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PRELIMINARY SURVEY
OF THE
HISTORY AND PHYSICAL STRUCTURE
OF
FORT VANCOUVER

by
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PREFACE

The chief purpose of the present study is to provide an organized and integrated collection of facts relating to the history and description of the physical structure of the Hudson's Bay Company's former fur-trading post of Fort Vancouver, in the present State of Washington. The study is designed to serve as an aid in interpreting the results of archeological excavations already conducted on the site of the post by the National Park Service, as a help in planning future excavations, and as a guide in the designing and construction of museum exhibits, models, etc. The material relating to the physical structure of Fort Vancouver will be found in the second section of the present report.

As the gathering of data relating to the actual buildings of the post progressed, it was found that many of the facts had little meaning without reference to the history of the Hudson's Bay Company and, in particular, to the history of Fort Vancouver as a fur-trading post, depot, and headquarters for all of the firm's activities west of the Rocky Mountains. Also, a mere compilation of the details of the physical structure of the establishment failed to provide any adequate indication of the great historical significance of Fort Vancouver.

Most of the printed histories of the Pacific Northwest, of Oregon, and of Washington contain discussions of the rule of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific Coast, and some treat Fort Vancouver in considerable detail; also, many special studies of specific phases of these subjects have been published. But no single account was found which provided the background necessary for a proper understanding of the story of Fort Vancouver's physical structure. It was necessary, therefore, to prepare such a general historical account, and it forms the first section of the present report.

No pretense is made, however, that the first four chapters of this study constitute a complete or well-balanced history of Fort Vancouver. In general, only those topics are treated which contribute directly to an understanding of points mentioned in the second section of the report. Particular attention has been paid to the administrative history of the post, since information on this subject, especially for the years after 1846, is not readily available elsewhere. The first two chapters will be found to be somewhat better balanced than the second two. This more expanded section of the narrative, covering the story of the post up to 1829, was included deliberately as an example of the type of

account which, in the opinion of the present writer, should be prepared to cover the remaining years of the history of the post.

Because of the limited time allotted for its preparation, the present report must, necessarily, be considered only as a preliminary study. This fact is particularly true in view of the materials upon which it is based. The amount of printed and manuscript source material relating to the Hudson's Bay Company and to Fort Vancouver is so great in bulk that it was not possible to exhaust even the research possibilities available in the United States. In addition, the greater part of the original records relating to the post are deposited in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company in London. Although the Company has published a number of documents which shed much light upon the history of Fort Vancouver and although the Governor and Committee have been more than generous in aiding the present study by supplying excerpts from their archival materials, there remains a limit to what can be done without direct access to the original sources.

If it is intended to continue the program of gathering a body of historical information relating to Fort Vancouver to serve as a reference upon which to base future archeological explorations, museum exhibits and labels, information bulletins, lectures, etc., the writer would respectfully make the following recommendations: First, an historian should be sent to London to examine the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. Second, the narrative history of Fort Vancouver contained in the first four chapters of the present report should be greatly expanded, particularly in the direction of giving more adequate treatment to such topics as the fort's farms and industries; the importance of the post in the economic, political, and social life of the Oregon country; and the experiences of travelers and settlers at the establishment. Third, and particularly essential for museum work, an entirely new section should be appended to the present report which would cover biographies of prominent residents at Fort Vancouver; the daily routine of life and business at the post; the clothes, utensils, and furniture used by its inhabitants; social activities, schools, churches, etc.

Many persons and institutions have contributed to the preparation of the present study, and to them all the writer acknowledges a debt of gratitude. Dr. Vernon Aubrey Neasham, Regional Historian, Region Four, of the National Park Service, initiated and guided the work. His preliminary survey of the field enabled him to make many valuable suggestions as to source materials to be examined, and he made available a fine collection of maps and pictures which had been gathered under his direction. Mr. Louis R. Caywood, archeologist for the National Park Service, freely imparted the knowledge

gained as a result of his excavations on the site of Fort Vancouver and contributed a number of excellent photographs.

Dr. Burt Brown Barker, of Portland, Oregon, and Mr. Howard J. Burnham, of Vancouver, Washington, were extremely helpful to the writer during his visits to those cities and permitted the examination of valuable historical materials in their possession. Use of the splendid collections of the Oregon Historical Society was facilitated by the unfailing kindness of Mr. Lancaster Pollard, superintendent, and other members of the Society's staff.

