history. At the Vancouver Museum our presenters were: Jean Cole, Jean Barman, Morag Maclachlan, Wayne Suttles and Keith Carlson. And at Fort Langley National Site: Bruce Watson, Yvonne Klan, Morag Maclachlan, Wayne Suttles and Sonny McHalsie. Thank you also to the Vancouver



Photo by Vicki Cole

Opposite page: Detail of a portrait of Dr. Lamb painted in 1994 by Brenda Guild Gillespie reproduced here with kind permission of the artist. She writes: "...Most of all, I wanted to show the bigness of the man, in physical size matched by head and heart. Everyone who knew him can count themselves lucky—a shining example to me of what a truly great mind/soul should be...."

Museum and Fort Langley National Historic Site for staging the events. Funding for this symposium was made available by a grant from the BC Government. The society also thanks *British Columbia Historical News*, the journal of the British Columbia Historical Federation, of which the Vancouver Historical Association is a member, for generously offering to publish the talks from this symposium, meaning that these essays will be permanently recorded for the benefit of a still broader audience. What follows in the succeeding pages are mostly only slightly edited versions of the presenters' talks. If these essays on fur trade history should pique your interest on the subject you will find that many of the presenters are published authors and their works on the fur trade and other subjects can be found at your local bookstores and libraries. The Vancouver Historical Society hopes that you will enjoy these articles and thanks all of its supporters for having made it possible for the society to host FUR TRADE DAYS ON THE LOWER FRASER. ~

History is Alive and Well

by Morag Maclachlan

THE Vancouver Historical Society has a proud record of promoting local history. Some outstanding achievements in the recent past include the establishment of the Vancouver Bibliography, the False Creek Oral History project, and assistance with the publication of Bruce McDonald's *Vancouver Atlas* and Cyril Leonoff's books based on the work of Leonard Frank and Otto Landauer.

But for creative energy and enthusiasm there has seldom been a year to match 1998–99. In the past the projects have been undertaken by individuals or small groups, with the approval and support of the membership. Under the presidency of Adrian Clark, the executive has involved more people in projects. A high standard was maintained for the usual work—producing a newsletter and planning the monthly meetings. In addition the VHS has published the results of Elizabeth Walker's research on the street names of Vancouver, and, in collaboration with the Vancouver Museum and the Fort Langley Historic Site, planned the highly successful fur trade symposium which is featured in this issue of BC Historical News.

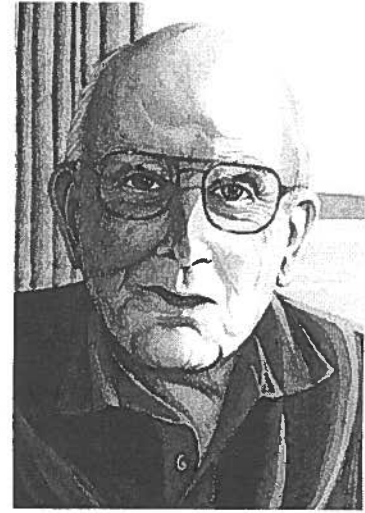
On behalf of our membership, I wish to thank our very active executive for their energy and enthusiasm, and let them know how much we appreciate their efforts. Kudos to past president Donna MacKinnon who recruited some of our new members, and to the members of the current executive—Adrian Clark, Wes Knapp, Jos Dyck, Kathleen MacKinnon, Ida Gibbard, Alida Kulash, Kelsey McLeod, Christine Mellema, and Helen Shore. We know they have great plans for the future. We take off our hats and wish them well!

Adrian's interest in history was enhanced when he studied under UBC professor Robert McDonald—a long time supporter of the British Columbia Historical Federation. These days we hear lamentations about how poorly our history is served. Perhaps the naysayers should take a closer look at the British Columbia Historical Federation and its member societies. ~

IT IS with great sadness that we have to report the death on August 24th, of Dr W. Kaye Lamb, a pioneer and founding father of British Columbia historical studies. Born in New Westminster in 1904, Dr Lamb received his early education in New Westminster, later at the University of British Columbia, and earned his Ph.D. at the London School of Economics. He returned to Victoria in 1934 as Provincial Librarian and Archivist, was Head Librarian at the University of British Columbia from 1940 until 1946, when he was invited to go to Ottawa to head the Dominion Archives and to set up a national library. He remained in Ottawa until 1969, when he and his wife retired back to Vancouver.

While Dr Lamb was widely acclaimed for his role in fostering Canadian studies, he made a very special contribution to British Columbia history and to the B.C. Historical Association. At the 1935 Annual General Meeting Dr Lamb proposed a thorough reorganization of the Association. Shortly thereafter the Association, formerly a Victoria society, was broken down into a federation of sections, initially Victoria and Vancouver, and later joined by other areas; this basic organization remains the same to this day. Dr Lamb founded the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* in 1936, to provide an outlet for his friend Judge Howay's writings and those of others. He edited the *Quarterly* until his departure to Ottawa in 1946. During the life of the *Quarterly*, Dr Lamb contributed no less than twenty-five scholarly articles and an equal number of book reviews. There is little doubt that many members at that time joined the Association for one reason only - to subscribe to the *B.C. Historical Quarterly*.

Dr Lamb's scholarly output has been phenomenal; although his par-



W. Kaye Lamb

ticular interest has always been maritime history, he has also published major works on the Canadian Pacific Railway, continental exploration and Canadian political history. His major retirement project was to edit the Hakluyt Society's scholarly four-volume edition of Captain Vancouver's Journals, which has become the standard reference edition on George Vancouver. Even a week before his death, the *New Yorker* magazine was trying to get in touch with Dr Lamb to clarify some points on the Inside Passage!

Dr Lamb was President of the British Columbia Historical Association from 1936 to 1937 and Honorary President of the British Columbia Historical Federation from 1986 to 1989. Until less than a year ago he contributed book reviews to the *British Columbia Historical News*. His final review, dictated to his daughter from his bed, was on his friend Barry Gough's book on Alexander Mackenzie, whose journals Dr Lamb had edited in 1970 for the Hakluyt Society.

With Dr Lamb's passing we have lost British Columbia history's finest scholar and a generous friend.

Anne Yandle

The Founding of Fort Langley

by Morag Maclachlan

Morag Maclachlan, an active member of the Vancouver Historical Society, taught British Columbia and Canadian history at Langara College in Vancouver until her retirement. She is presently working on edited versions of the journals kept by Francis Annance and John Work.



Photo by Cyril Leonoff

IN THE protracted negotiations between the British and the Americans after the War of 1812, the 49th parallel was chosen as the boundary from the Great Lakes to the Rockies. One of the decisions made at the Convention of 1818, was that the area west of the Rockies between 42° and 54° 40' should be accessible to both Americans and British. This provision was to obtain for ten years. The British government gave the Hudson's Bay Company, merged with the North West Company in 1821, the sole British trading rights to the Pacific slope. Although they hoped to maintain their holdings as far south as the Columbia, it seemed not improbable that the Americans would insist on the 49th parallel. What was not foreseen was that no final decision would be made until 1846. The North West Company had transported furs and supplies across the continent to and from their headquarters in Montreal, but the supply line was too long. This was one of the factors leading to the merger which permitted furs from New Caledonia to be sent out via Hudson Bay, but even this route presented problems. At the urging of John Stuart, an old Northwesteer, furs from New Caledonia were brought down the Fraser to Fort Alexandria, taken overland to Kamloops, from Kamloops to Okanagan Lake, and from there by water down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver where they were shipped out by sea. If the Columbia should be lost, it was imperative to find a waterway north of the 49th parallel that could be used as a transport route.

When Governor Simpson made his first trip to the Pacific in 1824, that ten-year deadline was one of his concerns. He immediately sent an exploring party to the north to examine the lower Fraser and report on its suitability. James McMillan was put in charge and the expedition set out on 18 November.¹ They travelled from Fort George, the former Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia, portaged across the neck of land on the north side of the river mouth and followed the coast to the mouth of the Chehalis which they ascended. They followed a tributary, the Black River, portaged to an inlet on Puget Sound, travelled

along the coast to the mouth of the Nicomekl which they followed as far as they could, then portaged to the Salmon River which took them to the Fraser. They went upstream as far as Hatzic Slough, then began their return journey following the Fraser to its mouth, then south along the coast through Puget Sound and portaged back to the Black River. At this point on their northward journey, Potvin, one of the men, had become so incapacitated with a swollen foot and leg that he had to be sent back to Fort George. McMillan made arrangements for one of the Chehalis to take him back the way they had come, via the Chehalis River and along the coast, but the negotiations broke down and new arrangements were made with a Native who volunteered to take Potvin back through the Cowlitz Valley. This meant an uncomfortable portage for the sick man but McMillan needed to send him back to Fort George and was obviously relieved that an escort familiar with the area was available.

Why had McMillan not taken advantage of this route when travelling north? Because they were leaving from the mouth of the Columbia, he may have felt that travelling up the coast was the fastest way to go. However, once Fort Vancouver, which was built that winter, was completed, the Cowlitz became the shortest route to the Fraser. Another reason for avoiding the Cowlitz was probably the fact that there had been bad blood between the fort people and the Cowlitz. A few years earlier a raiding party had invaded the valley in order to avenge the death of an Iroquois and as a result the traders had avoided the area for fear of reprisal.² Scanawa, the Cowlitz chief, however, was a middleman who traded regularly at Fort George.

On the return journey McMillan, with John Work, Michel Laframboise and six men, returned via the Cowlitz while the rest of the party, with two clerks, Thomas McKay and Francis Annance, in charge, returned the way they had come. McMillan had tested the Cowlitz as a transport route from the Fraser to the Columbia, a route which would become the shortest, safest and most frequently used between Fort Vancouver and Fort Langley.

On his return to Fort George, McMillan

¹ Details are to be found in the journals kept by Francis Annance and John Work.

² Spaulding, 129-30 and Merk, 113.

wrote a favourable report which probably was a major factor in the decision made by the Governor and Council to establish a post on the lower Fraser in 1826. In view of the treacherous nature of the Fraser Canyon, it is difficult to understand why this report was favourable. Could it be that McMillan misunderstood the Natives?³ Their languages were almost impossible for Europeans to master, but communication was possible through the trade languages that developed. The establishment of a fur trade post in their territory was of advantage to the Natives. It is unlikely that the people McMillan encountered would do anything to discourage such a project. While on the lower Fraser, the party saw few European goods and many village sites which suggested an area ripe for exploitation. They met a Native who could name all the groups from the lower Fraser to the Thompson River and were assured that the river was navigable to Kamloops though "with a strong current."⁴

McMillan accepted the information. He chose not to go further upstream to examine the river because, as he reported, he did not have adequate equipment to deal with ice and snow. It is also important to note that he led a very large expedition consisting of three clerks, an interpreter and thirty-six men. Food supplies must have been a major concern. Some geese were caught and, though the party saw numerous elk and killed several, not all attempts to obtain meat were successful. The party had left Fort George on 18 November. One group returned on 30 December and the other on 31 December, in time for Hogmanay, an important time for celebration in fur trade society. McMillan may have made a choice between learning more about the nature of the river and maintaining the co-operation of the thirty-six men on the expedition, many of them former Nor'Westers, who had not been required to perform such arduous duties in the dead of winter.

An even more puzzling question is why people who should have known, did not warn of the dangers of the Fraser Canyon. Proveau, one of the men on the expedition, had been with Simon Fraser when he explored the river in 1808. He was able to identify landmarks so that McMillan knew that the river they were on was indeed the Fraser. Why did Proveau not speak up? Even more surprising is the fact that when Simpson returned east in the spring of 1825 after seeing Fort Vancouver established, he stopped at Fort Carlton

where John Stuart was in charge.⁵ We cannot be sure what Stuart told the governor, but we do know that he put in writing his approval of the project. John Stuart had been with Fraser in 1808, and he was one of those who pioneered the route from New Caledonia to the Columbia via the Okanagan. Why, with the knowledge he had of the country and the recollections he must have had of the disasters the Fraser expedition encountered through the canyon, did he approve this project?

There are no clear answers, but it may have had something to do with Simpson's admiration for men of courage and stamina. Both Proveau and Stuart may have felt that to talk of danger would have indicated weakness on their part. John Stuart was unhappy with the changes made after the union of the companies and spoke of retiring, but obviously, not seriously, for he stayed on until 1839. We know from Simpson's correspondence that he had serious doubts about the feasibility of the project,⁶ but the orders had been given and the plan went ahead.

The vessel *William and Ann*, newly purchased, arrived on the coast and in May 1825 was sent north on an exploratory trip.⁷ Alexander McKenzie, a clerk at Fort George, was sent with instructions to contact as many Native groups as possible in order to assess the trading prospects. American vessels had been engaged in the maritime trade for almost fifty years, and now the Hudson's Bay Company had plans to enter into competition. Many of the American traders had begun to look for new resources and markets and were abandoning the Pacific trade, but there was still considerable opposition for the company to meet. McKenzie kept a journal on the 1825 voyage from which we know that he informed many of those he came in contact with—the Clallam, the Kwantlen, the Cowichan in particular—that a trading post was to be built in the area.

The voyage was considered unsuccessful because Captain Hanwell refused to go close to most of the villages and absolutely refused to enter the Fraser. This particularly incensed McKenzie because he had met Shashia, a Cowichan chief, who had never before seen a white man, and he had promised to visit his summer village. Shashia subsequently became a frequent visitor to the fort and in 1849 was sketched and painted by Paul Kane. (See front cover)

The fort on the lower Fraser was to be established in 1826, but McLoughlin put the plan on

³ See Suttles in Maclachlan, 257-8.

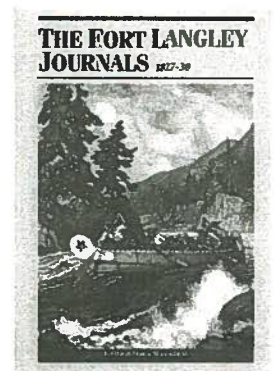
⁴ PRO Fo 5/208. See also Merk, 248-50.

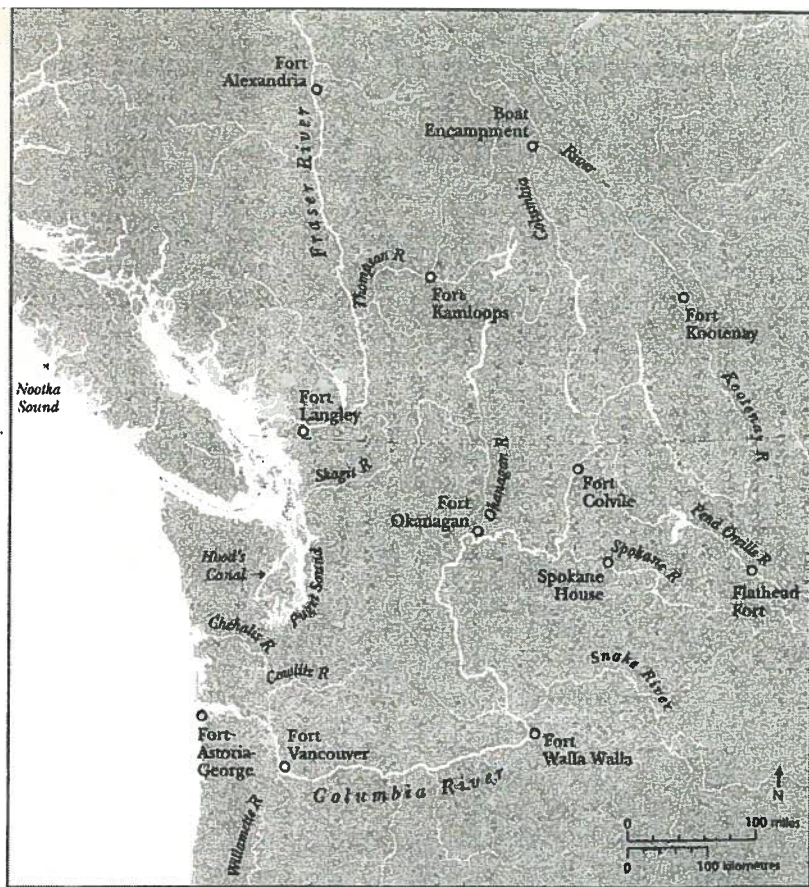
⁵ Merk, 154-5.

⁶ Ibid. 265.

⁷ Details to be found in the journal kept by Alexander McKenzie.

Below: Cover page of *The Fort Langley Journals*, ed. Morag Maclachlan, with a contribution by Wayne Suttles. UBC Press.





Reproduced from *The Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30*, UBC Press, with kind permission from Morag MacLachlan

Above: Map of the fur trade posts in the Columbia district.

hold because he was short-handed. Archibald McDonald, who had been sent to take charge of Kamloops, explored the Thompson River to the Fraser and James Yale explored the Fraser from Fort Alexandria to Kamloops. Their reports were not favourable, and McLoughlin knew that the men had "a dread of the Fraser."⁸ Nevertheless, in late June of 1827, under the indomitable leadership of James McMillan, three clerks and twenty-one men went up the Cowlitz River and portaged to Puget Sound. When they reached Protection Island they met up with the *Cadboro* commanded by Aemilius Simpson. McMillan checked out Point Roberts, but decided it was unsuitable for a fort, and insisted that the *Cadboro* enter the Fraser in spite of Simpson's reluctance. The ship went up to the mouth of the Salmon River, the site of the present fort, but it was impossible to get close enough to the shore to unload the *Cadboro* and to feel secure. Hundreds of Natives were passing up the river to fish at the falls (near the present town of Yale). The ship drifted downstream about three miles where the *Cadboro* anchored close to shore and the construction of the fort began.

When Simpson came through the Fraser

Canyon in 1828, there was no longer any question about the unsuitability of the Fraser as a transport route, and Fort Langley would have been abandoned if it had not been for the rich salmon resource and the possibilities for establishing agriculture. There was no immediate need for an alternative route to transport furs, and the Okanagan-Columbia system continued to be used until the boundary was finally settled. After several attempts to find a new route to the Pacific, the fur brigade followed the Coquihalla to Fort Hope and the lower Fraser to Fort Langley. In the meantime Fort Victoria replaced Fort Vancouver as the headquarters. Within a decade the gold rush occurred, mainland British Columbia became a British colony and the Hudson's Bay Company lost its monopoly on the Pacific slope.

From the journals available to us, those kept by Work and Annance on the 1824 trip and the Fort Langley journals, we know a great deal about the day-to-day events from 1824 to 1830, as seen and recorded by the fort people. For some insight into the impact of the fort, we have to read between the lines. Two events are of interest in speculating about the effect of the fort.

There are a number of murders recorded in the journals. In time for the Christmas of 1827 Alexander McKenzie arrived from Fort Vancouver with news and supplies. On his return journey he and the men with him were attacked and killed by the Clallam Indians as they travelled through Hood Canal.⁹ On 16 May 1828 the journal records that Scanawa, the Cowlitz chief, was killed.¹⁰

Why did these murders occur? The first reaction of the fort people was that in both cases the victims had been killed so that their murderers could seize their property. In the case of Scanawa, however, they later came to accept the explanation they were given that Scanawa's death was an act of revenge on the part of relatives of a Snohomish who had spent the winter with Scanawa and who had drowned when he fell through the ice. In the case of the Clallam the fort people decided that the murder was treachery because McKenzie had believed that Ai a waston, one of the Clallam, had become a friend. This brutal savagery had to be met with even more brutish force. An expedition set out some months later and did serious damage to a Clallam village. It was expected that this would teach all the Natives a lesson. There has never been a satisfactory explanation for the motive behind the

⁸ Rich, 32.

⁹ MacLachlan, 51, 213-5. McLoughlin, 34d, 35.

¹⁰ MacLachlan, 63.

¹¹ Dye, 18. See also Ermatinger 20 June 1828.

Clallam massacre. However we note that on the 1825 voyage McKenzie, travelling on the *William and Ann*, had promised the Clallam that a fort would be built in their area. He visited the region again in 1826, and while we have no record of this trip, it is likely that McKenzie felt he had cemented a friendship begun in 1825 and it is highly probable that the promises were repeated.

Though the North West Company had been much more aggressive than the Hudson's Bay Company in pushing across the continent, once they took over Fort George, the former Astoria, during the War of 1812, they became much less adventuresome. Pre-occupied with attempts to get into the Canton market and with the problem of their long supply line to and from Montreal, they stayed close to the fort and let the Natives bring the furs to them. As a result the Clallam had achieved an important role as middlemen. Scanawa, the Cowlitz chief, had also gathered furs and become an important middleman trading to Fort George. By establishing Fort Langley, the company was moving into his hinterland. We have evidence that he was not happy about this. McMillan reported that Scanawa was reluctant to provide the 1827 expedition with horses for the portage. And we know from later accounts that he obtained a high price for the horses.¹¹ We know also that McLoughlin insisted that he begin to trade at Fort Langley instead of going to Fort Vancouver.¹² By establishing the fort in the lower Fraser, Scanawa had to endure seeing the fort traders move into his hinterland, and the Clallam, whose role as middlemen was considerably reduced, may have felt that the broken promises constituted a "treachery" that demanded reprisal. Whether or not these facts explain the murders, they do give us some insight into the sort of disruption of existing patterns that must have occurred as a result of the establishment of Fort Langley.

The fur trade society that developed within the Hudson's Bay Company was hierarchical and in the first decade of the eighteenth century became even more rigid, a system that was retained after the merger. The social structure within Native societies was much different. The chiefs were influential men, but they did not possess the authority that the title "chief" would imply to Europeans.¹³ There are many incidents described in the Fort Langley journals which indicate that the fort people assumed they could control the Natives by controlling their leaders. They may very

well have threatened the credibility of the head men by this behaviour. On 4 April 1828, a few days before his murder, Scanawa was assaulted by McMillan who reported that he gave the chief "two or three knockdown blows which soon brought the great man to his senses."¹⁴ Did this humiliation of the chief make him more vulnerable to his avengers? It is impossible to say that this was a factor in the murder of Scanawa, but one thing is clear: those closest to the fort became the chief traders in the area. Archibald McDonald, in charge of the fort from October 1828 until he left in 1833, did his best to deal directly with every trader, but in spite of his efforts, middlemen did emerge. Scanawa, left out of the loop, died before his time; Shashia, a Cowichan, whose people had summer villages in the lower Fraser, lived until 1870, probably attaining at least his three score years and ten. Any attempt to solve these murder mysteries is highly speculative, but the exercise does provide some evidence of the disruption which must have been caused by the decision to establish a fort on the lower Fraser.

In 1827 a group of twenty-five men established a post on the lower Fraser. They were very fearful of the hundreds of Natives who swarmed up the river to the fishing spot at the "falls" (near the present town of Yale). They were initially very cautious about moving out of the fort and they were dependent on obtaining fish from the Natives for food. Within three years they had established links with local Natives by allowing each single man to take a native wife, they had estab-

¹² McMillan 15d.

¹³ See Suttles in Maclachlan, 185-7

¹⁴ Maclachlan, 58.

Below: "Flathead Woman Spinning Yarn." by Paul Kane (1810-1871). Watercolour on paper. 12.4 x 17.8 cm.



