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The

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The  
BRITISH COLUMBIA  
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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

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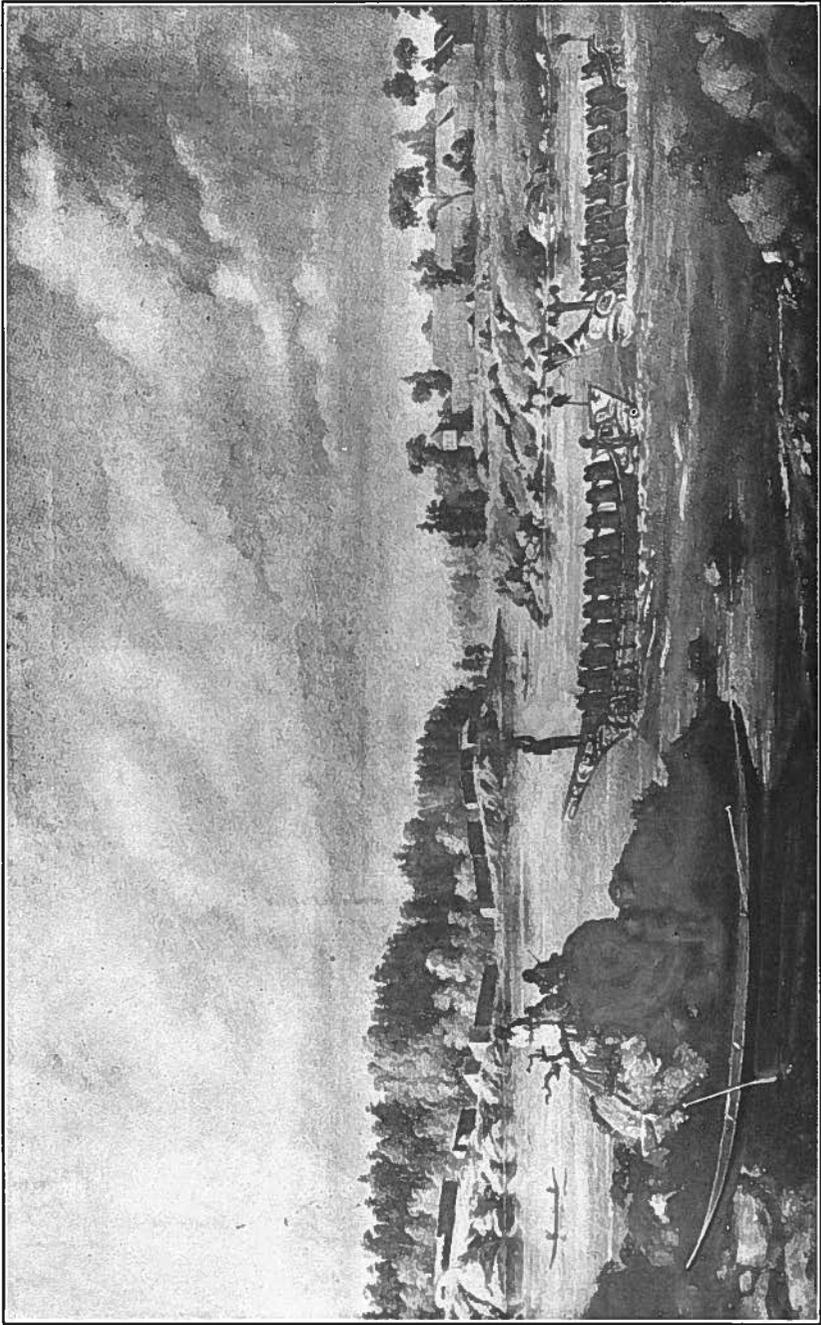
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Fort Victoria in 1847.

From the painting by Paul Kane, who arrived at the fort on April 9, 1847. This is the earliest known view of Fort Victoria.

## THE FOUNDING OF FORT VICTORIA.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—A special word of thanks is due Mr. J. Chadwick Brooks, Secretary to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, who not only granted permission to print the excerpts from documents in the Company's Archives that are included in this article, but also contrived, in spite of war-time difficulties, to have several of these copied from the originals expressly for the use of the writer.

### 1.

The founding of Fort Victoria in 1843 marked the climax of a controversy—one might almost say a series of controversies—that had lasted for nearly twenty years. The point at issue was the best location for the principal depot of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific Coast. Chief Factor John McLoughlin, who was placed in charge of the Company's operations west of the Rocky Mountains in 1824–25, early became a staunch supporter of the claims of Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River. Governor Simpson, who travelled westward with McLoughlin, felt from the first that the main depot should be farther north. As the years slipped by, circumstances seemed to favour first one point of view and then the other; but in the end the consensus of opinion turned decisively against McLoughlin.

Two considerations remained paramount throughout the controversy. First came the trading requirements of the Company. In 1825 its activities were limited to a chain of posts in the valley of the Columbia, and in the interior of what is now British Columbia, all of which received their supplies and shipped their furs by way of the Columbia River. The second consideration was the boundary question. Until 1846 the whole area from California to Alaska was in dispute between Great Britain and the United States. A joint-occupation agreement had been arrived at in 1818 and this was renewed for an indefinite period in 1827; but uncertainty about the boundary was nevertheless a continual source of anxiety to the Hudson's Bay Company. Sooner or later the line would be determined; and it was most desirable that the main depot should be located in territory which would ultimately become British.

At first both considerations bolstered McLoughlin's point of view. When Fort Vancouver was completed, in 1825, no one could deny that it was admirably situated to meet the trading needs of the moment. At that time, moreover, informed circles were of opinion that the boundary-line would follow the Columbia River; and with this in mind Fort Vancouver had been built on the Columbia's north bank. The post was thus situated in territory which it was presumed would become British. This being so, McLoughlin felt that it should become the main depot, at least until such time as some change in conditions made it unsuitable for the purpose.

But Governor Simpson was not convinced. For one thing, he hoped that the Company would be able to develop an extensive trade on the Northwest Coast, and Fort Vancouver would not be a convenient depot for this purpose. For another, he felt that it would be prudent to place the district headquarters at a greater distance from the prospective boundary-line. All things considered, the mouth of the Fraser River seemed to him to be the most promising location, particularly as he was confident that the river itself would provide a travel route to the interior comparable to that furnished by the Columbia. By Simpson's order Fort Vancouver was therefore planned as an ordinary trading-post, and built upon a site suitable only for this limited purpose.

Needless to say, when Simpson reached this decision he knew nothing about the canyon of the Fraser. Simon Fraser had descended the river in 1808, and had described in his journal the narrow chasms and swirling waters that made it an impossible route for the transport of supplies and furs; but little was known about his experiences until a later date. A party sent off by Simpson, late in 1824, had had time to explore only the lower reaches of the river. In 1828, however, when travelling westward on his second tour of inspection, Simpson himself investigated the canyon. A few months later he confessed to the Governor and Committee in London that he would "consider the passage down, to be certain Death, in nine attempts out of Ten."<sup>1</sup> The plan to establish a depot at the mouth of the Fraser was at

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(1) Rich, E. E. (ed.), *The Letters of John McLoughlin . . . First Series, 1825-38*, Toronto and London, 1941, p. lix. (Simpson's 1829 Report, March, 1829.)

once abandoned, and, to McLoughlin's immense satisfaction, Simpson agreed that Fort Vancouver should become the headquarters of the district. The post was subsequently moved nearer to the river, where shipments of freight and furs could be handled more easily, and rebuilt upon a much larger scale.

At this point the depot controversy seemed to have ended; but circumstances soon led to its revival. In the spring of 1829 the annual supply ship *William and Ann*, inward bound from London, was wrecked on the bar at the mouth of the Columbia River. A year later the *Isabella* met a similar fate. The Governor and Committee had long been aware of the existence of the bar, but these events brought its dangers very forcibly to their attention. Then in 1830 a fever epidemic broke out in the lower valley of the Columbia, and in the course of two seasons it decimated the Indian population. Deaths amongst the whites were astonishingly few, but McLoughlin's men were laid up by the score and the Company's programme of expansion was brought to a standstill.

By the spring of 1834 the Governor and Committee had come to the conclusion that some change in the depot arrangements was necessary. In March they wrote to Governor Simpson:—

The unhealthy state of [Fort] Vancouver for several years past, and the distance at which it is situated from the Sea, render it by no means so well adapted for the sole depot of the West side of the Mountains, now that the Trade is extended to the Coast: we therefore think it advisable that a Depot should be situated on the shores of Puget Sound, where there are many places highly favorable for a Seaside Depot . . .<sup>2</sup>

Simpson subsequently instructed McLoughlin to explore Puget Sound and examine the various sites available. This McLoughlin endeavoured to do in 1835, but sickness at Fort Vancouver forced him to return before he had completed the survey. He reported to London in September that he had visited Fort Nisqually and the head of the Sound, but that neither place could offer one of the essential requirements for a depot—an extensive tract of land suitable for tillage.<sup>3</sup>

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(2) Governor and Committee to Simpson, March 5, 1834. This and all subsequent quotations from documents in the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company are printed by permission of the Governor and Committee.

(3) McLoughlin to the Governor and Committee, September 30, 1835. *Letters of John McLoughlin*, pp. 138–39.

McLoughlin's report crossed a dispatch from the Governor and Committee in which the latter dealt with the depot question at some length. The topic was introduced as follows:—

We have again to draw your attention to the object of removing your Principal Depot from the Columbia River to the Coast, say to Whidby's Island, Pugets Sound, or some other eligible situation, easy of access, as we consider the danger of crossing the Columbia Bar too great a risk to be run by the Annual Ships from and to England, with the Outfits and returns.<sup>4</sup> Doubtless with McLoughlin's susceptibilities on the subject in mind they hastened to add that "Fort Vancouver must of course always be kept up as a large establishment," and that it "must always be maintained as a Depot" for the interior posts and trapping expeditions. But McLoughlin knew full well that the supremacy of Fort Vancouver was threatened; and in his reply he entered a strong plea for permission to carry on as before, basing his request upon a sincere conviction that the existing arrangement was "the most economical and efficient" that could be made.<sup>5</sup>

His principal arguments were three in number, and to them he clung tenaciously through the years that followed. In the first place, as the Columbia River was admittedly still the only practicable route to the interior, the supplies for and furs from the numerous posts would have to continue to cross the Columbia bar, regardless of where the principal depot was situated. Secondly, McLoughlin insisted that the bar itself was not nearly as dangerous as it was reputed to be, and charged that the loss of both the *William and Ann* and the *Isabella* had been due to the negligence of their captains. Finally, he pointed out that a new depot on Whidbey Island, or thereabouts, would prove costly to the Company, since it could not take the place of the near-by posts at Fort Langley and Fort Nisqually, as the Governor and Committee evidently supposed. Fort Langley was maintained largely because of the salmon trade, which could not be transferred elsewhere, while it was certain that the Indians who frequented Fort Nisqually would not go instead to the proposed new depot.<sup>6</sup>

(4) Governor and Committee to McLoughlin, December 8, 1835. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

(5) McLoughlin to the Governor and Committee, November 15, 1836. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

(6) *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56.

In spite of his strong prejudice in favour of Fort Vancouver it is only just to McLoughlin to say that he seized every opportunity to secure information about possible sites for a new depot. In November, 1836, Chief Factor Duncan Finlayson, returning from Fort Simpson in the steamer *Beaver*, visited Port Townsend, Port Discovery, and Whidbey Island, but could report favourably on none of them.<sup>7</sup> In the light of later events it is interesting to find that it was apparently McLoughlin himself who first directed that the search should be extended to Vancouver Island. On December 8, 1836, he wrote to Chief Trader John Work, who was then in charge of Fort Simpson:—

The Captain of the steamer [Captain W. H. McNeill] should also be directed to examine on his way to Nisqually next summer the south end of Vancouver's Island for the purpose of selecting a convenient situation for an Establishment on a large scale, possessing all the requisites for farming rearing of Cattle together with a good harbour and abundance of timber, in short containing every advantage which is desirable such a situation should furnish.<sup>8</sup>

In accordance with these instructions Captain McNeill, in the *Beaver*, spent some days in the early summer of 1837 exploring the southern end of Vancouver Island. It is clear that he was favourably impressed, but McLoughlin devoted only a few lines to the subject in his autumn dispatch to the Governor and Committee. He stated that McNeill had "found an excellent harbour, of easy access with good anchorage, surrounded by a plain of several miles in extent, of an excellent Soil"; but added cautiously that it "would require to be more particularly examined before we could rely on it."<sup>9</sup> If McNeill submitted a written report it has been lost, and it is therefore fortunate that James Douglas returned to the subject of this survey and dealt with it at greater length in a letter to Governor Simpson. This reads in part as follows:—

The survey strictly speaking commenced at Newitti<sup>10</sup> near the north end of the Island and proceeded through Johnstones Straits and the Gulf of

(7) McLoughlin to the Governor and Committee, November 18, 1836 (postscript to dispatch dated November 15). *Ibid.*, p. 165.

(8) H.B.C. Archives, B.223/b/15, fo. 62.

(9) McLoughlin to the Governor and Committee, October 31, 1837. *Letters of John McLoughlin*, p. 214.

(10) Meaning the region about the present Port Hardy. Fort Rupert was built there by the Company in 1849.

Georgia to Pt. Gonzalo. . . .<sup>11</sup> On reaching the South end of the Island, a decided improvement was observed in the appearance of the Country. Three good harbours of easy access, were found west of Point Gonzalo, at two of which, Captain McNeill passed a few days. The land around these harbours is covered with wood to the extent of half a mile, interiorly, where the forest is replaced by a more open and beautifully deversified Country presenting a succession of plains with groves of Oaks and pine trees, for a distance of 15 or 20 miles. The most Easterly of the harbours 10 miles West of Point Gonzalo is said to be the best on the Coast and possesses the important advantage, over the other, of a more abundant supply of fresh water furnished by a stream 20 Yards wide, which after contributing to fertilize the open Country, flows into it. The plains are said to be fertile and covered with luxuriant vegetation; but judging from a sample of soil brought here, I think it rather light and certainly not the best quality, admitting even this disadvantage, I am persuaded that no part of this sterile & Rock bound Coast will be found better adapted for the site of the proposed Depot or to combine, in a higher degree, the desired requisites, of a secure harbour accessible to shipping at every season, of good pasture, and, to a certain extent, of improvable tillage land.<sup>12</sup>

There is no doubt that the three harbours examined by McNeill were Victoria, Esquimalt, and Sooke; and of these it was Victoria Harbour, the "most Easterly" of the three, that he and Douglas described with such approval.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear that the Governor and Committee intended that the new depot should be built as soon as a satisfactory site for it had been found. Thus in February, 1837, they informed Governor Simpson that the post was to be named Fort Adelaide,<sup>14</sup> in honour of Queen Adelaide, consort of the reigning monarch, William IV.—a step they would scarcely have taken if the building of the post had not been in immediate prospect. Again, in October, 1838, Douglas remarked that he was awaiting—and by this he obviously meant that he was expecting—"instructions,

(11) The present Cadboro (Ten Mile) Point, not Point Gonzales.

(12) Douglas to Simpson, March 18, 1838. *Letters of John McLoughlin*, pp. 286-87.

(13) It is interesting to note that in a dispatch dated November 15, 1837, when they were still unaware of McNeill's survey, the Governor and Committee suggested to Douglas that the southern end of Vancouver Island should be examined. (H.B.C. Archives, A.6/24.) When the report of McNeill's explorations was received, they complimented him on finding so promising a site. (Governor and Committee to Douglas, October 31, 1838; H.B.C. Archives, A.6/25.)

(14) Governor and Committee to Simpson, February 15, 1837. (H.B.C. Archives, D.5/4.)

with the necessary reinforcements of officers and men, to carry into effect your wishes, with respect, to the proposed establishment on Vancouvers Island."<sup>15</sup> But by that time the Governor and Committee had adopted a policy of delay. Why they did so we do not yet know; but it is possibly significant that John McLoughlin arrived in London in the autumn of 1838 to confer with officials of the Company. McLoughlin, whose opposition to the construction of a new depot was well known, may well have asked that the final decision as to a site should be postponed until his return to the Pacific Coast; and in view of his long service in the region it would be a difficult request to refuse.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that McLoughlin paid his first and only visit to Vancouver Island almost immediately after his return to Fort Vancouver, in the autumn of 1839. He was accompanied by John Work and Captain McNeill. The party proceeded first to Fort Nisqually and from there sailed in the *Beaver* for Fort Langley, where they arrived early in December. McLoughlin described their subsequent movements as follows, in a report to Simpson:—

. . . On the 10th [December] left Fort Langley. On the 12th reached the plain on the South end of Vancouvers Island which Captain McNeill examined in 1837 and reported as a fine place for an Establishment. It is a very fine harbour, accessible at all seasons, but it is not a place suitable to our purpose; on the 14th arrived at Nisqually . . .<sup>16</sup>

Thus briefly did McLoughlin dismiss McNeill's discovery, and the possible site of a depot that might rival his beloved Fort Vancouver. He made no further reference to the matter in his report to Simpson, and did not so much as mention it in his dispatches to the Governor and Committee.

As it turned out, McLoughlin's attitude had little influence upon the course of events. Simpson was planning a third inspection trip to the Pacific Coast, and the Governor and Committee decided to place the whole matter in his hands. The same month that McLoughlin visited Vancouver Island a dispatch left London instructing him not to make any decision as to the location of

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(15) Douglas to the Governor and Committee, October 18, 1838. *Letters of John McLoughlin*, p. 267.

(16) McLoughlin to Simpson, March 20, 1840. (H.B.C. Archives, B.223/b/26.)

the new post until Simpson's arrival<sup>17</sup>—an order that had the effect of postponing any further action until 1841.

In the interval, however, a new complication appeared on the horizon. It had long been McLoughlin's ambition to build a chain of trading-posts that would extend along the coast all the way from Puget Sound to the far north. By 1834 he had completed Fort Nisqually, Fort Langley, Fort McLoughlin, and Fort Simpson. At that time the Russian American Company controlled Alaska; but the agreement arrived at between that Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1839, while McLoughlin was in London, made it possible for the latter to extend its operations to Russian territory. In the summer of 1840 James Douglas went to Alaska, and there took over Fort Stikine and built Fort Taku.

As he returned southward, Douglas carefully considered the Company's trading requirements on the whole Northwest Coast. He concluded that one more post was needed—a fort that would be frequented by the Indians dwelling in the region of Queen Charlotte Sound and the northern half of Vancouver Island. This area was then served by the *Beaver* and other trading vessels, but Douglas felt that a fort would be both cheaper and safer. On the question of its location he reported to McLoughlin as follows:—

The place which I consider, in all respects most suitable for this purpose, is the neighbourhood of Newweté, near the north end of Vancouver's Island, where there are several good harbours accessible to Shipping at every season, and which is almost directly in the centre of the Native Population . . .<sup>18</sup>

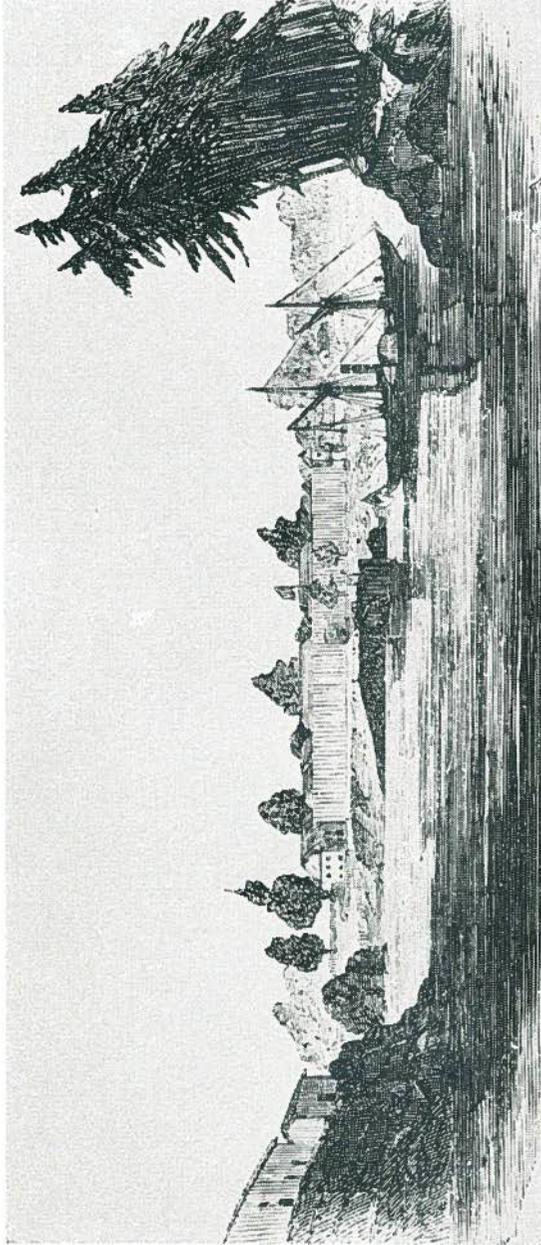
McLoughlin, who infinitely preferred trading-posts to trading-ships, and who regarded the steamer *Beaver* in particular as an unnecessary and costly extravagance, welcomed this recommendation and endorsed it heartily in his fall dispatch to the Governor and Committee.<sup>19</sup> To complete the chain of forts on the coast by building a post at the northern end of Vancouver Island

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(17) Governor and Committee to McLoughlin, December 31, 1839. (H.B.C. Archives, A.6/25.)

(18) Douglas to McLoughlin, October 1, 1840. (H.B.C. Archives, B.223/b/28.)

(19) McLoughlin to the Governor and Committee, November 20, 1840. (H.B.C. Archives, B.223/b/28.)