The greater part of the research for this study was conducted at the Bancroft Library, University of California. Dr. George P. Hammond, director, and his staff were, as ever, exceedingly helpful. In Washington, D. C., the work was made easier, more fruitful, and more pleasant by the kindness of Mr. Ronald F. Lee, Chief Historian of the National Park Service, and other members of the Historical Division. Particular thanks are due to Mr. Rogers W. Young, who arranged entrée for the writer into a number of Governmental institutions, and to Dr. Charles W. Porter III, who suggested methods of presenting the material gathered.

Because their number is legion, it is impossible to mention by name each of the members of the staffs of the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institution, the Department of the Interior, the Department of State, and the Office of Chief of Engineers who aided in the gathering of material relating to Fort Vancouver; but to each of them the writer expresses his appreciation. Special mention, however, must be given to Mr. Richard S. Patterson, of the Division of Historical Policy Research, Department of State, who made available much important material from a forthcoming volume of the Department's Treaty Series.

Special thanks are also due to Mrs. Alice B. Maloney, of Berkeley, California, who shared her intimate knowledge of the activities of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific Coast. Above all, the writer is indebted to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, who most graciously answered a number of questions by reference to material in the Company's archives.* Major Fred B. Rogers, U. S. A. (retired), supplied valuable references relating to the military history of Vancouver.

*If it should be decided to print for general circulation all or part of this report, it should be borne in mind that all quotations from documents in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company and all reproductions of illustrative material supplied by the Company or taken from Company publications, must bear the acknowledgment: "Reproduced by permission of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company."

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From the original in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, through the courtesy of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company.

SECTION I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter I

THE FOUNDING OF FORT VANCOUVER

Location

The site of the proposed Fort Vancouver National Monument is within the Vancouver Barracks Military Reservation, in the City of Vancouver, Washington. Located on the north bank of the Columbia River, the site is about one hundred miles from the mouth of that stream and some six miles above the junction of the Columbia and the Willamette.

Historical significance of Fort Vancouver

Founded by the Hudson's Bay Company during the winter of 1824-1825 as a fur-trading post and supply depot, Fort Vancouver for the next twenty years was the most important settlement in the Pacific Northwest, from San Francisco Bay to the Russian outposts in Alaska. Here were the headquarters for all the Hudson's Bay Company's activities west of the Rockies. From the fort's warehouses went out supplies for all the many interior posts, for the fur brigades which ranged as far distant as the present Utah and California, and for the vessels and forts of the coastal trade, the activities of which extended well up the shore line of the present Alaska. And here the furs of the entire western trade were gathered for shipment to England.

At Fort Vancouver was established the first of the series of great farms which the Hudson's Bay Company and its subsidiary, the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company, maintained at several widely scattered posts in the present states of Oregon and Washington. Thus it was here that large-scale agriculture in the Northwest had its beginnings. Furthermore, the fine crops raised at Vancouver and its subordinate settlements demonstrated the agricultural possibilities of the Oregon country to visitors from the United States and thus indirectly promoted American interest in the region.

Here too were the first real industrial plants in the Northwest. Lumber, pickled salmon, and other products of Vancouver's mills, drying sheds, dairies, and shops supplied not only the wants of the fur trade but also a brisk commerce with such distant ports as those of the Hawaiian Islands, California, and the Russian settlements in Alaska. It was not without reason that early visitors sometimes called Fort Vancouver the "New York of the Pacific."

Under the direction of the hospitable "Father of Oregon," Dr. John McLoughlin, Fort Vancouver became the goal of travelers, missionaries, and settlers arriving in the Oregon country. McLoughlin's kind treatment of these newcomers helped to foster the growth of an American population in the region, a population which was to an appreciable extent responsible for winning the area between the Columbia and the forty-ninth parallel for the United States.

Because it possessed the only adequate supplies of seed and farm animals, and because it was practically the only market for produce raised by the settlers, the Hudson's Bay Company, chiefly through Fort Vancouver, controlled the economic life of the Oregon country for many years. At Fort Vancouver also centered much of the social and cultural life of the territory. Here were established the first school, the first circulating library, the first theatre, and here were some of the earliest churches in the Northwest.