Courtesy Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas — No. 3131.78, WWC 97

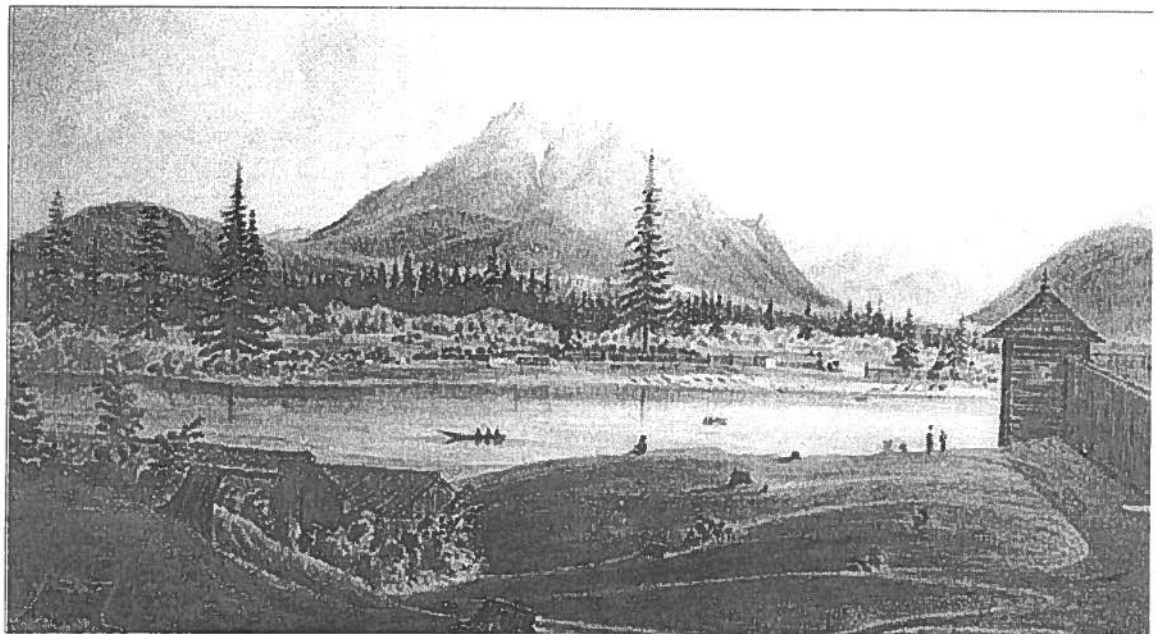
lished a fishery and were beginning to export salmon, they were employing Natives to load and unload the *Cadboro*, were using the women in the fort to perform many tasks, and by 1834 had established a large farm in the Salmon River valley. The Europeans had absorbed many Natives into their highly structured society. A unique fur trade society developed which collapsed with the settlement that followed the gold rush of 1858. Colonial society freed the fur trade employees from the firm control of the Hudson's Bay Company but relegated the Natives to its lowest level, and left many of the people between—the wives and children of the traders—diminished in status. ~

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Right: "H.B. Co. Fort Langley, Left Bank of Fraser River," by James Madison Alden of the U.S. Boundary Commission, 1858. Looking north from Fort Langley across Bedford Channel at McMillan Island and the Kwantlen village. In the background the Golden Ears.



You are Asked to Witness

by Morag Maclachlan



Photo by Cyril Leonoff

Left: Sonny McHalsie speaking on 3 April 1999 at the symposium at Fort Langley.

We were privileged to have Sonny McHalsie participate in the fur trade symposium at Fort Langley, representing the Stó:lo people upon whom the traders at Fort Langley were so dependent. He spoke of the importance of the Fort Langley journals as a reference source for his people and he paid tribute to the life work of Wayne Suttles, who contributed to the published journals.

Sonny shared with his audience some of the knowledge he has acquired as a result of his study under numerous elders as well as his acquaintance with the academic literature. He began by identifying the Stó:lo territory and the groups who share it. Many of his stories had to do with food sources—sturgeon, steelhead, salmon, eulachon, deer, ducks, and geese, and some of the means of capturing prey, like the dipnets and the shovel-nosed canoes used in sturgeon fishing. He spoke not only about the methods of capture and the legends relating to the animal world, but also about the times of food scarcity—the hungry times or *q'ole*. He spoke of warfare and how people fortified themselves against raiders. He described the masks, the house posts, the burial figures, and the ceremonies of his people. But perhaps no part of his talk was more interesting than his own personal history. This is how he introduced himself:

My name is Sonny McHalsie. I am Stó:lo, which in our Halq'emeylem language means “river,” so we call ourselves the “river people.” I am from the community of Shxw'owhamel, which means “where the river levels and widens.” This is about ten kilometers west of Hope. When I introduce myself, people often assume that the “Mc” part of my name must mean that I have a Scottish background or ancestry.

It wouldn't be so bad if I didn't look so Scottish. [Take a look at his picture to get the joke.] I must clarify the origin of my surname and the best way that I can do this is by sharing the story. I come from a mixed background. My father was Nl'akapamux and my mother was Stó:lo. My paternal grandfather as a boy was known as Bagupsh. As a young man he was known as N'axetsi and as an elderly man he was known as Meshk. When the missionaries arrived they baptized my grandfather and gave him the name Antoine. When the Indian agent came to the community to register my grandfather on the band list, he asked my grandfather what he wanted for a surname. My grandfather stated that he wanted his two adult names, Meshk and N'axetsi. So the Indian agent wrote down McHalsie. One of my elders, the late Annie York¹ passed on to me my father's name which is N'axetsi. I am in the process of working with my extended family to acquire a Stó:lo name.

According to Keith Carlson, Albert “Sonny” McHalsie, who has worked for the Stó:lo Nation since 1985, has become a recognized expert in the oral traditions of the Stó:lo people. In his capacity as Cultural Advisor he seeks to ensure that Stó:lo culture and history are interpreted and presented accurately and respectfully. He represents his extended family on the Shxw'owhamel Band Council and continues to exercise his Aboriginal right to catch and sell salmon from his hereditary family owned fishing spot in the Fraser Canyon. He co-authored a chapter entitled “Spoken Literature,” in the publication entitled *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lo in Canada's Pacific Coast History*. ~

¹The results of Annie York's collaboration with Andrea Laforet have been published in a book entitled *Spuzzum: Fraser Canyon Histories, 1808–1939*. UBC Press in association with the Museum of Civilization, 1998.

The Coast Salish in the Journals

Wayne Suttles

Wayne Suttles is professor emeritus of anthropology, Portland University. Morag Maclachlan's edition of the Fort Langley journals includes an essay by Wayne Suttles on their unique value to our understanding of Coast Salish life in the late 1820s.

THE Fort Langley journals are a day-by-day account of the first three years of continuous European presence in the country of the Coast Salish of the Georgia Strait-Puget Sound Basin, and these people appear in it again and again. What the writers of the journals recorded was, of course, limited by their interests and by what they were able to observe and understand, given the cultural differences and the linguistic barrier. Nevertheless, their account gives us a glimpse of Coast Salish life that is without parallel.

But it is, we must remember, not a glimpse of Native life untouched by European contact or influence. The journals were written a half century after the first devastating epidemic of smallpox and the beginning of trade with Europeans on the outer coast and a decade and a half after the first trading posts were established at the mouth of the Columbia and to the east in Interior Salish country. We cannot be sure what may have occurred as a result of those events. The first epidemic especially may have taken away so many people, including those with special knowledge and skills, as to have caused major changes in Native culture and society.

Although the journals cannot show us what those changes may have been, they do show us something of what life was like at the moment when, as we know, new great changes were about to come. Rolf Knight, in his ground-breaking *Indians at Work*, points out that ethnographers, in their attempts to describe aboriginal culture, have generally ignored the fact that several generations of Native involvement in industry separate the present from the pre-contact past. The truly pre-contact past may be recoverable only through archaeology, but in the Fort Langley journals we can see something of Native life when this involvement began and long before the first ethnographers tried to recover an earlier way of life.

What the journals tell us is relevant to many of the categories of the usual ethnographic monograph, and in my contribution to the book, I have generally followed these categories. The journals are also especially valuable in providing evidence against some questionable or downright false notions about the Native peoples that have been current among anthropologists in the

past and may linger in popular thought. Here I will consider four of these notions.

1. One such notion is that the Native band or tribe was a self-contained little society. This view was once the very basis of one school of social anthropology. But the journals give evidence of a widespread social network. Years ago Wilson Duff pointed to the value of the journals in documenting the great annual movement of people—Musqueam, Saanich, Cowichan, Nanaimo, and Squamish people from Georgia Strait up the Fraser to the great fishery at the lower end of the canyon. We can also see the network of social relations from the contacts of some of the individuals who appear in the journals.

Consider the man known as Scanewah. He was a Cowlitz chief, that is, a wealthy man, who had evidently acquired wealth as a trader. His people, the Cowlitz, lived on the Cowlitz River, a tributary of the lower Columbia, and on the Newaukum, a tributary of the Chehalis River. He had traded with the Hudson's Bay Company on the Columbia, at Fort Vancouver and perhaps earlier at Fort George, in the country of the Chinookan tribes. When McMillan went north in 1827 to establish Fort Langley, Scanewah was encamped near the Skookumchuck River near or within the traditional territory of the Upper Chehalis people, where he provided horses to McMillan's party. He and his family joined the party to go north to the Fraser. This was, as Morag Maclachlan notes, because McLoughlin had forced him to trade at the new fort rather than at Fort Vancouver. He set up his camp near the new fort, from which he made trading trips out to bring in quantities of beaver skins. He is also mentioned as bringing a letter from McLoughlin, suggesting that he had been back to Cowlitz country on at least one of these trips. He seems to have been on good terms with the Cowichan chief Shoshia, from Vancouver Island, and with Skagits and others from Puget Sound. He had a tie with the fort as well, in that a daughter was married to Simon Plamondon.

Scanewah was married to a woman of the Clallam people on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Her sister and some others had been captured by the Lekwiltok (the Yucletaw, etc. of the journals), who were probably at that time on Johnstone

Strait. She and some of the other captives were ransomed by a Lekwiltok woman who was married to a man of the Kwantlen people, the nearest neighbours of the new fort. While at Fort Langley, Scanewah bought a Lekwiltok slave from a Thompson (Nlakapamux) man, who had come downriver from his home country around Lytton. Another man from the Interior, an Okanagan, was spending a winter with Scanewah, but fell through the ice and drowned. This man was married to a woman from the Duwamish people, whose home county includes the present Seattle. After his death she reportedly made her way home by an inland route through Nooksack, Skagit, and Snohomish country. This death caused some hostility for Scanewah; perhaps he was held liable and did not compensate the widow enough. Fearing for his safety he started back to the Cowlitz, but on the way he was killed. Later a Skykomish man was suspected of the murder but released for lack of evidence. The Skykomish lived inland from the Snohomish. The Duwamish widow may have passed through his village, and the Skykomish may have had, like other inland Puget Sound peoples, ties with the Interior Salish, even the Okanagan. The suspicion of murder may have been reasonable.

What the journals tell of the career of this one man shows connections among peoples on the coast from the Columbia to Johnstone Strait and into the interior as far as the Thompson and Okanagan rivers. It might be suggested that these wide contacts are a product of the fur trade. To some extent this may be true. The marriages between distant tribes—a Cowlitz man with a Clallam woman, a Lekwiltok woman with a Kwantlen man, and a Duwamish woman with an Okanagan man—must have been made before the founding of Fort Langley, but the ties they established may have been motivated by trade with the outer coast and the interior. We may suppose that Scanewah's Lekwiltok slave was probably not a captive taken in a recent conflict, because after Scanewah bought him, he ran away, not to get back to Lekwiltok country but to get back to Thompson country, where presumably he felt at home. But his original capture would have occurred long after the beginning of trade on the outer coast, which may have promoted Lekwiltok raids on their southern neighbours and retaliation. Other evidence, however, suggests these connections are old. Genealogies elicited in the 1940s indicate a wide network of inter-

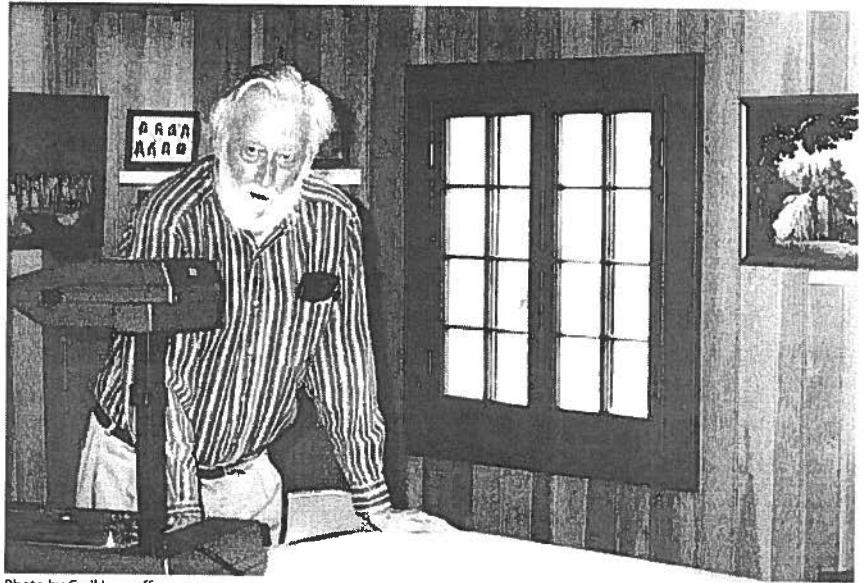


Photo by Cyril Leonoff

marriage going back at least to the late 18th century. Archaeological evidence shows that trade has been going on for thousands of years.

2. A second questionable notion is that the Coast Salish were a peaceful, non-aggressive people, neighbouring tribes always living on good terms with one another. This is a notion that comes in part from the image, which I will turn to later, of the Coast Salish as the helpless victims of northern raiders and partly from the reality of the wide networks just mentioned. Marital and economic ties certainly were the basis for these networks. But in stressing the importance of these ties, as I have done in my writing, I'm afraid that I too have underrated conflict. The journals contain many accounts of conflict, even between close neighbours speaking the same dialect of the same language. However, it was evidently not total and unlimited conflict.

One incident suggests there were ways of keeping conflict between close neighbours under control. In May of 1828 there were Kwantlens and Musqueams at the fort. The Musqueams were from their camp across the river, the Kwantlens from their village nearby. A Musqueam girl and a Kwantlen woman got into a quarrel, about their virtue, according to McMillan. The quarrel spread to the other women and then to the men, Musqueams on one side and Kwantlens on the other. Representatives of each side made speeches. The Musqueam men went and got their knives. The five Kwantlen men who were there stood fast but sent for reinforcements. Soon they were facing about fifty armed Musqueams, who took turns haranguing them with all the wild gestures

Left: *Wayne Suttles surrounded by the art of Paul Kane.*

Left: "A Quantlin [Kwantlen] from the Mouth of Fraser River," by Paul Kane (1810-1871). Watercolour and pencil on paper. 18.1 x 13.0 cm.

and grimaces imaginable, and the Kwantlens answered in kind. But before the Kwantlen reinforcements arrived the Musqueams withdrew. They later told McMillan that if they had fought, they would have grabbed their enemies by the hair and used their knives on them. But since the Musqueam men did not go for their bows and arrows and guns, it seems likely that they had not intended to go beyond a show of defiance. They may have thought the issue too trivial, but had to make a show for the women. At any rate the conflict was kept in check. As far as I know, we do not have other reports of confrontations with wild grimaces and gestures in this region, but they are well known from other parts of the world. And perhaps they were used by ancestors of our journalists. I am thinking of the scene in the movie *Braveheart* in which the Scots collectively moon the English.

Lethal conflict did occur between Musqueams and Kwantlens in another series of incidents, but what occurred seems to have been more like a feud, a case of a life for a life, which ended when the score was even. There is nothing in the journals to suggest that neighbours as close as the Musqueam and Kwantlen raided each other for loot and captives. But Island and Downriver Halkomelem people did raid the Upriver Halkomelem, though revenge was evidently still the pretext.

The surprising thing about this kind of conflict is that there seem to have been rules governing behaviour afterwards. After a Cowichan warrior and his raiding party captured some Sumas women and children, a Sumas man went over to Cowichan country with a canoe-load of property to ransom his wife and successfully came

back with her and the others, for whom he had paid all of his property. Now why didn't the Cowichans simply seize the man's property and enslave or kill him? Clearly this was not total war between the Cowichan and the Sumas, but conflict between some of each, with limits on who could do what to whom. As in the history of our own legal system, the importance of property must have played a crucial role.

3. A third questionable notion is that the northern Indians and the Coast Salish were in a predator-prey relationship. The fierce northern people—the Haida are mentioned especially often—swooped down on the poor peaceful Salish, carrying them off

as slaves. However, in the daily account of events over three years, there is no mention of any raiders from the north other than the Lekwiltok. The only other northern people mentioned by name are the Kwakiutl, who were at the near end of Queen Charlotte Strait. The Haida and others farther north are not mentioned, and there seems to be no reason to believe that they were coming this far south before Victoria became a commercial centre. At that time they came for commerce and raided a bit on their way home.

During the first years of Fort Langley the Lekwiltok did indeed come as raiders, and the Kwantlen and others on the Lower Fraser were afraid of them. But they were also afraid of the Cowichans, who came over from Vancouver Island each summer to fish, and who spoke the same language. The Lekwiltok may have raided more often, but at least one intermarriage is reported, at least two efforts to ransom captives are reported—one successful and one unsuccessful but with no harm to the Coast Salish ransomer.



Courtesy Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas.—No. 31.78/33, WWC 33

The unsuccessful attempt was by the Musqueam headman Shientin who went north to recover his wife and daughter—presumably the one who had not already been seized by the Cowichan warrior Lammus. He learned they had already been sold farther north, and so he abandoned the quest, but he returned safely. Occasionally alliances were formed. That famous Cowichan chief Shoshia may have been allied with them. At one point, expressing outrage at their attacks, he persuaded the fort to give him the ammunition to attack them. But it turned out he probably went north and sold them the ammunition instead. After many threats the Coast Salish later did mount retaliatory expeditions. In the light of all of this it appears to me that the image of the Coast Salish as perpetual victims is a myth and that relations between Salish and Salish and between Salish and Lekwiltok differed only in degree not in kind.

4. The fourth questionable notion is that the Northwest Coast was so rich in natural resources and these were so reliable that the Native peoples could get all the food they needed during the warmer seasons and spend their winters engaging in ceremonies and the arts. This notion, once standard among both popular writers and anthropologists, is no longer a common view, but if we need any more evidence to dispose of it, the journals provide it. Even in the three years they record, the salmon runs fluctuated greatly. In 1827 the fish were abundant, in 1828 they were scarce and the Natives were reluctant to sell them and were later hungry, but in 1829 they were so plentiful that the fort was turning the would-be fish sellers away. Sturgeon also fluctuated in abundance. It is also clear that there was no season during which the Native people could simply live off their supplies. They seem to have been out in the river fishing for sturgeon whenever conditions permitted it.

I know there is much more of anthropological value in the Fort Langley journals than I have described in my contribution to the book. I hope that now that the UBC Press has made them available, others will mine them further. I am grateful to Morag and to UBC Press for letting me play a part in the publication. But we all must be grateful to Barnston, McMillan, and McDonald for their work as journal keepers.



Natives in the Fur Trade: Looking at the Fort Langley Journals

By Keith T. Carlson

THE recent publication of Morag Maclachlan's edition of the Fort Langley journals provides the public with easy access to an important historical document which until now has been cloistered in the archives. Records relating to the Pacific Northwest Coast's early land based fur trade era are relatively scant compared to most other parts of Canada. Two fires and the intrigue of international compensation claims between the British Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the United States following the dividing of the Oregon Territory along the 49th parallel in 1846 have resulted in historians having to make more of less in terms of documentary records. For scholars of Aboriginal history and Native-European relations this has meant that the typical records relied upon by historians of the Canadian subarctic, for example, are generally absent or available only in miniscule proportions for BC's coast. Journals for Fort Langley exist only for the brief three-year period 1827–1830, despite the fact that the HBC operated the fort from its establishment in 1827 through to the 1890s. How then do the Fort Langley records contribute to our understanding of BC's Aboriginal history, and how does the information contained within them relate to the historical interpretations of earlier generations of scholars?

The first historian to seriously consider the role of Aboriginal people in Canada's economic and social history was Harold Innis. In *The Fur Trade In Canada* (1930), Innis presented his now famous "Staple's Thesis" in which he articulated the argument that Canada's political institutions were shaped by the centralizing forces of the continental mercantile fur trade: the fur trade created Canada by linking diverse geographical regions into a single economic unit. In his analysis he recognized the role of Native economic agency and commented on what he saw as the deterministic influence of European technologies on Aboriginal culture. He argued that as economic demands outstripped local production levels cer-

Keith Carlson is the editor of *You are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lo in Canada's Pacific Coast History*. He has worked for Stó:lo Nation since 1992.

tain Native individuals and communities assumed influential roles as middlemen acting as brokers between the HBC and more distant suppliers of furs. His analysis assumed that both Native and European participation in the fur trade were premised on the same economic motivations.

On the West Coast, the fur trade and aspects of Aboriginal history were being considered by the judge-cum-historian, the Hon. F.W. Howay. Howay was the first to make meticulous use of the voluminous maritime fur trade records housed in various depositories in New England. While in many ways marginal to broader events in eastern and central Canada, the Pacific maritime trade dwarfed the economic activities of the St. Lawrence and Hudson's Bay based activities of the North West Company (NWC) and the HBC of the same period. Howay interpreted the massive economic disruption caused by the fur trade to have been devastating for Aboriginal communities. He regarded the exchange as exploitative and the social interactions as manipulative. For Howay, the fur trade ushered in the beginning of the end for Native people.

Directly challenging Howay's interpretation (or what came to be known as the "degeneration" thesis) were the anthropologists Joyce Wike, Wilson Duff and Marius Barbeau. In Wike's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation "The Impact of the Maritime Fur Trade on Native People..." and as refined in Duff's popular booklet *Impact of the White Man*, the argument was made that the fur trade era actually saw the flourishing climax of Native culture. New technologies and increased wealth led to ever increasing artistic expressions and potlatch economic ceremonialism. Degeneration only occurred after Native usefulness as trade partners evaporated during the subsequent settlement era. Together, these writings came to be known as the "enrichment thesis."

Robin Fisher, who had studied under Duff, elaborated on the enrichment thesis literature and provided the interpretation a degree of legitimacy among historians that had hitherto been lacking. Fisher himself enriched the literature by emphasizing the importance of personal relationships forged through interracial marriages during the land based fur trade. European traders formed lasting, meaningful, long-term relations with Native communities through their Aboriginal wives and "mixed-blood" children. As demonstrated by the relationship between Governor Douglas and his Metis wife Amelia, interracial

relations could be successful. It was the arrival of a new community of European colonists, ones who did not depend upon Native generosity or labour, that turned the enriching forces of the fur trade into the conflict driven exploitation and marginalization of the modern settlement era.

Working with heavily Manitoba Red River Valley centered sources, Jennifer Brown and Sylvia Van Kirk explored in much greater detail the social and sexual relationships between fur traders and Native women. They showed that the contribution of Native wives stretched into the economic realm as well as the social. Brown in particular also discussed how the cultural background of the Europeans—Highland clansmen or English merchants—played a role in shaping the communication and understanding between the two communities.

Barry Gough in *Gunboat Frontier* and James Gibson in *Otter Skins, Boston Ships and China Goods* have recently revisited the enrichment thesis. In doing so they have drawn new conclusions not unlike the earliest analysis of Howay. Looking at the military relations between the diverse Native communities and the British admiralty, and the violent encounters associated with the initial maritime fur trade, Gough and Gibson conclude that if "enrichment" was a feature of early contact, so too was violent oppression and military coercion.

Most recently, the courts have been the primary forum for engaging and advancing key debates over aspects of west coast Aboriginal history. The "Vander Peet" decision of 1996 focussed on the question of whether or not Stó:lo Coast Salish people engaged in the economic exchange of salmon prior to 1846. Evidence of such exchange would support the position that market sales are an Aboriginal right.

How then do the newly published Fort Langley journals of 1827–1830 fit into this historiographical mosaic? What do they contribute to our understanding of Aboriginal economic and social history? What do they say about Native-European relations? Appended to the published journals is an excellent discussion of their ethnographic significance, compiled by the senior scholar of Coast Salish anthropology, Wayne Suttles. Read in conjunction with Maclachlan's edited journals, Dr. Suttles's ethnography provides an insightful and readable discussion of the culture of the Halqemeylem speaking Coast Salish and their neighbours. The journal entries them-



Left: "Interior of a Lodge with Family Group." by Paul Kane (1810–1871). Watercolour on paper. 14 x 23.5 cm. Slightly cropped.

Courtesy Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas.—No. 31.78/87, WWC 88

selves, however, speak directly to the historiographical debates introduced above.

From the journals we learn that the market exchange of salmon was not something the Coast Salish had to learn from Europeans. Indeed, the HBC struggled to modify the Stó:lo economy away from salmon exchange and into the fur trade. Failing in this endeavour, they then adapted themselves to the local salmon economy and became middlemen in an expanded version of the traditional Aboriginal economy. Similarly, the journals show that cedar bark, sturgeon isinglass, berries and even slaves were also part and parcel of the dynamics of Aboriginal-European exchange associated with Fort Langley.

In terms of the debate of "enrichment," the Fort Langley journals indicate that Native people did indeed enjoy and benefit from the introduced European technology. They were just as eager as the Europeans to secure the benefits of the fort for their own use, and arranged marriages with the HBC employees to get an edge over their Native competitors. The HBC, on the other hand, found marriages to Aboriginal women at Fort Langley not only important for trade purposes, but also for staff morale. The journals describe the comic and tragic case of one lonely servant who, frustrated with Fort Langley's isolation, attempted to walk his way south to civilization only to return naked, hungry, covered in mosquito bites and delirious a few days later. Fort Langley's chief trader determined that marriages into the local community were the "only means of reconciling" the men to the place. These mixed marriages resulted in long term meaningful relationships that fulfilled a host of social, economic,

sexual, and other more subtle and gendered requirements and needs among the individuals and communities involved.