### Fort Victoria.

From the *Illustrated London News*, August 26, 1848. This was probably the first view of the fort to appear in print. The original sketch was evidently made before the end of 1847, as the enlarged stockade, which enclosed the building here shown outside the walls, was completed at that time. The steamer is the famous *Beaver*.

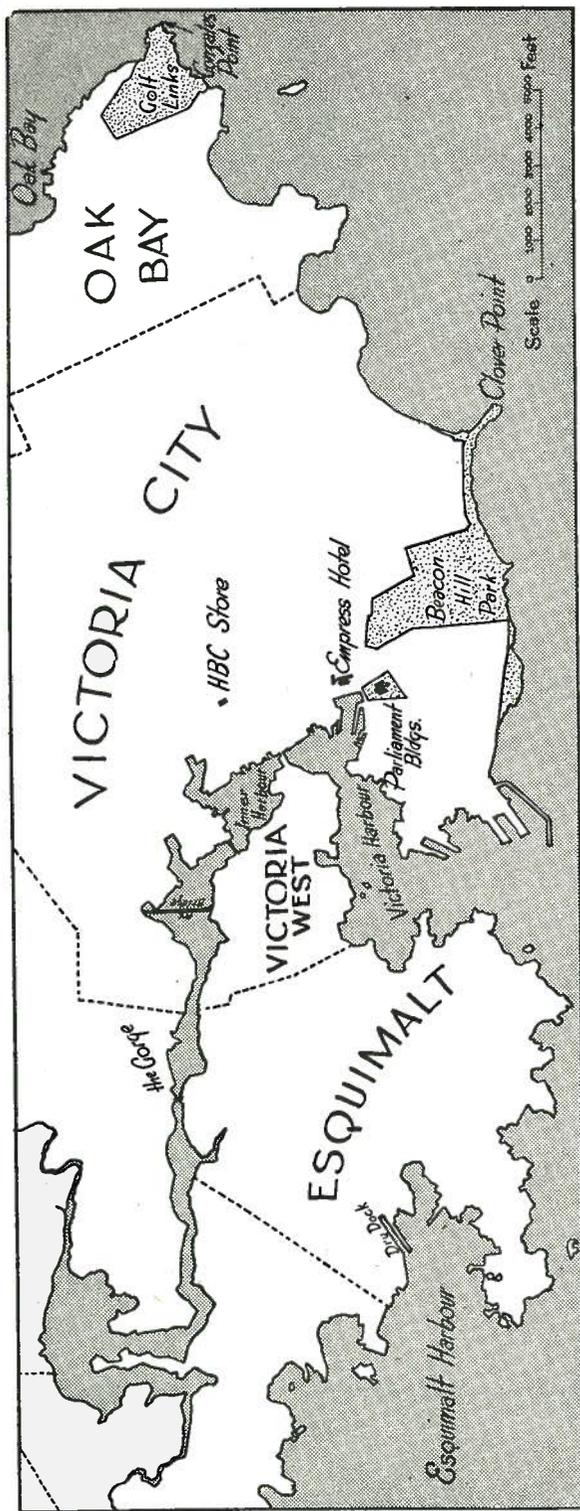


Part of the map prepared by James Douglas in 1842.

Courtesy, Hudson's Bay Company.

Esquimalt Harbour is shown as "Iswoymalth" and Victoria Harbour as "Camossack." The black square shows the site upon which Douglas proposed that the fort should be built. Fort Victoria was constructed very near this spot in 1843.

The original of this map was forwarded to London by John McLoughlin, and is now in the Hudson's Bay Archives. It is here reproduced from the photostat copy in the Provincial Archives.



Courtesy, Hudson's Bay Company.

Sketch map of Victoria and vicinity in 1948.

The various features on Douglas's 1842 map may be readily identified by comparing it with this modern sketch.

seemed to him much more sensible than to build a new depot, which he was still convinced was unnecessary, at its other extremity.

Such was McLoughlin's frame of mind when Governor Simpson—who in January had become Sir George Simpson—arrived at Fort Vancouver late in August, 1841. A few days later Simpson left for the north with Douglas on a seven weeks' tour, in the course of which he visited every post on the coast except Fort Langley. Unfortunately the conclusions he reached regarding the conduct of the coastal trade were diametrically opposed to McLoughlin's policy. In November he wrote to the Governor and Committee from Fort Vancouver:—

The trade of the coast cannot with any hope of making it a profitable business afford the maintenance of so many establishments as are now occupied for its protection, together with the shipping required for its transport, nor does it appear to me that such is necessary . . .<sup>20</sup>

The thing to do, in Simpson's opinion, was to abandon all the forts north of the Strait of Georgia except Fort Simpson, and carry on the trade with the *Beaver*, supplemented by sailing-vessels.

McLoughlin did not accept defeat without a struggle. He produced facts and figures that proved, to his own satisfaction at least, that trading-ships—and in particular the *Beaver*—were much more expensive to acquire and maintain than trading-posts. But Simpson was adamant, and by the first months of 1842 McLoughlin knew that he would receive instructions to abandon Fort Taku and Fort McLoughlin in 1843, and Fort Stikine in 1844.

On the depot question McLoughlin fared no better. At Fort Vancouver Simpson had found Commodore Wilkes, commander of the United States Exploring Expedition that circled the globe in 1838–42. From Wilkes he learned that one of his sloops of war, the U.S.S. *Peacock*, had been pounded to pieces on the bar of the Columbia six weeks before. Even when it was not dangerous the bar was frequently a serious inconvenience, as Simpson himself found when he left Fort Vancouver for California in

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(20) Quoted from E. O. S. Scholefield, *British Columbia*, Vancouver, 1914, I., p. 417.

December. On March 1, 1842, he wrote to the Governor and Committee from Honolulu:—

A three weeks detention inside Cape Disappointment, watching a favorable opportunity for crossing the very dangerous Bar off the entrance of the Columbia river, recalled my attention very forcibly to the importance of a depot being formed for such portion of the Company's business, as is more immediately connected with the Foreign Trade and Shipping department, on some eligible part of the coast instead of continuing Fort Vancouver as the great centre of the business of the west side of the Continent, and exposing many lives and the whole of the valuable imports and exports of the Country to a danger which is becoming more alarming every successive year.

In measure as the natural resources and sources of commerce of the Northern Pacific and its shores and interior country develop themselves, in like measure does it become apparent that we cannot avail ourselves of them advantageously, while entirely dependent on Fort Vancouver as the principal depot; as independent of the dangers of the Bar, the time lost in watching opportunities either to get out or in (frequently from a month to six weeks, while three weeks more are often consumed after crossing the Bar, in getting from Cape Disappointment up to Fort Vancouver) renders it impossible to calculate with any degree of certainty on the quantum of work that ought to be performed by the Shipping, deranging the best laid plans, burdening the different branches of the business with very heavy Shipping charges and depriving us of the means of embarking in other branches of Commerce, which might be carried on with great advantage, had we a depot eligibly situated on the Coast.

Regarding the site for the new depot, Simpson had this to say:—

The Southern end of Vancouver's Island forming the Northern side of the Straits of de Fuca, appears to me the best situation for such an establishment as required. From the very superficial examination that has been made, it is ascertained there are several good harbours in that neighbourhood no place however has as yet been found combining all the advantages required, the most important of which are, a safe and accessible harbour, well situated for defence, with Water power for Grist and Saw Mills, abundance of Timber for home consumption and Exportation and the adjacent Country well adapted for tillage and pasture Farms on an extensive scale. I had not an opportunity of landing on the southern end of the Island, but from the distant view we had of it in passing between Puget's Sound and the Gulf of Georgia and the report of C F McLoughlin and others who have been there, we have every reason to believe there will be no difficulty in finding an eligible situation in that quarter for the establishment in question.<sup>21</sup>

He went on to point out that there was a good prospect that both the salmon and whale fisheries would develop on a large scale

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(21) Quoted from the transcript in the Provincial Archives.

in the region, and that a post on the Strait of Juan de Fuca would be well situated to benefit from this trade.

It is evident, too, that political considerations weighed heavily with Simpson when he was deciding the depot question. Some years later he recalled that "The first idea of forming an establishment at the Southern end of Vancouver's Island was suggested by the danger that seemed to present itself from having the whole of our valuable property warehoused at one depot."<sup>22</sup> The proximity of Fort Vancouver to the Willamette Valley, in which there was already an American settlement of some size, worried him, and both then and later he was apprehensive lest the post should be attacked and plundered of its heavy stock of supplies. Moreover, even as early as 1842 Simpson had come to the conclusion that, when the boundary was finally determined, the line would follow the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Americans, he was convinced, would insist upon having a harbour on the Northwest Coast, and to grant this it would be necessary to give them Puget Sound. Much as the British Government might regret this necessity, Simpson foresaw that it would yield for the sake of peace.<sup>23</sup> In that event a post on the southern end of Vancouver Island would be of the utmost strategic and political importance, as it would bolster strongly the British claim to the whole of the island.

McLoughlin assigned to James Douglas the task of re-examining Vancouver Island and of selecting a site for the new fort. Douglas carried out the mission with characteristic thoroughness and submitted a detailed report, dated July 12, 1842. As the text of this report is readily available,<sup>24</sup> only the first three paragraphs, in which Douglas summarized his findings, need be quoted here:—

According to your instructions I embarked with a party of 6 men, in the Schooner *Cadboro*, at Fort Nisqually and proceeded with her, to the South

(22) Simpson to McLoughlin, Ogden, and Douglas, June 16, 1845. (H.B.C. Archives, D.4/32.)

(23) See Simpson to the Governor and Committee, March 1, 1842; transcript in the Provincial Archives.

(24) See, for example *The Beaver*, Outfit 273, March, 1943, pp. 4-7, where the report is printed in full. The map that accompanied Douglas's report was forwarded to London by McLoughlin. The portion showing the vicinity of Victoria is reproduced in the accompanying illustration.

end of "Vancouver's Island," visited the most promising points of that coast, and after a careful survey of its several Forts and harbours, I made choice of a site for the proposed new Establishment in the Port of Camosack which appears to me decidedly the most advantageous situation, for the purpose, within the Straits of De Fuca.

As a harbour it is equally safe and accessible and abundance of timber grows near it for home consumption and exportation. There being no fresh water stream of sufficient power, flour or saw Mills may be erected on the canal of Camosack, at a point where the channel is contracted to a breadth of 47 feet, by two narrow ridges of granite projecting from either bank, into the canal, through which the tide rushes out and in with a degree of force and velocity capable of driving the most powerful machinery, if guided and applied by mechanical skill.

In the several important points just stated, the position of Camosack can claim no superiority over some other excellent harbours on the south coast of Vancouver's Island, but the latter are, generally speaking, surrounded by rocks and forests, which it will require ages to level and adapt extensively to the purposes of agriculture, whereas at Camosack there is a range of plains nearly 6 miles square containing a great extent of valuable tillage and pasture land equally well adapted for the plough or for feeding stock. It was this advantage and distinguishing feature of Camosack, which no other part of the coast possesses, combined with the water privilege on the canal, the security of the harbour and abundance of timber around it, which led me to chase [choose] a site for the establishment at that place, in preference to all others met with on the Island.

The "Port of Camosack" was, of course, the present Victoria Harbour and Victoria Arm, and the word *Camosack* itself a variant of the Indian name usually rendered in English as *Camosun*. It is interesting to note that the determining factor in favour of Camosack was its suitability for agriculture. Its chief deficiency was the inadequate supply of fresh water, which Douglas felt would "probably be found scanty enough for the Establishment in very dry seasons . . ." The report concludes:—

The situation is not faultless or so completely suited to our purposes as it might be, but I despair of any better, being found on this coast, as I am confident that there is no other sea port north of the Columbia where so many advantages will be found combined.<sup>25</sup>

Douglas was probably still on Vancouver Island when the Council of the Northern Department assembled at Norway House, perused Simpson's reports, and on June 28, 1842, passed the following resolutions:—

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(25) *Ibid.*, p. 7.

That in accordance with the 23rd paragraph of Governor Sir George Simpson's dispatch to the Governor and Committee, dated Fort Vancouver 25th November 1841, Chief Factor McLoughlin take the necessary steps for abandoning the posts of Fort McLoughlin and Takoo in Summer 1843, and the Posts of Stikine in Summer 1844; and fitting the "Beaver" Steamer to secure the trade usually collected at these abandoned Establishments.

It being considered in many points of view expedient to form a depot at the Southern end of Vancouver's Island, it is resolved that an eligible site for such a Depot be selected, and that measures be adopted for forming this Establishment with the least possible delay.<sup>26</sup>

## 2.

Douglas can have had no conception of the important part the new establishment was to play in his own career, and it is therefore interesting to find that he returned from his visit to Vancouver Island thoroughly enamoured of the "Port of Camosack." Writing to his friend James Hargrave in February, 1843, he described it in glowing terms:—

The place itself appears a perfect "Eden," in the midst of the dreary wilderness of the North west coast, and so different is its general aspect, from the wooded, rugged regions around, that one might be pardoned for supposing it had dropped from the clouds into its present position. . . .

The growth of indigenous vegetation is more luxuriant, than in any other place, I have seen in America, indicating a rich productive soil. Though the survey I made was somewhat laborious, not being so light and active of foot as in my younger days, I was nevertheless delighted in ranging over fields knee deep in clover, tall grasses and ferns reaching above our heads, at these unequivocal proofs of fertility. Not a musquitoe that plague of plagues did we feel, nor meet with molestation from the natives.<sup>27</sup>

He informed Hargrave further that he was soon to leave for the Northwest Coast to superintend the abandoning of Fort Taku and Fort McLoughlin, and the construction of the new post.

Douglas left Fort Vancouver on March 1, with a party of fifteen men, and on the 9th arrived at Fort Nisqually, at the southern end of Puget Sound. The next day he wrote a private letter to Simpson, in which may be seen the last flicker of the

(26) Formal authority to abandon the posts and build the new fort on Vancouver Island was given to McLoughlin by the Governor and Committee in a dispatch dated December 21, 1842. This probably reached Fort Vancouver by the supply ship *Diamond*, which arrived on June 30, 1843; but by that time, as we shall see, work on the new post had already commenced.

(27) G. P. de T. Glazebrook (ed.), *The Hargrave Correspondence*, Toronto, 1938, pp. 420-21.

depot controversy. Despite Simpson's known opinions and instructions, McLoughlin still felt that a small fort was all that was required; and it is evident that it was upon his own responsibility that Douglas ordered the building of a larger post. To Simpson Douglas wrote:—

I am at a loss on what scale to build the new Establishment, I thought it was designed to serve as a general Depot for our Pacific trade, and to become a rendezvous for the shipping: but it seems I am mistaken, as the Doctor thinks that a quadrangle of 70 yards will answer every purpose of its erection. I am however of opinion that it should be made larger; as whatever may be our present views, I am confident that the place from its situation and accessibility, will eventually become a centre of operation, either to ourselves or to others who may be attracted thither, by the valuable timber and exhaustless fisheries of that inland sea. I would therefore propose to make the stores roomy and substantial, and the Fort on a plan of at least 300 feet square, so that when it is up we may not be put to the expense and derangement of incessant changes and extensions.<sup>28</sup>

Leaving Nisqually in the *Beaver* on March 13, Douglas arrived off Clover Point, Vancouver Island, about 4 p.m. on the 14th. He appears to have remained on board until the next morning, from which point his activities are recorded in a small pocket diary now in the Provincial Archives:—

*Wednesday 15th March.* Went out this morning with a boat and examined the wood of the north shore of the harbour; it is not good being generally short, crooked and almost unservicable. On the south shore, the wood is of a better quality and I think I will have no difficulty in getting enough for our purpose. Small wood for picketing [i.e., for the stockade] is scarce, particularly cedar which answers better than any other kind for that purpose from its lightness and greater durability under ground. We will probably have to bring such as we require from a distance.

I am at a loss where to place the Fort, as there are two positions possessing advantages of nearly equal importance, though of different kinds.

No. 1 has a good view of the harbour, is upon clear ground, and only 50 yds. from the beach, on the other hand vessels drawing 14 feet cannot come within 130 feet of the shore, we will therefore either have to boat cargo off and on at a great destruction of boats, and considerable loss of time or be put to the expense of forming a jettie at a great amount of labour.

No. 2 on the other hand will allow of vessels lying with their sides grazing the rocks, which form a natural wharf, whereon cargo may be conveniently landed from the ships yard, and in that respect would be exceedingly advantageous but on the other hand, an intervening point inter-

(28) Douglas to Simpson, Private, March 10, 1843. (H.B.C. Archives, D.5/8.)

cepts the view so that the mouth of the Port cannot be seen from it, an objection of much weight in the case of vessels entering and leaving Port, another disadvantage is that the shore is there covered by thick woods to the breadth of 200 yards so that we must either place the Fort at that distance from the landing place, or clear away the thickets which would detain us very much, in our building operations. I will think more on this subject before determining the point. The weather rather cloudy, but dry, and beautifully clear in the afternoon.

*Thursday 16.* The weather clear and warm. The gooseberry bushes growing in the woods beginning to bud.

Put 6 men to dig a well and 6 others to square building timber. Spoke to the Samose [Songish] today and informed them of our intention of building in this place which appeared to please them very much. and they immediately offered their services in procuring pickets for the establishment, an offer which I gladly accepted and promised to pay them a Blanket (2½) for every forty pickets of 22 feet by 36 inches which they bring. I also lent them 3 large axes, 1 half sqre head Do. and 10 half round head axes, to be returned hereafter, when they have finished the job.

. . . 5 Men squared 1½ pce of 40 feet, & 1 pce of 32 feet today. 6 men digging the well. . . .

*Friday 17th.* Clear warm weather. Frost last night. The 5 squares [squares?] finished ½ pcs of 40 feet and 1 of 32 feet. . . .

Six men digging the well.

*Saturday 18th.* Men employed as yesterday. The well is now about 11 feet deep.<sup>29</sup>

A parallel narrative is in existence, which, although it is not concerned directly with the founding of Victoria, has an interest of its own. Douglas was accompanied from Nisqually by a Catholic missionary, Father J. S. Z. Bolduc, who has left this description of his arrival at Camosun:—

[On the 14th March] we bore away for the southern point of Vancouver's Island, whither we arrived about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. At first, only two canoes were perceived; but, after a discharge of cannon, we saw natives issuing from their haunts and surrounding the steamboat. Next morning the pirogues (Indian boats) came from every side. I went on shore with the commander of the expedition [Douglas] and the captain of the vessel [McNeill]; having received unequivocal proofs of good-will of

(29) Quoted from the original in the Provincial Archives. On the 17th Douglas described in detail "a luminous streak in the heavens" which appeared that evening and was again visible, when darkness fell, on succeeding days. Dr. W. N. Sage believes this to have been the great comet of 1843 (see *Sir James Douglas and British Columbia*, Toronto, 1930, pp. 121-122); but see also James C. Agnew, "The Okanagan Arc," in *Sixth Report of the Okanagan Historical Society*, 1935, pp. 119-121.

the Indians, I visited their village situated six miles from the port, at the extremity of the bay.

Like the surrounding tribes, this one possessed a little fortress, formed by stakes enclosing about 150 square feet. . . .

My arrival being noised abroad, several neighboring nations came hither in crowds. Saturday, the 18th, was employed in constructing a kind of repository, whereon to celebrate mass the ensuing morn. Mr. Douglas gave me several of his men to aid the work. Branches of fir-trees formed the sides of this rustic chapel; and the awning of the boat, its canopy. Early Sunday morning, more than twelve hundred savages, belonging to the three great tribes, Kawitskins [Cowichans], Klalams [Clallams], and Isanisks [Sanetch], were assembled in this modest sanctuary. Our commander neglected nothing that could render the ceremony imposing; he gave me liberty to choose on board, all that could service for its decoration. He assisted at the mass with some Canadians, and two Catholic ladies. It was in the midst of this numerous assembly, that, for the first time, the sacred mysteries were celebrated; may the blood of the Spotless Lamb, fertilize this barren land, and cause it to produce an abundant harvest.<sup>30</sup>

The identity of the "two Catholic ladies" has not been established.

Father Bolduc remained at Camosun only until March 24, when he left by canoe. Douglas tarried somewhat longer, but the exact length of his stay is not known. Nor is it certain that, when he sailed on to Fort Taku and Fort McLoughlin, men were left behind to continue work on the new fort. It now seems more likely that Douglas's purpose on this first visit was merely to decide upon the precise site for the new post, and become familiar with local conditions, in order that work might proceed without delay when he returned from the north with the men from the two abandoned forts.<sup>31</sup> Be that as it may, Douglas and the *Beaver* carried out their northern mission and arrived back at Camosun on June 3. Six days later Douglas left for Fort Vancouver, leaving Chief Trader Charles Ross, who had previously been stationed at Fort McLoughlin, in charge of the construction of the new post. Roderick Finlayson was second

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(30) Father P. J. De Smet, *Oregon Missions and Travels over the Rocky Mountains in 1845-46*, New York, 1847, pp. 56-58. Bolduc's narrative is dated February 15, 1844.

(31) We know from Ross's letter of January 10, 1844, that work on the well was not resumed until Douglas returned. As we shall see, the supply of fresh water was a matter of importance, and one would think that if any men had remained at the fort site, they would have continued this work.

in command; and Ross tells us that the men numbered "little short of forty hands."<sup>32</sup>

It is frequently asserted that Fort Victoria was originally known as Fort Camosun, but no available contemporary document bears out the statement. The name Camosun, or Camosack, is invariably applied to Victoria Harbour, or, occasionally, to the neighbourhood; never to the fort itself. The post was first known locally as Fort Albert; but when it was so named, or by whom, does not appear. On the other hand, the distinction in significance between the names Camosun (which in this instance is spelled *Camosum*) and Fort Albert is shown clearly by an entry in the log of the schooner *Cadboro*, under date August 6, 1843. This reads:—

. . . Made all possible sail . . . and run for *Camosum* . . . at 11.30 A.M. arrived safe and Moor'd abreast of Fort "Albert" . . .