It is not without reason, therefore, that historians have stated that for at least a decade after the founding of Fort Vancouver the history of the Oregon country and the history of the Hudson's Bay Company's activities which centered about that post were "almost identical."¹ But with the growth of the American population and the decline of the fur trade in the 1840's, Fort Vancouver began to lose its importance. After the boundary settlement in 1846, the headquarters and depot of the Hudson's Bay Company's Columbia Department were transferred to Vancouver Island, in British territory.

Even under United States rule, however, the old fort had its moments of glory. It provided a temporary haven for the survivors of the Whitman massacre in 1847, and during the Indian troubles of 1855-1856 a number of settlers sought safety within its walls. Fort Vancouver continued to operate as a general trading post and as headquarters of a reduced Hudson's Bay Company district until 1860, when the Company evacuated it at the request of the United States military authorities. Within a few years the buildings of the former fur-trading establishment were torn down or burned, and thus disappeared all above-ground vestiges of the most significant relic of pioneer times in the Pacific Northwest.

¹ Robert Carlton Clark, History of the Willamette Valley, Oregon (3 vols., Chicago, 1927), I, 153.

Historical background

The story of Fort Vancouver may quite properly be said to begin with the union of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821. Changes in policy and personnel stemming directly from this amalgamation led to the founding of the fort and to the injection of a new vitality into the British fur trade in the Oregon country. In order to understand the nature and importance of those changes, it is necessary to know something of the development of the fur trade in the Northwest and, particularly, the main details of the merger of the two greatest fur trading companies in British North America.

Development of the Fur Trade in New Caledonia and the Columbia River Basin

The Pacific Northwest first entered the pages of recorded history through the accounts of adventurous English and Spanish navigators who appear to have briefly glimpsed its coast line during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sir Francis Drake may have sighted the Oregon shore in 1579 while on his voyage around the world in the *Golden Hind*, and several Spanish pilots left accounts of similarly indefinite landfalls. It was not until the voyages of the Spanish explorers Pérez, Heceta, Bodega, and Arteaga, in the years 1774 to 1779, however, that some of the main features of the coast were definitely described.

Captain James Cook, on his third voyage of exploration for the British government, ran along an extensive section of the shore line in 1778, but failed to find both the mouth of the Columbia River and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. However, sea otter skins brought by his men from Nootka Sound to Canton sold for high prices and opened the eyes of merchants to the possibilities of trade on the Northwest Coast. It was not long until both British and American vessels came to exploit the opportunities thus revealed.

In one of these ships, the *Columbia* of Boston, Captain Robert Gray entered the mouth of the Columbia River for the first time in May, 1792. Hearing of Gray's achievement, Captain George Vancouver, who was on the coast at the time to look after British interests and to conduct explorations, sent one of his officers, Lieutenant William Broughton, to chart the stream for about one hundred miles above its mouth.²

² This account of maritime explorations and the opening of the Northwest coastal fur trade is based upon Charles Henry Carey, *A General History of Oregon Prior to 1861* (2 vols., Portland, Ore., 1935-1936), I, 17-99; George Washington Fuller, *A History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York, 1931), 42-56; Oscar Osburn Vinther, *The Great Northwest: A History* (New York, 1947), 21-32.

At the same time that the maritime traders and explorers were discovering and making known the features of the coast, the inland regions were being opened by fur traders advancing overland. Foremost in this work were the men of the North West Company. After several preliminary attempts at organization, this powerful firm had been formed during the winter of 1783-1784 by a number of rival fur-trading interests operating out of Montreal. The true strength of the company lay in its form of management. The shares in the firm were not only owned by a group of capitalists and merchants in Montreal, known as the "agents," but also by a number of traders in the interior, known as the "wintering partners." Decisions concerning the operation of the business were reached at annual meetings of the partners, generally held at Fort William on Lake Superior. This system of sharing the profits with the men in the field, coupled with opportunities for able young employees to advance to partnership, made for aggressiveness and efficiency.

Strengthened by a reorganization in 1787, when still more competitors were brought into the combination, the North Westers rapidly pushed their operations westward and northward into territories not hitherto trapped from Canada. In 1789 their great explorer, Alexander Mackenzie, descended to the Arctic Ocean the river which bears his name; and, in 1793, he reached the Pacific at the mouth of the Bella Coola River, thus becoming the first white man to cross the American continent north of the Spanish colonies. A few years later the fur hunters of the same company were extending their regular operations into the Columbia River Basin and the region known today as British Columbia.