Enrichment must be tempered as an explanatory model, however, by recognition of the omnipresent threat of force behind all HBC activities. Cannons were mounted in the fort's bastions, torture was used to extract information and confessions from the slaves of the Native wives who married into the fort's community, and Natives who arrived and refused to trade according to European standards of market exchange sometimes found themselves receiving a swift kick in the groin.

Violence was a common feature of life on the Fraser River in the 1820s. The fort journals describe inter-community raids and retaliatory raids involving the Cowichans, Musqueam, Kwantlen, Chilliwack, Scowlits and others. Larger scale conflicts are also described between the Yukletaws (from Johnstone Strait) and the Coast Salish. The HBC generally refrained from involving themselves in these conflicts, but considered supplying the Coast Salish with guns to counteract the technological imbalance created by the American sale of arms to Yukletaws to the north.

Readers of all interest levels, from armchair history buff to academic scholar, will find things of interest within the Fort Langley journals. Likewise, those with interests in ethnography and anthropology will not be disappointed either. This publication provides the reading public with easy access to primary records previously available only through archival manuscript collections. Its entries are thick with detailed description and titillating accounts of a host of matters. ~

Family Life at Fort Langley

Jean Barman

Jean Barman teaches at the University of British Columbia and is the author of *The West beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*.

She is currently completing a manuscript on Aboriginal women and newcomer men—arrived with the fur trade and gold rush—and the families they formed on the British Columbia frontier.

WE each bring to the fur trade our particular sets of assumptions. I long conceived of it as a man's game in which, to use the clichés of an earlier day, "tough minded" Scots, "easy going" voyageurs who always seemed to be singing as their canoes sped along, and "obliging" Kanakas more or less hung out together in the wilderness.¹ There is nothing wrong with these images so long as we use them as a starting point and realize that much more also went on, including family life.

CONTEXT

To understand the origins of family life, generally and at Fort Langley, we have to reflect on the fur trade as a whole and to recognize, most importantly, that it was a business. The Hudson's Bay Company, which ran the fur trade across the Pacific Northwest by the time of Fort Langley's establishment in 1827, was a private enterprise out to make a profit. The goal was to persuade local Aboriginal people to trade furs for goods at an exchange rate low enough to make a profit when these furs were turned into products of desire, ranging from trimming for clothing to beaver hats.

The fur trade worked only so long as Aboriginal societies remained reasonably intact. Local people had to both be able to continue to hunt and trap and to want the goods that fur traders had to offer with no or few options for acquiring them. This meant that trading posts, like Fort Langley and the two or three dozen others scattered across the Pacific Northwest during the first half of the nineteenth century, were, by their very nature, isolated dots within an Aboriginal world. Once gold was discovered along the Fraser River and the gold rush broke out in 1858 the world of the fur trade essentially collapsed. Some posts continued in operation for a time, as did Fort Langley, but as pale reflections of what they had once been. The arrival of thousands of newcomers gave local people new choices that unbalanced the fur trade and also the Aboriginal societies themselves.

The other point that follows logically is that most of the jobs in the fur trade were in no way glamorous or romantic. What they demanded was hard brute labour. Furs had to be traded, packed, and transported out and new trade goods brought in. Foodstuffs had to be raised or acquired. Other commodities that might be usefully sold had also to be packaged to be shipped out, as for instance

salmon in barrels. All the same, it is the officers whom we have most often equated with the fur trade. In particular, the few published studies we have about family life, notably *Many Tender Ties* by Sylvia Van Kirk and *Strangers in Blood* by Jennifer Brown, are really only talking about officers and their families.²

Each post had just one or two men known as officers, who were generally English or Scottish in background, literate, in the fur trade as a career, and what we might think of as gentlemen. The other dozen to two dozen men stationed at Fort Langley or at any of the other Pacific Northwest posts at any one point in time were what the HBC called servants. These were men hired on three-year contracts who were usually of very modest background and generally illiterate.

About 120 men worked at Fort Langley between 1827 and 1858, of whom no more than eight or ten were officers or clerks. The two most important were Archibald McDonald, there from 1828 to 1833, and his successor, James Murray Yale, from 1833 through mid-century. It was McDonald and then Yale who lived in the "Big House," in the case of McDonald with his wife Jane Klyne and growing family. All of the other hundred plus men at Fort Langley were contract employees, who divided roughly equally into three groups. The first were French Canadians, the second indigenous Hawaiians known as Kanakas, and the third a combination of Englishmen, Scots, and men of mixed descent, including Iroquois from eastern Canada and Cree from Red River.

This then was Fort Langley, an isolated dot in an Aboriginal sea where a gentleman officer, possibly with a clerk to assist him, oversaw a dozen to two dozen illiterate men of diverse backgrounds and language whose brute labour made the difference between profit and loss, and hence the future career prospects of the officer in charge.

¹ See James Andrew Grant, "An Unsung Pioneer: Life and Letters of James Murray Yale and his 30 years at Fort Langley," p. 82 and passim, typescript, BCARS, Add. Ms. 182, pt. 3.

² Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), and Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1980).

ORIGINS OF FAMILY LIFE

Family life came about because, quite simply, it served the economic self-interests of the fur trade and, more specifically of Fort Langley, also the self-interests of the Aboriginal peoples all around them. Kwantlen, Musqueam, Nanaimo, and Cowichan peoples regularly passed by Fort Langley as they went up and down the Fraser River, sometimes in the hundreds.³ It is only to be expected that they would be curious about this new strange place in their midst and were soon jostling with each other for best advantage. What better way to get access than to have someone trustworthy on the inside? Given that these newcomers were mostly men alone, without women, who better than a daughter or a sister?

McDonald, as the officer in charge during Fort Langley's early years, was just as eager as were local peoples to establish ties in order to encourage more furs to be offered. The interplay between the two sides, how each sought to manipulate the other, becomes visible by looking at the first test case, so to speak.

It was in November 1828, just over a year after Fort Langley's establishment, that McDonald made a suggestion to his young clerk, James Murray Yale, so he reported in his journal: "The 'Quaintkine [Kwantlen], ... being the principal Indians of the neighbourhood & [the only ones] who at all exert themselves to Collect Beaver, we have thought it good Policy in Mr. Yale to form a Connection in that family—and accordingly he has now the Chiefs daughter after making them all liberal presents."⁴

At first events seemed to be unfolding to the newcomers' advantage. However, within two weeks, it became clear that both Yale and McDonald had been taken in. The Kwantlen chief calmly informed them that he was under claim of "heavy damages for giving away his daughter in marriage to Mr. Yale [when she] was already the lawful wife (in their way) of a Scatchad [Skagit]."⁵ A day later the chief's brother got into the act. He sought to benefit from the confusion by turning up at the post "with a grand total of ten and three or four Young Girls to dispose of them in marriage if he can."⁶ As if this were not enough, within the day "it turns out they [these new women being offered up] are all married wives & of course all negotiations with the men broke off."⁷

Even this was not the end of the story. Yale became caught between the fur trade's interests



Mural at the entrance to the visitors centre of Ford Langley National Historic Site.

and sexual desire. The woman's appeal is evident in the reference in a Yale family history, based on stories originating with Yale himself, to her "laughter, that prodigal laughter so characteristic of the generously proportioned squaws and lissome maidens of the Indian race in his own haunts, laughter such as few white men hear, melodious ripples from the midst of the groups of Indian maidens in the village."⁸ Thus, a week after being turfed out on discovering that she was twice "married," "Mrs. Yale Came home again."⁹

Soon the tide turned once more. Just weeks later, so the post journal recorded, "Mr. Yale has found means to get rid of his Lady that has Cost So much goods."¹⁰

Then Yale reversed himself yet again and the Kwantlen chief Nicamous, to quote the journal, "brought back his Daughter in Consequence of her husband regretting having given her Conge [discharge] Some days ago."¹¹

It was the Kwantlen chief's turn to press his advantage. Less than two weeks later he turned up at Fort Langley to claim his reward for bringing the couple back together. "Without much ceremony [he] asked his daughter for [a] Blanket & she just as unceremoniously walked in[to the store room]—took it out, & with a pin buckled it on round his neck."¹² Such audacity was more than McDonald could tolerate, so "with Still Less Ceremony [he, McDonald] took the liberty of removing it & told Master Nicamous to be off with his own good new, white Blanket."¹³ The woman likely stuck with Yale, for in March 1830 the post journal noted the birth of a "young daughter" to "Mrs. Yale."¹⁴

³ For instance, 26 June, 20 July, and 21 October 1828 entries in Morag Maclachlan, ed., *The Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 66, 69, 81.

⁴ 13 November 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 82.

⁵ 25 November 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 86.

⁶ 26 November 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 87.

⁷ 26 November 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 87.

⁸ Grant.

⁹ 5 December 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 88.

¹⁰ 20 December 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 90.

¹¹ 5 January 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 92.

¹² 13 January 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 93.

¹³ 13 January 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 93.

¹⁴ Jamie Morton, *Fort Langley: An Overview of the Operations of a Diversified Fur Trade Post 1848 to 1858 and The Physical Context in 1858* (Ottawa: Microfiche Report Series, Canadian Parks Service, Environment Canada, 1980), 214.

TABLE 1 — MEN MORE THAN TWO YEARS AT FORT LANGLEY

WIFE	CHILDREN		YEARS	TOTAL YRS		AFTERWARDS
y	5	ANNANCE, F NOEL	1827-30	3	French Canadian	returned home
y	8	Arquoitte, Amable	1827-30	3	French Canadian	to Williamette, OR
		Boisvert, Louis	1827-30	3	French Canadian	to Williamette, OR
y		Kennedy, John	1827-30	3	Brit/Scot	died
y	7	MACMILLAN, JAMES	1827-30	3	Brit/Scot	returned home
y	2	Piette, Francois	1827-30	3	French Canadian	to Cowlitz, WA
y	11	Plamondon, Simon	1827-30	3	French Canadian	to Cowlitz, WA
y		Therrien, Pierre	1827-30	3	French Canadian	died
y	4	Ossin, Louis	1827-31	4	French Canadian	to Williamette, OR
y	6	Farron, Dominique	1827-35	8	French Canadian	to Cowlitz, WA
y	5	McDonald, Anawiscum	1827-34, 1840-42	9	Brit/Scot	to Cowlitz, WA
y	3	Como	1827-39	12	Hawaiian	to Fort Vancouver, WA
y	4	Charles, Pierre	1827-40	13	French Canadian	to Cowlitz, WA
y	3	Satakarata, Louis	1827-45	18	French Canadian	to Victoria
y	4	Piopio (Peeopeeh)	1827-52	25	Hawaiian	stayed in Fraser Valley
y	3	Pepin/Magice, Etienne	1827	33	French Canadian	?
y	14	McDONALD, ARCHIBALD	1828-33	5	Brit/Scot	to Quebec
y	2	Oniaze, Etienne	1828-37	9	French Canadian	to Fort Vancouver, WA
y	4	Delonie, Louis	1828-41	12	French Canadian	to Cowlitz, WA
y	3	YALE, JAMES MURRAY	1828	31	Brit/Scot	to Victoria
y		Tai i	1830-48	18	Hawaiian	died
y	2	Wavicareerea	1830-53	23	Hawaiian	stayed in Fraser Valley
y	?	Rendall, James	1831-46	15	Brit/Scot	returned home
		Hereea	1833-37	4	Hawaiian	died
y	1	Brown, William	1832-33, 1835-39	5	Brit/Scot	returned home
y	3	Brousseau, Basil	1833-34, 1836-	23	French Canadian	stayed in Fraser Valley
y		Peeannau, Joe	1837-50	13	Hawaiian	to Victoria
y	5	Vautrin, Xavier	1837-52	15	French Canadian	to Cowichan
y	7	Minie, Frederic	1838-43	5	French Canadian	to Victoria
y	1	McPhail, Angus	1838-46	8	Brit/Scot	to Victoria
y	8	Fallardeau, Narcisse	1838-	20	French Canadian	stayed in Fraser Valley
y		Laowala	1839-48	9	Hawaiian	died
y	7/8	Allard, Ovid	1839-53, 1858-	15	French Canadian	stayed in Fraser Valley
y	1	Bell, John	1840-53, 1856-57	14	Brit/Scot	died
y		Taheenou	1841-47	6	Hawaiian	returned home
y	1	Borabora, George	1841-52	9	Hawaiian	to Victoria
y		Mokowhehe	1842-47	5	Hawaiian	returned home
		Holland, George	1843-46	3	Brit/Scot	returned home
y	2	Willing, Augustin	1843-	15	French Canadian	to Boundary Commission
y	3	Ohier	1845-56	11	Hawaiian	stayed in Fraser Valley
y	7	Cromarty, William	1845-	13	Brit/Scot	stayed in Fraser Valley
		Kekapalale	1847-54	7	Hawaiian	?
y	3	Robertson, Samuel	1847-	11	Brit/Scot	stayed in Fraser Valley
y	1	Apnaut/Ohulu, Peter	1848-49, 1850-55	6	Hawaiian	stayed in Fraser Valley
		Kekoa	1848-55	7	Hawaiian	?
y	3	Dease, Napoleon	1850-54	4	Brit/Scot	died
y	3	Ayotte, Firmin	1850-	8	French Canadian	to Victoria?
y	2	Latrielle, Alexander	1851-58	7	French Canadian	?
y	3	Danneau, Antoine	1853-56	3	French Canadian	to Victoria
y	1	Dionne, Cyprien	1853-	5	French Canadian	?
y	7	Taylor, James	1853-	5	Brit/Scot	stayed in Fraser Valley
y	7	Wavicareerea, Robert	1853-	5	Hawaiian	stayed in Fraser Valley

Officer's surnames in FULL CAPITALS

This little drama made clear to McDonald that desire could easily spin out of control. Realizing the situation, local people became ever more determined to gain entry to the post through their women, so McDonald recorded. “Ever since the fields are Cleared of the potat[o]es—Swarms of women & Children are daily Sauntering about Collecting what they can and this unavoidably leads to a meeting with our men, who rather Seek than avoid it.”¹⁵ The very next day some of the men requested permission, which McDonald rejected as “impudent,” “to go out and Stop for the night” in the nearby camp.¹⁶ Worse yet, during the New Year festivities heralding 1829, the post journal recorded, “the drunken Sot [Quebecker Louis] Delanis had Contrived to haul [sic] one of the Quaitline [Kwantlen] damsels up by a port hole in one of the Bastions.”¹⁷

McDonald became determined to wrest control of the situation and, as we can read in the Fort Langley journal, established a system whereby cohabitation became less an end in itself than the first stage of family life. Men were permitted to make “a formal application for wives,”¹⁸ a policy which worked because it also suited the interests of Aboriginal fathers, who had to indicate their willingness by accepting gifts comparable to, or better than, they would have required of an Aboriginal suitor. Thus, when “one of our men Pierre Therrein [a Quebecker] was allowed to take a wife out of the Aiskimnum’s [Chinook chief’s] family—He gave a Gun & 4 Blkts.”¹⁹

Each union was also recognized within the post, likely encouraging greater stability than would otherwise have been the case. As noted in the journal, “one of the Engages—[Quebecker] Louis Ossin is allowed to take a woman from the Camp & each man had a half pint liquor on the occasion in the evening.”²⁰ The Kwantlen chief whose daughter was cohabiting with Yale soon also had his sister ensconced within the post. Hence, when “Como—an Owhyhee [Hawaiian], & one of our best men here is married to the Sister of Nicameus—the Quaitline [Kwantlen] Chief—all hands had a half pint & a hop on the occasion.”²¹ Another time, “Annawuskum McDonald [an Iroquois and] our [Kitchen] Servant, having taken a woman last night, our people were treated with a decent Ball on the occasion, which, with other moments of relaxation they have, Seem to make them think that they Cannot be much happier in any other part of the

Country.”²²

This observation reveals McDonald’s second reason for encouraging family life and that was to keep this disparate lot of men satisfied and to make them want to stay at Fort Langley, once their three-year contracts expired. McDonald understood that “those of the men that had not been lucky enough to Come in for a Chance of this kind have no inducement at all to remain at the place.”²³ As he put it, “to reconcile the bucks to Fort Langley without Some indulgence of this nature is utterly out of the question—to leave them to prowl about in the [Indian] Camp would be the worst policy of all—What remains for us, then, is to make the best & wisest Selection [of a woman that] we Can for every man.”²⁴

McDonald very cleverly linked permission to have a wife to a willingness to continue in the company’s service. A man had to be “Engaged [by the company] for two years” to be “allowed to take a woman.”²⁵ The timing was clearly intended to encourage contract renewal for another 3-year term so as not to be separated from a newfound love. The policy worked. McDonald reported in 1830 how “it has had the effect of reconciling them to the place and removing the inconvenience and indeed the great uncertainty of being able to get them year after year replaced from the Columbia.”²⁶ “All our [fifteen] Men have taken Women.”²⁷

Although no journals survive after 1830, we do have glimpses of subsequent events. The report from one of the first visiting Catholic missionaries, in 1843, stated that all of the “about twenty men...employed there” have “wives and children after the fashion of the country.”²⁸

We can also trace the men as individuals, which Bruce Watson and I have been doing over the past number of years. By putting together HBC records with baptisms and marriage records of visiting priests, we can get some idea of what happened. Just over half of the men left within two years of arriving at Fort Langley, not surprising given the difficult working conditions of the fur trade. What is more surprising is that the other half stayed on longer, sometimes much longer.

Table 1 lists the men who stayed at Fort Langley more than two years and hence were able to take a wife and likely began a family. What we see is that most of them did so. Fort Langley retained a strong core of men, in part at least because of the opportunity for family life. It is not surprising

¹⁵ 26 November 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 87.
¹⁶ 27 November 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 87.
¹⁷ 1 January 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 91.
¹⁸ 26 November 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 87.
¹⁹ 20 January 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 94. Language of “Fort Langley Journal,” transcribed by Winnifreda Mcintosh, 9 January 1963, in British Columbia Archives, preferred.
²⁰ 28 February 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 99.
²¹ 7 March 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 100; also “two more of our men took wives from the Indian Camp” in 23 May 1829 entry, 114, and “another one of our men took to himself a wife” in 18 September 1829, 128.
²² 18 November 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 131; also Etienne Pepin being given permission in 14 January 1830 entry, 137; also 23.
²³ 3 March 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 99.
²⁴ 3 March 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 99-100.
²⁵ 14 January 1830 entry in Maclachlan, 137.
²⁶ Archibald McDonald, Report, 25 February 1830, reproduced in Maclachlan, 222.
²⁷ McDonald, Report, 25 February 1830, reproduced in Maclachlan, 222.
²⁸ Notice no. 5, January 1843, cited in *Notices & Voyages of the Famed Quebec Mission to the Pacific Northwest, Being the correspondence, notices, etc., of Fathers Blanchet and Demers, together with those of Fathers Bolduc and Langlois* (Portland: Champoege Press for the Oregon Historical Society, 1956), 104.

²⁹ James Douglas to Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Vancouver, 14 October 1839, cited in E.E. Rich, ed., *The Letters of John McLoughlin, Second Series, 1839-44* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1943), 215; and John McLoughlin to George Simpson, Fort Vancouver, 20 March 1840, 231. The exception was the fur trade.

³⁰ George Simpson to Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Vancouver, 25 November 1841, in Glyndwr Williams, ed., *London Correspondence Inward From Sir George Simpson 1841-42*

(London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1973), 74.

³¹ Jason O. Allard, "Reminiscences," *Province*, 25 October 1924, appendix C in Mary Cullen, *The History of Fort Langley, 1827-96*.

Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History 20 (Ottawa: Parks Canada 1979), 90.

³² McDonald, Report, 25 February 1830, reproduced in Maclachlan, 222.

³³ Allard in Cullen, 90; also Morton, 258.

³⁴ Morton, 258.

³⁵ 3 March 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 99.

³⁶ 3 July 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 118-19.

³⁷ 13 July 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 120.

³⁸ "The naming of Kanaka Creek," typescript, BCARS, citing Jason Allard's reminiscences in BCARS.

³⁹ "The naming of Kanaka Creek," citing Denys Nelson, *Fort Langley, 1827-1927* (Vancouver: Art, Historical and Scientific Association of Vancouver, July 1927), 21.

⁴⁰ Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest. Vancouver, Volumes I and II, and Stellamaris Mission* (St. Paul: French Prairie Press,

then that a report from the Hudson's Bay Company noted in 1839 how "the several branches of business carried on at this Post [of Fort Langley] continue in a flourishing state" and a year later that "the business is going on in the most prosperous manner."²⁹ The head of the Hudson's Bay Company across North America enthused in 1841 how Fort Langley "has for a length of time been a very well regulated post."³⁰ In sum, family life originated at Fort Langley and was continued as a policy, not for sentiment or romance, but because it was good business.

NATURE OF FAMILY LIFE

For all of its prevalence, family life was never easy at Fort Langley. It had to fit into the nooks and crannies. Men worked from early morning until sunset for five and a half days each week.³¹ Apart from McDonald in his "Big House," men got no perks for their families. As he noted in his journal, "provisions for them they have none, save what they derive from the regular and ample allowance to themselves."³² The son of a longtime servant recalled that "all the employees of the company had quarters inside the fort."³³ Where relationships acquired a sense of permanence, some men built private dwellings outside of the walls.³⁴

Flexibility and accommodation was essential on both sides for unions to survive. Newcomer men simply could not take the assumptions about masculinity and femininity that they brought with them whence they came and make them work at Fort Langley. Their women could simply disappear back into Aboriginal space. They possessed far more freedom than did the men, who were obliged by contract to stay put for a specified period of time. Even McDonald conceded that, "like all Indians, their attachment to their own lands and friends keeps them for ever on the wing to be back again."³⁵

It took McDonald and the other men at Fort Langley some time to learn that women could not be made to submit. Unhappy women simply left, forcing the male either to enter Aboriginal space to retrieve her or to lose face. To take just one example from the journals, a woman who had been "remonstrated with" by "her husband" for talking with her mother near the gates "watched her time and walked off to the camp." The man she was living with wanted her back. And so, "after his work was over he followed her, & requested her return, which with the Concurrence of her relations and others around was

positively refused under frivolous pretexts that She was not Kindly treated or entirely Secured as yet with the necessary property."

For a time it seemed as if newcomers' might would triumph. Reflecting contemporary assumptions of male superiority, McDonald fretted that, if the women were allowed to persist, "the husbands are bound down never to Correct them." So he rationalized that what this woman really wanted was, and I quote, "an opportunity of gratifying her paramour & when Convenient return to the Fort & to the arms of her outwitted husband." On that basis McDonald "called 5 men under arms immediately & with them proceeded to the [Indian] Village when with very little gallantry in my address I ordered the lady to the Fort & acquainted the Natives that it would be best for them never to put us to Such trouble again."³⁶ The victory was short lived, for just ten days later the post journal noted curtly, without elaboration, that "one of our men's wives de-camped this morning."³⁷

More than any other factor, it was the arrival of children which forged long term relationships. The Hawaiians were the earliest to establish family life. Their leader was Piopio, who had in 1824 been one of the men dispatched to prospect for a suitable location for what became Fort Langley and was in 1827 one of the two dozen sent to construct the new post. Piopio was among the first to cohabit. A daughter Aglace Paiva was born in 1827,³⁸ followed quickly by a son known as Mayo³⁹ and a few years later by Sophie, who was baptized during the Catholic priest's first visit in 1841 as the "natural daughter of Pehopuho and a Kwoithe [Kwantlen?] woman."⁴⁰ When Fort Langley moved about three miles upriver in 1840 Piopio and the other Hawaiians continued to live at the original site with their families, commuting to work.

Similarly, the post journal noted on 2 July 1828 how "one of the fair Laddies [sic] of the Fort presented her Husband wi[t]h a Son & heir, He being the first born in this quarter (I mean among the whites)."⁴¹ The next March, "At a few minutes past midnight, a Girl was born to [Quebecker Simon] Plemondon."⁴² A couple of months later it was "Mrs. Annance" who gave birth. And so on.