A later entry, which refers to the "Harbour of 'Camosum,'" makes the distinction still more clear. The transcript of the log of the *Cadboro* in the Provincial Archives covers the period from July 1 to November 4, 1843. Throughout those months the *Cadboro* was acting as a tender to the new post; references both to it and to Camosun are therefore numerous, and it is noteworthy that not one of them is inconsistent with the distinction made above.<sup>33</sup>

Officially the post was never known by any other name than Fort Victoria. William IV. having died in 1837, the original intention of naming it Fort Adelaide, after his Queen, was dropped, and it was christened instead in honour of the new reigning monarch. A resolution passed by the Council of the Northern Department at Fort Garry on June 10, 1843, is interesting both in this connection, and because it shows the wisdom of Douglas's decision to build the post upon a generous scale:—

Resolved: That the new Establishment to be formed on the Straits de Fuca to be named Fort Victoria be erected on a scale sufficiently extensive to answer the purposes of the Depot; the square of the Fort to be not less

(32) Ross to Simpson, January 10, 1844. See *infra*, foot-note 36.

(33) I am aware that this interpretation runs counter to the statement made by Governor Charles A. Sale in a letter dated April 7, 1927, which is printed in Sage, *Sir James Douglas and British Columbia*, p. 123.

than 150 yards; the buildings to be substantial and erected as far apart as the grounds may admit with a view to guarding against fire.<sup>34</sup>

The text of this resolution presumably reached McLoughlin by the fall Express, which arrived at Fort Vancouver on November 17, 1843. In any event, the post is referred to as Fort Victoria in a dispatch to the Governor and Committee written by McLoughlin the next day.

The most complete description of the original plan of Fort Victoria at present available is contained in a private letter from Douglas to Sir George Simpson, written in November, 1843, the text of which the Hudson's Bay Company has kindly released. The passage reads:—

We arrived and began operations at Vancouvers Island in the beginning of June, and after things were fairly started I returned by instructions to this place, leaving Mr. Ross in charge. In planning the Fort, I had in view the probability of its being converted into a Depot for the coasting trade and consequently began on a respectable scale, as to size. It is in form a quadrangle of 330 x 300 feet intended to contain 8 buildings of 60 feet each, disposed in the following order say 2 in the rear facing the harbour and 3 on each side standing at right angles with the former leaving the front entirely open. The outhouses and workshops, are to be thrown in the rear of the main buildings and in the unoccupied angles, so as not to disturb the symmetry of the principal square. So much for the plan now for the progress made in carrying it out. On the 21st September when we last heard from Ross the Pickets and defences were finished, and two of the buildings completed so far as to be habitable, and they were engaged in hauling out the logs of a third building.

The climate of the place is pleasant, and I believe perfectly healthy. It is rather a singular fact that no rain fell there between the 10th of June and 8th Septr., though we had heavy showers, both at this place [Fort Vancouver] and Nisqually. The great and only inconvenience of the situation is that which I mentioned in my survey report, as likely to be felt, until such time as wells are dug, the scarcity of fresh water in the months of August and September. They were at times badly off for water last summer, and had to cart it from a distance of 1½ miles in consequence of the failure of the stream which supplies the Fort. There is a numerous Indian population about the place, who have so far been quiet and civil, though they had many opportunities of displaying an unfriendly disposition if they had been evil disposed.

The summer returns from June to September amount to 300 Beaver and Otter, with a few small furs, and probably the trade will increase, when the Cape Flattery Indians and the people inhabiting the west coast of Vancouvers Island begin to frequent the establishment. There has of course

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(34) E. H. Oliver (ed.), *The Canadian North-West: Its Early Development and Legislative Records*, Ottawa, 1915, II., p. 862.

been no time to attempt any thing in the way of farming, and the resources of the country in fish, are only known as yet through the supply procured in trade from the Natives, which was abundant after the arrival of the salmon in July; other kinds of fish were not regularly brought in; a proof of their being, either, less sought after or not so easily caught.<sup>35</sup>

A second letter from Charles Ross to Simpson, dated Fort Victoria, January 10, 1844, gives a few additional details:—

Our progress in regard to the Establishment is as follows—a Quadrangle of 330 by 300 ft. surrounded with Stocades, eighteen feet high—one octangular Bastion of three stories erected—also, two men's houses, and one Store each measuring 60 by 30 ft. with 17 ft. Posts & Pavilion roofs. These have been thoroughly completed, and an Officers' & main house of 60 by 40 ft. are rapidly advancing to the same end. The farming is as yet little more than in embryo—there being only about five acres under cultivation, and about the same quantity prepared for the Plough.<sup>36</sup>

Trade had continued quiet, and Ross reported that he had “as yet collected little beyond 400 skins—Beaver & Land Otter.”

Little more than five months after this letter was written, Ross, whose health had frequently been a cause for anxiety, died after a brief illness, and was succeeded as officer in charge by Roderick Finlayson.

### 3.

At this point, strictly speaking, the story of the founding of Victoria should end; but a few notes relating to later events, and to the ultimate fate of the fort buildings, may be of interest.

The year 1843, in which Fort Victoria was built, is known in the history of Oregon as the year of the “great immigration” and of Champeog. The arrival of a thousand American citizens in a single season, and the establishment of a provisional government, made it more than ever clear that the days of British influence in the valley of the Columbia were numbered. The future of Fort Vancouver became increasingly uncertain, and the Hudson's Bay Company attached more and more importance to Fort Victoria. In the autumn of 1844 the Governor and Committee instructed Captain Mott, of the annual supply ship *Vancouver*, to proceed direct to Fort Victoria instead of to the Columbia; and, although the formal transfer of the Company's

(35) Douglas to Simpson, Private, November 16, 1843. (H.B.C. Archives, D.5/9.)

(36) Charles Ross to Sir George Simpson, January 10, 1844. (H.B.C. Archives, D.5/10.) This letter is printed complete elsewhere in this number of the *Quarterly*; see pp. 113–117.

district headquarters was delayed somewhat longer, this event was unmistakable evidence that the position of primacy was already passing from the Columbia to Vancouver Island.

One journal of the old fort has survived and is now in the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. It covers the period from May 9, 1846, to May 28, 1850;<sup>37</sup> and when the text becomes available it will throw a flood of light upon the development of the post during four eventful years. Meanwhile notes in the possession of the writer, made from this journal many years ago, reveal that Fort Victoria soon grew beyond the original dimensions set by James Douglas. At least two buildings were erected outside the walls, one of which was a powder magazine. In 1847 the stockade was partly rebuilt and at the same time extended to the north, in order that the whole establishment might once more be enclosed. The work was completed on Christmas Day, 1847. Such details as are available indicate that the fort enclosure was enlarged to measure 300 by approximately 465 feet, or about half as big again as the original area. A new bastion was constructed at the north-east corner, and upon its completion the old bastion to the south-west was rebuilt as well.

The stockade and bastions seem to have been kept in repair as fortifications for a good many years; but the serious need for them passed quickly. Soon after Ross's death a clash with the natives occurred, but owing to Finlayson's courage and forbearance it only served to enhance the prestige of the fort.<sup>38</sup> By 1850 both the Company and private individuals were erecting buildings at considerable distances from the stockade. In 1851 James Douglas himself completed a large residence on property adjacent to what later became the site of the Parliament Buildings. The following year Douglas's son-in-law, Dr. J. S. Helmcken, built a more modest dwelling next door. The gold-rush of 1858, which in a few months caused Victoria to grow into a town with a population of several thousands, completed the transformation. The pickets and bastions that had been a practical necessity only a few years before had become an anachronism.

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(37) H.B.C. Archives, B.226/a/1.

(38) Finlayson's own account of the incident is printed in A. S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, London, n.d., pp. 731-32.

An agitation was soon afoot urging the removal of the fort, and in particular of the north-eastern bastion, which stood on Government Street, the main thoroughfare of the new town. Popular feeling seems to have been well expressed in a letter printed in the *Victoria Gazette* in December, 1858, that poured scorn and ridicule upon the now superfluous fortification:—

It cannot be used to fire a salute without endangering the lives of pedestrians, as well as smashing the windows in neighboring houses, as was the case the last time a salute was fired off, and for which window-smashing a bill has been presented to the Government for payment—so remove the concern.<sup>39</sup>

But the bastion survived this blast and held its ground for another two years. By that time the Hudson's Bay Company had built a new brick store and warehouse on Wharf Street and had decided to sell part, at least, of the old fort property. In preparation for this sale a portion of the fort was demolished, as recorded in the newspapers of the time:—

The old picket fence [i.e., stockade] that has so long surrounded the fort yard, is fast disappearing. Piece after piece it is taken down, sawed up, and piled away for firewood. Yesterday afternoon workmen commenced removing the old bastion at the corner of View and Government streets, and before to-day's sun gilds the western horizon, the wood comprising it will no doubt have shared the ignoble fate of the unfortunate pickets. Alas! poor bastion. Thy removal should be enough to break the heart of every Hudson Bay man in the country.<sup>40</sup>

Late in 1864 a second sale caused another orgy of destruction, and the last remnants of the fort disappeared. Its passing was thus chronicled in the press:—

Bit by bit all traces of the Hudson Bay Company's old fort are being obliterated. The work of demolition of the remaining fort buildings has been going on gloriously during the last few days. Yesterday evening the last of the number, an old log house, adjoining the Globe Hotel, formerly used as a kitchen, was brought to the ground.<sup>41</sup>

So passed old Fort Victoria, after a relatively brief life that scarcely equalled in length the controversy that had preceded its construction.

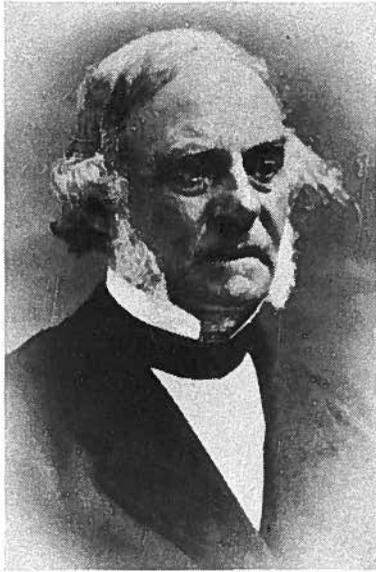
W. KAYE LAMB.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA,  
VANCOUVER, B.C.

(39) *Victoria Gazette*, December 9, 1858.

(40) *Victoria Colonist*, December 15, 1860.

(41) *Ibid.*, November 25, 1864.



Sir James Douglas, K.C.B.

A hitherto unpublished portrait, reproduced from the original tin-type  
in the Provincial Archives.

## SIR JAMES DOUGLAS: A NEW PORTRAIT.

Through the kindness of the family, the *Quarterly* is enabled to present in this, the centennial year of Victoria, a reproduction of a hitherto unpublished tin-type of the Capital City's founder, Sir James Douglas, K.C.B. The original was presented to the Provincial Archives by Mrs. J. E. W. Oland, granddaughter of Sir James.

The photograph is undated, but obviously it was taken within a few years of his death, and before the still later picture that shows Sir James with sunken cheeks. It is also apparent that this new likeness of the "great governor" was made after the photograph that is so familiarly known, and which was so extensively retouched as almost to destroy the indices of personality for the sake of a more pleasing picture.

The tin-type presents a picture of a tired, sad, and dignified old face, but one that is filled with character. The firm, sensitive mouth, and square determined chin; the rather bulbous nose, the heavy-lidded eyes, and broad high forehead defy the loosening facial muscles and reveal a man of courage, decision, and intellect. The mouth is the most interesting feature, for it indicates at the same time decision and sentiment; but it betrays very little humour.

A study of the "new" photograph, and of personal letters and official correspondence of his day, lifts the veil a little and gives a glimpse of the man, rather than the stern and somewhat pompous governor portrayed by those familiar with him only in his public capacity.

The business abilities and general character of James Douglas were analysed by one of the shrewdest of his contemporaries, Governor George Simpson, of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose business it was to estimate the worth of his associates in the service. Writing long before Douglas attained to the position, either with the Company or the Crown, that he eventually occupied, Simpson had this comment to make about the young clerk:—

A stout powerful active man of good conduct and respectable abilities;—tolerably well Educated, expresses himself clearly on paper, understands our Counting House business and is an excellent Trader.—Well qualified for

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any Service requiring bodily exertion firmness of mind and the exercise of Sound judgement, but furiously violent when roused.—Has every reason to look forward to early promotion and is a likely man to fill a place at our Council board in course of time.<sup>1</sup>

This appreciation was penned about 1833, when Douglas was 30; and time justified Governor Simpson's evaluation of the clerk at Fort Vancouver. He did fill a very important place at the Company's council board, and became the dominant figure in the affairs of the concern West of the Rockies.

Apart from Simpson's appreciation of him, James Douglas may be said to have fashioned his life and conduct upon the Bible and copy-book precepts. He was a slave to duty, and as long as he was a subordinate to Dr. John McLoughlin, on the Columbia, he gave implicit obedience to his superior. Writing to an associate he reprimanded him for his lack of courtesy to the doctor: "You have got to learn at this hour," he declared, "that obedience is the very first and most important of our duties."<sup>2</sup>

But once he was placed in command at Fort Vancouver, although only temporarily, due to the absence of McLoughlin in Europe, James Douglas was ready to strike out along lines that, it would appear, McLoughlin did not favour. Writing to Governor Simpson on March 18, 1838, he commented:—

In consequence of Chief Factor McLoughlin being here I have not hitherto taken a leading part in the management of affairs; but upon his departure I shall carry into effect, such, of the several objects recommended in your dispatch, as could not be attempted at an earlier period.<sup>3</sup>

It was from this time that Douglas really blossomed. Upon the return of McLoughlin to Fort Vancouver, and his own appointment in 1840 to a Chief Factorship, he took a larger part in the affairs of the Company. He became a confidant of Simpson and a diplomatic representative of the Company on the Pacific. He was no longer restricted to the status of an inferior who must give blind obedience to his immediate superior.

A man of deep religious principles, and—for his day—of wide denominational tolerance, he supported every church that sought to spread Christianity in the western wilds, while his generosity

(1) Douglas MacKay, *The Honourable Company*, Toronto, 1936, p. 200.

(2) Douglas to A. C. Anderson, April 20, 1841; quoted in W. N. Sage, *Sir James Douglas and British Columbia*, Toronto, 1930, p. 111.

(3) E. E. Rich (ed.), *The Letters of John McLoughlin, First Series, 1825-38*, Toronto, 1941, p. 269.

to the poor and distressed was gracious and generous. It is interesting to look into the personal account-book that he kept. An entry for January 2, 1836, was: "To goods to poor 0.19.10"; and another: "Cash to Jason Lee (U.S. Missionary) 5.0.0." On June 10 of the next year: "To Orphans Fund, 3.0.0" and "to Catholic Church, 2.0.0"—and so on throughout the years. One item in 1849 is of more than passing interest: "To goods to ransom a slave 14/."<sup>4</sup>

This payment of ransom money to free an Indian slave shows that James Douglas did not swerve from the social and religious programme that he set himself to attain when he was made Chief Factor. It is written in the same account-book:—

The Moral renovation of the place;  
Abolition of slavery within our limits;  
Lay down a principle and act upon it with confidence;  
The building of a church of Christ in this place.

Slavery was an ancient institution among the Indian tribes of the Northwest, and it took a courageous man to fight against a custom that was one of the pillars of the whole social system of the savages.

In 1840, following his elevation to the Chief Factorship, Douglas was sent to Sitka to settle the details of a trading agreement with the Russians, and he did his best to dissuade them from selling liquor to the Indians. His habits of industry and orderliness were shocked, for he found Sitka "crowded with men living in idleness."<sup>5</sup> To him, idleness was a cardinal sin. He jotted down at the same time another observation based upon a copy-book maxim:—

Honesty is found in all cases the best policy, but in our dealings with our Russian neighbors it will be found so from the first day to the last of our intercourse.

Personal note-books, scrap-books, and diaries left by Douglas show that he was interested in the details of a multiplicity of matters and things apart from those directly concerned with the fur trade. Nature in its various phases enthralled him, and convulsions of Nature, such as cyclones and earthquakes, tidal waves and unusual rainfalls, fascinated him. He was particu-

(4) James Douglas, *Personal Account Book*, MS., in Provincial Archives.

(5) James Douglas, *Notes from Establishment of Servants and Trading Trips*, MS., in Provincial Archives. Cited hereafter as *Notes*.

larly fond of astronomy, while a deep reader of science generally. Occasionally he clipped out a humorous anecdote from some periodical and carefully pasted it in a scrap-book, betraying his own lack of spontaneous humour by labelling it "Amusing." Occasionally a sense of the ludicrous appealed to him. Chief Trader James Murray Yale was lacking in stature, so much so that he was known as "Little Yale." He was sensitive upon the subject, and avoided standing beside Douglas when he could, as the towering height of the Chief Factor made his own lack of inches the more apparent. Douglas knew this, and took a quiet delight in teasing Yale by moving with him whenever Yale sought to lessen the contrast.<sup>6</sup>

Among the things that interested Douglas was baldness. When he discovered that the Indians of the Northwest Coast used a certain root for medicinal purposes, he gravely recorded: "It prevents baldness and produces a new growth of hair."<sup>7</sup> Dr. J. S. Helmcken, in his delightful story of his meal in Fort Victoria in 1851, tells how Douglas questioned Dr. Alfred Benson about the cause of baldness. It may be that he feared that he would lose his hair with advancing age, but if so it was a needless worry, for he kept his locks until the end.

Religious and theological topics claimed his closest attention, while political speeches and history made up much of his reading.

He was constantly seeking a more intimate knowledge of the ways and customs of the Indians, and when he discovered that there was a belief among the Northwest Coast natives in the existence of a Supreme Being whom they called *Yealth*, and that he had a son named *Yealth Yay*, Douglas found time amid his many other duties of the day to set it down in detail.<sup>8</sup>

He went to California to treat with the Spaniards there, following his trip to Sitka in 1840, and his sense of propriety was shocked:—

I hear from the most unexceptional authority that the ladies of California are not in general very refined or delicate in their conversation, using gross expressions and indulging in broad remarks, which would make modest women blush.<sup>9</sup>

(6) Reminiscence of the late Jason Allard, told to the writer.

(7) Douglas, *Notes*.

(8) *Ibid.*

(9) *Ibid.*

In his own home and circle women were treated with every possible respect, and with the utmost regard for the strict conventions of the period.

Such, then, was Chief Factor James Douglas at the time that he founded Fort Victoria in 1843: austere, just, and meticulous in all things; an accomplished business-man and shrewd diplomat, deeply religious and tolerant. He lived behind a mask and it became part of him. It was necessary in order to impress the natives and overawe the rougher element among the Company's servants that he maintain "face" at all times. He remembered that the old adage was "familiarity breeds contempt," so he maintained a grand aloofness, even among his associates. He was dignified and courteous to all, but he made a confidant of no one. As a result, it was the mask and not the man himself that was presented to the public gaze. He was pictured by writers of his time as being cold, righteous, but unfeeling.

Could a man devoid of finer feelings pen the account of the Cowlitz epidemic of 1830, ten years after the event, upon learning the details of that dreadful occurrence?

Every village presented a scene harrowing in the extreme to the feelings; the canoes were drawn up upon the beach, the nets extended on the willow boughs to dry, the very dogs appeared as ever watchful, but there was not heard the cheerful sound of the human voice; the green woods, the music of the birds, the busy humming of the insect tribes, the bright summer sky, spoke of life and happiness, while the abode of man was silent as the grave.  
 . . . Oh, God! wonderful and mysterious are Thy ways.<sup>10</sup>

Douglas was devoted to learning in all its branches, and was particularly keen to see opportunities afforded to the young for scholastic training. He busied himself with the affairs of the circulating library that had its headquarters at Fort Vancouver, and provided outposts with solid reading matter. In 1844 he was trying to establish a school on the Columbia where the children from distant establishments could be boarded.<sup>11</sup>

When the Rev. Robert Staines and his wife arrived at Fort Victoria in 1849 it was not long until Douglas was praising the work that Mrs. Staines was doing as a teacher. Three years later the Chief Factor and Governor found time to busy himself

(10) *Ibid.*

(11) Douglas to James Murray Yale; letter in the possession of James Grant, Saanich.

with the text-book supply for the fort school. "Baileys School is doing wonders—books are scarce, will you get 36 spelling Books for that promising institution if procurable anywhere," he wrote to Dr. W. F. Tolmie, at Nisqually.<sup>12</sup>

It was within his own domestic circle, however, that the real character of Douglas was more generously revealed. He was devoted to his wife and children, but even within his own home he could not altogether free himself from the mask he wore before the world. His tender regard for the sweet little girl whom he married at Fort St. James in 1828, when he was an obscure clerk, remained undiminished by time and advances in fame and fortune.

Mrs. Douglas is now leaving for Nesqually with James and baby to try the effect of a change of air [he wrote to Tolmie in 1854]. I am afraid they will put you to much trouble, which I will not forget.

Have the goodness to supply them with anything they may want at Nesqually on my account, as I regret no expense for their good.<sup>13</sup>

James Douglas directed the affairs of his household with the same painstaking regard to detail that he displayed in his private affairs and in public business. It is interesting, as throwing a sidelight on the life and character of this very busy man, to scan the pages of an old scrap-book and order-book now in the Provincial Archives. It discloses that he ordered the clothing for his entire family, and gave careful directions as to the manner in which the various garments should be fashioned. Picture him in 1855, at a time when he was Governor of Vancouver's Island, Lieutenant-Governor of Queen Charlotte Islands, and directing the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company in the West, sitting down to write to England for white and coloured muslins, yards—40 of them—of black merino, and bolts of linings for dresses. It was a miscellaneous order indeed, for it contained such items as "56 Gall. Brandy in two quarter casks," "4 doz. old Brown Windsor soap," "4 doz. Eau de Cologne," four pairs of boots and shoes for himself, "1 Gentleman's neat silk hat measure round outside of hat 23 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches," books and magazines, "a few scent Bottles and other little presents for young ladies," and, finally,

(12) "Report of the Provincial Archives Department . . . of British Columbia . . . 1913," in *British Columbia Sessional Papers, 1914*, Victoria, 1914, p. V 93.