In 1805 Simon Fraser and John Stuart established Fort McLeod, on McLeod Lake, the first inland trading post built west of the Rockies. Additional forts were erected in the same area during the next few years, and in 1808 Fraser followed nearly to its mouth the stream which has since borne his name. He found the river too turbulent to be used as a trade route. On the basis of these early settlements and explorations, the prosperous fur district of New Caledonia was developed in the present British Columbia.

Farther south, David Thompson in 1807 built Kootenai House near Lake Windermere, the first trading post in the area drained by the Columbia. Pushing forward rapidly, the North Westers built four more posts in the Columbia district before the end of 1810, and during the next year Thompson descended the Columbia to Astoria, opening up important new routes of travel and trade.

Meanwhile, Lewis and Clark, sent out by the United States Government, crossed the continent to the mouth of the Columbia on their great journey of exploration performed during the years 1803 to 1806. Their return stimulated the interest of the United States in the fur trade of the Far West. One of the Americans who saw the opportunities for profit offered by the peltries of the Oregon

country was John Jacob Astor of New York. Organizing the American Fur Company in 1808 and the Pacific Fur Company in 1810, he sent two expeditions, one by sea and one overland, to establish a trading post at the mouth of the Columbia. The company by seas was the first to reach its destination and founded Fort Astoria in 1811. During that year and the next, Astor's men built other posts at strategic locations as far east as the Rockies and from the Willamette Valley to Thompson River. Although the North West Company increased the number of its posts to meet the competition, it seemed for a while as though the American rivals might get the upper hand. But the War of 1812, with the resultant failure of supply ships to arrive, quickly ended Astor's hopes; and in 1813 his partners at Astoria sold out the Pacific Fur Company's interests on the Columbia to the Canadian firm. In December, 1813, Captain Black of the H. M. S. Raccoon took formal possession of Astoria for Great Britain and changed its name to Fort George.

The North West Company on the Columbia, 1813-1821

For the next eight years the sway of the North West Company in New Caledonia and the Columbia basin was virtually uncontested. One of the most significant developments of this period was the attempt of the company to build a maritime trade in the Pacific. The natural market for the furs of the Northwest was China, but when the firm sent vessels to Canton it found itself blocked by the monopoly of the East India Company. The Northwesters were able to sell their furs, but could not bring home the cargoes of tea and other Oriental products which made the trade profitable. To evade the restrictions of the East India Company, the Northwesters reluctantly abandoned their direct commerce with Canton and in 1815 arranged with a Boston firm to carry the company's trade goods and supplies to the Columbia and to conduct the traffic in China.

Connected with this attempt to develop a maritime trade was the firm's decision to supply both the Columbia and New Caledonia districts by sea rather than by the long overland route from Canada. In 1813 a route was opened from Stuart Lake to the mouth of the Columbia, and until 1821 it was used at least intermittently to haul supplies from Fort George to New Caledonia. It is known, however, that for certain years the returns and accounts of New Caledonia were, as of old, sent eastward by way of Rainy Lake rather than to Fort George. There appears to be little information concerning the extent to which the new route was actually employed.

Another major contribution made by the Northwesters to the fur trade of the Columbia district was the fur brigade. After some troubles with the Indians in 1814, it was no longer safe for small parties to trap at will throughout the country. It became necessary to organize companies large enough to protect themselves as they harvested the rich resources of the interior. Starting about 1816 formidable brigades were sent southward into the Willamette and

Umpqua valleys, and in 1818 the brigades to the Snake River country were inaugurated. It was not long before the latter expeditions proved themselves to be the most profitable features of the Columbia trade.³

In spite of these measures to improve operations, the fur trade of the Columbia Department did not prosper under the North West Company. From what evidence is available, it appears that the four years 1818 to 1821 produced annual losses in the district; and another deficit was incurred in 1822 before the new management of the Hudson's Bay Company became effective.⁴

Since the account books of the North West Company either have been lost or have not been made available for public scrutiny, the causes for the unprofitable trade on the Columbia are not easy to determine. It is sometimes stated that the necessity of marketing the fur catch through an American agent in China was at least partially responsible for the deficits. Undoubtedly the payment of one-fourth of the net proceeds of the triangular Boston-Columbia-China-Boston trading voyages to the Boston firm of J. and T. H. Perkins, besides giving commissions to the Canton agents, reduced the returns of the North West Company below what they might have been had the Nor'Westers been free to conduct the ventures on their own account exclusively; but the acknowledged authority on the maritime activities of the North West Company states that the arrangement was not only satisfactory but "extremely profitable" to both