Family life never overcame larger divisions grounded in status, religion, language, and ethnicity and race, or indeed the differences in rank that the women themselves embodied. There was

never a single family life at Fort Langley, apart from brief moments in time. Christmas was one of the few occasions when the women cohabiting with Hawaiians, and thereby deemed inferior, were permitted into the post. Even then, one year, they got into an almost immediate confrontation with “the women who were married to white men, were related to the chiefs” and considered themselves superior. According to the son of one of the French Canadians: “The Kanaka women were accused of passing remarks about their white sisters and then from one imaginary insult or slight the fight was on. There was no prancing or sparring. It was run and grab for the hair of the head. A regular tug-of-war ensued. Finally they were separated by their husbands and all was peace and quietness.”⁴³

There were three times each year—Christmas, New Years, and the fur trade brigade’s arrival in the summer—when, to quote the Yale family history, “the obligations of business ceased to regulate seniority of rank and trade.”⁴⁴ Christmas was not just for squabbling, it also strengthened family life. “In the afternoon of Christmas Day the men’s wives were invited to the big hall where they were given two or three ‘shots’ of wine after which their baskets (they were told to bring them) were filled with cookies, cranberries and blueberry jam and ships biscuits.”⁴⁵ On New Year’s day, there was dancing. “The men, and in succession the women were received into the Hall & treated with just enough of the ‘Oh be joyful’ . . . so that we could all again meet in the evening with propriety”⁴⁶ for a “merry reel,”⁴⁷ but “without any indecent frolick.”⁴⁸

The strength of family life at Fort Langley is most visible in the accounts of outsiders, who often used racist rhetoric to explain away what they observed rather than having to take it seriously. In his description of the dance held in 1858 to mark the brigade’s arrival, a Maritime gold miner admirably evoked the sense of community that for brief moments did bind together the families of Fort Langley. “To this ball I received an invitation, which I, with much pleasure attended, and was not a little surprised at seeing the company composed of so heterogeneous a kind. There were English, Scotch, French, and the Kanackas present, and their offspring, and all so thoroughly mixed with the native Indian blood, that it would take a well versed Zoologist to decide what class of people they were, and what relation they had to each other; though that will

cause you but little surprise when you are informed that almost all the Co’s. wives are the native squaws, their children, which are called half breeds, as a general thing, being fair, docile and intelligent. The ball was conducted with the best possible decorum. The music was sweet, from the violin, and the dancing was performed in the most graceful manner, by the Indians and the half breeds, who took a very prominent part of that occasion.”⁴⁹

LEGACY OF FAMILY LIFE

Family life did not disappear just because the fur trade fell into decline. We all too often think of settlement, be it in the Fraser Valley or elsewhere in British Columbia, as beginning with the gold rush. This was most certainly not the case. Table 1 summarizes the subsequent lives of the men who remained at Fort Langley more than two years. What the lives tell us, most importantly, is that family life at Fort Langley counted. A few men returned home, almost certainly by themselves, but most looked for an intermediate place where they could continue to live satisfactorily with their wives and children. Many of the first families went to earlier places of newcomer settlement in the Pacific Northwest, such as the Willamette Valley in the Oregon Territory or to Cowlitz in the future Washington state.

Wherever they headed, families to some extent turned inwards. They settled in clusters. To understand the reasons, we need to keep in mind the thousands of newcomers from Britain, the United States, and elsewhere that flooded into the Pacific Northwest during these years. We need to remind ourselves of the attitudes that many of them had toward persons perceived as different from themselves. It was not just the Maritime gold miner who ridiculed Fort Langley’s fur trade families. The Anglican cleric who held religious services at Fort Langley during the early settlement years came close to ridicule in his observation: “Very unsatisfactory was the state into which many of the Hudson’s Bay employés had degenerated: living insulated, from boyhood often to gray hairs, amongst debased savages, they had married squaws, and their half-bred offspring but too often were mere degraded savages like the mother.”⁵⁰

If growing racism forced families to look inwards for marriage partners, other aspects of changing times worked to their benefit. Children, as well as some members of the first gen-

___1972), first listing, pages 66-67.

⁴¹ 2 July 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 67.

⁴² 12 March 1829 entry in Maclachlan, 100; also 24

June 1829 entry concerning “Mrs.

Annance,” 117.

⁴³ Allard in Cullen, 90.

⁴⁴ Grant.

⁴⁵ Allard in Cullen, 90.

⁴⁶ 13 November 1828 entry in Maclachlan, 82.

⁴⁷ The dance is described only in 1 January 1830 entry in “Fort Langley Journal,” transcribed by McIntosh.

⁴⁸ 2 January 1830 entry in Maclachlan, 136.

⁴⁹ C.C. Gardner to editor of *Islander*, 17 March 1858, cited in Morton, 230.

⁵⁰ William Burton Crickmer, “Story of the planting of the English Church in Columbia,” *Christian Advocate and Review*, s.d., 780, in Vancouver Public Library.

⁵¹ Aurelia Manson, "Reminiscences of Old Langley," appendix B in Cullen, 89.

⁵² Morton, 259 and 261, and genealogical materials in possession of Christy Wong.

⁵³ Morton, 185.

⁵⁴ Verbal information from Christy Wong.

⁵⁵ British Columbia manuscript censuses for 1881, NWS, family 198, and 1891, NW (11), family 255, and birth certificate of Samuel Cromarty in possession of Christy Wong. Mary and David were named in the will of William Cromarty, 15 April 1875.

⁵⁶ John Gibbard, "Early History of the Fraser Valley, 1808-1885" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1937), 112-13.

⁵⁷ Typescript enclosure in Deann Cleveland to Jean Barman, Armstrong [early spring 1995], in author's possession.

⁵⁸ Deann Cleveland to Jean Barman, Armstrong, 8 April 1995, in author's possession.

⁵⁹ Donald E. Waite, *The Langley Story illustrated: An Early History of the Municipality of Langley* (Altona: Friesen, 1977), 265.

⁶⁰ Cleveland to Barman, in author's possession.

⁶¹ Typescript enclosure in Cleveland to Barman, in author's possession.

⁶² Robert Emmett Hawley, *Skqee Mus or Pioneer Days on the Nooksack* (Bellingham: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, 1971, orig. 1945), 178.

⁶³ "The naming of Kanaka Creek," citing Jason Allard's reminiscences in BCARS.

⁶⁴ James Douglas to James Murray Yale, 1 July 1857, cited in Morton, 159.

⁶⁵ Morton, 258; and Cullen, 61.

⁶⁶ January 1859 entries in

eration, who wanted to settle near Fort Langley, were given a very important economic boost by the pre-emption policy put in place for the British Columbia mainland at the beginning of 1860. Men could take up 160 acres, even if the land were not yet surveyed. Men employed at Fort Langley, and some of their sons, were in a particularly advantageous position both because of proximity and due to the nature of their jobs. As recalled by one of Yale's daughters, "the men of the fort, with some Indian lads, used to go to Langley Prairie to cut the grain which they had sown in the Spring."⁵¹ They had in effect received an apprenticeship in farming, including insider knowledge as to the most fertile land. Table 2 lists some of the fur trade families who settled in the Fraser Valley, including information on which families preempted.

Each of the families and clusters of families settling in the Fraser Valley have their own story to tell, and I can only sample each of the principal ethnic groups here.

WILLIAM CROMARTY, who arrived from the Orkneys as head barrel maker in 1844, took similar pains to give his family a sense of security.⁵² If technically a servant, he likely enjoyed a certain status above the rank-and-file. For some time there had been complaints that the barrels used to export Fraser River salmon were leaking, whereas they had to be airtight for the fish to arrive edible at its destination, and Cromarty was an experienced cooper.⁵³ He settled down virtually immediately and remained with Salum'mia until her death in 1869.⁵⁴ Son William was born in about 1846, followed by seven other children.⁵⁵ In 1852 Cromarty requested and was given permission to purchase a cow, by which time he had his own house located "just outside the western wall."⁵⁶

NARCISSE FALLARDEAU joined the Hudson's Bay Company from Quebec in 1837 and spent his entire career at Fort Langley. Almost immediately, he settled down with a Kwantlen woman,⁵⁷ possibly named Ellen.⁵⁸ Catherine was born in 1839,⁵⁹ followed by five more daughters and also two sons who died young.⁶⁰ Fallardeau's position as Yale's cook and servant allowed his family to live in the kitchen of the Big House. The eldest Fallardeau daughter Catherine was wed to Fort Langley blacksmith James Taylor in the summer of 1858.⁶¹ As for her sisters, three white newcomers, "products of the Fraser River Gold Rush," so an acquaintance recalled, "married

halfbreed sisters who were of the old Feledew family."⁶²

The Hawaiian group, headed by Piopio, particularly benefited from the preemption legislation. They were already formed into a cluster. When the daughters of Piopio reached adolescence, they were, not unexpectedly, partnered with Kanakas working at Fort Langley.⁶³ When contracts expired, enough of them had not renewed so that by 1857 sufficient "free Kanakas" were living around Fort Langley for the Hudson's Bay Company to request that the "seven able men among their number" help transport an especially large load of goods.⁶⁴

Then came disruption. The land on which the Hawaiians had informally settled near the original site of Fort Langley was surveyed and auctioned off in the fall of 1858 for a townsite named Derby, which many expected to become the capital of the new mainland colony brought into being by the gold rush.⁶⁵ Although legally dispossessed, the Hawaiians held on. A government official who stopped by in January 1859 found still there "a large body of Kanakas—a mixed race half Indian half Sandwich Islanders."⁶⁶ In the spring of 1859 Governor James Douglas was petitioned by Piopio, who stated that he "had cleared and had been in occupation of a piece of land there, from which he was ejected when the site of the town, of which it formed a part, was decided upon."⁶⁷ Piopio wanted 47 acres on the other side of the Fraser River as reparation and wanted it now so that he could plant that year's crops.

The preemption legislation of 1860 allowed the Hawaiians to acquire the land that they sought. Almost immediately, on 23 January, Piopio's son-in-law "Peter Apponette" took up 160 acres, and I quote from the preemption document, "situated on the north bank of the Fraser River opposite the town of Derby, bordered on the east by a Creek (name unknown) the said claim to have a frontage of 33 chains on the river 48 back."⁶⁸ Just a month later, on 23 February, Piopio's son "Magno Papu [Mayo Piopio]" followed suit, as did other Hawaiians. The group's continuing presence is attested by Piopio's grandson being elected to the Maple Ridge council in 1879.⁶⁹

Lest you think all of this was so very long ago, in March 1999 I had the pleasure of visiting with Piopio's great-great grandson and of hearing him tell me how, when he was a small boy, his great-

grandmother, Piopio's daughter Sophie, would "sit with us and tell us stories about Hawaii [and how] it was all sunshine." I was transported back in time almost two hundred years, for these were almost certainly stories that Sophie Apnaut Nelson, born in 1830, had herself heard as a child from her father about his life in Hawaii before he sailed to North America and became part of the adventure which was Fort Langley.

At the end of the twentieth century, family life at Fort Langley is not so distant from us as we might sometimes want to believe. We have a rich and diverse human heritage all around us which, in the case of Fort Langley's fur trade families, stretches back a century and three quarters, yet is very much part of who we are today as British Columbians. ~

Arthur Bushby, Journal, cited in Morton, 288.
⁶⁷ Moody to Douglas, 1 April 1859, BCARS, Colonial Correspondence, film 915/26, cited in Morton, 288.
⁶⁸ F.W. Laing, *Colonial Farm Settlers on the Mainland of British Columbia 1858-1871* (Victoria, 1939), 99.
⁶⁹ Sheila Nickols, ed., *Maple Ridge: A History of Settlement* (Maple Ridge: Municipal Hall, 1972), 33; and Waite, *The Langley Story Illustrated*, 102.

TABLE 2
 FUR TRADE CONTINUITY INTO THE SECOND GENERATION IN THE FRASER VALLEY

ALLARD, Ovid	Sennie + David Hamburger/Yale Jason + Seraphine of Port Townsend Lucy + *Kenneth MORRISON
BROUSSEAU, Basil	Marie + *Peter Baker Basil Jr. + Sarah Pierre
*CROMARTY, William	*William + Lucy of Cheam Elizabeth + *Henry Dawson James + Annie Cliton *David Mary + *Joseph Hairsine Samuel + Caroline Garner
xDEASE, Napoleon	Mary + Godfrey McKay
*EMPTAGE, William	William Jr. + Sarah Elkins
*FALLARDEAU, Narcisse	Catherine + *James TAYLOR Harriet + Daniel Kilcup-US Louisa + Henry West-US Matilda + George Rehberger-US Rose + James Ibbotson Mary + William Worley
*Lacroix, Michel (New Caledonia)	Michel + Mary Dixon Gabriel + Sarah Jane Wells Joseph + Annie James Helen + Alonzo Baker Mary Louise + Gabriel Galland/George Newton
*PIOPIO	*Joseph MAYO Sophia + *Peter APNAUT/*William Nelson Paiva + OHIER Henry Pound + Margaret
*Robertson, Robert (New Caledonia) DL.433	*Andrew Robertson Charlotte + Frank Owens Mary + Joseph Garner Barbara + Henry Garner Andrina + Charles Robert Garner
*ROBERTSON, Samuel	Mary + *Thomas Shannon Donald + Mina Rehberger James + Christine Yates
WAVICAREERA	*Robert WAVICAREERA + Marguerite Sta-ei-els

SMALL CAPS=worked at Ft Langley * =Early land preemption x =Died before settling

Family Life At Fort Langley

by Bruce M. Watson

Bruce Watson teaches at Vancouver Community College. He is currently completing a dictionary of fur traders and explorers on the Pacific slopes between 1774 and 1858.

Unless otherwise stated, most biographical material is drawn from: "Liste des Voyageurs, 1788-822" Societe Historique de Saint-Boniface, MB, 1993-. Documents from Hudson's Bay Company Archives include NWC Account Books (1811-21), F4 series, HBC contracts; York Factory, Fort Vancouver and Fort Victoria Abstracts of Servants' Accounts, District Statements; various Post Journals, Correspondence Books, 1821-60. Other material is drawn from BC Archives, Victoria; Washington Archives, Olympia; Portland Historical Society Library, Portland; Idaho State Historical Society Library and Archives, Boise, Idaho; Kirkwall, Orkney Archives, U.K. Biographical and settlement information comes from 1850 and later U.S. censuses, 1881 and later Canadian censuses as well as various contemporary Canadian and U.S.A. newspapers. Colonial Vancouver Island and Colonial British Columbia pre-emption records provided settlement information. Printed primary sources include publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society. Other material comes from oral interviews with descendants.

¹ Article III of a convention signed by the British and Americans in 1818 stated that all the area "that may be claimed by either party on the Northwest coast of America, westward of the Stony [Rocky] mountains...shall...be free and open, for the term of ten years" as cited in *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States and Other Powers 1776-1909*, vol. I, Washington, D. C., p. 632. However, Henry W. Clay, U.S. Secretary of State, in a 19 June 19 1826 letter to Mr. Albert Gallatin, Minister to Great Britain (see doc. 199.20th Cong. 1.Sess. House of Representatives), saw it differently: "You are then authorised to propose the annulment of the Third Article of the Convention of 1818, and the extension of the line on the parallel of 49 from the eastern side of the Stony Mountains where it now terminates, to the Pacific Ocean as the permanent boundary between the territories of the two powers in that quarter. This is our ultimatum and so you may announce it." From map compiled by Bureau of Topographical Engineers under direction of Colonel J. J. Abert, 1838.

IN THE smoky, bustling first thirty years of the existence of Fort Langley, while the cooper steamed and winched his barrels, the blacksmith coaxed tools from bare metal, and Natives traded fish, the cries of children—perhaps being admonished by their mothers in French, Chinook or Salish—could be heard as they played on the gallery. Fort Langley was alive with family life. Rather than by happenstance, such family life emerged and flourished for three reasons: the Hudson's Bay Company's need to anchor its workforce, the Natives' need to cement economic, political and social relationships with the Company, and the needs of the contracted servants themselves. This paper will explore those reasons further and examine some of the resulting Fort Langley families.

The very existence of the Hudson's Bay Company in the area in 1827 was a hedge against the possible loss of territory south of the 49th parallel, the boundary. By 1826, an impatient U.S. Secretary of State was instructing his Minister to Great Britain to demand the extension of this boundary to the coast.¹ The Fort Langley site was ideal, for it was above the 49th parallel, was on a river which drained the New Caledonia area, and it possessed the added bonus of arable land. As a commercial enterprise, tapping into an existing Native economy rather than a colonial settlement venture imposing a whole new economy, the Company had to ingratiate itself to the local people for its own protection and profitability. This was not unlike the experience of other companies such as the Russian American Company out of St. Petersburg, the Greenland Trading Company out of Copenhagen and various other companies, largely based in London: the East Indian, West Indian, and South Sea

Companies. In order to secure protection, profitability and anchor its isolated workforce, a trading company such as the HBC encouraged marriages to the local Natives. So there was clearly a commercial motivation for the creation of the fur trade families.

The local Natives also had a very good reason to promote the establishment of families at such a post, a virtual department store being parachuted into their back yard. It was a kind of wealthy village in their territory. They considered it their property and so they could exact tariffs from those wishing to trade with it. Thus, in order to do this, they had to establish their presence in kind and by marriage. Firstly, they established their presence by moving in close to the fort. Fur trade records reveal that Natives not only clustered around such new posts but also vigorously opposed their relocation.² As political and social alliances were traditional vehicles to secure food gathering areas and trade, new adjustments had to be made. Those from the higher ranks were anxious to continue their position of privilege by having family members marry those of the fort. Fort Langley was no exception. Chiefs arrived with daughters, and even others' wives, to be given away in marriage although sometimes these were for sexual liaisons only.³ From the point of view of the native people, there was every reason to establish marriage relationships and fur trade families.

The third reason for family formation were the needs of the men themselves. If they were labourers, they were between 18 and 20 years old and older if they were skilled tradesmen. Most were regular servants, from poor or very modest backgrounds and all were drawn away from their families on three to five-year contracts, either with

TABLE A - EMPLOYEES: OCCUPATION AND WORK PER ETHNIC GROUP 1827-1858

- I. officers / gentlemen
- II. clerks / postmasters
- III. traders—including those who worked in the coopeage in later years (de-facto coopers)
- IV. status canoemen (steersmen & bowsmen)
- V. personnel employed: total and by ethnic group

Employees by occupations	I	II	III	IV	V
106	3	10	12	7	74
100%	3%	10%	11%	7%	70%

Employees by ethnic group and occupation

		I	II	III	IV	V
French Canadians	32	-	3 %	6 %	19 %	72 %
Hawaiians	30	-	-	3 %	-	97 %
Mixed descent	7	-	43 %	43 %	-	14 %
Scottish						
Orcadians	10	-	10 %	30 %	-	60 %
Highlanders	8	25 %	38 %	-	-	37 %
Lowlanders	5	-	20 %	-	-	80 %
Iroquois	5	-	-	-	20%	80 %
English*	7	14 %	29 %	14%	-	43 %
Others	2	-	50 %	-	-	50 %

* includes English from both Great Britain and British North America

the intention of returning with some money, or to start a new life abroad. Almost all came from pre-industrial societies. They were French Canadians, Hawaiians, men of mixed descent, Scots (Orcadians, Highlanders and Lowlanders), Iroquois and English (see table A). The French Canadians and Scots generally came from subsistence farms which could not sustain an increasing population. This, coupled with the fact that only the eldest inherited the farm, meant that they had little to return to. The Hawaiians, having seen the population decline by 65 percent, faced bleak prospects at home. The independent-minded Iroquois were continuing their Diaspora dating back to the English-French wars of the eighteenth century. Those of mixed descent were often second and third-descent fur traders whose antecedents had worked in a variety of posts. In summary: we have poor, young, and robust men toiling away in isolation. The servants' lives could be made more meaningful by the formation of locally based families.

How were marriage liaisons formed? Such arrangements were not as easy as a local chief showing up at the gate with female relatives in tow, or HBC servants independently seeking wives within the native villages, although both were part of the process. Liaisons and dowries had to be negotiated with the Natives, and

screened and sanctioned by the officers of the fort who, in the best interests of the company, reflected and sustained the ranking within both communities.⁴ To reinforce these relationships, servants had to agree to provide for any wife if they left the area on their own volition. For example, William Brown was not allowed to leave Fort Langley and had to stay behind until his child was old enough to travel with him.⁵ Sometimes the men brought in their own wives as we can only assume that some did into Fort Langley. In short, families formed under the watchful eye of the company itself. Of course, matters didn't always turn out like this. On 1 January 1829 Louis Delonie was found hauling a Kwantlen woman up by a porthole in one of the Bastions.⁶ Similarly, Camil Raymond at Fort Simpson [Nass] was caught smuggling another person's wife through the drain hole. He picked up stakes and went to the Russians but was promptly returned.⁷ At other times, female slaves were peddled for sexual liaisons.⁸ In Fort Stikine, the servants shot and killed the chief trader who wouldn't let them bring in women from the outside.⁹ Family formation was not a clear-cut matter.

The nature of work at Fort Langley made the families interdependent. The jobs of the fur traders had evolved. By this time the HBC was not only securing furs, but also supplying salmon to

² For a description of native protest over the 30 August 1834 relocation of Fort Simpson, Nass to Dundas Island, see *The Journals of William Fraser Tolmie*, Mitchell Press, Vancouver, BC, 1963, pp.290-91.

³ Fort Langley Journals 1827-30³, M. Maclachlan, ed., U.B.C. Press, 1998, (Whitlakenum's brother "Came in with... three or four Young Girls to dispose of them in marriage if he can", 26 November 1828) p.87.

⁴ Rule 73 of the Company's "Standing Rules and Regulations" stipulated that "no person be permitted to take a wife at any Establishment, without the sanction of the Gentleman in charge of the District", BCA, Add. Mss 220, "H.B.C. Standing Rules and Regulations", p.40, Rule 7.

⁵ Fort Vancouver [Columbia] Correspondence Book, 1837-1838, B.223/b/19, James Douglas's 16 October 1837 letter to Gov. & Committee, (addressing Brown's complaint of being cruelly held back because of child under 12 months) fos. 14-16d; *ibid*, 1837-38, B.223/b/22, James Douglas's 16 August 1838 letter to J. M. Yale, (Brown to be sent away with child) fo. 24d.

⁶ *Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30*, M. Maclachlan, ed., U.B.C. Press, 1998, ("...the drunken Sot Delannis had Contrived to haule one of the Quaitline damsels up by a port hold in one of the Bastions.", 1 January 1829) p. 91.

⁷ Fort Simpson (Nass) Post Journal (1838-40) B.201/a/4, (Raymond brought woman in through drain, went to Russians, 5-10 October 1839) fos. 141d-143.

⁸ Servants' procuring sexual services at a price was discouraged at many of the posts. See: *Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30*, M. Maclachlan, ed., U.B.C. Press, 1998, (one of the men "proposed to go out and stop for the night with Master Quaitland's Indian and his Seraglio. The proposition was answered with indignity of Course and a resolve made if not this very night early tomorrow morning to have the whole Gange banished from the plantation", 27 November 1828) p. 87; In Fort Stikine, marriage was preferable to the purchase of sexual services. HBCA Stikine Post Journal, 1840-1842, B.209/a/1, ("On the 11th Simon got a wife and the 12th Flurry, making six men now married here which will put an end to this sort of trade.", Oct. 12, 1840) p. 17.

⁹ The murder investigation of the son of Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin, John McLoughlin Jr., is one of the most well documented and debated in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. For published primary sources, see *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, 1839-1844 and 1844-1846*, E. E. Rich, ed., HBCS, vols. VI & VII, Toronto, 1943 & 1944, as well as George Simpson's *Narrative of a Journey Round the World, During the Years 1841 and 1842*, Henry Colburn, London, 1847, pp. 181-182.

¹⁰ For an analysis of the evolution of the fur trade on the Pacific slopes into that of a more multifaceted operation, see Richard Mackie's *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793-1843*, UBC Press, 1997.