(13) *Ibid.*, p. V 104.

"1 pair Colts Revolver Pistols—Colts patent no other wanted because inferior."<sup>14</sup>

He supplemented the order by further instructions in respect to clothing for himself:—

The Clothing I wish to have stout and good, and as well made as can be expected, particularly the Trowsers, upon which I am rather hard, and pray give the Tailors a caution to sew the buttons on well. We poor Colonists are victimised, in many ways, but chiefly in the articles of clothing and shoes, which cost one a little fortune in the course of the year.

Again, the following year, he made a somewhat similar complaint:—

Whether it be from mistakes in the measures sent home, or from inattention of the Tradesmen, you employ, I am unable to say, but it is certain that my clothes seldom fit so well as could be wished; a remark which especially applies to trowsers and hats, and I have experienced all the tortures which uneasy shoes can inflict.<sup>15</sup>

He was particularly fussy about his clothes, and wished to be correctly attired for every occasion. Hence it was that immediately upon his return from an expedition against the Cowichans in 1856 he wrote to London:—

I wish you would send me a good serviceable sword, with a strong belt of which I felt the want in my late journey.<sup>16</sup>

He had probably felt himself to be improperly dressed for the military part that he had played, and took steps to prevent a recurrence of such an error.

In one of his letters ordering clothes from London his Scottish thrift induced him to pen: "Clothes to be made with deep seams for letting out if required."

But James Douglas was not penurious by any means. In sending his daughter and niece to California "to see the lions of the Great City" of San Francisco in the summer of 1854, he wrote to Douglas Peyton, of that place:—

I have to beg your kind offices in behalf of my dear little ones, and shall take it a particular favour if Mrs Peyton will receive them under her care. . . . Expense is of course no object. . . . I have to request Mrs Peyton's acceptance of a Sea Otter skin.<sup>17</sup>

(14) Quoted from the original scrap- and order-book, in the Provincial Archives.

(15) *Ibid.*

(16) *Ibid.*

(17) *Ibid.*

And even in those days sea-otter skins were worth real money!

His acts of kindness extended from lowly Indians to the highest dignitaries who visited Victoria. Hearing of a fire that burned the home of a friend, he wrote:—

In expressing deep regret for the misfortune which has resulted in such loss and suffering to yourself and family, permit me to use the privilege of an old friend in presenting, under these calamitous circumstances, the enclosed token of my sympathy and regard.<sup>18</sup>

The "token" was a cheque for \$200.

His youngest daughter, Martha, later to become Mrs. Dennis Harris, was the favourite of his old age. From the faded pages of a journal that he had her start on January 1, 1866,<sup>19</sup> his affection for the child is evidenced throughout. When she missed a word or omitted an entry for a day, the neat, unmistakable handwriting of Sir James makes good the deficiency. From these daily notes in the childish scrawl of Martha and the precise calligraphy of her father, a glimpse may be obtained of the daily life of the old governor in retirement. "Drove into the country with mamma in the phaeton with Papa riding," is typical of many an entry. Martha usually accompanied Sir James to church, and he often took her to the theatre; she rambled with him through Beacon Hill's groves, and many were the picnic parties that were made up to go out to his farm at Metchosin.

It is pleasing to contemplate the grave old Sir James stealing to Martha's room on her birthday morning in 1866, in order that he might be the first to compliment her: "An early visit from my own dear Papa, who kissed me fondly and wished me many happy returns of the day; he then gave me a beautiful gold pin set with a ruby," Martha wrote.

She grew up too quickly for old Sir James, and for her own good he sent her to England to complete her education. The pain of that separation of several years has been splendidly portrayed in an earlier article in this *Quarterly* entitled "Letters to Martha."<sup>20</sup>

(18) Douglas to Mrs. A. F. Pemberton, November 25, 1863.

(19) The original diary is in the possession of the writer.

(20) See W. Kaye Lamb, "Letters to Martha," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, I. (1937), pp. 33-44.

In one of his scores of letters to Martha he wrote on his birthday, August 15, 1872:—

Dear little Dolly came in with a rush to wish me many happy returns of the day, leaving in my hand a shilling, as a birthday gift, and went off like a shot, for fear I should return it to her.

The late Mrs. Edith L. Higgins, the "Dolly" referred to, supplemented his letter, shortly before her death:—

I had been given a shilling by my father [Dr. J. S. Helmcken], and I saw grandpa walking up and down on the front verandah, smoking. I ran through the gate from our place and put the shilling in his hand, saying: "Now, Grandpa, that's for you to spend on yourself in any way you like," and before he could recover from his astonishment, I ran away.

When Sir James died five years later, they found that shilling in the back of his watch case.<sup>21</sup>

The last days of Sir James Douglas were spent in superintending the cultivation of his large estates; in unostentatious benevolences; in directing the affairs of his household; and in fondly watching the growth and development of his many grandchildren and the city that he had founded.

B. A. MCKELVIE.

VICTORIA, B.C.

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(21) Personal narrative given by Mrs. Higgins to the writer.

## FIVE LETTERS OF CHARLES ROSS, 1842-44.

Charles Ross was aptly described recently as "Victoria's forgotten man." Although he was the first officer in charge of Fort Victoria, his period of office was so short, and the name of his successor, Roderick Finlayson, has become so well known, that Ross has been overlooked. Fortunately there would appear to be a considerable number of papers relating to his career in the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. When the war is over, and research in the Company's Archives can be resumed, it should therefore be possible to do him belated justice and prepare an adequate account of his life. Meanwhile the five letters and biographical notes here presented will at least give Ross a place in the Victoria centenary number of this *Quarterly*.

Only eight letters from Ross are known to be in existence, outside the Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. Four, addressed to James Hargrave, were included in the collection of Hargrave's correspondence acquired some years ago by the Champlain Society. These were printed in 1938.<sup>1</sup> The remaining four letters, together with a fifth from the Hudson's Bay Archives, are printed below.

Thanks to a memorandum sent to the Ross family by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1924, it is possible to give a brief outline of Charles Ross's career. He was a native of Kingcraig, Invernesshire, but the date of his birth is not known. He joined the Company's service in 1818, and on October 6 of that year was mentioned as arriving in a boat at Norway House from York Factory. In 1818-19 he served as clerk at Norway House, and in 1822-23 was clerk at Lac la Pluie.

In 1824 Ross was transferred to New Caledonia, where he served as a clerk at various posts for the next eight years. In 1825-27 he was in charge of Babine Post. The trade thereabouts declined, and Chief Factor William Connolly charged Ross with mismanagement. A minute dated July 25, 1827, records that as

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(1) See G. P. de T. Glazebrook (*ed.*), *The Hargrave Correspondence*, Toronto, 1928, pp. 63-64; 91-93; 361-362; 414-415.

*British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VII., No. 2.

a result Ross "was ordered out to the depot for the purpose of instituting an enquiry into his conduct. He was, however, exonerated later." His name cleared, Ross returned to take charge of Bears Lake Post. In 1828 he moved to Fort George, and in 1829-31 was at Fort Connolly.

April of 1832 found him at Fort McLeod, where he wrote to James Hargrave:—

If you take a peep at the front piece of this Epistle, you will see that I am no longer at Connolly's Lake—To my great delight I quitted that dreary solitude in October last, and came down to Stuarts Lake [Fort St. James] the Emporium of these parts. Here I passed the greater portion of the Winter in the enjoyment of more cheerfulness, and contentment, than I had known for many years. . . .

I left Stuarts Lake about a month ago, and came here to relieve my friend [John] Tod, who goes out on account of ill Health. . . .

. . . I expect to remove to the Athabasca District in the Autumn . . .<sup>2</sup>

Ross was duly transferred to Athabaska and there remained until 1838, when he was sent to the Northwest Coast and stationed at Fort McLoughlin.<sup>3</sup> This post was abandoned in 1843 and Ross, who had just received his commission as Chief Trader, was placed in charge of Fort Victoria, which was under construction at the time. He arrived at Victoria on June 3, 1843, and died just a year later, on June 27, 1844, apparently of appendicitis.

His letters show that Ross was a man of some education. R. E. Gosnell, who was able to obtain some information about the family from a grand-niece, wrote as follows:—

Walter Ross, his brother, was a physician who settled in British Guiana and there amassed a considerable fortune. He died in 1832. One of his legatees was Charles, to whom he bequeathed £500. John, another brother, was a clergyman, in all probability a Presbyterian, who lived and whose family survived him in Edinburgh. He became a chaplain on a sixty-ton sailing frigate, the *Planet*, bound for Caraccas on some adventurous scheme, which proved to be a disastrous one financially. On this voyage John visited his brother, Dr. Walter, in British Honduras. He was lost at sea . . . A sister was married to a Mr. Young, who from 1820 to 1862 was editor and proprietor of *The London Sun* . . .<sup>4</sup>

(2) *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

(3) The memorandum from the Company states that Ross returned to New Caledonia and served as a clerk at Frasers Lake in 1839-40; but from Ross's own letters and other evidence it is clear that he remained at Fort McLoughlin.

(4) *Victoria Daily Times*, April 29, 1922.

One of the letters here printed was addressed to another sister, Elizabeth (Mrs. Joseph Macdonald), and this letter makes mention of a third sister, Kate.

In 1822, when stationed at Lac la Pluie, Charles Ross married Isabella Melville (or Merilia). She is said to have been of Spanish descent on the male side.<sup>5</sup> At the time of her death it was stated that she was a native of Michillimackinac Island, Lake Superior. She survived her husband for more than forty years, and died in St. Ann's Convent, Victoria, on April 23, 1885, aged 78 years.<sup>6</sup>

The couple had five sons and four daughters. One grandson, Francis Ross, still lives on Eberts Street, Victoria, not far from Ross Bay, which was named after Charles Ross, and Fowl Bay, which was so named by his grandmother, Isabella Ross.

W.K.L.

### 1. CHARLES ROSS TO SIR GEORGE SIMPSON.

The original of this letter is in the possession of the Ross family. It is printed from a transcript in the Provincial Archives.

Fort McLoughlin October 1st. 1842

Sir George Simpson Knt.

Governor in Chief H.H.B.Coy.  
Northern Department.

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that in July last I was duly favored with your communication, dated Fort Vancouver 1st. Novr 1841—enclosing a List of Words and Phrases to be translated into the language of those Indian tribes, to which I have access. This task is now executed, so far as I am able, in the manner you were pleased to specify; and I should be happy to find that the performance proved satisfactory. I have certainly bestowed upon it all the pains which my knowledge of the subject would permit. But this being very limited, and that of the person who serves here as interpreter nearly equally so—will I trust be my apology for all inaccuracies, as well as for the scantiness of information I am able to impart.

The languages into which the "Words & Phrases" have been translated, are those spoken by the Billillah [Bella Bella] & Bellhoola [Bella Coola] tribes. But, as I have already taken the liberty to intimate, my acquaintance with either of these dialects is so slight that I do not feel competent to offer any further remarks upon their respec-

(5) *Ibid.*

(6) *Victoria Daily Colonist*, April 24, 1885.

tive characteristics, than what will appear in the Document herewith transmitted.

The Geographical position of the Billillah & Bellwhoola tribes, lies within the parallels of 51 & 53° North Latitude, and 128° West Longitude. The latter inhabit the mainland on and adjoining the outlets of Salmon River, being that by which Sir A. McKenzie fell upon the sea in his expedition across the continent in "Ninty three," and the former occupy the adjacent Islands, which fill a portion of the sea of 120 miles in length, and the same extent in breadth.

Accurate information on any point can rarely be obtained from the Indians of this quarter, for they are ever ready to believe that our enquiries are directed by improper motives. Owing to this, they view with much distrust all questions relative to their numbers. On this subject, therefore, I can procure no estimate from themselves, that can at all be depended upon—they exaggerate too much. But, taking the aggregate of their villages, and reckoning the average number of occupants in two or three houses I am of opinion that the Billillahs may amount to about 1500, and the Bellwhoolahs to 650 individuals of every age and sex. It might be supposed that the abundance, as well as the facility of supply, which the sea affords to both these tribes, ought to render the population much denser than it really is, and this would no doubt be the case—were it not for the lax state of morals which obtains among them—permitting not only frequent divorce, but also, the still more unnatural practice of Infanticide, both before & after birth.

Having now nothing further to add on these topics, I beg leave to conclude—

And have the honor to be

Sir

Your most obt [words obliterated]

Charles Ross Clk. H.B.Coy.

Fort McLoughlin

Sir George Simpson, Knt.

## 2. CHARLES ROSS TO HIS SISTER ELIZABETH (MRS. JOSEPH MACDONALD).

The late R. E. Gosnell saw the original of this letter in Ottawa, in 1922. It was then in the possession of Mrs. William Beattie, a granddaughter of Mrs. Macdonald. With Mrs. Beattie's assistance Mr. Gosnell prepared a transcript, and this was printed in the *Victoria Daily Times* for April 29, 1922. In the accompanying notes Mr. Gosnell thus described the original: "It is really the remnants of a letter which, suffering from fire and careless handling, are patched together, very yellow and extremely fragile. Some portions of the letter are lost altogether, and I could only surmise the contents from parts left and Mrs. Beattie's remembrance of the original as it was. She found it in the false bottom of an old trunk and preserved it as best she could." It will be noticed that the letter breaks off abruptly. Mr. Gosnell was of the opinion that "a great many pages" were missing. The postscript has been preserved as it was added at the top of the first page.

The letter was addressed to "Mrs. Joseph Macdonald, Guelph Town." Notations on the original show that it was received in October, 1844, eighteen months after it was written (and, incidentally, four months after Charles Ross's death), and answered on March 28, 1845.

The text which follows is quoted from the *Times*, but in reprinting notes have been revised or added, square brackets have been substituted for parentheses, and one or two obvious typographical errors have been corrected.

Fort McLoughlin,  
N. Wst. Coast of America,  
April 24th, 1843.

My Dear Elspat,

A merciful providence enables me to say that I am still in the land of the living—and I had the rare happiness of receiving your affectionate and loving letter of 27th of Sept., '41, on the 14th inst., and you see agreeably to your desire I lose no time in addressing you these lines in return though I am afraid this letter will be equally as long [on the way] as your own. It will, however, cross the Rocky Mountains in the Fall, and through the . . . east side of Canada . . . it will reach you much earlier than if I were to defer writing until next Spring which would be the regular period of communication between us and you. The distance that divides us, my Dear Eppy, is, indeed, great, and this has, hitherto, been one main reason in my backwardness in writing to you—another was—that I preferred remaining in blissful ignorance in regard to you, rather than run the risk of being told that ruthless fate had left me alone of my father's house! But thank God there are two of us, and I am truly happy to find by your excellent letter that affairs appear . . . [the next few words are indistinct but evidently are to the effect "to be prosperous"] . . . beyond what my fears would permit me to hope. On this head, however, being ignorant of my probable fate you were not so communicative as you otherwise would. It is nevertheless a great satisfaction to learn that you manage [?] in the enjoyment of health and [were] without any serious complaint when you wrote. Your next letter will acquaint me with all you left untold in your last—that is everything relating to yourself, your husband, your sons and your farm. Meanwhile, I shall flatter myself in the belief that you are now quite comfortable, and relieved from every care, save those that are inseparable from human lot.

You say you are anxious, and it is but natural, to learn somewhat of my own history for so many years back . . . [words here obliterated] . . . I have as yet said nothing about my wife, whence you will probably infer that I am rather ashamed of her—in this, however, you would be wrong. She is not, indeed exactly fitted to shine at the head of a nobleman's table, but she suits the sphere [in which] she has to move much better than any such toy—in short, she is a native of the country,<sup>1</sup> and as to beauty quite as comely as her husband!

(1) Not meaning the Northwest Coast; Ross met and married his wife when stationed in Rainy Lake District.

From remarks I have made in preceding parts of my letter you will no doubt have gathered that there is a very painful part of it to come—and this, it grieves me to tell you, is the case. Shortly after you heard from me last, through our excellent friend, Mr. Urquhart, finding myself in delicate health and thinking that a visit to our native land might do me good, I, for the purpose, obtained a twelve months' leave of absence and got safe to London in October, '35. There, as you may suppose, I met with a warm and affectionate welcome from poor dear Kate<sup>2</sup>—who was so rejoiced to see me, that she would hardly suffer me to go as far as Edinburgh to see our poor brother's children.<sup>3</sup> Thither, I, however, went, and had the pleasure of finding our nephews and niece in excellent health—nearly men and woman grown and almost as clever and talented as their unfortunatę father—but the poor mother, alas! was quite helpless in body and mind. From Edinburgh I returned again to London—[I did] not visit—the North,<sup>4</sup> as I could find nothing there but painful recollections. I left finally on my return to this country in June, '36—and had every reason to be pleased with the results of my trip. This, however, was not to last long—my very next letter from home announced that our poor dear sister had ceased to exist. I left . . . [here a portion of the letter is gone, but apparently from the remnant left referred to his sister's family] . . .

[The next page begins abruptly with a description of the locality in which Fort McLoughlin was situated.] . . . possess or wandering through the morasses and swamps in quest of game. Business generally takes up but a small portion of his [the trader's] time and is almost wholly confined to receiving such furs as the natives may bring in and giving goods in return. By way of recreation and change we are frequently shifted from one fort to another. I was for many years a sojourner at various establishments on the east side of the mountains but for the last five I have been a resident at this place. The situation is a very comfortable one—only the native [Indians] are very numerous and we require to be on our guard against them—but we are in the hands of Him, whose eye neither slumbers nor sleeps, and at [is?] present here as well as in the peopled city. The fort is situated on the shores of the North Pacific—the country around us is extremely wild and rugged and instead of frost . . . [some words obliterated here] . . . we have almost constant rains for two-thirds of the year.

I must now tell you, in answer to your enquiry whether, that I am not only married but I believe I have a larger family than your own. This however, is a circumstance which, I believe, I should not be proud of—for I now think, it had been much wiser, if I had kept my freedom a little longer, of which you will be the better judge, when I tell you I married so far back as '22! The consequence is that I am blessed with a family of nine children, that is, five boys and four girls—whose

(2) Sister of Charles Ross.

(3) The children of the Rev. John Ross, who had been lost at sea.

(4) Presumably meaning Invernesshire, where Charles Ross was born.

names and respective ages are as follows: John, 20; Walter, 16; Elspat (Elizabeth), 14; Charles, 12; Catharine, 10; Alex., 8; Francis, 6; Mary, 3, and Flora, 1. Now, my dear Eppy, that is a list for you which I dare say will astonish you—but this is now not important. True, this numerous progeny is for the present rather an encumbrance, but the time may come when they will be no longer so. Meanwhile my chief regret is their growing wild around me without proper education or example, and my means I am sorry to say, are as yet too slender to enable me to send them where they can get either.<sup>5</sup> The whole are with myself here, nor do I see the least possibility of respectably disposing of any of them so long as we remain in this unchristian wild. This leads me to say that it is by no means improbable, but I may some of these days, take up my last resting place alongside of you. But to do this comfortably would, I fear, require a longer purse than I am yet possessed of. Would a few hundred (meaning pounds, of course) do? Tell me all about it in your next letter and whether my sons and daughters joined to your own, might not be able to fit in and make it go . . . [the next line is too indistinct to decipher, but he evidently wishes to quit the place, and he then comments upon] . . . the long and dreary space since you and I parted and no doubt many events have occurred to us both, but to neither of us, I believe has the major portion of these events been productive of much joy—my own undoubtedly have presented nothing that would give you much pleasure in the hearing or me in the telling. Than our way of life in this dreary wilderness nothing can be more dark and insipid. The posts we occupy, though many, are far between, and seldom have any intercourse with each other, oftener than once a year and then for the most part is for the purpose of exchanging cargoes of merchandise for cargoes of furs. There is no society—that is the person in charge must divert himself the best way he can with his own thoughts. The few books he may possess . . . [Here the letter breaks off abruptly.]

P.S.—I would perhaps send down my two eldest boys, John and Walter if I thought they could prepare a place for the rest of us to follow by and by. Tell me what you think of such a plan, and what funds would be required to set it agoing—say, to buy and stock 200 acres.—CH.R.

### 3. CHARLES ROSS TO DONALD ROSS.

Like James Hargrave, a portion of whose inward correspondence was published by the Champlain Society in 1938, Donald Ross received innumerable letters from his colleagues in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. Many of these letters, including the following communication from Charles Ross, have been acquired by the Provincial Archives. So far as we know, Donald and Charles Ross were not related.

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(5) As will be seen, as soon as Ross received word that he had been made a Chief Trader he at once sent three of his children to England to be educated.