³ The best general summaries of the operations of the North West Company in the Columbia region are Gordon Charles Davidson, The North West Company (University of California Publications in History, VII, Berkeley, 1918); and, particularly, Marion O'Neil, The North West Company on the Pacific Slope (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1940). Also useful in preparing the above account was Clark, History of the Willamette Valley, I, 121-152. See also A. Kennedy to G. Simpson, "Spokan," April 12, 1823, in Frederick Merk, ed., Fur Trade and Empire; George Simpson's Journal . . . 1824-1825 (Harvard Historical Studies, XXXI, Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 193-194.

⁴ Frederick Merk, "Snake Country Expedition, 1824-1825," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXV (June, 1934), 93-95; J. H. Pelly to Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade, London, February 7, 1838, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 339-344. If the trade did not produce actual losses, at least the profits during those years were so low as to lead Pelly to describe the operations as "unprofitable."

parties during its entire duration.⁵ If true, this information would seem to indicate that the marketing arrangements had little to do with the difficulties on the Columbia.

Other causes ordinarily cited as being responsible for the losses are: the costs of importing too-lavish outfits and an overabundance of supplies by the long sea route from London to Boston to Fort George, the departmental headquarters and depot; the dependence of the personnel of the district upon expensive imported foodstuffs; and the distance of the region from the seat of control of the North West Company. Undoubtedly these factors had some bearing upon the matter. When Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company visited the Columbia in 1824, he noted that the employees at the interior posts had, ever since the establishment of the district, "shewn an extraordinary predilection for European Provisions" without paying the slightest heed to the enormous cost of importing them. "All this time," wrote the anguished Scotsman, "they may be said to have been eating Gold."⁶ And it is true that when, under Simpson's direction, foodstuffs were produced locally and more regular transportation was instituted to bring central control closer to hand, conditions in the Columbia Department changed for the better. Yet, during the North West period, these same defects and abuses plagued the New Caledonia district, which nevertheless steadily produced large profits.

Competition from American coastal traders may also have cut down the gains from the Columbia Department somewhat, but the plain truth appears to be that the district lacked competent and vigorous leadership. It was this absence of proper direction, coupled with a rapid turnover in personnel which stemmed at least partly from it, which was chiefly responsible for the troubles on the Columbia. Governor Simpson was notably uncharitable in his remarks concerning his predecessors in many districts, but he was certainly correct when he wrote in 1824 that the Columbia Department "from the Day of its Origin to the present hour has been neglected, shamefully mismanaged and a scene of the most wasteful extravagance and the most unfortunate dissension."⁷

One of the most glaring examples of poor management was the lack of judgment shown in ordering the annual supplies and trading outfits. Many expensive items, "very useless" on the Columbia, were imported, with the result that in 1821 the warehouses at

⁵ Marion O'Neil, "The Maritime Activities of the North West Company, 1813 to 1821," in Washington Historical Quarterly, XXI (October, 1930), 245, 265-267.

⁶ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 47.

⁷ Ibid., 43.

Fort George were stocked with such articles as ostrich plumes and coats of mail. Even more revealing was the failure of the Nor'Westers to exploit to good advantage the fur-producing possibilities of the territory. No attempt was made, for instance, to employ shipping and enter into the rich coastal trade. As a result of such neglected opportunities the department did not produce enough peltries to meet the overly high operating costs.⁸

North West Company vs. Hudson's Bay Company

Meanwhile, east of the Rockies, the North West Company had been locked for years in a death struggle with its powerful rival, the Hudson's Bay Company. This latter firm dated back to a charter granted by Charles II in 1670 to his "dear and entirely beloved Cousin, Prince Rupert," and a number of associates incorporated as "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay." By this charter the Company obtained ownership, powers of government, and monopoly trade rights over a vast area known as Rupert's Land, or, roughly, over all territory drained by waters running into Hudson Bay and Hudson Straits.