TABLE B - FORT LANGLEY EMPLOYEES: 25 FEBRUARY 1830

I	Years in fur trade before Langley			IV	Wife or wives from Northwest Coast		
	Years at Fort Langley			V	Total number of children settled in Northwest Coast area		
II	Total years in fur trade			VI			
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
Annance, F. N.	9	3	17	n-?	5		St. Francois, Que.
Charles, Pierre	2	13	22	y	4		Cowlitz
Charpentier, Charles	17	2	22	?	?		?
Como	9	12	32	y	3		Ft. Vancouver, Wash.
Delonie, Louis H.	13	12	27	y-y	4		Cowlitz
Fannons, Dominique	12	8	27	y			Cowlitz
Kennedy, John [a]	13	3	16	?			died early in service
McDonald, Wiscum	2	9	20	y	5		Cowlitz
McDonald, Arch.	15	5	31	y-n	14		St. Andrew's, Que.
Oniaze, Etienne	17	9	40	n-y	2		Ft. Vancouver, Wash.
Ossin, Louis	8	4	30	n-n	4		Willamette val, Ore.
Peeopeeoh	10	25	35	y	4		Derby area
Pepin, Etienne	[1]	33	33	y	3		Langley area?
Piette, Francois	10	3	21	n	2		Cowlitz
Plamondon, Simon	8	2	16	y-n-n	11		Cowlitz
Satakarata, Louis	13	18	36	y?	2		Victoria
Therrin, Pierre	9	3	12	?			died early in service
Yale, James M.	11	31	42	n-y-y	3		Victoria

areas of the Pacific and foodstuffs to the north.¹⁰ As self-sufficiency was the rule of the day for each post, large gardens and dairy farms developed. So, besides trading manufactured goods from the store for furs, our "fur trader" could be sowing seeds, weeding, hoeing, thrashing, milking cows, making barrels, boiling brine, curing fish and working at a forge making any number of metal tools. Although spared the endless cutting and squaring of logs to replace buildings and pickets in the palisade, the wives secured and prepared the food, sewed, kept the children in tow, made clothes, etc. This veil of domesticity belies the importance of the wives' extended ties to the wider community, not to mention their knowledge of and ability to survive in the area. Almost as soon as the children were able to handle it, they were put to work. They might be beating furs to get rid of the dirt and bugs, some of which would have bitten them, leaving sores. While the clerk or officer might be negotiating fish sales at the wharf, the children would have to carry the fish up into the fort where their mothers would split the fish and put them in brine. As soon as they were able, the children might be carrying milk from the dairy cattle from the large field to

the east of the fort, back up the hill and inside the fort, where the mother would churn it into butter. The children might feed the chickens, tend the sheep and cows, or groom the horses. There was little room for education. Unlike Forts Vancouver, Victoria and Simpson there was no teacher at Fort Langley. The children had to pick up what little education they could get from their parents or another interested person. And so we have a picture of the sights and smells of a bustling family life at Fort Langley.

Social ranking within the post also affected families. The gentlemen—the McDonalds and Yales of the big house—led a decidedly different life from the skilled tradesmen, that is the coopers, blacksmiths and boat builders in the men's quarters. They in turn were relatively better off than the labourers. Some of the Hawaiians, near the bottom of the scale, appeared to have stayed outside the fort at the original Derby site. Natives were allowed into the trading shop only one or two at a time. Invisibly, these differences were reinforced when acquiring goods from the HBC. For example, a gentleman, generally English, could purchase goods from the company at cost plus 100 percent. This would ensure the company

profit. A skilled tradesman, generally Scottish, could purchase goods at cost plus 100 to 300 percent. A Canadian, that is a French speaking person from Lower Canada, paid cost plus 300 to 500 percent. Goods for a Hawaiian Kanaka could be purchased at cost plus 500 to 700 percent, whereas the local native people could purchase goods at cost plus 1,000 percent.¹¹ This division depended not only on ethnic background but also on skill and educational level. Rank also dictated who would be permitted into the post and that sometimes caused altercations. For example, Jason Allard told of a confrontation at a Christmas party. This was a rare occasion when seniority and rank were put aside and Hawaiian wives were permitted on the post. However, after the other wives perceived that they were being insulted by the wives of the Hawaiians, a hair-pulling fight broke out. Peace was restored when they were separated by their husbands.¹²

A brief look through the Fort Langley journals of February 1830 shows that many servants were old-time fur traders who had worked in the fur trade at least 17 years before coming to Fort Langley. They obviously had established liaisons elsewhere, and may have brought wives with them. Some continued working at Fort Langley for up to 25 years. Many ended up with wives from the Northwest Coast cultural area and had families of two to eleven children. Native wives usually moved within familiar territory rather than across cultural areas and so fur traders tended to be anchored in the region of their wives. The families settled in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia, depending on the cultural areas of their wives.

Let us look briefly at three early families that started at Fort Langley and then went away (see table B). Simon Plomondon started his family around the time of the murder of his father-in-law, Scanewah, the Cowlitz native trader at Point Roberts.¹³ Plomondon, who may have met his wife while coming north, had an interesting beginning. His New England colonial ancestors had been taken in a raid by the Abenaki and he was raised as Abenaki. He left his St. Francois, Quebec home uneducated at 14, unlike his second cousin Francois Noel Annance who achieved the rank of clerk. Plomondon later joined the North West Company working in Athabasca and New Caledonia. His partnership at Fort Langley apparently was his first try at marriage and on 12 March 1829 a child was born, probably Sophie.

Plomondon left Fort Langley around 1830 and worked at several more posts until he retired to farm in the Cowlitz area, an area with which he was well connected. After the death of his wife he remarried twice, first a metis, then a French Canadian. Events eventually overtook Plomondon. During the tense 1850s his wife went to live in Vancouver and Oregon City and his appointment as Indian Agent came to an end because the illiterate Plomondon was deemed too sympathetic to the Native peoples.¹⁴

Another early Fort Langley fur trade family was that of Louis Satakarata, otherwise known as Rabesca. He had joined the North West Company in 1814 and had worked for 13 years before coming to Fort Langley. It is not known whether he brought a wife with him, or married again locally. By 1845, he was sent over to Fort Victoria where he was to spend the rest of his career and he possibly died there. One son, Francois, also carried on a career with the HBC and raised a family in Victoria. Another child of Satakarata may have been Louis Langley, of the Fort Langley journals.

One cannot speak of Fort Langley without speaking of Jean Baptiste Brulez. He had been in the fur trade from 1831. When he came to Fort Langley in 1839 he may have had a wife, Marguerite Sooke, and her son, Joseph. While a small hut was being built for him, he was allowed to occupy part of the blacksmith's shop. On 11 April 1840, while he was absent from the blacksmith's shop, a fire broke out and, fanned by high winds, quickly spread consuming almost the entire fort.¹⁵ Brulez stayed around to rebuild the fort but then was sent to Snake Country, perhaps as a form of punishment. He quit soon after and retired to the Willamette, then to the Nisqually area and finally to Sooke, the home turf of his wife.

That brings us to some of the fur trade families that stayed, and which we normally associate with Fort Langley (see table C). James Murray Yale—short in stature and equally short-tempered, and some say mean-spirited—took over Fort Langley after Archibald McDonald left in 1834. Yale represents the privileged upper class. The first marriage at Fort George (New Caledonia) of this Canadian-born clerk ended in murder and mayhem with his wife running off with her lover.¹⁶ His second marriage at Fort Langley to the daughter of a chief—an arrangement which his boss thought most appropriate—ended in failure when he found out that she had previously

¹¹ Information obtained from G. E. (Gerry) Borden, Heritage Programs, Fort Langley National Historic Site, 1999.

¹² Jason O. Allard, "Reminiscences," *The Province*, 25 October 1924.

¹³ *Fort Langley Journals, 1827–30*, M. MacLachlan, ed., U.B.C. Press, 1998, (murder of Scanewah) pp. 63, 65.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, (editor's biography of Plomondon) pp. 231–232.

¹⁵ HBCA: Fort Vancouver Correspondence, 1839, B.223/b/28, James M. Yale's April 15, 1840 Fraser River letter to John McLoughlin, (blame for fire placed on Brule) fo. 28.

¹⁶ John Stuart's arduously penned Fort McLeod journals of 1823 reveal a picture of the scene at Fort George; however, a more concise description of the murders can be found in HBCA: George Simpson's Report, 1824, D.4/87, fo. 43d.

¹⁷ *Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30*, M. MacLachan, ed., U.B.C. Press, 1998 (Kwantlen Chief Nicameus given a blanket which was then taken away by MacDonald), p. 93.

been married to a man who had not yet claimed her. Aware that the Fort George love triangle had cost the lives of two of his men, Yale sent his wife back. Her father rejected her return, sent her back, and eventually had to be paid off to keep his daughter.¹⁷ One child born of this marriage was abandoned by the mother and left at Fort Langley to be raised by Yale. After nine years of thinking about it, Yale married again and had two more daughters. Being of the privileged class, however, he sent his daughters off to Victoria to be educated. Both daughters married HBC officers, Henry Newsham Peers and George Simpson Jr. respectively. However, in his later life, after retiring in Victoria and after having had one or more strokes, poor old Yale was virtually abandoned by family and friends and spent his declining years in solitude.

Another enduring fur trade family associated with Fort Langley is the Allard family. While articling for a notarial office in Lachine in 1834, a young, tall French Canadian joined up with the Hudson's Bay Company. Ovide Allard was first assigned to an area in the Snake River area, working at Forts Hall and Boise, where he

partnered with a local native woman. It is not known what happened to his wife (she may have remained within her cultural area), but when he was assigned to Fort Langley in 1839, he brought a child with him. After he arrived at Fort Langley, being a clerk, he partnered with Justine, (c.1823-1907), the sister of a Cowichan Confederacy Chief, T'Soshia, and they had at least five children. Not all was bliss, however, for a young daughter accidentally drank poison and had to be buried in a coffin made from boards pulled up from the floor. A jealous Justine gave away Ovid Allard's Snake-River-country daughter to a Mr. McKay, a passing trader, telling her husband that the child had fallen in the river and drowned. Some 20 years later the story was refuted when the daughter passed through Yale to her husband's store in the gold fields. Any excitement of the rediscovery was short-lived. This daughter and her husband were lost at sea. Allard himself had his usual run-ins with his short-tempered boss. One day, after Allard had provided barrels to a non-Company trader and had shot Yale's dog after it had bitten him, Yale's temper became so unbearable that Allard packed his bags

TABLE C - SELECTED FAMILIES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

Simon Plomondon (c.1802-1900)	+ daughter of Scanewah, Cowlitz trader. (?-1836)	- <u>Sophie</u> (c.1830-?); Simon (c.1831-?); Therese (c.1831-?); Marie Anne (c.1834-?); Genevieve (c.1836-?)
	+ Emily [Finlay] Bercier (1796-c.1847)	- Lena (1837-?); Daniel (1838-?); Moysse (1840-?); Angelique (1841-?); Baptiste (c.1843-?)
	+ Louise Pelletier (c.1812-?)	- Francis (c.1849-?)
Louis Satakarata (Rabesca) (c.1794-?)	+ Native woman or women	- Louise (c.1820-1850); Louis Langley? (1828-?); Francois (c.1830-?); Therese Rabesca (?-?)
Jean Baptiste Brulez (c.1809-?)	+ Marguerite Sooke (?-?) widow	- Joseph Thomas Brulez (c.1831-1860)
James Murray Yale (1796-1871)	+ daughter of Talpe, Carrier	- no children
	+ daughter of Chief Nicamus, Quaitlin	- Eliza (c.1824-?)
	+ Native wife	- Aurelia (1839-1931); Isabella (1840-?)
Ovide Allard (1817-1874)	+ Fort Hall Native woman	- Sennie (c.1837-?)
	+ Justine, Cowichan (c. 1823-1907)	- <u>Lucie</u> (c.1842-1924); <u>Jason Ovide</u> (1848-1931); <u>Mathilde</u> (c.1851-?); <u>Laurent</u> (c.1851-1860); Eugenie (?-?); Sara (?-?); Joseph (c.1862-?); Marie (?-?)
Peeopeeh [Maillot] (c.1798-?)	+ Catherine, Kwantlen	- Algace/Paiwa (c.1824-?); Joseph Maillot (c.1826-?); Sophie (c.1830-?); Henry (?-?)
Samuel Robertson (c.1824-1897)	+ Julia Casimir (?-1884)	- Helen (c.1851-?); Mary (1853-?); Donald (1857-1887); James Lewis (1861-?)
William Cromarty (c.1814-1875)	+ Salum'mia (c.1830-c.1869)	- <u>Elizabeth</u> (1847-1883); <u>William</u> (1848-1881); <u>Ann</u> (1850-?); <u>James</u> (1853-1936); <u>David</u> (1855-1884); <u>Mary</u> (1858-1889); <u>Samuel</u> (1869-1923)
Etienne Pepin [Maille, Magice] (c.1798-?)	+ 1830 wife	- ?
	+ Uiskwin woman	- Marie (c.1835-?); Francois (c.1838-?)
	+ Isabel, Kwantlen	- Simon (1855-?)

Children born at Fort Langley are shown underlined

TABLE D – MEN WHO SPENT THREE OR MORE OUTFITS AT FORT LANGLEY,
AND MAY HAVE BEGUN, HAD, OR HAVE HAD FAMILIES.

FRENCH CANADIANS

Ovide Allard, Bazil Brousseau, Louis Delonie, Cyprien Dionne, Narcisse Fallardeau, Dominique Farron, Etienne Pepin (Magice), Francois Piette, Pierre Renard Urno, Pierre Therrien, Francois Xavier Vautrin, Augustin Willing

HAWAIIANS

George Borabora, Como, Hereea, Keahanele, Keea, Kekoa, Laowalla, Joseph Maayo, Mokowliele, Charles Ohia, Peter Ohule, Joe/John Peannau, Peeopeeh, Taheenou, TaI, Waikanoloa, Wavicareea, Robert Wavicareea

BRITISH ISLES

English: William Harkness; George Holland

Highlander Scots: Archibald McDonald, Donald Walker, Angus McPhail

Shetlander-Orcadian Scots: William Brown, William Cromarty, Gavin Hamilton, James Rendall, Samuel Robertson, James Taylor, William Yates

Irish: John Kennedy

IROQUOIS AND MIXED DESCENT

Iroquois: Thomas Atariachta, Etienne Oniaze, Louis Satakarata, Francois Xavier Tarihonga

Mixed descent: Francois Noel Annance, John Bell, Napoleon Dease, Kenneth Logan

and went to Victoria to turn in his resignation to James Douglas. A brief stint at Nanaimo allowed his son Jason to get a formal education, and after a few years of posting at Yale, Allard came back to Fort Langley where he lived out the rest of his life, dying on 2 August 1874. His son Jason Allard followed his father into the fur trade. He was of high ranking birth and retained the traditional hereditary rights within the Cowichan group. He made his mark, however, not through lineage or education but by having a cheese named after him. While he was working at the border post of Fort Shepherd he ordered 200 pounds of cheese for nearby Fort Colvile. However, a gremlin slipped an extra 0 on the order form. When 2,000 lbs. of cheese arrived on horseback at Fort Colvile, Jason was beside himself not knowing what to do with a ton of cheese. Finding the Fort Colvile warehouse full, the exasperated young clerk located some recently emptied rum barrels and, wrapping the 2,000 lbs of cheese in cloth, he sealed it in the barrels which he left outside. Over time the cheese melted and rum flavour fused into it. When his boss, Angus McDonald, tasted the cheese he was very impressed and ordered it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Word got around and soon U.S. Army officers were coming in from as much as 100 miles just to get a taste of Allard's cheese.¹⁸

Hawaiians also had families at Fort Langley, one example being Peeopeeh. Interestingly, almost 10 percent of the Sandwich Islanders mentioned as working on the Pacific slope worked at Fort Langley. Oral tradition has Peeopeeh linked to the royal family of King Kamehameha but my Hawaiian informant believes him to be of com-

mon birth, as reflected by his non-high ranking name. His endurance in the fur trade may have prompted the monarch of the Company to ask Peeopeeh to be a leader amongst the Kanakas. Peeopeeh joined the North West Company in 1817 and worked at a variety of locations before joining the HBC in 1821. He was part of the exploratory expedition and the initial building of Fort Langley at the first site, a short distance down-river from the present fort. He married a Kwantlen and raised a family possibly on the original Derby site. This would mean that he, as well as the other Hawaiian families who may have lived there, would take a canoe, walk or ride to work each day through their 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. shift. When the site where he lived was going to be taken over for the planned development of Derby, Peeopeeh pre-empted land just across the river in an area now known as Kanaka Creek. Also his son Joseph Maayo joined and briefly worked for the HBC. He too, pre-empted land and raised a family across the river. This family has gone on to spread into various communities across the Pacific Northwest.

An Orcadian Scot who nurtured a family at Fort Langley was Samuel Robertson. The Orcadians, of course, were very familiar with the fur trade. In the late 1700s, 75 percent of the workforce of the HBC was from Orkney. Robertson came from a marginal subsistence background and, like many Orcadians, had relatives in the fur trade. He was raised in a small croft cottage on a nine-acre farm at Sandwick, Orkney. In 1830 his older brother David went off to work on the Pacific slopes, returning in 1839. As the heir-apparent, David married, had a

¹⁸ Most of the Jason/Ovide Allard stories and many anecdotes of family life at Fort Langley, come through Jason Allard and should be viewed with a critical eye. A newspaper source would be Jason O. Allard's "Reminiscences," *The Province*, 25 October 1924; another would be Noel Robinson's, "Jason Allard Passes", *Museum and Art Notes*, September 1931, Vol. VI, No. 3, p.95. B.A. McKelvie's "Jason Allard: fur trader, prince and gentleman," *B.C. Historical Quarterly*, Volume IX, October 1945, No. 4., p. 243-257 and his *Fort Langley, Outpost of Empire*, Vancouver Daily Province, 1947, reflect interviews with Jason.

¹⁹ *The Victoria Gazette*, 21 July 1858, (advertisement for What Cheer House working with a James Rodgers) p.3; Laing, F.W., *Colonial Farm Settlers on the Mainland of British Columbia, 1858-1871*, Victoria, B.C., 1939, (pre-emptions, etc.) p. 98.

child, and was to take over the farm. Samuel had no choice but to leave. He came to the Pacific slopes in 1843, where his skills could be used as a boat builder and carpenter. A still younger brother, James, who also had to leave the cottage in 1847—probably squeezed out by David’s growing family—went to work in Fort Colvile and the Flatheads area but “fierce consumption” claimed him in 1852. Samuel, on the other hand, was at Fort Langley by 1847, where, for the next 11 years, he worked in carpentry and raised a family. He took as his wife Julie Casimir, the daughter of Stó:lō Chief Skah Til and so his children would naturally be in line for hereditary rights in the native community. It is not known how long he lived within the palisades of Fort Langley but, at some time, he chose to live across the river at Albion. As there were rumours that the capital of the about-to-be-formed Colony of British Columbia might be situated in nearby Derby, he built himself a combination saloon and roadhouse, “Whatcheer House” in Albion. Setting up roadhouses was not an unusual activity for former HBC employees. In 1858, three things happened. The Colony of British Columbia was formed with its temporary capital at Fort Langley, Samuel Robertson retired, and on 7 February 1858, he took out a pre-emption claim on his land in Albion, where he was to stay for the rest of his

life. In 1860, he dismantled “Whatcheer House” and reconstructed it upriver at the palisades of Fort Langley as “The British Columbia Liquor Company,” a not-altogether unpretentious name, meant to capture the trade of the thirsty miners passing through. Samuel continued to farm in Albion, importing fruit trees from Scotland and grafting hardier varieties onto crab-apple trees. Both he and his wife were buried at Fort Langley.¹⁹

Many others, some recorded, some not, went on to raise families, or at least we suspect, raise families (see table D). The following generation often stayed on and pre-empted land.

CONCLUSION

We can conclude from this that family life did indeed bustle around Fort Langley. These families grew out of Company necessity and Native alliances. The wives and families anchored the “fur traders” at least to the cultural areas of their wives, if not the very post itself. The families existed in a ranked structure and if you were of the privileged or educated rank, your children were lucky to receive education. Families endured and went on to help shape the province and northern states of the Pacific Northwest. In fact, people from different parts of the world today can trace their family roots back to Fort Langley. ~

The Keepers of the Journals



Courtesy Mrs. Margaret Johns

Above: *George Barnston, keeper of the journal for the years 1827 and 1828. Mrs. Margaret Johns is a great-granddaughter of George Barnston.*

The first Fort Langley journals kept by George Barnston, James McMillan and Archibald McDonald have miraculously survived and are in the British Columbia Archives. Copies made for each year are in the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg.

GEORGE BARNSTON kept the journal from 27 June 1827 when the founding party left Fort Vancouver until 27 February 1828, and he made the copy for that year. A well educated, energetic man, he had joined the North West Company in 1820, but was disappointed at his lack of advancement after the amalgamation of that company with the Hudson’s Bay Company. In spite of a hasty resignation, he rejoined the company and served in several posts east of the Rockies. Eventually he achieved the rank of chief factor and enjoyed a long retirement in Montreal where he played an active role in the Natural History Society. This interest originated with his meeting with David Douglas at Fort Vancouver in 1826.

JAMES McMILLAN is the founder of Fort Langley. James joined the North West Company about 1802. He served in the Saskatchewan district, travelled with David Thompson, and was at various posts on the Pacific slope for a decade before the amalgamation. Governor George Simpson was most impressed with his physical stamina and his management skills. This ensured his promotion to the rank of chief factor. After founding Fort Langley he was put in charge of establishing a large experimental farm at Red River where the management skills required were very different and he ended his career in charge of the Lake of Two Mountains district.

More about ARCHIBALD McDONALD on the following pages.

Archibald McDonald's Fort Langley Letters

by Jean Murray Cole

ARCHIBALD McDonald's Fort Langley letters form part of a much larger collection of correspondence that covers twenty-four years of history in the Pacific northwest—years that began with the merger of the Hudson's Bay and the North West companies in 1821 and ended when McDonald retired to the east in 1844, the year after the building of Fort Victoria. This too was the time that the boundary negotiations were going on, leading up to the signing of the Oregon Treaty in 1846, which resulted in the total revamping of the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Columbia district.

These were important—if neglected—years in the history of the Pacific slope. In the quarter century that McDonald spent there, the Hudson's Bay Company's Columbia district embraced all the lands west of the mountains from New Caledonia and the upper Fraser river to California. His correspondence touches on all activities and developments throughout the region, and he played an active role in—or at least was a knowledgeable observer of—all the major events during those years. The McDonald letters are significant in that they provide a broad and perceptive picture of that time.

McDonald, born in Glencoe, Scotland, first came to North America in 1812 at age 22. He was a protege of Lord Selkirk, and brought the second largest group of settlers to the Red River colony. During the years that followed he was much involved in the ups and downs of that contentious enterprise. In fact his reputation as a scribe might be dated back to those Red River days. His published accounts of events at the colony became an important element in what Dr. W.S. Wallace later called "the paper controversy over the Selkirk settlement."

In 1820, when Lord Selkirk was near death in France, his visions for the Red River settlement shattered, McDonald sought a more hopeful future, and joined the Hudson's Bay Company. He spent his first season in the Athabasca district, along with another new company recruit, George Simpson, just arrived from London. Negotiations for the merger of the two trading companies were

already going on back in England and Simpson was expected to apply his London mercantile experience when the new organization took form. He came under the patronage of Andrew Wedderburn Colvile, who had assumed greater prominence on the Hudson's Bay Company London committee after the withdrawal of Lord Selkirk, his brother-in-law.

It was not until Simpson returned from Athabasca to Norway House in June 1821 that he learned that the merger agreement had been signed three months earlier and he was to be governor of the Northern region. He decided then to send McDonald west of the mountains to look over the North West Company posts. These had suddenly become part of the domain of the Hudson's Bay Company, who until then had had no presence in the Columbia district.

Thus McDonald, who arrived over land at the mouth of the Columbia river early in November 1821 with Chief Trader John Lee Lewes, became one of the first two Hudson's Bay men west of the mountains. They found a large contingent of Nor'Westers scattered throughout the region, and in the succeeding months McDonald met them all, as he went about from the headquarters at Fort George to the other three existing posts at Okanagan, Spokane and Walla Walla. His detailed report back to Simpson included inventories of all the forts, which revealed extravagances and reliance on European goods not at all to the governor's liking.

Within two short years Simpson himself appeared in the Columbia, where he spent the winter of 1824-25, completely reorganizing the affairs of the district. Before he left in the spring of 1825 he moved the headquarters sixty miles up the Columbia river from Fort George (Astoria) to the new Fort Vancouver, he ordered the building of Fort Colvile up river at Kettle Falls to replace Spokane, and at the same time he appointed McDonald to take over the Thompson river district. This was a significant move as it was decided that the New Caledonia furs from the north would from then on be shipped south to Fort Vancouver, rather than carried east through the mountains as they had been before. Kamloops

Writer-historian Jean Murray Cole, a former journalist, has written numerous books, monographs and articles on the history of Peterborough County and on the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest. Jean Cole is a direct descendant of Archibald McDonald.

and Okanagan, the two Thompson river posts, were a key link in this new trade route, their role not being only to trade for furs with the local Natives, but also to provide the horses and rations—mostly of dried salmon—for the southward bound New Caledonia fur brigades.