The original letter is endorsed: "Private. Charles Ross. Columbia 10 Jan'y, 1844. Ansd. 9 July"

Private

Fort Victoria, Vancouver's Island,  
January 10th 1844

My dear Sir

You may be sure you would be the very last I would forget—nor did I—but it seems my Letter, whatever it was worth, was too late for last years express. But I suppose it would have crossed in the fall, & will reach you by & bye. I am now you see moving in a *more respectable state of society* than heretofore, where I have more intercourse with the world, and can now promise you greater punctuality, than while at Fort McLoughlin—because I have it more in my power. This being premised, allow me to say that it gives me very great pleasure to learn that yourself & family continue to enjoy the comforts of Norway House without any serious draw back. And whether there or elsewhere I most sincerely wish you no worse fortune. You talk of coming this way to pitch your last tabernacle and, without joke, I think you might do much worse—providing you bring "Old Jack River" along with you; for I must say the Country, in our vicinity at least, is rather droughty.<sup>6</sup> This is its greatest draw back, for, in every other respect, there is, I do believe, not a finer within the length & breadth of Ruperts Land and all its dependencies! On the abandonment of Fort McLoughlin & the rest of it, I need not dwell further, than to observe that all was managed very quietly. The greater part of the Indians of Millbank were absent at their fisheries when the event took place—and thus no doubt, we escaped a good deal of annoyance from them. We landed at this famous spot early in June, when Mr. Douglas who had the conduct of the Expedition hitherto, started for Vancouver, leaving myself & Mr. R. Finlayson with a body of 40 men to carry on operations at this place. Here then we have ever since been hard at it—fortifying—building—*farming* &ca &ca. Unaccustomed, as I may say I am, to most of these things, and just emerging from comparative solitude & obscurity—I dare say you will think the burden, thus imposed, is quite enough for me, and, indeed, so it is. Finlayson & myself are however doing the best we can, and I am happy to say things have gone on hitherto without much let or hindrance, save from the annoyance occasionally given us by the Natives—who have been about us in great numbers, ever since our arrival, and, though not quite so rough & surly in their manners, as their northern neighbors,—it was a great relief to us when we got the Stocades placed between ourselves and them. The Fort is a quadrangle of 330 by 300 ft. The Buildings are, *for the present*, to be eight in number, exclusive of Bastions—and their dimensions—60 by 40 & 30 ft. with 17 ft. Posts & Pavilion roofs. Of these edifices we have already thoroughly completed three, and two more (Main, and Officers' House) are up, but as yet unprovided with

(6) The season of 1843 was exceptionally dry on Vancouver Island.

covering or inside work. An octangular Bastion of 3 Stories is also built. In the farming line we have not as yet done much, but there are about ten acres broken up & prepared for the plough. The soil appears excellent, being composed of decayed vegetable mould with a strong clayey bottom; it is however a good deal encumbered with stones & a rank growth of fern. The landscape is beautiful & strongly reminds one of some of the noble domains at home—water alone being wanting to complete the picture. The climate is perhaps *too fine*, of which you may judge, when I tell you that from June to Novr. we had scarcely any thing else, than bright sunny days! Yet we were by no means oppressed by the heat, for the close vicinity of the sea, & the cooling breezes blowing thence, made it very bearable. At present we have occasional showers & slight frosts—but nothing like what might be called bad weather for the time of year. Such, my dear Sir, is Camôsun, alias Fort Albert, alias Fort Victoria. And whether the description is tempting enough to induce you to come and *take the charge* of it, or pitch your tent in the neighborhood, it is, in either case, equally at your service.

The Steamer [*Beaver*] & [schooner] "Cadboro" have been off & on with us all summer and furnished us with all the news from either hemisphere. But the most interesting to myself, & that upon which you are pleased to congratulate me (many kind thanks) was my promotion in the service. My Commission [as a Chief Trader] came out by the Chartered Ship, "*Diamond*"—an auspicious name, and I hope it will make my fortune! Be this, however as it, may, on the strength of it (the commission I mean, not the Diamond) I did perhaps a very foolish thing—I sent *three* of my children to England to be educated—viz—Walter, Elizabeth & Charles. They left us in September—perhaps never more to return to us. But the Lord reigneth & his will be done!

Immense numbers of whalers have been upon the Coast this last Summer, some say so many as 300 sail! One or two of them called in at Neweté to look for Beaver, and it is said have done us a good deal of injury. The Steamer, as well as the Cadboro are at present gone in that direction.

As I keep no copy of my Letters, I remember not what I wrote you in my last, about the shocking occurrence at Stikine;<sup>7</sup> but whatever it was I do not believe it will much edify you, beyond what you already know—because I myself was then & indeed am now not much enlightened on the subject. The current version, however, is—that excessive tyranny & oppression, especially while under the influence of l—r led to the horrid catastrophe that followed. Poor John undoubtedly had his faults of which *undue* advantage was taken by the miscreants he had to deal with—to destroy him! His poor father is still in a sad state about it and leaves no stone unturned in his endeavors to clear

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(7) The murder of John McLoughlin, Jr., at Fort Stikine, on April 21, 1842.

the memory of his son. Meanwhile I believe he has had little satisfaction from home—and the murderers still remain in limbo. We for our share, have got five of them here, under watch and ward, which adds not a little to our other embarrassments.

I must leave you to your other correspondents for the Columbia news—and I dare say you will thank me for so doing, as you must now be quite tired of me.

My wife unites wh. me in warm respects to Mrs Ross and trusting this may find you all in the enjoyment of your usual health—

I remain, my dear Sir,  
always yours most truly  
Charles Ross

Donald Ross Esquire

#### 4. CHARLES ROSS TO DR. W. F. TOLMIE.

The original of this letter is in the Provincial Archives. In 1844 Dr. Tolmie was in charge of Fort Nisqually.

Private

Fort Victoria January 11th 1844

My dear Tolmie

We are in momentary expectation of the arrival of the Indian, Snaadlum, according to appointment, to convey some of our people whose times are out,—as likewise, our a/cs. & Letters to your place for transmission to [Fort] Vancouver. Hence you may see these are busy times with us, as I dare say is the case with yourself. I must not however pass over the opportunity thus about to offer without acknowledging your kind favors per Steamer, as well as by Madam Finlay. I heartily say amen to your hope that, whatever our religious differences, our social intercourse may not be affected thereby.<sup>8</sup> I am no fiery zealot, not I trust a Pharisee—but I am of the religion of my fathers, & there intend to stick. If reason were given us for an *infallible* guide, I might have my doubts, but as matters stand, I think my own creed, at least quite as good as any *new fangled doctrine* attempted to be foisted in its place!! We never can arrive at *certainty* by any one system whatever *without Revelation*. Of this we have had many proofs. Why then act, like the Dog in the fable—let go the *substance* for the Shadow? But I am no logician and would be sorry to stake my Salvation on my skill in that science!— So a truce with what may be sheer nonsense after all—only it is well meant. Nothing has occurred with us of late, in the least worth transmitting to you. What remains of my family enjoys tolerable health—but as to myself I am but so so. My ailings I believe to be occasioned by the old complaint—coldness & irregularity of the Bowels. Pray can you do any thing for me? Exercise I know is one of your favorite prescriptions, as I proved at Van-

(8) Theological discussions are met with frequently in the letters and private diaries of the fur-traders. See, for example, the well-known letters from John Tod, in the Ermatinger Papers.

couver. But of that God Wot I have enough here—so my dear friend that wont do—you must propose some thing else—such as early rising—temperance &c. You see I have got the whole catalogue by heart—but what benefits it “so long as Mordicai the Jew sitteth at the Kings Gate”! We had rather a merry Xmas & New Year, and I tried hard to dance my complaint “down the wind.” But ale would not do—I rather made things worse. The Steamer & Cadboro being still with us, we had a splendid dinner on the 25th which went off with great eclat, as well as some of Scarboroughs Rockets<sup>9</sup> to the bargain. On the 28th the vessels left for the North, having been detained hitherto, while a cargo of [word obliterated in original] was being brought us from Langley.

Our Buildings are advancing apace. We have now six a-foot, but only four, including Bastion, are thoroughly completed—the rest still want coverings & inside work.

Our farm is as yet only breaking the shell. There are however about 5 Acres *under wheat* (sown in Decr. & likely to come to nothing) and more is being broke up & prepared for the plough. Trade is quite dead—Provisions & every thing else. This reminds me of the charming Xmas gift you made us. It was well thought of, and helped us on famously with our fête—many kind thanks for it—and once more for the very entertaining Letter that accompanied it. Both afforded a rich treat. Reciprocating the compts. of the season and wishing you many happy returns, I always am my dear Tolmie most truly yours

Charles Ross

NB. The “fair haired chief” will perhaps write you himself—if not he is doing well and is a very *fine* young fellow. A nephew of mine has written me about the aerial Steam Carriage you speak of—and says not the least doubt is entertained of its practicability. What an age we live in!

##### 5. CHARLES ROSS TO SIR GEORGE SIMPSON.

The following letter is printed by kind permission of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson’s Bay Company. The original is in the Archives of the Company, in London. A note indicates that it was received on June 9, 1844.

Fort Victoria 10th Jany. 1844

Sir George Simpson

Dear Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your various favors, both by the *Diamond* as well as by the “Express.” And for both my grateful thanks are due—especially for that by the

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(9) James Allan Scarborough was at this time captain of the *Cadboro*. Rockets from the schooner were evidently used to celebrate the occasion.

*Diamond*,<sup>10</sup> which was "long looked for come at last." I am well aware how much I owe to your kindly endeavors in procuring me this step in the service, and I hope no conduct of mine shall ever make you regret having thus exerted yourself in my behalf.

Having had no opportunity of addressing you by the usual course, I was induced in April last, to answer your communications the preceding season by writing via New Archangel &ca. and in so doing I fear I was much to blame, but I chose it rather than you should think I was in the least inattentive to what my obligations to you require.<sup>11</sup> Shortly after this event poor old Fort McLoughlin was abandoned. In spite of every precaution to the contrary, the Indians soon got it among them that this was to happen, and, accordingly, collected about us in great numbers. Observing us, however, busy with our ordinary occupations—planting Potatoes—breaking up new ground &ca. they began to disperse by degrees, and finally betook themselves to their fisheries—so that when the Steamer returned from the North few remained except the families of the absent men. Thus we got off with the utmost possible harmony. On the 3d of June we landed here, and on the 9th Mr. Douglas left for the Columbia. Since when Mr. Finlayson and myself have been left to shift for ourselves, the best we may. The sudden transition from the comparative seclusion of Fort McLoughlin to the stirring scenes of this place, has been sufficiently trying to myself. In fact I never before was in such a turmoil in my life. For what with Building—fortifying—Shipping—farming—Indians &ca. there is quite enough to do. Yet I am happy to say that in all these respects, our proceedings hitherto have met with no unfavorable check. Our progress in regard to the Establishment is as follows—a Quadrangle of 330 by 300 ft. surrounded with Stocades, eighteen feet high—one octangular Bastion of three stories erected—also, two men's houses, and one Store each measuring 60 by 30 ft. with 17 ft. Posts & Pavilion roofs. These have been thoroughly completed, and an Officers' & main house of 60 by 40 ft. are also rapidly advancing to the same end. The farming is as yet little more than in embryo—there being only about five acres under cultivation, and about the same quantity prepared for the Plough. Our force on first commencing here was little short of forty hands, but it was subsequently considerably reduced, owing to five of the number being re-committed to prison for their share in the melancholy transaction at Stikine,<sup>12</sup> and two more being required to keep watch over them. Numerous hordes of the natives (except for a short time while absent at their fisheries) have

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(10) The *Diamond*, a chartered vessel, was the annual supply ship from London in 1843. She brought Ross letters from London telling him that he had been appointed a Chief Trader.

(11) Simpson left the Northwest Coast in the spring of 1842 and travelled to London via Siberia: hence the difficulty of communicating with him.

(12) Again the reference is to the murder of John McLoughlin, Jr., on April 21, 1842.

been about us up to the present moment. So far however, they have not *particularly* annoyed us, beyond now & then shewing their dexterity at light fingered work. The unreflecting imprudence of our people was, more than once, on the eve of involving us in serious quarrels with them, but all this was in the end amicably adjusted; and now, that we have got ourselves surrounded with stoccades, we are proportionately respected. They are much more effeminate in appearance than their northern neighbors, and luxuriate, much more than these do, in filth & poverty. The R.C. Priests, Baldue [*sic*] & Demers, having been among them some time previous to our arrival—Psalm singing and Prayers were for some time the order of the day. Latterly, however, these gave way to their own less orthodox habits, and at present seem entirely forgot. The reverend gentlemen, above alluded to, were for some time located on Whitby's Island—but so little respect was ultimately shewn, either to their persons or property, that they were glad to beat a precipitate retreat to the Columbia. I am sorry to say that the trade here does not seem to augur any thing very propitious. We have as yet collected little beyond 400 skins—Beaver & Land Otter. Mr. Yale complains that we are injuring his trade at Fort Langley, and I believe with justice; nor can it be otherwise, close neighbors as we are, and friendly as the intercourse is, between his Indians and those of this place. Nisqually also, is much in the same predicament—so that beyond what we may get from the Cape Flattery Indians, I believe it cannot be said, that we are likely to make any very material addition, to what was previously procured in this quarter.

Nothing can be finer than the Climate and scenery of this place. The former, especially, surpasses any thing I ever before experienced—for from the month of June up to the present moment, we have scarcely yet had four & twenty hours of consecutive wet weather. Yet, notwithstanding the many bright sunny days we had during the Summer, the heat was at no time oppressive, being almost invariably tempered by refreshing Sea breezes. Bating the drought (which may not always be so excessive as this last season) the country seems well adapted for agricultural purposes. With the exception of a slight sprinkling of Oak, and occasional clumps of Pine—it is quite open to the Plough; the only other obstacles being a dense growth of fern, and stones in great size & number. The ground is every here & there lined with slightly rocky eminences which merely intersect it into natural fields, the hollows between being almost in every instance, the best adapted for cultivation. The soil appears to be composed of decayed vegetable mould of about 1½ ft. thickness—over a bed of clay of, as yet, unascertained depth. I cannot say that the country is well timbered. It is, however, sufficiently so for our present purposes. Very little is to be found on or near the site of the Establishment—and almost all the Building materials hitherto employed had to be rafted from the left shore of the "Camosun Arm." Water, however, is the great desideration. Mr. Douglas, on his way north in the spring, got a well com-

menced, which was again resumed on his return in June, and sunk to the depth of upwards of thirty feet—all hard clay—at this point a quantity of Water collected in it, which was thought to be the real “Simon Pure”—Subsequently, however, it unfortunately proved to be no such thing. For not only it, but, also, every other reservoir then known in the vicinity, dried up in course of the Summer—and things began to look rather alarming, until we found a supply about 2 miles distant, which I am in hopes will be a never failing resource, until such time at least, as the urgent avocations, we have at present in hand, will permit us to finish the Well already commenced. With regard to Water power for machinery, I know of none within several miles, except a strong Tide way (confined within a narrow compass down the Camösun Channel)<sup>13</sup> which, I believe, there is little doubt, a little skill & labor can render available to every requisite purpose.

I shall now take the liberty of saying a few words about my personal affairs. On the Strength of my Commission, joined to my little previous earnings, I have ventured to send three of my children to England for their education. And perhaps, Sir, you may happen to see them, which would give me very great pleasure. The honorable Coy’s late Secy.<sup>14</sup> was, up to his lamented death, the person who settled my money matters at home—and I fear that his loss will, consequently be much felt by my youngsters on their first arrival. But having appointed the Son my attorney, conjointly with the father, things may go on perhaps better than I at present anticipate. I have allotted £100 per ann. for the maintenance of my children—in which I am perhaps, much below the mark, and in that case, may I entreat you, sir, to order on my account such further supplies as their necessities may require. I have about £500 invested in the funds, which I would not wish to be touched—but on the contrary, that all expences, if possible, were defrayed from such monies as may accrue to me from time to time in the fur trade.

My nephew, Mr. Walter Ross, at Mr. Gillon’s 44 Parliamt. St. Westmr. is entrusted with the care of my children—and I mention this in the hope that you, sir, will not decline the trouble of seeing him. Trusting that yourself and Lady Simpson & family are in the enjoyment of perfect health

I remain, Dear Sir,  
With the greatest esteem  
and respect, your  
most faithful & obt.  
hum. servt. Chas. Ross

P. S. If I might speak of Dr. Barclay in a postscript I would say that I heartily rejoice at his appointment.<sup>15</sup> I have known him since 1814. He was then an intimate friend of my brother’s and I have ever heard

(13) The spot now known as “the Gorge,” on Victoria Arm.

(14) William Smith, who died in January, 1843.

(15) The reference is to Dr. Archibald Barclay, who in February, 1843, succeeded William Smith as Secretary to the Governor and Committee.

him spoken of as a very clever & talented man. I am, however, not speaking of him as to character, but merely expressing my pleasure at his good fortune! C. Ross

## 6. SIR GEORGE SIMPSON TO CHARLES ROSS.

This is Simpson's reply to the letter from Charles Ross just quoted. Ross never received it, as it was written only a week before his death. The text here given is taken from a transcript in the Provincial Archives that was secured from the Ross family. The present whereabouts of the original is not known.

Private

Red River Settlement  
20 June 1844.

My dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to acknowledge your valued communications of 13 April 1843 & 10 Jan. 1844. Owing to my absence from England, the former did not reach me till April last, & the latter came to hand a few days ago by the Columbia Express to this place.— By the tone of those letters I am exceedingly happy to find that you were in better health and spirits than when I had the pleasure of seeing you at Fort McLoughlin, when I was exceedingly anxious about you, and was really glad when information reached me that you had got over the nervous state in which I was sorry to see you when we last parted.—

I am quite surprised to notice by your letter of April 1843 that you express regret at removing from Fort McLoughlin, which proves that "habit is second nature," as it was decidedly the most dismal, gloomy place I was ever in, & surrounded by the most cut-throat looking rascals I think I ever met with. You have now got to a very Elysium in point of climate & scenery, if I may judge from the reports I have of the Southern end of Vancouvers Island. It is quite evident from the progres you have made in building & agriculture, & among the natives, that you have not been idle. If you can but get water in sufficient quantity, I think Fort Victoria is likely to become a place of much resort to strangers, especially so if American whalers continue to frequent the Northern Pacific; & that a profitable business may be made by the sale of provisions & supplies to those vessels.— I was not prepared to find the natives so peaceably & well-disposed, as from the reports we had of them, there was every reason to apprehend they would have been both formidable & troublesome. Sea Otters were some time ago represented as numerous outside the Island about Nootka & other parts; but as you do not speak of any important trade in that article, I presume they have been very much thinned out since then.— When at Newetee & among the Quakiolths [Kwakiutls] in Johnstons Straits, we understood the few sea otters that were brought to us, were hunted outside the island, & at no great distance from the Entrance of the Straits of De Fuca. Your information, however, must

be much better than any we could have collected in the short time we had to communicate with the natives, of whose language we had a very imperfect knowledge.

Considering the state of your finances, you must really be a very bold man to send 3 children to England for the benefit of education and I much fear they will cost you far more than you seemed to count upon or can afford. The cost of maintenance & education will of course, depend entirely on the description of school at which they may be placed: but if at all respectable, they will most unquestionably cost you much more than £100 pr. annm: indeed, I know very few gentlemen who have sent their children to England, whose education has not cost at least double the allowance which you have authorised your friend to lay out, the ordinary charge I think being little short of £70-£80 pr. annm, for board, education & clothing. I think you would have done much better by sending them to Red River School, which is really by no means contemptible & when they would have cost you but £30 pr annm, covering all charges.— I hope to be in England in the course of the Autumn, & shall make a point of seeing your nephew Mr. Walter Ross, & if the allowance you have made be insufficient, I shall take care that increased means be afforded.— Mr. Smith's son (W. G. Smith) now Assistant Secretary, continues to transact any agency business, usually managed by his late father.— He is highly respectable in every sense of the word, & from his regular, steady, business habits, will I am sure do justice to any matters entrusted to his care. You need not, therefore, be anxious in reference to any authority with which you may have invested him over your funds.

I met your friend Mr. Young<sup>16</sup> once or twice when last in London; he is a very active enterprising man & his paper has an extended circulation so that I presume he is doing well: & your old acquaintance Mr. Barclay (who since he has become Secretary has dropped the Doctor) gives great satisfaction at the H. B. House. Your friend George Bain I see occasionally, he is still a Bachelor & I believe doing very well.— I shall be glad to hear from you by every opportunity & it will afford me much pleasure to be useful to you meantime.

Believe me

My dear Sir

Very truly Yours

Geo. Simpson.

Charles Ross, Esqre  
Fort Victoria.

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(16) Ross's brother-in-law; editor and proprietor of the London *Sun*.

## THE DIARY OF ROBERT MELROSE.

The only remarkable thing about Robert Melrose seems to have been his diary. He was born in Scotland, probably in 1828. In 1852, at the age of 24, he was engaged as a labourer by the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company, which was about to establish several large farms in the vicinity of Fort Victoria. He and his wife made the voyage from London to Vancouver Island in the barque *Norman Morison*, in company with more than fifty fellow-workmen, many of whom had wives and families. The vessel arrived in January, 1853, and Melrose was assigned to the Craigflower Farm, near the head of Victoria Arm. The rest of his life was spent on the farm or in the vicinity of Craigflower. He died in the Jubilee Hospital, Victoria, after a long illness, on July 28, 1898, in his seventy-first year. A daughter, Ellen, later Mrs. Douglas, was born at Craigflower, on May 19, 1854. She died as recently as May 26, 1936, a few days after her eighty-second birthday.

The diary indicates that Melrose was a man of some education, and certain entries suggest that drink may well have been the reason for his failure to get on in the world. The original manuscript is elaborately lettered and decorated, in clever imitation of the printed almanacs which were fashionable at the time. The usual astronomical data and calculations, tables, ecclesiastical and historical anniversaries, poems, etc., are all included. These have been omitted in printing, and only the contemporary entries relating to local events have been retained.