This great monopoly had not been left to enjoy its exclusive privileges undisturbed. First the French and then free traders from England and Canada had intruded on its domain. When a number of the interlopers united to form the North West Company, the Hudson's Bay Company had an antagonist worthy of its full attention. As the Nor'Westers pushed farther and farther to the north and west, they diverted more and more furs from Hudson Bay to Montreal. The Hudson's Bay Company was rather slow to meet the challenge, but gradually it came to deal blow for blow to protect its territories. Rival trading posts were established side by side; undercutting, overbidding, plying Indians with liquor, attempting to win away the rival's employees, and seizing the other's furs and supplies were all features of the struggle. Murder, arson, Indian warfare, and pitched battles were the outcomes of the rivalry, to say nothing of a smothering blanket of arrests, legal actions, and court proceedings.

Although continually increasing in bitterness, the struggle did not become acute until 1811. In that year the Earl of Selkirk,

⁸ R. Harvey Fleming, ed., Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31 (Publications of the Champlain Society, Hudson's Bay Company Series, III, Toronto, 1940). (hereinafter cited as H. B. S., III), xxx, 412; E. E. Rich, ed., The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, First Series, 1825-1838 (Publications of the Champlain Society, Hudson's Bay Company Series, IV, Toronto, 1941) (hereinafter cited as H. B. S. IV), xvi; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 176-177, 339-340; Winther, The Great Northwest, 48.

who owned a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company, decided to colonize the Red River Country and obtained a grant of 116,000 square miles in the valley of the Red River. The settlement which he founded near the site of the present city of Winnipeg, lay directly across the Nor'Westers' regular route of travel to and from the West. Driven to desperation by this threat to their existence, the Northmen did everything in their power to block the colony. In 1816 matters came to a head when a party of North West Company half-breeds acting without orders massacred twenty-two men belonging to the Red River settlement, including the Hudson's Bay Company's local governor. While this event temporarily disrupted the colony, it only involved the rivals in more desperate conflict elsewhere and in extremely troublesome litigation in the courts. A particularly bitterly contested field was the Athabasca country, lying outside Rupert's Land and in a region which the North West Company had pioneered and thus regarded as its own. Beginning in 1815, the Hudson's Bay Company did its best to break up the North West possessions in the Athabasca and Peace River country, and in 1820 and 1821 preparations were made to cross the Rockies and invade New Caledonia and the Columbia.

Reasons for Union

By 1820 the long-continued warfare between the two great fur companies had resulted in the "complete disorganization" of the northern fur trade.⁹ Diminishing collections, wasteful competition, and increasing expenses had brought financial difficulties to both firms, although the returns of the Hudson's Bay Company had tended to be on a higher level after 1816, seeming to show that the older organization was getting the upper hand in the struggle.¹⁰ While little is known concerning the financial affairs which led to the union, the latest research on the subject tends to indicate that the North West Company could not endure the competition from the Hudson's Bay men on the one hand and the American fur interests on the other.¹¹

⁹ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, xi.

¹⁰ Hudson's Bay Company, Hudson's Bay Company, Incorporated 2nd May, 1670. A Brief History (London, 1934), 19, 22; Robert Eugene Pinkerton, Hudson's Bay Company (London, 1932), 252.

¹¹ H. B. S., III, xi. For a somewhat different appraisal of the situations of the two companies, see Davidson, North West Company, 168-174. See also E. E. Rich and R. Harvey Fleming, eds., Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822 (Publications of the Champlain Society, Hudson's Bay Company Series, II, Toronto, 1939) (hereinafter cited as H. B. S., II), c-cvi.

The partnership agreement of the North West Company was due to expire in 1822, and as the time for renewal drew near, a number of the wintering partners became uneasy concerning their prospects under the old arrangement. It occurred to some of them that it would be wise to end the destructive competition between the companies and to obtain for themselves the use of the shorter Hudson Bay route to the interior. Under the leadership of John McLoughlin, a revolt against the Montreal agents was organized in 1819, and negotiations were secretly opened with the Hudson's Bay Company.

On its part, the Hudson's Bay Company was not adverse to a union of interests. It had felt the strain of the competition and realized that large benefits could be expected from a monopoly control of the fur trade. In addition, the British government had exerted pressure upon the Company to put an end to the strife in Canada. It is generally stated, also, that the death of Lord Selkirk in 1820 removed an implacable foe of the Nor'Westers and helped open the way for consolidation.