This was a change that gave McDonald a degree of independence and freedom that was not possible at headquarters, especially as John McLoughlin took over the helm when the governor departed. Okanagan was the main post for the district, but McDonald spent most months of the year at the winter house at Kamloops between 1826 and 1828. It was here that he again took up his pen and began to keep the fort journals and letter books that he carried on at his later postings at Fort Langley and Fort Colvile. Colvile was located a short distance below what later became the border.

What gives distinction and interest to McDonald's writing—and particularly to his letters—is his frankness, and the fullness of his accounts of what was going on. Brevity was not his long suit. Unlike McLoughlin at headquarters, and James McMillan, who preceded him at Fort Langley, both of whom wrote briefly and to the point, McDonald enjoyed writing at length and had a considerable talent at it. The originality of his literary style, his candid observations and his ironic wit, especially when writing informally to old friends, are both entertaining and illuminating.

A few examples show how his letters broaden our understanding beyond the more businesslike content of the journals. In correspondence the tone shifts subtly, sometimes conveying a slightly different picture from the official record. McDonald spent four and a half years at Fort Langley. The surviving post journals end in the summer of 1830 and the existing fort letter book ends with the summer of 1831, but there are long personal letters to Edward Ermatinger and John McLeod that carry on to record events through 1832 and 1833.

The letters to Ermatinger are particularly significant because the first, written in March 1830, marks the beginning of this rich annual correspondence which continued until 1846, when McDonald was settled in retirement near Montreal. To Ermatinger, an old fur trade friend who had retired to a business career in Upper Canada after 1829, McDonald confided his hopes and dreams; he gossiped about their former colleagues;

he reported on all aspects of affairs in the fur trade—good or ill; he discussed political affairs in the east where he planned to live in his own retirement; and he revealed his true nature when he talked about his beloved wife and the children, "the greatest treasure I have."

In his Fort Colvile years—1833 to 1844—McDonald's personal correspondence expanded greatly—although it was always extensive. Writing to John McLeod from Langley in February 1831 he mentioned casually that McLeod's recent letter was one of thirty-two private letters that "came to hand five days ago via Puget Sound after a march of 11 weeks thro different tribes between Vancouver and this." Only a handful of these 32 correspondents turn up in the collection of several hundred letters I have gathered together. As always, the historical documentation is fragmentary and thus the picture is incomplete. If he had preserved his incoming mail, McDonald would have been unable to carry it back east when he retired. What remains to us was kept by the recipients and found its way into our own archival institutions and others such as the library of Kew Gardens, the British Museum, Scottish archives, and the missionary papers in the Beinecke Library at Yale. It is enough to tell us a great deal.

At Colvile there were new friends, not just old fur trade cronies, but also letters to scientists who shared his interest in natural history and for whom he gathered specimens of plants and animals to ship back to the British Museum and Kew Gardens; and there are many to the missionaries—both protestant and Roman Catholic—who located in the vicinity. As in the Fort Langley years there are confiding letters to colleagues like Peter Skene Ogden and Frank Ermatinger in the Columbia, a counterpoint to official, more deferential correspondence with McLoughlin and Simpson. And there are revealing letters of instruction to subordinates that demonstrate vividly the reality of the hierarchy of the Hudson's Bay Company.

In his first year on the Fraser river McDonald felt totally isolated. He arrived with a flourish in the entourage of Governor Simpson, fresh from the fellowship of the annual meeting of the Northern Council at York Factory.¹ After a few days the travelling party moved on to Fort Vancouver without him, taking Langley's former chief James McMillan with them. From that day in October 1828 until the following summer, McDonald did not hear a word from McLoughlin

at headquarters—although he himself sent messages up the river “by means of the Indians” to Okanagan in February, hoping they would be forwarded down to Fort Vancouver—and a month later despatched a strong party led by James Yale and Francis Annance to Puget Sound to find a “trusty Indian” to carry another packet of letters down via the Cowlitz.

When the company ship (*Cadboro*) arrived with the year’s outfit in July 1829 the captain (Aemelius Simpson) delivered McLoughlin’s first letter. It contained an account of the sinking of the *William and Ann*, the Hudson’s Bay supply ship from England, with the loss of all hands—and the year’s trade goods—at the mouth of the Columbia that spring. It explained the more recent silence, but that fall McDonald—mindful of “the doctor’s short notes”—determined to go to Fort Vancouver himself to have first hand discussions with his chief about the management of Fort Langley.

We all have a picture of McLoughlin. We have seen the stern portraits, the wild hair, the rather forbidding countenance, and it is clear from his letters, and from accounts of some of the more notable instances of his differences of opinion with his associates, that affability was not his style. Writing in March 1830 to his friend Edward Ermatinger, who had served as McLoughlin’s accountant during his first years in the Columbia and knew him well, McDonald gives a highly personal picture of the Fort Vancouver scene during his fall visit:

“We all seem in the dumps with each other since you left us. At Vancouver I remained 12 days & then was heartily glad to be off. Never was the poor Dr. half so much tormented in his life: [J.E.] Harriot who came out of New Caledonia with a mad wife was his second & accomptant—Dr. [Richard] Hamblyn, his trader & man of business among pork, molasses &c and looking after the women—Squire [John Warren] Dease a kind of volunteer that went down in poor health &, Fort Vancouver being rather an unfinished garrison, [was] dissatisfied with all the marks of distinction shown him as next senior officer of the Honbl Company—and poor [James] McDougall had quite enough to do to look after his crutches—this is a kind of picture of the scene. But when I tell you that he [the Dr.] & the first two were hardly on speaking terms & that something worse existed between him & the third you will be astonished. Saying this much to you I say more than I have said to many; I have noth-

ing against the Dr., on the contrary we are the same good friends as heretofore, & I know he is harassed, but I also know Edward that he is himself the cause of much of his trouble & unhappiness...”

This lapse was not repeated, and you will not find it in the journals, although years later when McLoughlin’s son was murdered at Stikine, the resulting scandal so deranged the father that letters flew back and forth amongst virtually all of his officers complaining of his irrational behaviour. These letters are well documented in fur trade literature. Nevertheless, McDonald remained loyal and never forgot the difficulties under which McLoughlin laboured.

McLoughlin had taken command of the Columbia in 1825 just at the time that the fur trade was beginning to decline, and when growing American interest west of the mountains meant greater competition. American ships from Boston sailed up and down the Pacific coast trying to pick up from the Natives what furs there were before they got to the Hudson’s Bay forts. In spite of the decline in demand back in Britain, with the popularity of the silk hat replacing that of the once requisite beaver, there was constant pressure to keep the returns up to previous standards.

As early as 1826, McDonald had explored and mapped the Thompson river region with the help of the Okanagan chief Nicolas. He reported to McLoughlin then that the beaver were “incredibly scarce” in the interior, and he expected they would “fall far short of last year’s Returns.” A few months later he wrote to Simpson that “A person can walk for days together without seeing the smallest quadruped, the little brown squirrel excepted.”

With the Boston ships in mind, the London committee provided more ships to trade along the coast. In 1829 Captain Aemelius Simpson brought the *Cadboro* to Fort Langley, but had little in the way of trade goods to do any bartering around the straits or on his expedition to the northward. The following year McDonald’s letters are full of the news of the two schooners (the *Cadboro* and the *Vancouver*) and the brig *Ea-*

¹*Peace River, A Canoe Voyage from Hudson’s Bay to the Pacific*, McDonald’s journal of that trip west, was published in 1872, edited by Malcolm McLeod, and reprinted by Cole’s (1970) and Hurtig (1971).

Below: Archibald McDonald took charge of Fort Langley when he arrived with the Simpson expedition in October 1828. He took on the task of keeping the journal and made copies for 1828–29 and 1829–30. He was well suited to the changes brought about by Simpson in 1824 and was put in charge of Fort Colvile where he managed a large farm so successfully that he was made a chief factor. His informative reports and the many letters that have survived are a boon to historians.

Courtesy Jean Murray Cole



gle that arrived at the Fraser river, bringing the outfit in to Fort Langley, and picking up the large quantity of pickled and dried salmon that had been traded and processed at the fort. At the same time Captain Simpson took Peter Skene Ogden up the coast to establish Fort Simpson, the new post at the Nass river, and managed to do enough trading in the Sound and along the coast to severely cut into the number of furs that Americans managed to gather in. After the 1831 season McDonald was able to report to John McLeod, back in Labrador, "Here we got rid of our opposition, a very fortunate circumstance [resulting in] a considerable increase in trade. Fort Langley this year is up from 1400 to 2500 Beaver—[and] the Tariff rose from one to two skins the 2 1/2 pt. blanket."

McDonald wrote much, too, about the development of the fishery which was expected to make up for declining profits on furs. He was an enthusiastic participant, though he quickly realized that the Cowichans were so skilled at bringing in the salmon that there was no point in training his own men to do it. He found that in ten days in 1829, he was able to trade a total of 7,544 fish averaging six pounds each for about 14 pounds worth of trade goods. The following year the Natives brought in 15,000 fresh salmon between 25 August and 15 September in return for the equivalent in goods of 30 pounds.

His biggest worry was making enough sound barrels, and while his carpenter tried valiantly to fill the need they were far from the ideal. Over and over he begged McLoughlin to send him a skilled cooper. "They say a cooper is come across to me, but we saw nothing of him as yet," he wrote to John McLeod in February 1831. "In consequence of my casks last year losing the pickle, the Dr. sent nine of them to market, but sent his own & kept ours for home consumption, so the end is always answered." The same year he shipped 10,000 hand hewn dressed cedar shingles to Vancouver, hoping to expand timber exports too.

Dependency on the native population—both for the salmon fishery and for trade in furs—aside from their helpfulness in carrying messages and acting as guides on exploratory trips—made amicable relations with the Natives of the region of uppermost importance. As is amply discussed in the Journals, and in different versions in McDonald's letters, this was not always easy at Fort Langley, complicated as it was by the feuding amongst the various families and among the

tribes themselves. Life at Langley was sometimes rather precarious as a result, and McDonald was ever aware of the need for a strong—if in our eyes small—complement of men at the fort. Friendly intercourse with the local tribes was essential.

Unfortunately the local tribes were frequently victims of attacks from the more aggressive "Yewcultas" (Lekwiltoks) from the Gulf of Georgia, and on occasion the visitors engaged travelling HBC parties in crossfire too. Accounts in the Journals describe these in some detail for official perusal. In letters he sums it up more succinctly.

One instance, in March 1830, clerks James Yale and Francis Annance, returning to Fort Langley from Puget Sound with a party of ten men, were ambushed near the mouth of the Fraser by a fleet of canoes manned by an estimated 240 Natives. By clever manoeuvring "with the flag up and a cheerful song" the small boat rushed on. Finding themselves blocked by a semicircle of nine war canoes each with about 30 men, some firing their guns, the Langley party, numbering 12, put to shore. Somehow in the confusion they "rendered the position taken so formidable to the bloodthirsty villains that in about 15 minutes the whole Brigade of not an Indian under 240 was repulsed, and down the main branch and out into the open gulf before our party reembarked."

This is a brief summary of McDonald's report on the affair to Governor and Northern Council. His letter goes on to say: "Tis most fortunate that none of our people was hurt; nor can we say, with the exception of Mr. Annance and his rifle shot, our small guns are likely to have made very great execution among the Natives. The Blunderbusses if they did not carry their length at least made a noise." Even McDonald wondered whether the Natives actually "had a fixed design on the Establishment" or whether they "merely came to catch what they could."

When Yale was sent to headquarters a few months later McDonald's written instructions advised caution. "With your small force of six men, you ought not to throw yourself much in the way of the Whidbey Island Indians or indeed any tribes along the Sound," he warned.

The incidents are innumerable—and impossible to go into at any length here. One of the important aspects of the correspondence is not just the descriptions of events, but McDonald's references to the people involved in them. The

officers and clerks get frequent mention in fur trade literature, but seldom are personal references to the other men on the fort to be found. Over the years, not just at Fort Langley, but often serving with McDonald at other forts in his charge, many of these rugged servants of the company take on a persona. They become real people with distinctive characteristics, with a family life and normal human qualities.

Just one example—and this one is from Fort Colvile. Early in the summer of 1842 Canote Umphreville—“a good and faithful servant of 31 years standing in the Columbia,” the most experienced of all the Columbia river guides, was steering the boats from Colvile down to Fort Vancouver as he had done six times a year as long as anyone there could remember. His son, young Canote, his son-in-law Pierre Martineau and David Flett, McDonald’s personal servant, were with him when they capsized in the “overwhelming whirlpools” at the Dalles near Fort Okanagan, and all but young Umphreville drowned, along with two of the paddlers.

Writing to Sir William Jackson Hooker, director of Kew Gardens, McDonald explained: “These mighty vortexes are of such a nature that one boat is swallowed down when others a few minutes after pass in perfect safety.” To Archibald McKinlay at nearby Walla Walla, he was more emotional. “Excuse me if I don’t write more ... the lamentable tale you will have heard has thrown me into a painful state of mind—My Guide, My Miller, & My Own Servant gone!!!” His heart went out too to Martineau’s widow: “What a sad blow poor Martineau’s wife has sustained within the short space of three days—after she lost her father, her husband, and nearly her brother, her only boy of just six years old was killed here on the spot by the rolling down upon him of one of our fence rails while in the act of climbing over it.”

We sometimes forget that most of the men who were attached to permanent posts during this time had wives and children. A fort was like a small village and the children grew up together. Most of them quite naturally married the sons and daughters of other Hudson’s Bay employees and family inter-relationships were the norm. Alexander Kennedy reported in 1824 that all of the 37 men at Fort George had wives and there were 35 children in all; at Kamloops in McDonald’s time 11 of the 15 men had wives and there were 17 children at the fort in 1827; at

Langley, in 1830, all of the 18 men were married and they had a total of 11 children.

McDonald’s own family was a favourite subject, especially in letters to Edward Ermatinger. Ranald, his firstborn son, was orphaned when his mother, Princess Raven, daughter of the Chinook chief Comcomly, died soon after his birth in 1824. The following year McDonald wed—“in the custom of the country”—Jane Klyne, daughter of the Jasper House postmaster Michel Klyne and his native born wife Susanne Lafrance. This marriage, which was solemnized in a Church of England ceremony at Red River 10 years later, produced 12 sons and one daughter, so throughout the years in the Columbia there was always a tumble of children in the household.

In the Fort Langley years McDonald ran what he described to Ermatinger as a “thriving school” with Jane at the head of the class—an “excellent scholar” as he said—and the little boys learning to read by the New Testament, and beginning their “Copy” in their sixth year. Jane arrived at Langley on the *Cadboro* in July 1829 with Ranald and her own two sons, and two more were born during their years there. She soon progressed sufficiently to become the teacher herself and her husband spoke proudly of her to Ermatinger. “You have always her good wishes; every letter I begin she gives a peep over my shoulder and asks if it is for le petit amis. I say no, and the reply is ‘then you’ll be forgetting him & saying you have no time when all the others are served’—this I do assure you is a true bill.”

Later, at Fort Colvile, where five more sons were born, including the much-adored twins Donald and James, McDonald again describes the scene about him as he is writing to his friend: “Were you at this moment to see them [the twins], assisted by an elder brother going on five years who thinks himself amazingly wise with tables, chairs, sofas, cushions, tongs, broomsticks, cats, dogs and all other imaginable things they can lay their hands on strewed about me, you would say ‘tis a delightful confusion, & then exclaim ‘McDonald, how the deuce can you write with such a racket about you.’” And then he went on to apologise for taking up space with such trivia. “Did I not know that I was addressing himself an indulgent father, I would not presume to dwell quite so long on the subject.”

More of the twins’ mischief is revealed in one of the many letters to Rev. Elkanah Walker, one

of the New England missionaries who established the Tshimakain mission 60 miles south of Colvile. These families provided Jane's first contact with white women and she was invited to become one of their Columbia Maternal Association, the first women's group west of the mountains. Their records included the names and birthdates of all the members' children, and in March 1842 McDonald wrote to his neighbour with a "strange request."

"Will you have the goodness to tell the doctor [Marcus Whitman] that we would much wish to have from Mrs. [William H.] Gray the age of our children... The fact is, the two little chaps, when their mother was indisposed last season [birth of son Samuel], took a wonderful liking to Books and pictures & behold, the leaf with the names in the prayer book disappeared."

Back at Fort Langley, on a cold December night in 1830, McDonald had recorded his own gene-

alogy, writing down the names and dates of all his 12 brothers and sisters and their marriage partners—and tracing his ancestry generations back to Alan Dubh, who fought with Montrose in 1645. His father Angus had been at Culloden, his grandfather John, as a child, had escaped to the hills from the massacre at Glencoe in 1692. In his methodical way he wanted to keep the record up to date.

The McDonald letters are full of such treasures and these are but a sampling of the subjects discussed in them. Whether discoursing on the fur trade and its players, the native people, the missionaries, the plant gatherers, the Oregon settlers—or even political affairs in the east—whose newspapers he perused with great avidity whenever he could lay his hands on them—, McDonald had opinions on them all and his correspondence lets us look upon the scene from a different window. ~

From the BC Archives:



Gary Mitchell, Provincial Archivist, whose roots are firmly planted in Fort Langley, has selected for this issue a 1901 photograph by an unknown photographer showing Jason Allard (on horseback) and Chief Casimir of the Kwantlen, in front of the old Hudson's Bay Company trading post at Fort Langley. The building is the only surviving original structure at Fort Langley Historic Site. It was built around 1840, after the fire.

The Apprenticeship of James Murray Yale

by Yvonne Mearns Klan

IF we think of Yale at all, we probably think of a cantankerous, anti-social little man whose only pleasures derived from watching Fort Langley prosper and sniping at James Douglas. This is a fairly reasonable assessment of Yale—he was a man who could not forgive and would never forget.

James Murray Yale was born about 1798. According to family history, his father drowned in 1805, his mother abandoned him, remarried and went to Scotland. A Colonel James Murray, who was a friend of Colin Robertson, fostered Yale. Robertson had been a clerk with the North West Company and could never understand why the Hudson's Bay Company didn't use their geographic advantage to wrest a share of the rich Athabasca trade from the Nor'Westers.

When Robertson left the Nor'Westers he approached the Bay's London Committee. He told them of the enormous profits the Nor'Westers reaped by making "a voyage of 4 months to purchase beaver at the threshold of your doors." He recalled the Bay's past feeble efforts to penetrate Athabasca, all of which ended in humiliating defeat when the mighty Nor'Westers drove them out of the country.

Robertson put forth a proposal for establishing Athabasca, which was revolutionary in that it had no place for servants recruited from Britain. In Montreal Robertson would hire voyageurs—those hardworking, colourful Canadians on whose backs the success of the North West Company was founded. He would recruit French-speaking officers, ex-Nor'Westers who had survived northern winters and who knew how to manage the volatile voyageurs.

The London Committee engaged Robertson to carry out his plans and in 1815 he was in Montreal putting together the Bay's Athabasca Expedition. One day he visited his friend Colo-

nel Murray, met Yale, and took him on as apprentice clerk.

The Nor'Westers were determined to put down once and for all the bothersome English forays into Athabasca. This contest would be particularly ugly, pitting brother against brother, comrade against comrade. Some partners resigned rather than engage in the struggle. Simon Fraser refused to go but was threatened with dire financial consequences if he didn't. John McLoughlin was Colin Robertson's good friend and absolutely refused a posting to Athabasca. The partners huffed that his behaviour was irresponsible, but allowed him a different posting, possibly because they feared he might join Robertson's cause.

In May 1815, Yale and Robertson embarked with the Bay's Athabasca brigade, which comprised two partners, 18

clerks, 140 voyageurs, 7 Native hunters and 20 canoes.

Near Lake Winnipeg Robertson encountered a group of terrified Selkirk settlers who were fleeing from their homes. The Metis had killed their cattle, torched their crops and threatened their lives. They implored Robertson to take charge of the colony's affairs, so he reluctantly gave command of the expedition to John Clarke, an impetuous, swashbuckling 33-year-old who had joined the Nor'Westers in 1800 and had served in the Mackenzie, Athabasca and Peace River districts.

At Lake Winnipeg two more clerks joined the expedition: George McDougall, whose brother James was a Nor'Wester in New Caledonia, and Roderick McKenzie, who kept the only journal of the expedition. Yale for the first time witnessed a clash between the companies at Cumberland House, where the Nor'Wester's fort was managed by William Connolly. One of the Baymen had deserted and Clarke suspected Connolly was harbouring him. He confronted Connolly, a

Yvonne Klan has published several articles on BC history and is currently working on a biography of James Murray Yale.



Courtesy BC Archives

Centre: *Portrait of James Murray Yale. 1860s.*
Unknown Photographer.

melee erupted, and, McKenzie recorded: "Mr. Clarke drew his pistol and would probably have blown Mister Connolly's brains out had I not taken it." The combatants allowed themselves to be separated and each faction retired claiming victory.

After leaving Cumberland House the brigade was overtaken by Simon Fraser. It was an awkward moment—Clarke and Fraser were former comrades. Nonetheless Fraser hovered around the brigade for the remainder of the journey, trying to coax Clarke's men to desert, but with little success.

On 2 October, 19 weeks after leaving Montreal, officers and men spruced up, the voyageurs chorused a rousing song and with Hudson's Bay Company flags flying, the brigade swept past the Nor'Westers' Fort Chipewyan in grand style.

But the Nor'Westers had prepared for them and had stationed men around the entrance to Lake Athabasca to keep Natives away from the Baymen. If the Natives resisted the Nor'Westers seized their furs and game, beat them, and/or imprisoned them.

By 4 October, two days after they arrived, Clarke was out of food. His fishers and hunters had no success and no Indian dared help him. The country could not sustain so many men, so Clarke sent small groups to outlying areas. McKenzie, the journal keeper, remained at Athabasca Lake to build Fort Wedderburn; and Clarke led Yale, 7 other officers and 48 men up the Peace River to Fort Vermilion, 320 miles away. They had no food, depending on their hunters and any Indians they might meet along the way.

Clarke had served four years at Fort Vermilion and was confident the Indians would swing their allegiance to him. Now the fort was in charge of William McIntosh, described as "a cold-blooded, black-hearted, revengeful Man...capable of anything that is bad...cruel and tyrannical without honour or integrity." McIntosh and Clarke had once been brigade companions. Now they would meet as enemies. But at Athabasca Lake the Nor'Westers got wind of Clarke's plans and sent a clerk to warn upriver posts of his approach. The Nor'Westers' clerk soon overtook Clarke's scrawny voyageurs and though he was shocked by their "meagre emaciated appearance," he nevertheless ordered his men to drive game and Natives away from the hungry Baymen.

Clarke knew that unless he got ahead of the Nor'Wester his men would starve. He left his

slow-moving brigade in charge of Yale and the other young officers, and took George McDougall and the strongest voyageurs in two canoes to try to out-race the Nor'Wester. But his paddlers were too weak; he fell further behind. By the time he reached Fort Vermilion McIntosh had cleared all Natives from the area and was keeping watch on his men to make sure they didn't give their starving countrymen a few morsels of their rations.

For days Clarke and his men lived on rose hips while they waited for Yale's brigade. They eventually found a camp of Natives but they refused to help. This is what they said:

We are afraid. The North West says you are not strong, you have only two canoes and no goods, that they will soon drive you away and those who assist the English now will have no ammunition from the Nor West Company when you are gone so we and our children will be pitiful...we like the English but we are still more fond of our children, and you are not strong enough for the North West Company.

To get the Natives' assistance Clarke had to show them the full strength of his expedition, so he sent McDougall down river to meet Yale's long-overdue brigade, load three of its best canoes with trading goods and the strongest men, and to hasten back with them. The weakest men were to return immediately to Fort Wedderburn. Clerks Yale and Cook were to stay at Wabasca River and take charge of the remaining men and property.

But Yale's brigade was in desperate trouble. The young clerks, Yale and Cook, could not control the starving men. When the hunter bagged some game he shared only with clerk Cook. These worthies then offered to sell bits of meat to their colleagues. The guide challenged them, saying if the food wasn't shared equally the others would help themselves. Cook cocked his rifle, and said he'd kill them if they tried. Too feeble and demoralized to paddle on, Yale's brigade camped at Wabasca River, where McDougall found them.

But far from proceeding with all haste, as ordered, McDougall opened the rum kegs and, as Yale reported, "remained a number of days, during which time McDougall and men were in a continual state of intoxication."

When the hungover men pulled themselves together the weakest paddled off to Fort Wedderburn, McDougall led a brigade to Fort Vermilion, and Yale's group huddled around their fires in the shrivelling cold.