At first sight the contents of the diary may seem trivial, but a careful reading will show that it throws much light upon the history of Vancouver Island in the fifties. To begin with, it is one of the very few chronologies known to us, and it is the only one that covers the years 1853-57 in detail. In the second place, it contains a great deal of information about shipping movements. The harbour life of Victoria and Esquimalt was far more active in early days than is generally realized. The supply ships and coastal trading vessels of the Hudson's Bay Company were constantly on the move; ships of the Royal Navy came and went; the demand for lumber and piles in San Francisco kept

a small fleet employed, sailing from Sooke and Victoria; little trading schooners flitted about, hawking wares and their services, and venturing as far afield as Honolulu. Finally came the start of regular coastal services, notably the mail route between Olympia and Victoria. All these developments can be traced in the Melrose diary, if one takes the trouble to tabulate the entries.

Then again, the diary throws light upon the living and working conditions of the time. The discontent, punishments, and desertions that characterized life at Craigflower are nowhere so clearly and starkly recorded as in Melrose's brief notes. Similarly, it gives us a record of the banquets, horse-races, 24th of May celebrations, and lectures on philosophical, religious, and scientific subjects that helped to make up the pleasanter side of life.

The preoccupation of the writer with food and drink is another point of significance. We know from his correspondence that Governor Douglas was frequently worried about the food supply on Vancouver Island. More than once a vessel had to be sent off in haste to Nisqually to bring cattle and supplies from the farms and storehouses there to relieve a local shortage. This state of affairs continued for several years, until the acreage under cultivation became sufficiently great to assure an ample supply of grain and other necessities.

The numerous references in the diary to drunkenness are amusing in their way, owing to Melrose's habit of noting whether the persons concerned were one-quarter, half, three-quarters, or wholly drunk; but the liquor traffic was anything but amusing to Douglas. By the spring of 1853 it was clear that restrictions of some kind were essential. On March 29, Douglas asked the Legislative Council to license liquor vendors, as he believed that this would be "the best means of restraining the abuse and excessive importation of spirituous liquors into this Colony." The Council agreed and licence fees of £100 (wholesale) and £125 (retail) were imposed. Douglas reported to London that this measure had been "fiercely opposed by the whole body of publicans and other blood suckers, who are preying upon the vitals of the Colony, exhausting its wealth and making a return of poisonous drinks, ruinous to the morals of the people, and the

prolific source of poverty and crime.”<sup>1</sup> Six months later he was able to state that there was “now only one licensed ale house at this place and that conducted in a very orderly manner. The consumption of spirits is greatly reduced, and the scandalous scenes of drunkenness [*sic*] and excess which were the disgrace of Victoria, before the passage of the License act, are now never seen.”<sup>2</sup> But if the supply had decreased, the demand had not. Less than two months later Melrose stated, in a special footnote in his diary, that “it would almost take a line of packet ships, running regular between here, and San Francisco to supply this Island with grog, so great a thirst prevails amongst its inhabitants.”

Experience in the Provincial Archives, where the original manuscript is a prized exhibit, has shown that almost every one seeking information about life on Vancouver Island in the fifties finds something of interest and significance in the Melrose diary. For that reason it seems worth printing in the *Quarterly*.

No attempt has been made to identify every person, place, event, or vessel mentioned in the text, but the more important amongst them have been dealt with briefly in the footnotes.

W. K. L.

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(1) Douglas to Barclay, April 8, 1853.

(2) *Ibid.*, November 4, 1853.

ROYAL EMIGRANT'S ALMANACK  
 concerning  
 FIVE YEARS SERVITUDE  
 under the  
 HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY  
 on  
 VANCOUVER'S ISLAND

Printed & Published by R. Melrose.  
 Front Street, Maple Point, Vancouver Id.

PREFACE.

The design and nature of this Almanack, is to take an accurate account of all the proceedings, and remarkable events, which may occur during our five years service under the Hudson's Bay Company on Vancouver's Island; as it was my intention to take up the detail from January 1853, that being the month of our arrival here; but I feel myself obliged to commence the description from the month of August 1852; the time we embarked, and sailed away from our native soil, where I shall be able to insert all the principal occurrences which happened during our voyage from Great Britain, to Vancouver's Island.

It is my intention further to pursue the course upon which I have undertaken, carefully noting down every transaction, either in regard to marriages, births, or deaths, agricultural improvements, house building, and all the shipping, either at Fort Victoria, or Esquimalt harbour, as far as I am able to know of their arrival, or departure.

1852

AUGUST

- We. 11 Shipped on board the "Steam Boat Trident," at Granton Pier,<sup>1</sup> sailed 6 o'clock evening.  
 Th. 12 Rough sea, All the passengers mostly sick.  
 Fr. 13 Arrived at London, evening. Slept all night on board.  
 Sa. 14 Shipped on board "Norman Morrison,"<sup>2</sup> East India Docks, London.  
 S. 15 Tugged down the Thames, to anchorage, at Gravesend.  
 Tu. 17 Weighed anchor, and sailed down to anchorage at the Lower Hope.

(1) Granton, a port on the Firth of Forth, a few miles north of Edinburgh.

(2) The correct spelling is *Norman Morison*.

## 1852—Continued.

## AUGUST

- We. 18 Mrs. Anderson<sup>3</sup> gave birth to a female child.  
 Fr. 20 Sailed out of the Thames.  
 S. 22 Pilot left us at the Isle of Wight.  
 Mo. 23 Passed the Lizzard Point.  
 We. 25 Entered the Bay of Biscay.  
 Mo. 30 Passed the Bay of Biscay.

## SEPTEMBER

- Mo. 6 No breezes at all, heavy swelling sea's.  
 We. 22 Thunder storm with high winds, Top-sails close reefed.  
 Th. 30 Crossed the Line 22°56' West Longitude.

## OCTOBER

- Mo. 4 Jonathon Simpson's child died, & buried. Funeral service performed.  
 S. 10 Very squally with showers.  
 Mo. 18 High winds and rain.  
 We. 20 Strong breeze, opposite the La Plata [River].  
 Th. 21 James Whyte's girl died.  
 Fr. 22 do. do. d. buried. 37°25' South Latitude, 49° West Longitude.  
 Mo. 25 Strong gales.  
 Fr. 29 Thunder, lightning, and rain.  
 Sa. 30 Great numbers of Whales seen during the last two or three days.  
 S. 31 Went close by the Falkland Islands, charming breeze.

## NOVEMBER

- Mo. 1 Heavy rolling sea.  
 Th. 4 Scarcely ever dark at night, 64° S. Lat. Off Cape Horn.  
 S. 7 Hurricane with drift and snow, saw an iceberg evening.  
 Mo. 8 Showers of snow.  
 Th. 11 Hurricane lasted from the 7th with a sea rolling mountains high.  
 Fr. 12 1 Albatross caught measurement, 10 feet 2 in. from tip to tip, 3½ feet from bill to tail. Spoke a ship bound for Callao.  
 Sa. 13 1 Buffoon,<sup>4</sup> 3 snow Pigeons caught.  
 Mo. 15 High winds and heavy sea, lasted from Sabbath morning.

(3) Most of the persons mentioned throughout the diary were fellow passengers in the *Norman Morison*. For a complete list of the passengers see A. N. Mouat, "Notes on the *Norman Morison*," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, III. (1939), pp. 213-14.

(4) Meaning, presumably, a Buffon's skua. The species found on the coast of Chile is known as *Stercorarius chilensis*.

1852—*Continued.*

## NOVEMBER

- We. 17 7 Albatross's caught, 42°30' S. Lat. 79°20' W. Long.<sup>5</sup>  
 Fr. 19 Great numbers of Cape Pigeons caught during the last month.  
 S. 21 High winds with rain.  
 Sa. 27 Crossed the Tropic of Capricorn.

## DECEMBER

- S. 5 Mrs. Anderson's child baptized, after Captain Wishart, & ship Norman Morison.<sup>6</sup> 12° S. Lat.  
 Mo. 6 11°37' South Latitude, 91°30' West Longitude.  
 Fr. 10 Mrs. Cheeseman gave birth to a female child, 3°35' S. Lat. 104° W. Long.  
 S. 12 Crossed the Line, 108° West Longitude.  
 Tu. 14 One Porpoise caught, 6 feet, 6 inches long.  
 We. 15 One Bonito, and one Albacore, caught.  
 We. 22 16°58' North Latitude, 119° West Longitude.  
 Sa. 25 Christmas kept, Grog for all hands, Riot with Mate & Seamen, 20°53' N. Lat. 124°30' W. Long.  
 S. 26 John Grout an Englishman died, aged 35.  
 Mo. 27 do. do. Buried 12. o'clock noon. Funeral service performed. 22°43' N. Lat. 126° W. Long.  
 Tu. 28 do. do.'s Clothing &c. sold by public auction on board. Crossed the Tropic of Cancer.  
 Fr. 31 Grog for all hands. 29°3' North Latitude 131° West Longitude.

1853

## JANUARY

- Sa. 1 Grog for all hands.  
 Mo. 3 Strong breeze, sailing under Close reefed Top-sails.  
 Tu. 4 Main Royal blown out of the Ropes, morning. Top-sails reefed.  
 We. 5 Heavy rain.  
 Fr. 7 Hurricane of wind. Sailing under Close reefed Top-sails.  
 S. 9 Very Rainy, Brisk gale, Sailing under Close reefed Top-sails.  
 Mo. 10 Espied Cape Flattery, and Vancouvers Island, Nearly struck against the rocks evening.  
 Tu. 11 Dodging about the mouth of the Sound, with Close reefed Top-sails Nearly struck morning.  
 We. 12 Wet day, Driven out to sea, Sighted Vancouvers Island, evening.  
 Th. 13 Strong gale, Driven out to sea again with Close reefed Top-sails.

(5) The *Norman Morison* has now rounded Cape Horn, and is sailing northward on a course roughly parallel to the coast of South America.

(6) The child was christened Eliza Norman Morison Wishart Anderson. She died in Victoria in 1936, a few days before her 76th birthday.

1853—*Continued.*

## JANUARY

- Fr. 14 Came to the mouth of the Sound Evening, All hands on Deck, to guard against the rocks.
- Sa. 15 Fine day, Sailed up the Sound very slow.
- S. 16 Cast Anchor in the Royal Bay [i.e., in Royal Roads], Saw the Indians in their canoe's first time.
- Mo. 17 English People went ashore, with Mr. McKenzie, Weir, & Stewart, at Fort Victoria.<sup>7</sup>
- Tu. 18 Scotch do. also do.
- Fr. 21 Norman Morrison came into Harbour.
- Sa. 22 Went up and saw our new abode.<sup>8</sup>
- Mo. 24 Carpenters, & Blacksmiths, all removed up to the farm. Shipwreck lost our Stern going home.<sup>9</sup>
- Sa. 29 Wet Day.
- S. 30 Attended the English Chapel in the Fort.<sup>10</sup>

## FEBRUARY

- We. 2 James Downie & James Whyte removed to the farm. Shipwreck in the Rapids going home.<sup>11</sup>
- Th. 3 Hard frost.
- Tu. 8 George Greenwood & Isabella Russel married.
- We. 9 Holiday kept here.
- Sa. 12 Holiday given all the men practising ball shooting.
- Tu. 15 The "Brig Vancouver"<sup>12</sup> sailed for the Sandwich Islands.
- Sa. 19 Mrs. Stewart gave birth to a male child.
- Tu. 22 Brig "Mary Dare"<sup>13</sup> arrived from Nisqually with fresh Beef and Cows.

## MARCH

- Tu. 1 Mr. McKenzie's Steam Engine taken up to the Farm.
- Fr. 4 Temporay [*sic*] Smith's-shop erected.

(7) Kenneth McKenzie had been engaged as a Bailiff on behalf of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, to take charge of one of their farms in the neighbourhood of Victoria. Upon his arrival he was assigned to the tract of land which soon became famous as the Craigflower Farm. James Stewart and Robert Weir had been engaged as Land Stewards by McKenzie.

(8) That is, Craigflower, to which Melrose was also assigned.

(9) At this time travel between Victoria and Craigflower was by water, up and down Victoria Arm.

(10) The Rev. Robert J. Staines, Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company, had been at Victoria since March, 1849.

(11) I.e., in the reversible falls now known as the Gorge.

(12) The *Vancouver* was owned by the Hudson's Bay Company. She was the first vessel to make the voyage from England direct to Victoria, where she arrived in 1845. She was later wrecked, as noted in the diary.

(13) Owned by the Hudson's Bay Company. The farms at Nisqually were one of the chief sources of supplies for Victoria at this time.

1853—*Continued.*

## MARCH

- Tu. 8 "Norman Morrison" ran aground at the entrance of the Harbour. "Steam Boat Beaver" sailed [for] Coal-Mines.<sup>14</sup>  
 Th. 10 The Brig "Williams" visited Port.<sup>15</sup>  
 S. 13 Thomas Abernethy & Christeena Bell proclaimed for marriage.  
 Tu. 15 Steam Boat "Beaver" arrived from Coal-Mines.  
 We. 16 Barque "Norman Morrison" sailed out of Harbour.  
 Th. 17 Mr. McKenzie's Store House finished.  
 S. 20 Barque "Norman Morrison" sailed for England.  
 Mo. 21 Scough-load of Provisions taken up to the farm.  
 Tu. 22 Wet day.  
 We. 23 Brig "Recovery"<sup>16</sup> sailed as a gaurd-ship [*sic*] to the Coal-Mines.<sup>17</sup> Steam Boat "Beaver" tugged her up.  
 Fr. 25 Holiday given.  
 Sa. 26 James Douglas Esqre. proclaimed Governor of Queen Charlotte's Island.<sup>18</sup>  
 S. 27 John Crittle & Herriot Whyte proclaimed for marriage. Likewise William Guthrie & Helen Fisher.  
 Tu. 29 Scough-load of provisions taken up to the farm.  
 We. 30 Rain & Snow.  
 Th. 31 One Dwelling House finished.<sup>19</sup>

## APRIL

- Fr. 1 Mr. McKenzie, Wife & Family removed to the Farm.  
 Mo. 4 Brig "Mary Dare" arrived with fresh meat and Potatoes.  
 Tu. 5 Schooner "Mary Taylor"<sup>20</sup> arrived in Port.  
 Th. 7 Mr. McKenzie's Steam Engine set agoing.  
 Fr. 8 Thomas Abernethy and Christeena Bell married.  
 Sa. 9 Saw Mill started.  
 S. 10 Brig "Mary Dare" sailed for San Francisco.  
 Mo. 11 Schooner "Mary Taylor" sailed out of Port.  
 Th. 14 William Guthrie and Helen Fisher married.  
 Fr. 15 John Crittle and Herriot Whyte, married.  
 S. 17 Schooner "Honolulu" arrived in Port.<sup>21</sup>

(14) Mining operations were being carried on at both Fort Rupert and Nanaimo in 1853; this reference is probably to Fort Rupert.

(15) The *William*, as she is usually called, loaded 121 tons of coal at Nanaimo in March, 1853.

(16) Owned by the Hudson's Bay Company.

(17) Fort Rupert is meant.

(18) Actually Lieutenant-Governor. Gold had been discovered in the Queen Charlotte Islands in 1850-51, a small rush followed in 1852, and it was deemed advisable to give Douglas formal authority in the area.

(19) Presumably this and the other buildings the completion of which is noted in the diary were in the Craigflower Farm neighbourhood.

(20) This little 60-foot schooner was the first pilot boat on the famous Columbia River bar, in 1849. She had just been replaced there, and was starting a new career as a general trader.

(21) Also referred to as the *Honolulu Packet*; a 92-ton British schooner.

1853—*Continued.*

## APRIL

- Mo. 18 H.M. Steam Frigate "Virago," 6 Guns, arrived in Esquimalt Harbour.
- Tu. 19 John Bell stricken work.<sup>22</sup>
- We. 20 "Mary Taylor" arrived in Harbour.
- Th. 21 Carpenters stricken work. Wet morning.
- Fr. 22 Schooner "Mary Taylor" sailed.
- S. 24 Steam Boat "Beaver," and Brig "Cadboro,"<sup>23</sup> arrived from Coal Mines.
- Mo. 25 Schooner "Honolulu" sailed out of Port.
- We. 27 H.M.'s Steam Frigate "Virago," sailed for the Coal Mines [Nanaimo], & Queen Charlotte's Island.
- Th. 28 John Bell imprisoned for thirty days. Wet day.
- Sa. 30 Brig "Vancouver" arrived from Sandwich Islands.

## MAY

- Tu. 3 Steam Boat "Beaver" sailed on a trading expedition.
- Th. 5 Garden seeds sown.
- S. 8 Mrs. Deans gave birth to a female child.
- Tu. 10 Commenced to plough a piece of ground for potatoes.
- Th. 12 One bullock killed.
- Sa. 14 One dwelling house finished. One dwelling house finished. [sic]
- Mo. 16 William Veitch, James Liddle, James Wilson, & the Author, all removed to the farm.
- Tu. 17 All the potatoes planted in the Garden. Brig "Vancouver" sailed for Fraser's River.
- Th. 19 Horses & Cows brought up to the farm. John Russel removed to the Fort.
- Sa. 21 Mrs. Barr gave birth to a female child.
- Tu. 24 Victoria races celebrated on Beacon Hill. Holiday given.
- We. 25 James Wilson, and the Author got a clock each.
- Th. 26 Brig "Rose" taking in a cargo of timber in Harbour.<sup>24</sup>
- Fr. 27 John Bell liberated. James Downie stricken work.
- Sa. 28 One Bullock killed and divided.
- S. 29 James Stewart, and George Deans's children baptized, English Chapel.
- Mo. 30 H.M.'s Steam Frigate "Virago" arrived from Queen Charlotte's Island.
- Tu. 31 Field potatoes all planted.

(22) The case of John Bell illustrates the punishment meted out to recalcitrant employees of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company. See the entries dated April 28, May 27, June 7, and June 20, 1853.

(23) The famous little vessel, owned by the Hudson's Bay Company, which had been on the Pacific Coast since 1827.

(24) The *Rose*, a German vessel of 200 tons, was loading piles, which were in great demand in San Francisco.

1853—*Continued.*

## JUNE

- We. 1 James Downie started to work. Dinner given by the Governor to the Officers of the Frigate on Beacon Hill.
- Th. 2 Well sunk 27 feet deep plentiful supply. Brig "Mary Dare" arrived from San Francisco.
- Fr. 3 William McNeill, and Mary MacCauly married. One Sow pigged.
- Sa. 4 Two Deers divided among the people.
- S. 5 Attended Prayers on board the Steam Frigate "Virago."
- Mo. 6 One dwelling house finished. One Sow pigged.
- Tu. 7 James Tait removed to the farm. John Bell started to work.
- We. 8 Discovered Lime-stone. Steam Frigate "Virago" sailed for Port Simpson.
- Th. 9 Four Cows brought up to the farm. Slight showers.
- Fr. 10 Brig "Vancouver" arrived from Fraser's River.
- Sa. 11 Edward Shooter drowned by the upsetting of a Canoe.
- Tu. 14 7 Cows brought up to the farm.
- We. 15 Commenced to make Bricks.
- Th. 16 W. Veitch, J. Wilson, A. Hume, J. Liddle, J. Tait, & the Author got a Cow each.
- Fr. 17 James Downie got a Cow.
- Sa. 18 One Bullock killed and divided. Brig "Vancouver" sailed for San Francisco.
- S. 19 Edward Shooter's body found by an Indian.
- Mo. 20 John Bell made his escape to America. Showers.
- Tu. 21 Edward Shooter buried. Brig "Rose" sailed for San Francisco.
- We. 22 Shed put over the Saw Mill.
- Th. 23 Brig "Cadboro" sailed along with the Governor.
- Fr. 24 John Russel, and Peter Bartleman stricken work.
- Sa. 25 H.M.'s Frigate "Trincomalee" of 26 guns arrived in Esquimalt Harbour.
- Mo. 27 William & John Weir absconded to Soack [Sooke]. John Russel & Peter Bartleman tried.
- Tu. 28 John Russel started to work.
- We. 29 8 Indians started to work. Peter Bartleman started to work.
- Th. 30 One dwelling house finished. Brig "Cadboro" arrived along with the Governor.

## JULY

- Fr. 1 James Stewart removed to the farm. Wilson & the Author got a gun each.
- Sa. 2 Four Lambs killed and divided.
- S. 3 One of Neptune's sons, belonging to the "Trincomalee," got himself hurt by falling from a tree, after drinking a bottle of Grog on the top of it.

1853—*Continued.*

## JULY

- Mo. 4 First Lime Kiln burnt off. 3 more Indians started to work.  
 Tu. 5 Crane broke. 2 more Indians started to work.  
 We. 6 Crane mended. One Bull gotten for the Cows.  
 Th. 7 Licences for selling grog granted 120£ per Annum.<sup>25</sup>  
 Sa. 9 One Sheep killed.  
 Mo. 11 3 more Indians started to work. One little pig got its leg broke.  
 Tu. 12 6 Marines belonging to the Frigate "Trincomalee" started to work here.  
 We. 13 The Marines dropped work.  
 Th. 14 Attempt made to make [take?] Robert Weir a farmer at Fort Victoria.<sup>26</sup>  
 Sa. 16 Schooner "Honolulu" arrived from San Francisco.  
 S. 17 Visited the Frigate "Trincomalee." Fine dinner on board of her.  
 Mo. 18 Mrs. Veitch gave birth to a female child. One bullock killed and divided. 2<sup>d</sup> Lime kiln burnt off.  
 We. 20 R. Anderson got a cow. Dinner given by the Governor to the Officers of the Frigate "Trincomalee."  
 Th. 21 Brig "Vancouver" arrived from San Francisco with flour.  
 Fr. 22 Fresh Salmon served out. Schooner "Honolulu" sailed out of Port.  
 Mo. 25 6 Marines, & 6 Seamen belonging to the Frigate "Trincomalee" started to work here.  
 Tu. 26 Flour brought up. Smiths shop erected. "Trincomalee" men threw a bridge here.  
 We. 27 James Downie's Cow shot by an Indian. "Trincomalee" men dropped work.  
 Th. 28 Skirmishing party sent after the Indian that shot the cow, but could not find him.  
 Fr. 29 Thomas Abernethy, and Christeena Bell escaped to America.  
 Sa. 30 Lime kiln burnt off.  
 S. 31 Prayer meeting started here by two Officers belonging to the "Trincomalee" Frigate.