At any rate, the defection of the wintering partners stirred the agents to action, and they too opened negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company in London. While the representatives of the wintering partners probably were consulted and their views considered, the agents were in a much more powerful position for bargaining, and it was with them that the Hudson's Bay Company reached an agreement in March, 1821.¹²

Union and reorganization

By means of an indenture and a "Deed Poll" dated March 26, 1821, and by subsequent modifying agreements, a new company was formed to which each of the rivals contributed its best features.¹³ The name,

¹² The results of the most recent research on the background of the coalition are utilized by Dr. W. Kaye Lamb in his splendid introduction to H. B. S., IV. See pp. xli-xlvi. There are a number of general histories of the Hudson's Bay Company. Probably still the best is George Bryce, The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company (London, 1900).

¹³ The actual terms of the merger were much more involved than can be represented in this summary. As a matter of fact, it took several years to work out all the details of the organization as described below. The texts of the indenture and Deed Poll can be found, among other places, in H. B. S., II, 302-314. Another important document, the Deed of Dissolution of September 15, 1824, is printed in British and American Joint Commission for the Final Settlement of the Claims of the Hudson's Bay Company and Puget's Sound Agricultural Companies, [Papers] (14 vols, Washington; Montreal, 1865-1869) (hereinafter cited as Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers), [II], 277-312. Summaries of the merger details may be found in H. B. S., III, xi, xiii-xv; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, xi-xviii; William Stewart Wallace, ed., Documents Relating to the North West Company (Publications of the Champlain Society, XXII, Toronto, 1934), 26-34.

identity, and charter of the Hudson's Bay Company were retained. The older company also gave its shorter route to the interior from Hudson Bay and the efficient form of management by a governor and committee in London. The Nor'Westers contributed many vigorous personalities to the new organization; and their field machinery -- some of which had already been adopted by the Hudson's Bay Company -- provided a model upon which to build the new system. They also brought friendly relations with the Indians and a fine control of the fur trade in a number of districts.

The North West Company was merged into the older firm simply by providing for the evaluation of the assets of each and by increasing the outstanding stock of the Hudson's Bay Company to finance the consolidation of those assets. The "clear gains" of each year were divided into one hundred shares. Sixty of these shares went to the capitalists, the men who had negotiated the merger -- twenty to the proprietors of the old Hudson's Bay Company, twenty to the leading agents of the former North West Company, and twenty for emergency funds and various capital commitments. The remaining forty shares were used to compensate the field partners.

By terms of the Deed Poll of 1821, the field officers and wintering partners of the two old companies were formed into a partnership body called the "fur trade." Two grades of field partners, or "commissioned gentlemen," were established: chief factors and chief traders. Chief factors were the senior in rank and responsibility, generally having charge of entire fur-trade districts. Chief traders filled positions of less importance, such as the management of single posts and the leadership of fur brigades. The number of chief factors was fixed at twenty-five, and that of chief traders at twenty-eight.

The forty shares of the profits set aside for the compensation of the officers were divided into eighty-five portions. Of these, each chief factor received two and each chief trader, one. Seven portions were reserved as a retirement fund for commissioned officers. Except for this set share in the profits, if any, the field partners received no remuneration for their services.

Because of this system and the reasonably generous provisions for retirement, clerks, apprentice clerks, and certain other classes of salaried employees could look forward to promotion and participation in the business. Thus one of the strongest features of the North West Company was incorporated in the new firm.

The machinery for the top direction of the reorganized company remained as it had been under the charter. The central control was vested in a governor, a deputy governor, and a committee of seven directors. The members of the "Honourable Committee," as these officers were known collectively, were chosen, "or at least confirmed," by the stockholders -- called "proprietors" -- at their annual General Court in London. In the words of one authority, "the Governor and Committee constituted the ultimate executive authority; they had

charge of the voyages, the shipping, the sale of the merchandise brought to England, and the managing and handling of all other business, affairs and things belonging to the said company."¹⁴

The indenture and Deed Poll provided that the management and conduct of the Company's operation in North America should be in the hands of two governors, appointed by the Honorable Committee, and two councils, one for the territory supervised by each governor. In theory, all chief factors residing under the jurisdiction of a governor made up the council for that officer's department. As it later worked out, however, only those factors who could conveniently leave their posts attended the annual meetings. In addition, such chief traders as were in charge of districts or were present at the council seat were invited to join the sessions and were allowed to vote on all matters except promotions into the commissioned ranks.