The next day McDougall's canoes were caught by ice, forcing the men to continue on foot. They had walked 75 km when starvation forced them to halt. A party of Nor'Westers camped beside them but refused to give them provisions unless McDougall signed over the men's contracts and all the company property, including that at Wabasca River. To save his men McDougall agreed.

Meanwhile, back at Fort Vermilion, Clarke was in a fever of anxiety. Where was McDougall? Had everyone turned back to Fort Wedderburn? He set out in search of his lost men and came upon what was left of McDougall's camp; one of the voyageurs had died, and the Nor'Westers had taken all the property and ambulatory men. Clarke delivered a blistering rebuke to McDougall then hurried on to Yale's camp where he found Yale and all hands "reduced to the very last extremity." Three more voyageurs died.

Shortly after the latest death McIntosh arrived with provisions to collect his booty. But Clarke refused to give up anything, whereupon McIntosh—in front of the starving men—began throwing lumps of pemmican to his dogs. Incoherent with hatred, Clarke and McIntosh bawled insults at each other and exchanged shots. But in the end Clarke too, was obliged to give up the property to save his men. He led a group back to Fort Wedderburn but Yale was too weak for the trek and was taken by the Nor'Westers to Fort Vermilion.

Meanwhile, two scrawny men from the group of weak voyageurs arrived at Fort Wedderburn. They told McKenzie that half a day after they left Wabasca River their canoes became icebound, forcing them to walk to Athabasca Lake some 300 km away. The men broke into tears as they told of starvation and death and said if Mr. McDougall had sent them off immediately as he was supposed to everyone would have reached safety. They thought other survivors might be on their way. McKenzie was in a quandary. The one man he had in the fort didn't know the country, and he had only ten fish in his larder. Much as he hated to, he asked Simon Fraser for help. Fraser immediately ordered one of his men to take a sled-full of provisions and guide McKenzie's man in a search. They found three corpses but evidence of cannibalism filled them with such horror they abandoned the search. Sixteen people died of starvation in the Bay's 1815-16 Athabasca Campaign.

At the end of the season Yale returned from Fort Vermilion seething with fury. "The indignities I received from Wm. McIntosh," he fumed, were "so numerous and of so unhuman a nature that they surpass my knowledge to explain."

And George McDougall, smarting from Clarke's rebukes, made his way to Fort St. James in New Caledonia to join his brother as a Nor'Wester. Thus ended Yale's first winter as a fur trader.

Nor'Westers and Baymen alike agreed that Clarke should not have gone up the Peace River without provisions. He was a former Nor'Wester, schooled in the ruthless techniques of fur trade wars, and should have known what to expect. Robertson, the architect of the Athabasca Campaign, learned of the disaster and lamented "Poor Clarke has dreadfully mismanaged the business. I cannot write him—indeed I cannot think of him without pain."

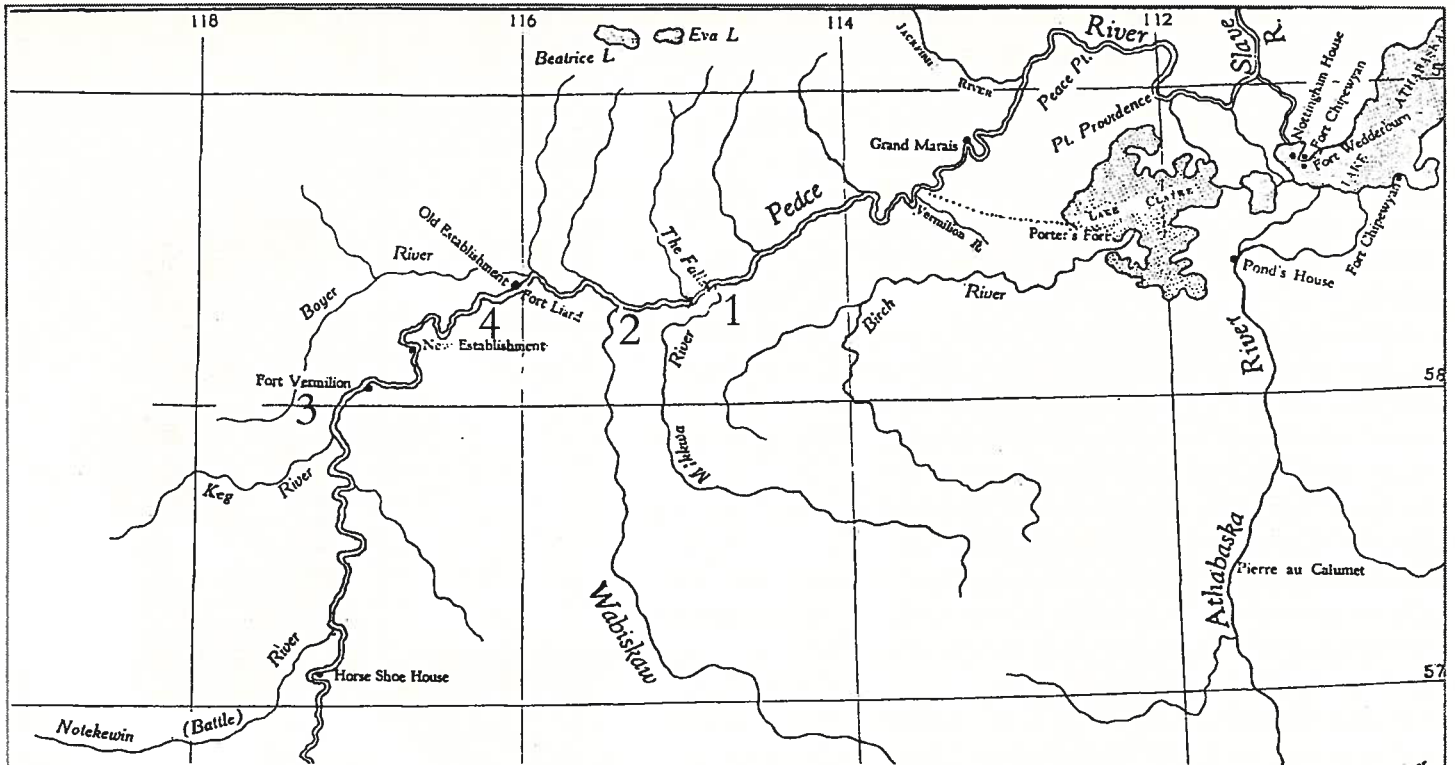
London officials, as yet unaware of the failure, were shipping outfits for 1816-17, "trusting that Mr. Clarke's party have at last established themselves in a respectable manner."

And in Montreal Lord Selkirk was recruiting a brigade of reinforcements for Athabasca. The reinforcements would enable Clarke to firmly entrench himself, and to establish posts on the Peace River. At break-up Clarke paddled to the depot at Lake Winnipeg to pick up his 1816-17 outfit and his reinforcements. However due to calamities in Selkirk's colony, Lord Selkirk decided he needed the brigade to transport his military settlers to Red River. He undertook to pay the brigade's expenses out of his own pocket and therefore, he reasoned, "I must be allowed to employ them to the best advantage." He assured London that except for the "unavoidable delay"



Courtesy The Langley Times. Photo by Rob Newell.

"...Fraser hovered around the brigade for the remainder of the journey, trying to coax Clarke's men to desert..." Simon Fraser's well-known face appears on the screen as Yvonne Klan speaks at Fort Langley about "most wanton and atrocious acts of unparalleled cruelty."



Detail of a map from J.N. Wallace, *The Wintering Parties on Peace River from the Earlier Records to the Union in 1821, with a Summary of the Dunvegan Journal, 1806*. Ottawa, 1929.

1. Here the clerk from Fort Chip overtook and passed Clarke and here Clarke and McDougall parted with the main brigade.
2. Yale and the rest of the brigade camped here too weak to proceed further.
3. At Fort Vermilion Clarke tried unsuccessfully to recruit Natives while he waited for Yale's brigade to catch up with him.
4. Approximates the spot where McDougall, after leaving Yale's brigade and returning to Clarke, was found to camp, unable to go further due to starvation.

in forwarding goods and reinforcements to Athabasca, the Bay would sustain no loss. He was quite wrong. Without reinforcements Clarke would hardly be able to hold his own, let alone establish the Peace River.

Outfit 1816-17 was Yale's second year. This year the Nor'Westers sent Partner Archibald Norman McLeod to take charge of Athabasca. (McLeod Lake is named after him.) He and Clarke had once been Peace River colleagues. Now McLeod was returning armed with papers appointing him Justice of the Peace and a fierce determination to drive Clarke out of the country. He soon overtook Clarke's returning brigade, poured a torrent of invective over Clarke, stormed ahead to Athabasca Lake, and loudly proclaimed to all that he had not come to trifle. Simon Fraser, he grumbled, had been "entirely too lenient" last winter.

Justice McLeod terrified the Natives and toyed with the Baymen as a cat toys with mice. He'd send his bullies over to insult the Baymen and when the inevitable donnybrook erupted he called court. The Baymen, of course, were always found to be guilty and were fined, or put in irons

or imprisoned. Yale was a frequent victim, charged variously with "disturbing the peace," "escaping arrest," or "being insolent to one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace."

Clarke later sent Yale to winter at Pierre au Calumet, a provisioning post on the Athabasca River. Directly across the river stood the Nor'Westers post in charge of John Stuart. (Stuart had been Simon Fraser's second-in-command in New Caledonia and had voyaged down the Fraser River with him. Stuart Lake and Stuart River were named after him). This wily veteran kept all Natives away from the Baymen and there was no trade in furs or provisions. In January 1817 Yale, looking forward to a bit of revelry, set off for the bright lights of Fort Wedderburn, unaware, as he was mushing northward, that the Justice was crippling the Athabasca Campaign. The Justice had learned that Lord Selkirk had captured the Nor'Westers Fort William and retaliated by seizing Fort Wedderburn and keeping its men and officers under house arrest. He would keep Clarke imprisoned at Fort Chip until all the Baymen surrendered all their arms. Clarke immediately wrote to his clerks, ordering them to give their

arms to the Nor'Westers. He warned them "If you do not obey this order you will become personally responsible for a penalty of fifteen hundred pounds." Needless to say, the clerks quickly complied. Clarke was released but kept under house arrest at Fort Wedderburn along with the rest of the Baymen. When Yale arrived from Pierre au Calumet for a bit of socializing he was promptly seized and thrown in with his colleagues.

Clarke brooded over his defeat and began planning an attack on Fort Chip. Most of the officers—now without arms—considered this sheer foolhardiness but Yale, ever ready for action, supported the idea. The Justice learned of Clarke's plans and his wrath struck like a thunderbolt. The Nor'Westers stormed Fort Wedderburn, took all property, provisions, and canoes to Fort Chip, and again imprisoned Clarke. They banished Yale and the voyageurs to distant fisheries, held the other officers in Fort Wedderburn, and prohibited all communication between officers and their men. Without arms, canoes, or provisions the officers were humiliatingly dependent on the Nor'Westers for their very subsistence. They had no word from Clarke, who was held at Fort Chip, or Yale, who had been sent to a far-off fishery, and didn't know what had become of their men.

At break-up the Justice returned east and John Stuart, now in command, allowed Yale to return to Fort Wedderburn. In June Yale went to Fort Chip to pick up some belongings he'd left there during one of his imprisonments. He was promptly seized and told to get ready for a voyage. He refused, struggled furiously with his captors, but at length was dragged to the beach and thrown in a waiting canoe beside Clarke. They were being taken to Great Slave Lake.

Along the way, the foreman confided that in a council of Nor'Westers one of the partners proposed that Clarke and Yale be taken to Great Slave Lake and murdered. Of all those present only Edward Smith, Master at Great Slave Lake, objected. Early next morning when the paddlers thought everyone was sleeping, Clarke overheard one brag to the other that Mr. Keith had hired him to kill Clarke. As a reward he would have Clarke's wife and property and be maintained for the rest of his life. Though Clarke was the primary victim there were to be no witnesses.

Clarke and Yale were landed on a small island that had been overrun by fire and was ankle deep in ashes. Two Nor'Westers arrived to act as guards

and fishers but fish were scarce; and when the wind blew the guards were unable to paddle to their fort for provisions. Captives and guards alike went hungry for days and ate whatever fish they found rotting on the beach. One day they found a duck nest with eight eggs and though the eggs were beginning to hatch, they added a little flour, made a cake and divided the feast between the four of them.

The fear of being murdered was ever-present and each had a club. Clarke hid a carving knife under his pillow, but even when they retired, he said, "we could not enjoy repose."

They passed ten weeks on the cinder-coated islet and in August were returned to Athabasca Lake, unharmed. This marked the end of Yale's second season as a fur trader. Senior officers had remarked his courage, energy, and fierce loyalty. Robertson wrote "your conduct has met with the entire approbation of your superiors—your sufferings have been great and though a boy, you bore them like a man." But the officers had also noted Yale's lack of education. Robertson counselled him to improve his writing by copying two or three pages from some good author every day and urged senior officers to help "my little friend Yale, whose education has been much neglected."

Over the remaining three years of his apprenticeship Yale endured more hardships and privation at the hands of the Nor'Westers. He went hungry when Samuel Black and his men destroyed the Bay's canoes and cut their fishing nets. He heard with horror the gruesome details of Peter Skene Ogden murdering a Native who had traded with the Baymen. He was involved in skirmishes with Roderick McLeod and with Peter Warren Dease. (Dease would later achieve fame as an Arctic explorer; Dease Lake was named after him.) William McIntosh, the black-hearted, reportedly tried to poison him. And he exchanged blows with brawny Simon McGillivray Jr. Little Yale recorded his version of this event in Fort Wedderburn's journal:

Mr. McGillivray very treacherously tramped upon Mr. Yale's snow shoes and struck him several times... Mr. Yale at last got off his snow shoes when he vigorously attacked McGillivray and in less than five minutes the latter was happy to call out for Quarters after receiving a bloody nose, a black eye and a swelled face. Mr. Yale received no mark whatever.

By 1821, after years of sacrifice and suffering, the Baymen had gained the upper hand in the Peace River and Athabasca. When they received word that the rival companies had negotiated a

merger, some were bitterly disappointed. Colin Robertson spoke for many when he wrote: "It pains me that our implacable and insolent opponents should acquire by negotiation what they have not been able to obtain by the most wanton and atrocious acts of unparalleled cruelty."

Immediately after the merger Yale was sent to New Caledonia. He experienced many more hardships, adventures and misadventures, but because he could neither forgive nor forget one of his biggest challenges was having to work with former enemies. New Caledonia was managed by John Stuart, now a chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company—Stuart, who had been Yale's formidable foe at Pierre au Calumet and who had been complicit in the plot to murder him and Clarke at Great Slave Lake. Yale and Stuart did not get along. Privately Stuart wrote that Yale "has much to learn and not a little to unlearn before he becomes an Indian Trader" but officially Stuart was more charitable and reported Yale "is clever and wants only experience—which he is fast acquiring—to be an able Trader."

With scenes of the bitter winter of 1815–16 seared in his memory, Yale found that he now had to work closely with George McDougall, whose dalliance at Wabasca River had caused the deaths of sixteen persons. He learned, too, that William McIntosh, who had taunted the starving Baymen by throwing bits of pemmican to his dogs, had rapidly risen to the rank of chief factor. William Connolly, who Clarke had confronted at Cumberland in a skirmish over a deserter, was now a Chief Factor and took over management of New Caledonia in 1824. Yale courted Connolly's young daughter Amelia, and there was an understanding that they would marry.

But before this could happen Yale's arm became inflamed and he had to go to Fort Vancouver for medical advice. When he recovered he was assigned to an expedition being sent to punish the Clallam Natives for murdering some Baymen. The expedition was led by another of Yale's old enemies—Roderick McLeod, who had headed the force that captured Fort Wedderburn and who had instigated many of the Athabasca skirmishes which resulted in Yale's imprisonment.

The Clallam Expedition was an ugly, controversial affair and Yale was happy to return to New Caledonia in September 1828. Unfortunately he found that during his absence ex-Nor'Wester James Douglas had married Amelia Connolly. It was perhaps fortunate that Yale's arrival in New

Caledonia coincided with that of Governor Simpson who was on his way to the Columbia. Simpson gave Yale no time to brood over Amelia but immediately sent him on an errand to Kamloops. Yale rejoined Simpson at present-day Lytton, voyaged down the Fraser Canyon with him, and arrived at Fort Langley 10 October 1828. Here Yale would spend the remainder of his days as a fur trader.

The 1830s were disappointing years for Yale, who hoped for some recognition of his long and conscientious service. But in this decade it was his old enemies who garnered rewards. Peter Skene Ogden in New Caledonia, and Samuel Black in Kamloops, had been initially excluded from the Hudson's Bay Company because of the atrocities they had committed during the Athabasca contest. They had later been taken in as chief traders and now were promoted to chief factors. Roderick McLeod and Peter Warren Dease, both of whom had provoked violent quarrels with Yale in Athabasca, also became chief factors. James Douglas, now formally married to Amelia, was promoted to chief trader in 1835 and became a chief factor in 1839.

And Simon McGillivray Jr., Yale's sparring partner and now a chief trader, successfully led the voyage of discovery from Babine Lake to present-day Hazelton. This was an exploration Yale had longed to undertake when in New Caledonia.

Not until 1844 was Yale promoted to chief trader. The 1840s saw the passing of a number of the old Athabasca veterans. Colin Robertson passed away in Montreal. Roderick McLeod died while on furlough; Simon McGillivray Jr. collapsed on his way to a posting in Athabasca. In Kamloops a Native murdered Samuel Black. William McIntosh died at Lachine, and John Stuart was laid to rest in Scotland.

Yale hoped and waited in vain for promotion to chief factor, and it was probably just as well he didn't know that though Simpson wrote praising his courage and activity he concluded that Yale's "want of education precludes all hope of his succeeding to an interest in the concern." Yale's 30 years in Fort Langley were relatively peaceful; at least he was now eating well. His fisheries prospered and his crops flourished in Fort Langley's nourishing soil. But the seeds of bitterness also flourished—seeds that had been sown in the hostile soil of Athabasca. ~

Book Reviews

Books for review and book reviews should be sent to:

Anne Yandle, Book Review Editor BC Historical News, 3450 West 20th Avenue, Vancouver BC V6S 1E4



James Sirois

Afloat in Time.

REVIEWED BY LESLIE KOPAS

W.H. Bell

*Beyond the Northern Lights:
A Quest for the Outdoor Life.*

REVIEWED BY KELSEY MCLEOD

Warren Sommer and Kurt Alberts

Langley 125: A Celebration.

REVIEWED BY MORAG MACLACHLAN

Morag MacLachlan

*The Fort Langley Journals,
1827-30*

REVIEWED BY BRIAN GOBETT

Lisa Hobbs Birnie

*Western Lights: Fourteen
Distinctive British Columbians.*

REVIEWED BY SHERYL SALLOUM

Frances Hanson, comp.

Memories of Osland.

REVIEWED BY PHYLLIS REEVE

Afloat in Time.

James Sirois. Skookum Press, Box 310, Hagensborg, BC VOT 1S0, 1998. 271 pp. Illus. \$25 paperback.

REVIEWED BY LESLIE KOPAS

Most of us believe our lives have been interesting, at least in parts. Sometimes, after we have related our best personal stories, an enthusiastic soul says, "you should write a book." If we are lucky, before embarking on a fool's errand, we are taken aside by a realist and persuaded that our life has been quite ordinary.

James Sirois, however, did indeed have a unique childhood. *Afloat in Time* is an anecdotal autobiography, a collection of brief stories and sketches of childhood and youth on the central British Columbia coast. Its significance to readers is alluded to in the subtitle: *Growing Up on the Raft of a Gyppo Logger in the Coastal Canyons of British Columbia 1930-1950*. It describes an unusual way of life, that of a peripatetic contract logger who moved his business and home from place to place on rafts.

James Sirois is proud of his pioneer heritage. He succinctly relates his grandparents' history on the British Columbia coast from their arrival from Oregon in 1916. They began logging at the mouth of the Nootum River near Restoration Bay. According to legend, his grandfather George Harrison Gildersleve acquired the moniker Doc by delivering his children at his isolated float camp. On maps today, Doc Creek flows out of Gildersleve Lake, and Amy Creek (after Doc's wife) flows into Nootum River.

The autobiography has an unusual balance in that the main character is James Sirois, but the hero is Doc Gildersleve. Doc holds the book together, just as he held together his small floating community between 1917 and 1956. If Doc Gildersleve is the psychological centre, then Ocean Falls is the geographical centre. As though on an invisible leash, the Gildersleve camp moved north, south, and east of the Ocean Falls pulp and paper mill for nearly forty years.

James Sirois's mother Elate was the oldest

child of Amy and Doc Gildersleve. Her marriage to Walter Sirois lasted about four years. In retrospect at least, James did not see the breakup as a disaster. The autobiography begins: "I came to realize, years later, that the summer of 1933 was the beginning of the most interesting and wonderful childhood that I could have wished for."

It was a childhood of summers at the logging camp and winters at school at Ocean Falls. For two grades, provincial government correspondence courses permitted winters at the logging camp, too.

Inevitably James Sirois learned to be a logger. (His account of the trials of a teenage whistlepunk brought back chagrined memories to this reviewer.) Although an interesting way of life, logging was a hard one. The University of British Columbia was the ticket out.

Fifty photographs and a glossary fill out the book. The glossary is mostly definitions of logging jargon. Under the letter "M," however, there is a recipe for matrimonial cake. *Afloat in Time* is like that, a conversational bunch of stories and descriptions, not necessarily in chronological order, about life on the central coast half a century and more ago. You get it all, right down to the recipes. ~
Reviewer Leslie Kopas lives in Bella Coola.

Beyond the Northern Lights: A Quest for the Outdoor Life.

W.H. Bell. Surrey: Hancock House, 1998. 284 pp., Illus. \$23.95 paperback.

REVIEWED BY KELSEY MCLEOD

The subtitle of this volume would make a better title, for this autobiography of the life of W.H. Bell shows his early obsession with the outdoors. He played hooky from school to be outdoors, and the mania never left him. The amazing thing is that after a lifetime of the outdoors he ended up taking years out of this life to gain an engineering degree from UBC.

The saga took him from Alberta to British Columbia, to Fort Resolution, to Saskatchewan, and countless points in all these locations. He was a game warden, fire war-

ALSO NOTED:

Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities around Puget Sound.

Sandra Harmon. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. 393 pp. Illus. \$40 US.

Meadow Muffins: Cowboy Rhymes and Other B.S. Poetry by Mike Pahullo.

Cartoons by Widney Liddle. Surrey: Hancock House, 1999. 64 pp. Illus. \$7.95.

A Guide to Medicinal Wild Fruits & Berries. Julie Gomez. Surrey: Hancock House, 1999. 63 pp. Illus. \$7.95.

den, a Hudson's Bay employee.... It would be interesting to hear his wife's version of this life. Their first home was a converted chicken house on the outskirts of Calgary: no electricity, no water, an outhouse—did she know it was the shape of the years to come? Later: "our family's staple foods were ordered once a year...and shipped in by riverboat or barge...."

Every detail of every posting he had is given exhaustive coverage. At Sturgeon Lake a session with an overpowering stench was eventually overcome. Everything you ever wanted to know about dog teams is in this book, including what to do when the plumbing freezes up. Every detail of how to set up camp in the wilderness under freezing temperatures is here for the reading.

The list of encounters with wild animals is a lengthy one: wolves, buffalo, moose, caribou, etc. There are so many near misses with nature at its wildest that Homer's *Odyssey* fades to the level of a stroll in the park.

The many flashbacks to his earlier life at times makes reading difficult, and the constant insertions of "aurora borealis" after "northern lights" are unnecessary. Nevertheless, the book is interesting, and will be an invaluable resource for those who want to learn what living with nature is really like, and for novelists who want authentic background details without the discomfort of personal experience. ~

Reviewer Kelsey McLeod is a member of the Vancouver Historical Society.

Langley 125: A Celebration.

Warren Sommer and Kurt Alberts. Fort Langley: Birthplace of BC Gallery Ltd. Designed by Digital Revolution, 1998. 77 pp. Illus. \$20 paperback.

REVIEWED BY MORAG MACLACHLAN.

Langley 125 was published to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Township of Langley. The people who contributed to the publication had three clear aims. Their first was to showcase the work of artists, most of whom live in the Langley area. Some reside in nearby municipalities and three are no longer living. The book itself is a work of art. It is beautifully designed and printed on very good paper. The pictures—the watercolours, oils and acrylics of the artists and the black-and-white photographs—are high-quality reproductions. The first stated aim, to promote local talent, is achieved in high style.