## AUGUST

- Mo. 1 H.M. Steam Frigate "Virago" arrived from Port Simpson. Brig "Vancouver" sailed for P. Simpson.  
 Tu. 2 Brig "Cadboro" sailed.  
 We. 3 All the Indians dropped work.  
 Th. 4 Years pay due, Accounts made up.

(25) This licence fee had been imposed in March. See introduction.

(26) Presumably this refers to a forcible attempt to bring Weir back to Craigflower, from which he had absconded (see entry dated June 27, *supra*).

1853—Continued.

## AUGUST

- Fr. 5 Screw Steamer "Otter" arrived from England.<sup>27</sup>  
 Sa. 6 One sheep killed. One sow pigged. Oatmeal and Rice stopped.  
 S. 7 Mrs. Montgomery gave birth to a female child. Brig "Cadboro" arrived.  
 Mo. 8 Robert Anderson stricken work. Refreshing showers.  
 Tu. 9 George Deans stricken work. More Indians started to work.  
 We. 10 One calf died of hunger. H.M. Steam Frigate "Virago" sailed for San Francisco & the South.  
 H.M. Frigate "Trincomalee" sailed for Queen Charlotte's Island and Sitka.  
 Robert Anderson, and George Deans, commenced to work to Captain Cowper.  
 Sa. 13 One Bullock killed and divided.  
 Mo. 15 One Indian died, that was working with Mr. McKenzie here.  
 Tu. 16 James Whyte got a room for himself. Robert Weir removed to Soack.  
 We. 17 Showers.  
 Th. 18 Screw Steamer "Otter," and Brig "Mary Dare" sailed for the Coal-Mines [Nanaimo].<sup>28</sup>  
 Fr. 19 Heavy Rain.  
 Sa. 20 One sheep killed.  
 S. 21 9 of the Companys men escaped to America, from Fort Victoria.  
 Mo. 22 Brig "Cadboro" sailed.  
 Tu. 23 Brick kiln burnt off. All the Indians dropped work.  
 We. 24 Joseph Montgomery dropped work. No Pork served out.  
 Th. 25 Commenced to plaster the houses with Lime.  
 Sa. 27 Four Lambs killed and divided.  
 S. 28 American Steam Frigate "Active"<sup>29</sup> arrived in Port.  
 Tu. 30 Screw Steamer "Otter" and Brig "Mary Dare" arrived from Coal Mines [Nanaimo].  
 We. 31 American Steam Frigate "Active" sailed out of Port.

## SEPTEMBER

- Th. 1 Joseph Montgomery commenced to sink wells for his own hand.

(27) The *Otter*, owned by the Hudson's Bay Company, was only less well-known than the famous *Beaver*. She was a craft of 144 tons, with a length of 122 feet.

(28) Douglas accompanied this expedition, in order to inspect the new coal-mines at Nanaimo. It is possibly significant that the desertions noted on August 21 took place during his absence.

(29) A United States revenue cutter and surveying vessel. She was the first vessel to use Active Pass, which is named after her.

1853—*Continued.*

## SEPTEMBER

- Sa. 3 Andrew Hume  $\frac{3}{4}$  Drunk, James Whyte, & James Liddle  $\frac{1}{2}$  Drunk.  
Brig "Cadboro" sailed as a guardship to the Coal Mines, Screw Steamer "Otter" tugged her up.
- Mo. 5 More Indians started to work. Smeeked [smoked?] Salmon served out.
- Tu. 6 James Tait and Wife absconded to Soack. One Bull got for the Cows. J. Wilson and the Author,  $\frac{3}{4}$  Drunk.
- We. 7 R. Anderson, G. Deans, & J. Montgomery imprisoned for one month. Robert, & Will. Weir apprehended.  
Steam Boat "Beaver" arrived with the Crew of the Brig "Vancouver."<sup>30</sup>
- Th. 8 Andrew Hume, & Duncan Lidgate got a house each.
- Fr. 9 Each Family got a stew-pan, and girdle [griddle].
- Sa. 10 Three Sheep killed and divided.
- Mo. 12 Brig "Mary Dare" sailed for San Francisco.
- Tu. 13 John Hall, Engineer, removed from his house here. Blankets served out to each Family. 1 pair.
- We. 14 James Wilson, & the Author's Vent put up. Steam Boat "Beaver" sailed on her trading expedition.
- Sa. 17 One Lamb killed. Pork served out. Screw Steamer "Otter," & Brig, "Recovery," arrived from C[oa]l. Mines.  
The Author  $\frac{3}{4}$  Drunk. James Wilson  $\frac{1}{2}$  Drunk. Letters arrived from Britain.
- Tu. 20 James Stewarts Vent put up.
- We. 21 Andrew Hume, & Duncan Lidgate's Vent put up. Brig "Recovery" sailed for the Sandwich Islands.
- Fr. 23 John Hall, & James Whyte's vent put up. Wet day. Flour brought up.
- Sa. 24 Potatoes served out. James Wilson whole Drunk. James Liddle  $\frac{3}{4}$  d. The Author  $\frac{1}{4}$  Drunk.
- Mo. 26 Screw Steamer "Otter" sailed for Port Simpson.
- Tu. 27 Peter Bartleman stricken work. William Veitch, and James Liddle's, Vent put up.
- We. 28 Another Saw-table erected. One Calf died. Peter Bartleman removed with his house to the Fort.
- Th. 29 Peter Bartleman started to work.
- Fr. 30 American Steam Frigate "Active" visited Port, an express sent from Dungeness, for her assistance [*sic*], against the Indians.<sup>31</sup>

(30) The *Vancouver* had been wrecked shortly before this on Rose Spit, Queen Charlotte Islands.

(31) Serious trouble with the Indians was being experienced by the American settlements at this time.

1853—*Continued.*

## OCTOBER

- Sa. 1 Three Sheep killed and divided.  
 We. 5 H.M. Frigate "Trincomalee" arrived from Sitka and Queen Charlotte's Island. Showers. R. Anderson, G. Deans, & J. Montgomery liberated from Prison. All the Indians dropped work.  
 Th. 6 William, and John Weir imprisoned for one month. James Wilson whole drunk.  
 Fr. 7 One Sheep killed.  
 Sa. 8 Three Sheep killed and divided.  
 S. 9 Showers.  
 Tu. 11 Flour Mill erected. Wet day.  
 We. 12 Commenced to Plough piece of land for wheat. More Indians started to work.  
 Th. 13 Showers. American Steam Frigate "Active" arrived from Dungeness.  
 Fr. 14 American Steam Frigate "Active" sailed out of Port.  
 Sa. 15 Three Sheep killed and divided. All the Indians dropped work.  
 S. 16 Wet day.  
 Mo. 17 Wet day. 12 Seamen belonging to the Frigate "Trincomalee" started to work here.  
 Tu. 18 Splendid Theatre on board the Frigate "Trincomalee." Mrs. Irvine gave birth to a female c[hild].  
 We. 19 The Seamen belonging to the "Trincomalee" Frigate dropped work.  
 Sa. 22 Three Sheep killed and divided. Commenced to make flour.  
 S. 23 Mrs. Veitch's child baptized on board the "Trincomalee" Frigate. Wet night.  
 Tu. 25 Frigate "Trincomalee" sailed for San Francisco. Screw Steamer "Otter" arrived from Port Simpson.  
 We. 26 Saw Mill going all night.  
 Fr. 28 Screw Steamer "Otter" sailed for Coal Mines. Showery Weather.  
 Sa. 29 Four Sheep killed, three divided. Doctor's Wife gave birth to a male child.<sup>32</sup> High wind & Rain.  
 S. 30 Mrs. Montgomery's child baptized.  
 Mo. 31 Mrs. Tait gave birth to a female child. More Indians started work.

## NOVEMBER

- Tu. 1 Wheat Sown. Saw Mill Shed slabbed all round. No Pork served out.

(32) The first child of Dr. J. S. Helmcken and his wife, Cecilia, daughter of James Douglas. The baby lived only three months. See entry dated January 22, 1854.

## 1853—Continued.

## NOVEMBER

- We. 2 Jack Humphrey dropped work. Pump of Engine broke. Frosty.
- Th. 3 Fresh Herring served out. Pump of Engine mended. Grinding wheat all night.
- Fr. 4 William, and John Weir, liberated from Prison. Quarters Pay due, and settled.
- Sa. 5 Peter Bartleman, taken Money for his Rations.<sup>33</sup> Thom Bates dropped work. Sleet and Snow.
- S. 6 Wet day.
- Mo. 7 James Wilson, and the Author taken Money for their Rations. Brig "Mary Dare" arrived from S[an]. Francis[co].
- Tu. 8 Grinding wheat all night. Rain.
- We. 9 2 Vice's, 1 Anvil, 2 Hand Saws, Cargo of Iron, received from S[an]. Francisco. Prayer Meeting started. Screw Steamer "Otter" arrived from C[oa]. Mines. Potato.
- Th. 10 John Instant  $\frac{1}{2}$  Drunk. Rain.
- Fr. 11 John Russel  $\frac{3}{4}$  Drunk. Rain.
- Sa. 12 Three Sheep killed and divided. Rain.
- S. 13 Rain.
- Mo. 14 American Barque "Swallow"<sup>34</sup> arrived in Port. Rain.
- Tu. 15 Smiths Shop shingled. Rain.
- We. 16 Pork served out. Rain.
- Th. 17 Screw Steamer "Otter" sailed Nisqually. J. Instant whole Drk. J. Stewart  $\frac{1}{2}$  Drk. Barque "Swallow" sailed. Johnstone Engineer's House burnt down. Rain.
- Fr. 18 J. Instant whole Dk. J. Russel  $\frac{1}{2}$  Dk.
- Sa. 19 John Instant whole Drunk. Letters arrived from Britain. Rain.
- S. 20 Mrs. Greenwood gave birth to a female child. Rain.
- Mo. 21 Schooner "Honolulu" arrived in Port. Rain.
- Tu. 22 Frost.
- We. 23 Frost and Snow.
- Th. 24 Schooner "Honolulu" sailed out of Port. Rain.
- Fr. 25 Earthquake felt at Fort Victoria. Rain.
- Sa. 26 Rain.
- S. 27 Rain.
- Mo. 28 Screw Steamer "Otter" arrived from Nisqually with Fresh Beef and Live Stock. Mail came in. Snow.
- Tu. 29 Potatoe House put up. John Goudy's Wife died. Rain.
- We. 30 J. Instant  $\frac{3}{4}$  Dk. The Author  $\frac{3}{4}$  Dk. Fresh beef served out. Indians dropped work. Flour came up.

(33) That is, he accepted a money allowance in place of rations supplied by the Company.

(34) Not identified.

1853—Continued.

## DECEMBER

- Th. 1 W. Veitch  $\frac{1}{2}$  Dk. J. Whyte  $\frac{1}{2}$  Dk. The Author whole Dk.  
Rain.
- Fr. 2 James Wilson whole Dk. Fresh beef served out. Screw  
Steamer "Otter" sailed [for] C[coal]. Mines. Rain.
- Sa. 3 Rain.
- S. 4 Rain.
- Mo. 5 Monthly Ration Pay due, and settled. More Indians started  
to work. Rain.
- We. 7 Mr. McKenzie got the Brig "Vancouver's" Boat.
- Th. 8 Rain.
- Fr. 9 Rain.
- Sa. 10 Steam Boat "Beaver" arrived from her trading expedition.
- S. 11 Frosty morning, Wet night.
- Mo. 12 Rain.
- We. 14 Screw Steamer "Otter" arrived from Coal Mines.
- Th. 15 Steam Boat "Beaver" sailed Bellview Island<sup>35</sup> with Sheep.  
Mail came in.
- Fr. 16 Brig "Mary Dare" sailed for England. Screw Steamer  
"Otter" sailed for Bellview Island.
- Sa. 17 Steam Boat "Beaver," and Screw Steamer "Otter" arrived  
from Bellview Island.
- Mo. 19 Cooking Galley, and Hen-House put up. Three French Cana-  
dians started to square wood.
- Tu. 20 Screw Steamer "Otter" sailed to rescue the Crew of the Ship  
"Lord Western."<sup>36</sup> Flour came up.
- We. 21 Prayer Meeting dissolved. Frosty weather.
- Th. 22 Enoch Morris started to work. Frost and Snow.
- Fr. 23 Five Sheep killed and divided. Schooner "Honolulu" arrived  
in Port. Theatrical Play and Ball, held at F[ort]. Vic-  
toria by the H. B. C.'s Clerks and Officers.
- S. 25 Wet day. Screw Steamer "Otter" arrived with Captain, and  
remaining part of the Crew of the "L[ord]. W[estern]."
- Mo. 26 Holiday given. Mail came in. Schooner "Honolulu" sailed  
out of Port.
- Tu. 27 Grinding wheat all night. Rain.
- Fr. 30 Monthly Ration Pay Settled, not due or 2d. January. Grind-  
ing wheat all night.
- Sa. 31 One Dwelling-house finished.

(The concluding part of the Diary will appear in the July issue  
of the *Quarterly*.)

(35) Bellevue Island, i.e., San Juan Island. The first serious American claim to the island was made in the fall of 1853, and the matter is dealt with at length in Douglas's letters of the time.

(36) This 530-ton British vessel sailed from Sooke with a cargo of salmon and lumber for San Francisco, but was wrecked on the coast of Vancouver Island. She is sometimes referred to (as in Lewis & Dryden, *Marine History of the Pacific Northwest*) as the *Lord Weston*.

## CELEBRATION OF THE VICTORIA CENTENARY.

Early in the year a Civic Centenary Celebration Committee was formed in Victoria, under the chairmanship of Alderman D. D. McTavish, to plan the city's observance of its hundredth anniversary. Various interested bodies were invited to name members to act on the Committee, and the British Columbia Historical Association was represented by its President, Mr. B. A. McKelvie, and by Mrs. Curtis Sampson and Mrs. M. R. Cree, Past Chairman and Secretary respectively of the Victoria Section.

Owing to the war the celebration was planned on a modest scale, but at the same time care was taken to see that the occasion received as much attention as was consistent with the times. It was decided that the celebration should commence in March, and a series of most interesting and successful functions were held during the month.

On Sunday, March 7, a "Thanksgiving Service in Commemoration of the Centenary" was held in Christ Church Cathedral. Those in attendance included Colonel the Hon. W. C. Woodward, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia; Mayor Andrew McGavin, of Victoria; and Mayor J. W. Cornett, of Vancouver. A special order of service was printed for the occasion and the sermon was preached by the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of British Columbia, who paid tribute to the city's pioneers: "Believing in the dignity and greatness of the future, they laid foundations large and worthy; nor was their vision limited to things material." Christ Church Cathedral traces its origin back to the old Victoria District Church, the first church building erected in the city; and even before its construction the Rev. Robert Staines conducted services in Fort Victoria, as chaplain for the Hudson's Bay Company.

On Sunday, March 14, the hundredth anniversary of the arrival of James Douglas off the southern end of Vancouver Island, the British Columbia Historical Association sponsored a motor cavalcade through the streets of Victoria, in the course of which a series of six plaques, marking as many historic sites, were unveiled by pioneers of the city. The first ceremony took place at the foot of Fort Street, where a plaque will henceforth draw attention to the existence of the old mooring-rings that are now the only surviving bit of Fort Victoria. Mr. B. A. McKelvie addressed the crowd of interested spectators, and deplored the fact that the old oak-tree near the mooring-rings, upon which Douglas had nailed his original proclamation, taking possession of the neighbourhood for the Hudson's Bay Company, had been cut down. Mr. Francis Ross, grandson of Chief Trader Charles Ross, the first officer placed in charge of Fort Victoria, then unveiled the plaque.

The next spot visited was an old brick building that once housed Macdonald & Co. at the foot of Yates Street. This private banking firm issued

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the first paper money circulated in what is now British Columbia. The plaque commemorating the bank was unveiled by Mr. W. H. Bone, one of Victoria's best known and most respected citizens.

The cavalcade then proceeded to a spot near the Central Junior High School, where a plaque had been placed to mark the site of the first school building erected in Victoria. Mr. F. C. Green, Surveyor-General of British Columbia, told the story of the school, and the plaque was unveiled by Mrs. T. H. Laundry, daughter of the late Bishop Cridge.

The fourth stop was made at the Windsor Hotel, at the corner of Government and Courtney streets. This building, known originally as the Victoria Hotel, was the first brick structure erected in Victoria. The plaque recording this fact was unveiled by Mr. Frank Partridge, who came to the city as a child, travelling by way of Cape Horn.

Helmcken House, residence of one of the Province's most interesting and distinguished pioneers, Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken, was next visited, and a plaque was there unveiled by Miss Josephine Crease, daughter of Sir H. P. P. Crease, first Attorney-General of British Columbia.

The sixth and last ceremony took place on Superior Street, where the old Legislative Hall, the only one of the original Parliament Buildings now standing, was likewise marked with a plaque. Mr. E. G. Rowebottom, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, whose department arranged for the erection of the plaques, recalled the old "bird cages," and at the conclusion of his remarks the flag concealing the inscription was drawn aside by Mr. Walter Chambers. Mr. Chambers, it is interesting to note, arrived in Victoria in 1858, a year before the historic "bird cages" were built.

Guests who took part in the cavalcade included Mayor Andrew McGavin, Alderman D. D. McTavish, and Alderman Archie Wills. Greetings from pioneers in the Interior of the Province were brought by Lieut. Louis LeBourdais, M.L.A. for Cariboo, and Dr. F. W. Green, M.L.A., of Cranbrook.

The old-timers who unveiled the plaques rode in the royal maroon phaeton that was used by the King and Queen when visiting Victoria in 1939. Mrs. Ross Palmer, of Comox, owner of the car, acted as chauffeur, dressed in a maroon uniform that matched the car's colour. At the conclusion of the programme the pioneers were entertained at tea in Helmcken House by Miss Madge Wolfenden, Acting Provincial Archivist.

On Monday, March 15, the Sir James and Lady Douglas Chapter of the I.O.D.E. held a centennial luncheon in the Empress Hotel. Mrs. A. S. Christie, Regent of the Chapter, presided, and introduced the guests and speakers. Two items on the programme were of outstanding interest, the first of these being the presentation by the Provincial Government to the City of Victoria of a striking oil painting of Sir James Douglas. The portrait is the work of Robert Southwell, the well-known artist. The presentation was made by Hon. John Hart, Premier of British Columbia, and the picture was accepted on behalf of the city by Mayor Andrew McGavin. Following this Mr. B. A. McKelvie delivered an address in which he made an eloquent plea that justice should be done the memory of Chief Trader Charles Ross, whom he described as "the forgotten man in a for-

gotten grave." "Nothing," he felt, "could be more fitting in this centennial year than that a memorial stone be erected in the Quadra Street Pioneer Cemetery, where the remains of the man who first controlled the destiny of the fort lie in an unmarked grave." Mr. McKelvie outlined Ross's life and work, and described the construction and early days of Fort Victoria.

In the course of the proceedings Premier Hart announced a gift of \$10,000 to the city's Centennial Celebration Fund; and it is to be hoped that plans for its expenditure will include the erection of a fitting monument to Charles Ross.

Others present who contributed to the programme included Mrs. Sidney Bowden, who moved the vote of thanks to the speakers; Mrs. W. H. Wilson, who contributed vocal selections; Mr. F. G. Mulliner, representing the Victoria School Board; Mrs. Hilda Cruikshank, Chief Factor of Post No. 3, Native Daughters of British Columbia; Mr. L. Westendale, Chief Factor, Post No. 1, Native Sons; and Alderman D. D. McTavish, great grandson of Sir James Douglas, and Chairman of the Civic Centenary Committee. Mrs. Bertha Parsons, Secretary of the Sir James and Lady Douglas Chapter, was convener of the affair, and supervised the seating of the 400 guests.

On Tuesday, March 16, a "Fort Victoria Centenary Dinner" was held in the Empress Hotel by the Vancouver Island Philatelic Society. A most interesting souvenir menu and programme was designed for the occasion by Dr. J. A. Pearce, President of the Society. The illustrations include facsimiles of an early letter addressed to Fort Victoria, and of the now celebrated "V for Victory" stamp of 1865. Miss Madge Wolfenden, Acting Provincial Archivist, gave an illustrated address entitled "An Album of Victoria's Early Years," in the course of which many of the early sketches, prints, and photographs relating to Fort Victoria were shown to the members. This was followed by a second address on "The Postal History of Fort Victoria," by Mr. Gerald E. Wellburn. Mr. Wellburn has a remarkable knowledge of the philatelic history of British Columbia, and a selection from the many letters, documents, stamps, Western Express envelopes, and Colonial covers in his private collection was on exhibition.

Thanks to the efforts of the Philatelic Society a special centenary cancellation was used by the post-office in Victoria during the fortnight commencing on March 15. The design included an outline of Vancouver Island and a drawing of one of the old bastions of the fort. It is much to be regretted that, owing to the war, the Post Office Department was unable to issue a special postage-stamp, as this would have directed wide attention to the centenary throughout the Dominion.

On Friday, March 19, a Civic Luncheon was held in the Empress Hotel, to honour "Victoria's Pioneer Residents of 1871 or Earlier." No less than 170 pioneers attended, and other invited guests brought the number present to 215. Alderman D. D. McTavish presided. Grace was said by the Rt. Rev. J. C. Cody, Bishop of Victoria. Greetings were sent to the pioneers by Col. the Hon. W. C. Woodward, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia. Hon. H. G. T. Perry, Minister of Education, addressed the assembled pioneers

in the absence of Hon. Herbert Anscomb, concluding his remarks with a much appreciated quotation:—

Make all the new friends that you can—but keep the old;  
For one is silver—but the other gold.