The second aim, to commemorate Langley's place in British Columbia history,

is well organized around central themes. The chapters dealing with the river, the landscape, the fur trade, the settlement period, occupations, transportation, and churches are illustrated with paintings, and photographs, chosen to fit the theme. Unfortunately some of the history reads more like hearsay than history, but the text is clear and readable.

The third aim is to recognize the diversity in this sprawling township with its many centres. A very clear map shows the various areas which make up Langley, wedged between Surrey and Abbotsford, and the last chapter entitled "A Community of Communities" provides a description of each area and a brief account of when and how it developed.

The credits indicate that a number of people and businesses supported the production of the book. Obviously people in Langley, so many of them newcomers, probably identify with their immediate neighbourhood, and for old-timers the rapid pace of development must be disquieting. This book will undoubtedly play an important role in creating a sense of place for all those who live in Langley and all those who would like to. ~

Reviewer Morag Maclachlan is the editor of *THE FORT LANGLEY JOURNALS, 1827-30*, UBC Press.

The Fort Langley Journals, 1827-30.

Edited by Morag Maclachlan.

Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998. 279 pp. Illus., maps. \$75 hardcover, \$19.95 paperback.

REVIEWED BY BRIAN GOBETT.

The 1820s were an era of transition for the Hudson's Bay Company: the HBC absorbed the North West Company in 1821 and throughout was engaged in a vigorous competition with the "Boston ships" of American fur traders. George Simpson, who still believed the Fraser to be navigable, envisioned Fort Langley as a central depot in response to American competition on the Columbia. While Fort Langley did not become such a depot, the first three years of the post's journals—written by George Barnston, James McMillan and Archibald McDonald—have survived and serve as a testament to the early years of this settlement and of its interaction with the Native peoples of the area. Morag Maclachlan provides an introduction to the writing of the journals and has meticulously annotated their content in light of a wide range of secondary literature. An ethnographic essay on the

journals and a series of appendices conclude the volume, including an especially useful discussion of the names of the 26 or 27 tribes mentioned in the journals.

Each HBC fur trade post was to keep a daily journal. Its task was four-fold: to record the weather, the trading done, visitors, and the work accomplished by the men. Fortunately, entries often went beyond these requirements, and the journals offer frequent insight into the daily activities of the trader, the development of the fort from dependency on foodstuffs obtained from Natives to a more self-sustaining economy. The journals act as an ethnographic source elucidating aspects of Native life and culture. For example, on the ambiguous nature of relationships between male trader and female Native, Archibald McDonald acknowledged that the former policy of not taking Native wives was no longer desirable; indeed, these relationships sometimes offered the Company advantages and were, in any case, preferable to leaving the men "to prowls about" (p. 99).

The ethnographic significance of the journals is explored in a lengthy essay by Wayne Suttles, professor emeritus of anthropology at Portland State University. Suttles's aim is two-fold: to illustrate the value of the journals to ethnography and to show how ethnography can contribute to a contemporary understanding of the journals. Suttles displays an intimate knowledge of the journals and of the relevant secondary literature in examining a variety of topics including Native-trader relationships, Native domestic life and social groups, ceremonies, commerce, conflict and war, and slavery. Unfortunately, several paintings by Paul Kane, including one of the Cowichan chief Shashia, who appears frequently in the journals, do not receive similar treatment as ethnological sources. In addition, Suttles argues that the anthropological work of Charles Hill-Tout was very much in the tradition of Franz Boas, a conclusion that would have horrified the German-born father of Pacific Northwest anthropology. Indeed, Hill-Tout's first anthropological publication in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* (1895) was followed by a brief note by Boas that illustrated their profound intellectual differences. Likewise, it was not a coincidence that Edward Sapir, Boas' most brilliant student, helped to prevent Hill-Tout from obtaining a professorship in anthropology at the University of British Columbia. These minor criticisms,

however, point more to the fact that too little work has been done on the ethnological and anthropological traditions in the Pacific Northwest, a gap that this volume will certainly help to fill. ~

Reviewer Brian Gobbett is a doctoral student at the University of Alberta.

Western Lights: Fourteen Distinctive British Columbians.

Lisa Hobbs Birnie, with illustrations by Anthony Jenkins. Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1996. 146 pp. \$17.95. paperback.

REVIEWED BY SHERYL SALLOUM

Anthony Jenkins's pen and ink drawings are the perfect introduction to each of the individuals in this engaging book. Like the illustrations, each interview is a brief but revealing sketch that manages to successfully convey the character, talents, and idiosyncrasies of some of this province's more colourful personalities.

Lisa Hobbs Birnie is a deft interviewer who has spoken with fourteen high-profile BC personages regarding their various endeavours. A talented writer, her subtle wit and insights complement the personal glimpses of her subjects. For example, Birnie describes Bill Vanderzalm as looking "like a guy with a franchise on success," Vicki Gabereau as one who "devours any information like a vacuum sucking up lint," Jack Munro as flying "by the seat of his made-to-measure pants," Svend Robinson as "a horsefly always ready to sting a somnolent political body," and Alberto Menghi as having "the sealed lips of a confessor, the energy of a Ferrari, and the food sense of a culinary genius."

From their stories the reader learns of the tragedies, passions, and joys that have shaped these notable British Columbians: the difficult early years of the late Bruno Gerussi, the alcoholism that once plagued Roy Henry Vickers, the "very lonely" path chosen by L.R. Wright, Rick Hansen's need to push "the edge of the envelope," the way Vicky Husband "lives her life at double speed," Myfanwy Pavelic's "restless search for artistic perfection," Frank Ogden's ability to "target his audiences, [and] rattle their brains like marbles in a can," Nicola Cavendish's "constant analysis of things" to the point that she wants to "unzip" her head and put her "brain box in a cupboard," Joy Kogawa's ability to lay "bare the knowledge of others gained through her own life's journey," and Celia

Duthie's rise to "queen of the West Coast book world."

Birnie captures the twinkle in their eyes as well as the determination and drive of these fourteen intriguing individuals. Their "hunger for undiscovered territory" and their "contributions to the fabric of British Columbia" are fascinating. ~

Reviewer Sheryl Salloom is the author of *MALCOLM LOWRY: VANCOUVER DAYS, and UNDERLYING VIBRATIONS: THE PHOTOGRAPHY AND LIFE OF JOHN VANDERPANT.*

Memories of Osland.

Compiled by Frances Hanson.

Prince Rupert, BC, 1997. 104 pp.. illus. \$22. Paperback.

REVIEWED BY PHYLLIS REEVE

In 1913, or thereabouts, Icelandic settlers, some coming by way of Manitoba, established the tiny community of Osland, on Smith Island at the mouth of the Skeena River, near Prince Rupert, Port Essington, and the Canneries. Most of the men worked as fishermen or carpenters, but Osland had industries of its own: the granite quarry, the Johnson/Oldson shingle mill, Skeena piledriving, Osland logging, Steini's goat farm, and later Sakamoto's boat building. The government provided a wharf and, from 1920-1953, a post office. Several generations of children attended school at Osland. Then it all came to an end.

One of the former Osland children is Frances Olafson Hanson. As people dispersed or died, and only ruins and a few summer homes remain of the little settlement, she contacted as many former Oslanders as possible—the wonder is how many had kept in touch—and urged them to write down their memories of Osland. Her efforts and their responses resulted in this book, an obvious labour of love, but a formidable challenge to a reviewer.

With the removal of its post office, Osland disappeared from atlases, gazetteers, and lists of place names. I found a brief mention in the *Sailing Directions for the British Columbia Coast (North Portion)*. The few facts required for informed reading eluded the resources of a substantial public library and came to light only after a call to Victoria. Yet Mrs. Hanson has sent forth her collection of submissions with little editing, and no context. Her introduction tells us how the book came to be, but not how Osland came to be, or how it ceased to be. The uninitiated, non-Oslander, reader has to gather hints where

they happen to appear, without the benefit of chronology, index, or cartography. The single map, a map of Osland, orients Emerson's boat house in relation to Kristmanson's General Store, but fails to orient Osland to the rest of the world, except for DeHorsey Island, which does appear on some maps of British Columbia.

This is too bad. The book is dedicated "in memory of all Osland pioneers and is for their descendants." But those descendants, lacking first-hand experience of the community, are liable to be as puzzled as this reviewer. Mrs. Hanson and her associate should provide a chronological framework for their memories before it is too late. In gathering these poignant snippets of autobiography, she has provided a glimpse of a little-known part of West Coast history and demography.

I found one aspect of the story especially striking. The little school opened early in Osland history. When, in the early 1930s, their children were not quite numerous enough to justify the government's appointing a teacher, the Icelandic families invited three Japanese families to move to the island. It was a happy solution for these Canadians from such differing heritages. Two photographs on one page tell eloquently what happened next. In summer, 1939, ten girls stand in the sunshine; their names are Riteuko, Nom, Ayako, Evelyn, Lena, Frances, Mary, Dorothy, Chiyoko and Junko. Three years later, June 1942, Chiyoko and her family are shown on board a departing boat "the day they had to leave Osland." Chiyoko, and the other Japanese Canadians who contributed their memories of Osland, write of "good and honest people, generous in heart and spirit, with dignity and respect for each other." After they left, Osland again had too few children, and the school was closed. Gradually the families moved to the mainland and spent only the summer in their island homes. Osland took a long time to die, and even now welcomes a few returning vacationers, but Osland as a community was a casualty of war. ~

Reviewer Phillis Reeve lives on Gabriola Island

BC Historical News Index Volumes 26-30

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News and Notes

News items concerning Member and Affiliated Societies and the British Columbia Historical Federation should be sent to: Naomi Miller, Contributing Editor BC Historical News, PO Box 105, Wasa BC V0B 2K0

BC HISTORICAL WEB SITE PRIZE

The British Columbia Historical Federation and David Mattison will jointly sponsor a yearly monetary award to recognize Web sites, longer than one page, that contribute to the understanding and appreciation of British Columbia's past. Judgment will be based on historical content, layout, design, and ease of use. The award honours individual initiative in writing and presentation. Nominations for the BC Historical Web Site prize for 1999 must be made to the British Columbia Historical Federation, Web Site Prize Committee, PO Box 5254, Station B, Victoria BC V8R 6N4 prior to 31 December 1999. Web site creators and authors may nominate their own sites. For further details and applicable rules and conditions for nomination please check David Mattison's well-known BC History Internet/Web site <http://www.victoria.tc.ca/Resources/bchistory.html>. The winning Web site will be listed on David's Web site and in *British Columbia Historical News*.

FROM THE BRANCHES

ALBERNI DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This sixty-member society looks forward to hosting the BCHF Conference in May 2000. They keep busy with nine meetings per year. Many of their members volunteer at the local archives.

ARROW LAKES HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This group has assembled a large collection of photographs and district archives which are currently held in a private home. The fourth book, on the Lardeau-Trout Lake area, is nearing completion, as is a history of Halcyon Hot Springs.

BOUNDARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The City of Greenwood celebrated its 102nd birthday with the Greenwood Board of Trade's 100th anniversary. A cavalcade of cars drove from Greenwood to the Phoenix Cemetery for the dedication of a grave marker for W.H. Bambury. (1867-1951). Bambury came to Phoenix in 1902 and worked as a carpenter. When the mine, and the city, closed in 1919 Bambury remained at site alone for more than 30 years. The Phoenix Founda-

tion, which was set up in 1997, and made a \$100,000 profit from the sale of slag from the old mine, paid for the marker. Mayor A. Hennig of Greenwood spoke, and a lone piper played "Amazing Grace." BHS volunteers and some paid youth workers have cleaned the Phoenix cemetery and researched archives to record the names of those buried there. Files are being stored in the Greenwood Museum.

BOWEN ISLAND HISTORIANS

Artifacts are not only exhibited at the museum but also shown on the popular PPP (People, Plants and Places) tours. This museum receives no government funding so the members are proud of their achievements including brochures on the history of Bowen and a writer's retreat called "Lieben," as well as updating their website.

BURNABY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Burnaby currently has 72 members. Their latest project is the restoration of Interurban Car #1223. This tram was retired in 1958 and subsequently acquired from the B.C. Electric Co.

CHEMAINUS VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The theme for this year's display is the age of steam in logging camps and sawmills. The equipment shown includes a steam-operated locomotive, yarders, loaders and a crane. In 1865 the Chemainus sawmill started to use steam-power for electric lighting and drying lumber in kilns. Steam was used in four successive mills up to closure in 1982. Meetings are now held at 11:30 a.m. on the last Monday of the month with lunch and a guest speaker. Attendance has increased since the change from evening meetings.

DISTRICT 69, PARKSVILLE

This group has tackled duties at Craig Heritage Museum with new energy. Brochures have been distributed province-wide. District 69 boasts 132 members at the last count. There is a lot of co-operation with special events, such as the Rath Days on July 1st, when a fun weekend is held in Rath Trevor Provincial Park.

EAST KOOTENAY HISTORICAL ASSOC.

Guest speaker at the spring luncheon was

Noel Retch from Fort Steele Heritage Town. His topic, "Don't Let The Sun Set on Your Face," was a study of racism in early years. The phrase was an edict to Chinese who were allowed to peddle fresh vegetables in the town of Moyie, but were forbidden to stay overnight. The slide show illustrated examples of prejudice noted in historical records, yet avoided creating a guilt trip for the audience.

GULF ISLANDS BRANCH BCHF

Meetings are rotating between Galiano, Mayne, Pender, and Saturna Islands with timing dictated by ferry-schedules. Recently they mounted a plaque commemorating Captain Galiano at Montague Park and another, at the Mayne Lighthouse, for "Scotty" Georgeson.

KOOTENAY MUSEUM-NELSON

In December 1998, a gala dinner was hosted by this society, to honour the region's railway retirees and museum volunteers. This was the final celebration for the 100th Anniversary of the Crowsnest Railway Line and the launching of the S.S. *Moyie* from the Nelson drydock.

NANAIMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This group works at a variety of projects such as preserving Pioneer Park Cemetery, documenting and publishing special memoirs, keeping abreast of historical writing about the district, and celebrating the arrival of its early pioneers on Princess Royal Day, each 27 November.

NORTH SHORE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This group has an excellent newsletter produced ten times a year by Robert Brown. If any reader has memories of North Vancouver they are invited to write them down and send to the *North Shore Historical Newsletter* at the address of the society. Seaspan International is a corporate sponsor and there were special exhibits mounted late in 1998 on the 100 years of Seaspan, including a video "Towing on the Coast."

PRINCETON MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

This society with only 18 members accomplishes a great deal each year—like setting up new displays. The most recent acquisition

is a fossil collection from the late Joe Pollard. The members are assisting with the preparation of a history of Princeton which is now celebrating 140 years since the earliest settlers arrived in the district.

SILVERY SLOCAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Their museum in New Denver is in the Bank of Montreal building that served the community from 1897 to 1969. The local society has done a wonderful restoration of the building towards which the bank belatedly donated \$15,000. An archives and reading room has been created with bookcases and filing cabinets gradually being filled.

SURREY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The November 1998 meeting was held at a novel site; the members participated in Old Time Days at the Fraser Downs Racetrack. At other meetings they heard proposals for the separation of Cloverdale from Surrey, development plans for the Tynehead area, and the history of the Clova Theatre.

VANCOUVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Great Fire of 13 June 1886 was the basis for a special event in June 1998 in downtown Vancouver. In March of this year the VHS produced the fur trade history symposium and book launch of Morag Maclachlan's *Fort Langley Journals, 1827-1830*. In May the society held its annual Incorporation Day dinner as well as the book launch of Elizabeth Walker's *Street Names of Vancouver*.

VICTORIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This first "branch" of the BCHF now registers 110 members, despite competition from 30 other heritage groups in the capital region. They have good speakers at evening meetings plus two outings. The 14 May 1999 sail on the *Oriole*, a navy training sailboat, took the guests to tea at Dunsmuir's Hatley Castle which is now a private college. Some members conduct guided tours of the Empress Hotel.

OTHER NEWS:

CANADIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION AWARDS

British Columbia had two winners. We extend congratulations to Mary-Ellen Kelm for her book *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing, 1900-1950*, and to Alice Glanville of Grand Forks, our past president of the BCHF, "for contributions towards the promotion of British Columbia history and regional history of the Boundary Area."

HERITAGE TRUST

The Trust's new chair is Anne Edwards of Moyie. Appointments by Minister Ian Waddell filled three vacancies created by those who completed their term, and a director who moved to another province. The new directors are George Atamenko of Williams Lake, Jamie Forbes of Trail, Dorothy Hunt of Vancouver, and Pamela Madoff of Victoria.

WINN WEIR HONOURED

Winnifred Weir of Invermere was chosen as one of 14 citizens to receive the Order of British Columbia in June 1999. Winn is a writer, historian, and community leader. She has been active in Girl Guides, sat on the school board, volunteered for the Cancer Society, was a leading speaker in Toastmasters, curator of the Windermere District Museum, and an officer of the BCHF.

FERNIE LIBRARY

Fernie's former post office and customs house has been lovingly restored to serve as the public library. The sponsoring group was given the "Outstanding Achievement Award" by the Heritage Society of BC for the work on this building. The award was presented on June 25th.

ARMSTRONG FAIR

For 100 years now Armstrong has held the Interior Provincial Exhibition early September every year. The Armstrong Spallumcheen Museum and Arts Society has prepared a comprehensive history of this remarkable "country fair." This book, with over 200 pictures, will sell for \$20.00, plus mailing costs and may be ordered from: ASMAS, PO Box 3089, Armstrong, BC, V0E 1B0, or by phoning (250) 546-8318.

CABOOSE TO KASLO

The Nelson Electric Tramway donated a 1929 CPR caboose to the Kootenay Lake Historical Society. The caboose came to Kaslo on a low bed trailer, with accompanying rails and ballast, to be carefully set in place beside the wharf between the SS *Moyie* and the station.

CFUW EAST KOOTENAY

In May The Cranbrook chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women hosted the provincial annual conference. Delegates were treated to workshops and taken on a tours. Donna Lomas a staff member from the College of the Rockies was the after dinner speaker.

Letter to the Editor

DEAR SIR: Laura Duke's article "Against a Tide of Change: an Interpretation of the Writings of Simma Holt, 1960-1974" (*BC Historical News*, 32:2, Spring 1999) is an adroit, if revisionist, view of the writings of Mrs. Holt, which no doubt will earn Ms. Duke an A-grade as a university term paper. Nevertheless I must agree with your correspondent Mrs. June Wilson of Kimberley, B. C. (*BC Historical News*, Summer 1999) that the article is too narrowly focussed and does not do justice to Simma Holt's career as an investigative reporter, author, parliamentarian, and humanitarian. From the advantage of contemporary perspective, Duke criticizes Mrs. Holt and her work using characterizations that lack balance, are sometimes inaccurate, and often are not substantiated.

For example, Duke depicts Simma Holt as the product of an upper middle-class lifestyle and a member of the ruling cultural mainstream, and this is simply not the case. Simma Holt is a member of a cultural minority - she is Jewish - and her father, Louis Milner, was an immigrant to Canada from the Ukraine in 1906. As well, rather than being "something of a red Tory" as described by Duke, Simma Holt was essentially apolitical until 1974 when she was recruited because of her public and feminist profile by the Trudeau Liberals as candidate for Vancouver-Kingsway - hardly an upper middle-class riding. She won the election handily, thereby earning the distinction of being Canada's first female Jewish Member of Parliament and her government fostered multiculturalism in Canada.

With regard to my concern that some statements made by Ms. Duke about Simma Holt were not adequately substantiated, I would point as examples to her claims that Mrs. Holt conformed to "traditional gender roles," adhered to "mainstream" and "conservative values," had "little sympathy for the Doukhobors," that she "stressed the importance of collective stability over private freedom." These are broad generalizations that were not justified by Duke's cursory excerpting from Mrs. Holt's own work. However they do serve to assign Mrs. Holt to broad categories useful for the purpose of theoretical argument. This suggests that there may be a wider framework of historical social debate through which Duke was analyzing Mrs. Holt's writings, but there was no mention of such a framework in the article.

There is a lack of discussion and support in other areas as well. Ms. Duke presents as an undisputed conclusion that it was inappropriate for Mrs. Holt and other social activists of the time to side against the Doukhobor community in its resistance to Canadian laws over property rights, citizenship, and the schooling of Doukhobor children; or as Ms. Duke phrased it "(t)otally foreign to Holt was the view that people might not want to conform to the dominant values of middle-class Canadians." However, as a business employer of many ethnic peoples, including Doukhobors, my experience has been that many have welcomed the freedom of breaking away from parental and ethnic restraints to enjoy fulfilling careers in mainstream Canadian society. This possibility was not presented or explored. Duke presents no follow-up examination as to how the counter-culture movement of the 1950s and 1960s, critiqued by Mrs. Holt, was not enduring and many of the hippie generation have settled down to the mid-life middle-class lifestyle of their parents.

As well, the article does not balance its criticisms with a fair appraisal of the character and accomplishments of Simma Holt. I had the opportunity to learn more about Mrs. Holt when I participated in interviewing her for the oral history program of our Society. At a time when women reporters were a rarity, Mrs. Holt covered Vancouver's waterfront and skid road beat, where few men dared to tread. Here she broke many a front-page story for the Vancouver Sun; at different times her tenaciousness saved three men from the gallows by proving their innocence. She was a crusader on the social concerns of the day. A meticulous researcher, she travelled as far as Uruguay to research her book on the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. In the 1960s Mrs. Holt was named Canada's Woman of the Year for arts and literature, won the Bowater Award of Merit for her series on teenagers, and was 3-time winner of the top news award for women. In a 30-year journalism career, Simma Holt has been called "perhaps the

greatest woman reporter of her time" (Peter Worthington, Toronto Sun, December 9, 1993).

Her 5-year parliamentary career was progressive. Vice-chair of the Justice Committee, she was also a member of the Sub-Committee on the Penitentiary System in Canada. The resultant Report to Parliament, which was drafted largely by Mrs. Holt, formed the basis for subsequent prison reform in Canada. Later she was on the Parole Board of Canada. Her humanitarian interest led to membership in the Canadian Parliamentary Helsinki Group and observer status at the 1977, 35-nation conference in Belgrade, which attempted to have dialogue with the Soviets on human rights and freedom behind the Iron Curtain. All of this back-

ground information on Simma Holt is readily available, and if the intent of Duke's article was a critique of Mrs. Holt's career and writings, then I would have expected historical impartiality to require inclusion and discussion of such positive and notable accomplishments.

I appreciate that Ms. Duke's article was written as a submission for a student competition. However, it was published in your journal on equal footing with other contributions, and without any editorial proviso to introduce it as an inaugural effort. Given that the article aimed rather brutally at a person whose career and character deserved more careful and more qualified analysis, I believe that it therefore requires a rejoinder.

I am pleased to advise that, at age 77, Simma Holt is alive and well and as dynamic as ever. Widowed in 1985, she now lives modestly in suburban Coquitlam. Still actively writing, she has a number of projected books in her computer, including an autobiography which we have encouraged her to finish and publish.

Cyril E. Leonoff,
The Jewish Historical Society
of British Columbia

Ms. Duke's article was indeed clearly identified as a student essay.



Photo courtesy Cyril E. Leonoff

Above: *Simma Holt displaying her self-described "Politician's Smile," during an interview, December 1998.*

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Questions about membership and affiliation of societies should be directed to Terry Simpson, Membership Secretary, BC Historical Federation, 193 Bird Sanctuary, Nanaimo BC V9R 6G8

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 Fred Braches, POBox 130
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The British Columbia Historical Federation invites submissions of books for the seventeenth annual Competition for Writers of BC History.

Any book presenting any facet of BC history, published in 1999, is eligible.

This may be a community history, biography, record of a project or an organization, or personal recollections giving a glimpse of the past. Names, dates and places, with relevant maps or pictures, turn a story into "history." Note that reprints or revisions of books are not eligible.

The judges are looking for quality presentations, especially if fresh material is included, with appropriate illustrations, careful proofreading, an adequate index, table of contents and bibliography, from first-time writers as well as established authors.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing will be awarded to an individual writer whose book contributes significantly to the recorded history of British Columbia. Other awards will be made as recommended by the judges to valuable books prepared by groups or individuals.

All entries receive considerable publicity. Winners will receive a Certificate of Merit, a monetary award and an invitation to the BCHF annual conference to be held in Port Alberni in May 2000.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS: All books must have been published in 1999 and should be submitted as soon as possible after publication. Two copies of each book should be submitted. Books entered become property of the BC Historical Federation. Please state name, address and telephone number of sender, the selling price of all editions of the book, and, if the reader has to shop by mail, the address from which it may be purchased, including applicable shipping and handling costs.

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