Mayor Andrew McGavin expressed the good wishes of the city. A blessing was pronounced by Rev. Hugh A. McLeod, President of the Victoria Ministerial Association. The programme concluded with an entertainment given by a group of students from Victoria High School, which featured old-fashioned costumes, songs, and dances. Mrs. W. Fitzherbert Bullen, granddaughter of Sir James Douglas, moved a vote of thanks, on behalf of the pioneers present, to the Mayor and Aldermen and the Civic Centenary Celebration Committee for the delightfully arranged luncheon. Auld Lang Syne was sung before the gathering dispersed.

A Civic Centenary Ball will be held in May. Other events are planned for later in the year, including a service at the grave of Sir James Douglas on August 2, the anniversary of his death in 1877.

The centenary received extended notice in the Press and on the air. Station CJVI, Victoria, sponsored a variety of broadcasts, and no less than eight programmes were offered by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation through station CBR, Vancouver. These ranged from fifteen-minute talks to a half-hour historical drama. Several of the broadcasts, including the drama, were carried by a nation-wide network.

The *Victoria Daily Colonist* and *Victoria Daily Times* both printed elaborate centenary supplements, and almost as much space and attention were devoted to the occasion by the *Vancouver Daily Province* and the *Vancouver Sun*. The number and variety of the articles and photographs printed by the four papers were remarkable, and the supplements will be most useful in future for reference purposes.

An example of the widespread recognition accorded the centenary is found in the February issue of the *British Columbia Electric Home Service News*, and the *B.C.E.R. Employees Magazine* for March, both of which include illustrated articles on early days in Victoria.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

### PACIFIC STATION RECORDS.

The correspondence relating to the establishment of the naval base at Esquimalt, printed in the *Quarterly* for October, 1942, brings to mind the question of the Pacific Station Records and their value to local and general history. The introduction brings out important points, but "Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Coast," on page 279, seems to give a wrong impression. The Pacific Station, in the days of the Naval Commander-in-Chief, was a blue-water affair. An old standing order, for instance, provided for repairs to Captain Cook's monument by ships visiting the Sandwich Islands. The sloop *Condor*, leaving on the Island voyage, went down with all hands off the west coast of Vancouver Island. Her sister ship, the *Shearwater*, after patrolling the Bering Sea in 1902, left Esquimalt for Honolulu, Fanning Island, Christmas, Tahiti, Pitcairn, and Easter islands. As coal was running short she made about 600 miles under sail alone before reaching the coast of Chile.

The last flagship was the cruiser *Grafton*. The Commander-in-Chief, Rear-Admiral A. K. Bickford, and the Flag Captain, Colin Keppel, were relieved by Commodore J. E. C. Goodrich in 1903. Some of the *Grafton's* officers have had interesting records, but a few of these were cut short. Clive Phillipps-Wolley, who came as a Midshipman from the old *Warspite*, went down as Lieutenant with the *Hogue* in September, 1914; the Signal Midshipman, now Vice-Admiral Sir Herbert Fitzherbert, became Flag Lieutenant to Lord Jellicoe; Lieutenant Loxley went down as Captain of H.M.S. *Formidable* on New Year's Day, 1915; the Torpedo Lieutenant, now Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, has been First Sea Lord of the Admiralty since the beginning of the present war.

The *Grafton* left for England in 1904, taking with her many of the naval stores; her departure from Esquimalt was impressive, but marked the beginning of the end of the old state of affairs. The Commodore's pennant was transferred to the cruiser *Bonaventure*, but not for long; she left for China early in the following year, the Commodore returned to England, and the Pacific Station became a thing of the past. Commander (now Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas) Hunt, H.M.S. *Shearwater*, was appointed Senior Naval Officer on the West Coast of North America. "Senior Naval Officer" was later changed to "Commander in Charge for Station Duties," a senior officer being present in the survey ship *Egeria*. In 1908 the sloop *Algerine* arrived from China and the length of the station was extended, "North America" being changed to "America." In 1914 the *Algerine* was commanded by a Captain, as Senior Naval Officer on the West Coast of America.

When the staff of the Dockyard left for England the late George Phillips resigned from the Admiralty Works Department and remained at Esquimalt as Admiralty Agent until the arrival of H.M.C.S. *Rainbow* in

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1910, when the shore establishment and his own services were taken over by Canada. The building demolished in 1939, after eighty-four years of service, was used as an office by the Naval Stores Officer and then by the Admiralty Agent. The north half was used by the Commander-in-Chief when ashore, then by the Commodore, and the Senior Naval Officer. Old Station Records were kept in one of the cupboards; current Records, bound by the King's Printer in Victoria, accompanied the Flag; they were not, however, taken on board the *Shearwater*, the size of the ship's office being, approximately, 5½ by 9 feet.

These Pacific Station Records contain important information on various matters, such as the Bering Sea controversy and the San Juan affair, on questions of local interest, and on the Pacific generally. Had it not been for the efforts of the Provincial Archivist they would, apparently, have been removed from Canada. Many of the volumes are now in Ottawa, but it is hoped that recent developments will draw attention to the fact that they should really be in British Columbia. In England the present tendency is towards decentralization, as it has been found that national records are often most useful in the neighbourhood to which they belong. And, in Canada, distances are so very much greater.

It might be added that distances in the Pacific are greater still. The Canadian Navy had a promising start in 1910, but during the boom, and after the war, the problems of the Pacific did not receive sufficient attention. If the original programme had been completed Canada might have had two cruisers of the *Newcastle* class on the Pacific coast in 1914; as events turned out the presence of the Japanese cruiser *Idzumo* was distinctly comforting—and Japan's services in the Pacific were rewarded by a League of Nations mandate.

Since drafting this note I have seen *Modern Naval Strategy*, by Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon and Francis E. McMutrie, whose predictions as to the East Indian islands have proved remarkably correct; they foretold the result of the lack of early and powerful fortifications at Guam, tracing the blame to the mandate given Japan for the Pacific Islands. The authors attribute importance to a well-informed public opinion on the changing aspects of naval war; absence of this, they consider, even affected the battle of Jutland. May we not then conclude that, while the old system of "showing the flag" throughout the Pacific could not be continued, its abandonment left a gap which only a well-informed public opinion could replace? And in this respect, perhaps, the Pacific Station Records may contribute their share to the solution of the problems of the future.

R. P. BISHOP.

VICTORIA, B.C.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of the Association was held in the Provincial Library, Victoria, on Friday, January 8. The meeting was held jointly with the Victoria Section, which transacted its business during the first part of the evening, and there was an excellent attendance. The retiring President, Rev. John Goodfellow, delivered an address on *John Hall: Pioneer Presbyterian in British Columbia*. Members will recall that this paper was printed in the January number of the *Quarterly*.

As usual, the election of the Council had been conducted by mail, and the result of the ballot was announced to the members. After the adjournment of the general meeting the new Council met and selected the officers for the new year. The Executive for 1943 is as follows:—

Honorary President	- - - -	Hon. H. G. T. Perry.
President	- - - -	Mr. B. A. McKelvie.
Past President	- - - -	Rev. J. C. Goodfellow.
1st Vice-President	- - - -	Mr. A. G. Harvey.
2nd Vice-President	- - - -	Mrs. Curtis Sampson.
Honorary Treasurer	- - - -	Miss Madge Wolfenden.
Honorary Secretary	- - - -	Major H. T. Nation.

## Members of the Council:—

Miss Kathleen Agnew.	Miss Helen Boutilier.
Mrs. M. R. Cree.	Judge F. W. Howay.
Dr. Robie L. Reid.	Dr. T. A. Rickard.

Dr. W. N. Sage.

In addition to the above, the Provincial Archivist, the Editor of the *Quarterly*, and the chairmen of the Victoria and Vancouver sections are ex-officio members of the Council.

At the date of the annual meeting the paid-up membership was 410, and it was expected that a number of members in arrears would still renew their subscriptions.

## VICTORIA SECTION.

The annual meeting was held in the Provincial Library, on Friday, January 8, and was followed, as noted above, by the annual meeting of the Provincial body. Mrs. Curtis Sampson, retiring Chairman of the Section, presided. The Secretary, Mrs. M. R. Cree, read her report, which chronicled the activities of the society and indicated that the Section had once again had a most active and interesting year. Miss Wolfenden, the Treasurer, presented a report which showed that finances were in a satisfactory state. Other reports presented included that of Miss Alma Russell, Convener of the Necrology Committee, who noted that at least 174 persons who had resided in Victoria for fifty years or more had died in 1942. Short biographies of several of these were included in the report.

Mrs. Sampson had chosen for the subject of her presidential address, *Victoria's Hundred Years*. Placing the emphasis on the social life of the city, she conjured up a vivid and delightful panorama of events, including

balls at Government House, 24th of May celebrations, regattas at the Gorge, incidents connected with early schools and churches, visits of royalty, and glimpses of the naval and military life of the city. Particularly interesting was her account of the reaction of the city to the news of defeat and victory during the Boer War and the Great War of 1914-18.

The new Executive is composed as follows:—

Chairman	- - - -	The Hon. Mr. Justice Robertson.
Past Chairman	- - - -	Mrs. Curtis Sampson.
Vice-Chairman	- - - -	Mr. F. C. Green.
Honorary Treasurer	- - - -	Miss Madge Wolfenden.
Honorary Secretary	- - - -	Mrs. M. R. Cree.

Members of the Council:—

Miss Muriel Galt.	Mr. John Goldie.
Mr. B. A. McKelvie.	Mr. W. E. McMullen.
Major H. T. Nation.	Mr. T. W. S. Parsons.

Dr. J. A. Pearce.

A meeting of the Section was held on Monday, February 22, when Dr. T. A. Rickard gave an interesting address on *Mining in the Early Days of the Kootenay*. Dr. Rickard described the Kootenay as one of the most beautiful districts in the world, and noted some of the features that lie within the area, which is approximately 240 miles long and 130 miles wide. Its history extends as far back as 1807, when David Thompson built a trading-post on Lake Windermere. The history of mining, of which Dr. Rickard gave a detailed account, commenced with the discovery of the celebrated Bluebell vein, on the shores of Kootenay Lake. One of the most spectacular developments had been the growth of the Trail smelter, which, in 1938, processed no less than 600,000 tons of ore. Among those responsible for the successful exploitation of the region were William A. Carlisle and W. Fleet Robertson, former Provincial Mineralogists, to whom the speaker paid a warm tribute.

The Hon. Mr. Justice Robertson, Chairman of the Section, presided, and Mr. F. C. Green, Surveyor-General for British Columbia, moved the vote of thanks to the speaker. Dr. Rickard's paper will be printed in an early issue of the *Canadian Mining Journal*.

Members of the Section took an exceedingly active part in planning the celebration of the centenary of Victoria, and particulars of the various functions held in March are given elsewhere in this issue.

#### VANCOUVER SECTION.

The first meeting in the New Year was held in the Grosvenor Hotel on Tuesday, February 23. Mr. A. G. Harvey presided. The speaker of the evening was Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, who described the *Early Medical History of British Columbia*. The story commenced with William Anderson, who arrived with Captain Cook in H.M.S. *Resolution*, and was the first qualified surgeon known to have visited what is now British Columbia, and concluded with Dr. J. S. Helmcken, who arrived in Victoria in 1850. Chief amongst

the intervening figures were Archibald Menzies, who came with Captain Vancouver; Dr. John McLoughlin, of the Hudson's Bay Company; and Dr. Meredith Gairdner and Dr. W. F. Tolmie, also in the service of the Great Company, whose careers contrasted sharply with one another. Dr. Lamb emphasized the remarkable variety of abilities and interests that was characteristic of these men, pointing out, for example, that in addition to being a qualified physician and a capable surgeon, Dr. Tolmie was a fur-trader of note, a naturalist, an ethnologist, a mountaineer, a farmer, an educator, and a politician.

*Early Days in Vancouver* were the "marching orders" followed by Major J. S. Matthews, Vancouver City Archivist, in his illustrated address before members of the Section on Tuesday, March 23. In speaking of the founding of the City Archives, Major Matthews paid tribute to the late John Hosie, former Provincial Archivist, for the assistance he rendered and the encouragement he gave to the undertaking.

The slides were arranged to give the audience an idea of life in the pioneer community that has since grown into Canada's third city. Many of the views were of the area lying between Hastings Street and the harbour, and Carrall and Granville streets. Colonial and railway officials whose names are perpetuated in the city's streets were described, and the story of the naming of Burrard Inlet, the Burrard Bridge, and Burrard Street was particularly timely, as the title had so recently passed to a younger member of the family. Major Matthews told of the securing of the city's charter, and of the problems confronting the City Fathers, particularly after the great fire of June, 1886: of a light-fingered jail inmate who had cached blankets in the woods, but was able to produce them to relieve those who had lost all their property; of the city hall "raised in five minutes"; of the church service held on the first Sunday after the fire in a store on Cordova Street, with kegs for pews. Unintentional humour, understood only by a war-time audience, came with the picture of an early street-car, which appeared to be as crowded as those now carrying defence workers.

Miss Jean Coats, Secretary of the Section, reported upon her visit to Victoria to attend a number of the functions held to celebrate the city's 100th anniversary.

#### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE.

Bruce A. McKelvie, President of the British Columbia Historical Association, is widely known as a journalist and historian. His books include *Early History of the Province of British Columbia*, *Pelts and Powder*, *Huldowget*, etc.

W. Kaye Lamb, formerly Provincial Librarian and Archivist, has been Librarian of the University of British Columbia since 1940.

## THE NORTHWEST BOOKSHELF.

*The Trans-Mississippi West: A Guide to its Periodical Literature (1811-1938)*. By Oscar Osburn Winther. Bloomington, Indiana: The Indiana University Bookstore, 1942. Pp. 263. \$1.50.

Our historical roads, like our highways, are becoming well lighted and marked by guide-posts. This volume, which is No. 3 in the Social Science Series of Indiana University Publications, "is designed," says the preface, "to serve teachers, students, and investigators in the field of western history" by furnishing a short-cut "obviating the tedious task of combing tables of contents of the professional periodicals included in this compilation." To all time-pressed workers in that field the utility of such a guide is manifest and they will gladly welcome its advent. There are others, with minds not so well regulated and regimented, who care not a fig for the time occupied in "combing tables of contents," for, occasionally, they find, like Saul, something more worth while than the object of their present search.

This guide enumerates 3,501 items, but beyond merely indicating their classification as articles, bibliographical material, official documents, letters, etc., it gives no indication of their worth or importance. The subject-headings do not include the Hudson's Bay Company: that Great Company, dovetailed as it is into the story of the West—the ruler of Old Oregon for nearly twenty-five years—is relegated to a subheading, a distinction it shares with the North West Company.

The periodicals indexed include, besides the wider-ranging, all the historical publications regularly issued west of the Mississippi, except the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*. The essential unity of the history of the whole region makes such an omission unforgivable. How a student can prepare a complete and comprehensive paper or thesis on the "Fur Trade," "Indians," "Mining," "Cattle," or "Oregon," not to mention "Canada," or "British Columbia" (to quote some of the headings), without consulting this *Quarterly*, passes understanding. The resultant product must be something parochial or, perhaps, national, but cannot reach higher.

Leaving these omissions aside, the volume seems reasonably complete, apt to its purpose, and so arranged that its contents are easily accessible. An author index, of some twenty-three pages, affords yet another key. Amongst the names therein are some that are familiar to the readers of this *Quarterly*: Dr. W. N. Sage, Dr. Robie L. Reid, Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, and Dr. T. C. Elliott.

F. W. HOWAY.

NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.

*Greenland*. By Vilhjalmur Stefansson. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1942. Pp. 338. Ill. \$4.50.

*Lucus a non lucendo*. It has been said that Greenland was so named because there was nothing green there, and that the poet's reference to its "icy mountains" was more nearly correct. Now we learn, from Mr. Ste-

*British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. 2.

fansson, that the largest island in the world was named *Grönland* by Erik the Red because he wished to make it attractive to his friends in Iceland.

The baleful light of a world-wide war has illuminated the earth so completely as to enlarge our knowledge of geography. The names of remote places are now familiar to us and we know where to look for them on the map. Interest in Greenland was awakened when on April 10, 1941, the region was formally taken under the protection of the United States, with the consent of the Danish minister at Washington, because at that time Denmark was in the hands of the enemy. Greenland is useful for meteorological stations to predict the weather on the Atlantic. It is also valuable on account of its production of cryolite, an ore of aluminium, of which a large deposit is exploited at Ivigtut, on the southwestern coast. Mining began there about a century ago, says our author, and it has yielded more than \$15,000,000 in taxes to the Danish government.

Greenland is as large as the combined twenty-six American states east of the Mississippi River. The fact that it was an island was determined by Peary in 1900, before he reached the North Pole. About 85 per cent. of Greenland is bound in snow and ice, but the remaining 15 per cent. of the country gives 110,000 square miles of prairie land, a treeless tract of grasses, sedges, and small bushes.

The first chapter of the book is devoted to geographic preliminaries; the second, to prehistoric discoveries. Here the author is much at home owing to his researches into the voyages of Pitheas and the early history of Iceland, as is indicated by two of his recent books, *Ultima Thule* and *Iceland*. He makes the interesting statement that Asiatic man has not been in Greenland for more than 2,500 years and it appears certain that the forefathers of the Eskimo did not reach the American continent much before 1000 B.C. Next Mr. Stefansson discusses the discovery of Greenland by the Greeks in 325 B.C. This is a fascinating question, even though the answer be inconclusive, for there is no evidence even to suggest that the enterprising explorer from Massilia, namely, Pitheas, did more than catch a glimpse of the ice-pack on the eastern coast of Greenland.

Equally inconclusive was the discovery of Greenland by the Irish. It is recorded that an Irish saint named Brendan in about 570 crossed the Atlantic in a curragh, or skin-boat, and likewise obtained a view of the ice-floes in his approach to Greenland. However, we can hardly concede that this was a discovery of Greenland, but it seems that the mythical and saintly traveller did reach Iceland and saw a volcanic eruption of Mount Hekla. Other evidence proves that the Irish landed and settled in Iceland about 795, and when the Norsemen came thither in 850 they found Christian Irish people had preceded them.

Then we come to the real discovery of Greenland, for it was an Icelander named Gunnbjorn that reported he had seen some skerries, or small islands, in the west, and land beyond them. The date is about 900. As a matter of fact, Greenland could be seen from the Icelandic mountain-tops. Gunnbjorn's story prompted further exploration. A red-haired young man named Erik left Norway in 950, and in 951 he sailed westward from Iceland in

search of the new land. Erik the Red took his wife and children with him, together with sundry friends, making a party of about thirty in a ship 80 feet long. He skirted the southeastern coast of Greenland and rounded Cape Farewell to land on the beach of what is now Julianshaab. He explored the vicinity and returned to Iceland in 954. His description of Greenland, which he so named, was attractive; in consequence, during the following year he started with twenty-five ships, of which fourteen survived the voyage and brought about 350 men and women to the colony on the southwestern coast. Thus Greenland, which is part of North America, was discovered by Americans, for Iceland is part of the western hemisphere.

The author devotes his sixth chapter to the discovery of America by the Greenlanders. This is a fascinating story, and it is well told. As is generally known, Leif, a son of Erik the Red, sailed in the year 1000 to Norway and on his return voyage he lost his way in the fog; in consequence he passed Cape Farewell and reached a land where wine-berries and self-sown wheat were found. He named the country Vinland or Wine Land. This name has proved misleading, for berries that yield a palatable juice are not necessarily grapes. Leif reached Greenland safely, returning north-eastward.

Next we come to the Karlsefni expedition, which is told in a celebrated saga. Stefansson thinks, with good reason, that the Norsemen reached Baffin Island and then Labrador—and possibly New England or the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

After immigration during 150 years, the settlements in southern Greenland had a total population of 9,000. Greenland became a republic, and adopted Christianity in about 1020. Sixteen churches were built. In 1261 the country was joined to Norway. Religious fervor decreased after a while by reason of a slow descent to Eskimo heathenism.

A chapter is given to the sagas of Erik the Red and Einar Sokkason. They are interesting as sources of historic facts, for sagas can be historical documents of importance. Such are these two. Then comes one of the most perplexing events in the story of Greenland; namely, the disappearance of the Norse colony. In Chapter X. our author discusses the subject with his usual acumen. In about 1420 the Greenland colony was cut off from Europe and it was extinct when, in 1721, Hans Egede, a Norwegian missionary, reached the sites of the former settlements. At first it was believed that the Norsemen had been exterminated by the Eskimos. Others suggested that the plague was the cause of the calamity. Our author suggests that the complete isolation of the Norse settlers led to race mingling with the Eskimos and eventual complete assimilation, so that when seen centuries later the survivors were found to be predominantly Eskimoid.

Greenland in the Middle Ages and the resettlement of the country (after Egede's exploration in 1721) form the subjects of two more chapters. The book is full of interest, for, like Mr. Stefansson's other books, it is the combined product of scholarly research and intimate knowledge of the Arctic lands.

T. A. RICKARD.

VICTORIA, B.C.

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# BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Organized October 31st, 1922.

## PATRON.

His Honour W. C. WOODWARD, *Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia.*

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	E. M. COTTON (New Westminster Section).		

## OBJECTS.

To encourage historical research and stimulate public interest in history; to promote the preservation and marking of historic sites, buildings, relics, natural features, and other objects and places of historical interest, and to publish historical sketches, studies, and documents.

## MEMBERSHIP.

Ordinary members pay a fee of \$2 annually in advance. The fiscal year commences on the first day of January. All members in good standing receive the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* without further charge.

Correspondence and fees may be addressed to the Provincial Archives, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C.