In conformity with the Deed Poll and to promote more efficient administration and "the convenient arrangement of the accounts," the Committee divided "the whole of the Countries, in which we may carry on the trade" into two departments or "Factories."¹⁵ The largest and most important of these divisions was the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, with its depot at York Factory on Hudson Bay. Roughly, the Northern Department stretched from the United States boundary to the Arctic Ocean, from the western shore of Hudson Bay as far south as the Albany River country to the Pacific Ocean. Definitely included in the Northern Department were the districts of New Caledonia and the Columbia. The second division, the Southern Department of Rupert's Land, had its depot at Moose Factory, on James Bay at the southern tip of Hudson Bay. Its jurisdiction covered the territory east of the boundaries of the Northern Department and included the northern shores of Lake Superior and Lake Huron.¹⁶

After some preliminary negotiations, the governorship of the important Northern Department was given to George Simpson, a young

¹⁴ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, xii-xiii.

¹⁵ Governor and Committee to G. Simpson, London, February 27, 1822, in H. B. S., III, 300-312.

¹⁶ As a matter of fact, the administration of the fur trade in North America was a bit more complicated than indicated here. For several years after 1821 the trade of the Canadian provinces centering about Montreal -- the exact districts covered varied from time to time -- was in the hands of the agents of the North West Company. Due to various difficulties, the agents were eliminated from their special position in the new Hudson's Bay Company, and the Montreal Department was placed under the jurisdiction of George Simpson in 1826. For a time thereafter the Montreal trade was under the direction of the Northern Council, although it appears, generally, to have been under the Southern Department. See H. B. S., III, xi, xlvii-liv, 141, 204, 271, 284.

and energetic Scotsman who was trusted by powerful members of the Committee in London and who, during a short period in the service of the Company in North America, had proved himself an able administrator. In 1826 Simpson was made governor of the Southern Department as well, and in 1839 he was given the title of Governor-in-chief of Rupert's Land.

At first glance it appeared to many of the factors that through the councils they would really dominate the operations of the Company in America. The governors and councils, meeting annually during the summer slack season, were authorized to make rules and regulations for the conduct of the trade, to discipline chief factors and lesser employees by means of fines or other penalties, to nominate persons to fill vacancies in the ranks of the officers, to determine furloughs and recommend retirements. They examined the results of each year's trading and, in accordance therewith, made "every arrangement with respect to the trading posts and stations to be occupied and the respective outfits to be made for carrying on the said trade" during the ensuing year. They assigned posts and duties to all classes of officers and servants, determined salaries and trade prices, established routes of travel and trade, and appropriated funds for various objects connected with the Company's operations. In addition, it was provided that a two-thirds majority vote of the council would carry a point even against the will of the governor.

In practice, however, the factors had little power in determining policies. All their actions were subject to the approval of the Committee in London. Since the departmental governor represented the views of the Committee and received his instructions from them, it was apparent that any proposals contrary to those made by the governor would have little chance of prevailing in London. Correspondence of the Committee shows that the London directors interested themselves in all phases of the operations in North America and that at times their instructions covered even the most minute details of the trade. Governor Simpson, furthermore, was adept at handling men and knew how to play one faction against another to thwart opposition to his will. During the early years of his administration, Simpson tended to ask the opinion of his factors and to treat the councils as legislative bodies, but when he felt himself firmly seated in the saddle, the councils usually had little more to do than approve the measures he presented. It is small wonder that some chief factors came to believe that their powers had been reduced "to a cypher."¹⁷

The license of exclusive trade

To make its monopoly more secure, the new company proposed to the British government that the firm's rights to exclusive trade in Rupert's Land be extended to include the balance of its field of

¹⁷ H. B. S., II, cxvii; H. B. S., III, lxxiii; Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, xv; Edmund Henry Oliver, *The Canadian North-West* (Publications of the Canadian Archives, no. 9, 2 vols., Ottawa, 1914-1915), I, 630.

operations in North America. As "a reward for the peace" and as a means of preventing any future recurrence of violence in the fur trade, Parliament on July 2, 1821, passed an act confirming the earlier charter of the Hudson's Bay Company and enabling the Crown to grant for twenty-one years exclusive trading rights with the Indians in all parts of British North America not already granted to the Hudson's Bay Company or included in the royal provinces of Canada. The act provided, furthermore, that west of the Rocky Mountains, in the territory held under joint occupancy with the United States in accord with the Convention of 1818, the license was to convey sole British trading rights only, since under the convention the Oregon country was "free and open" to the citizens and subjects of both nations.¹⁸

The license thus authorized was issued to the Hudson's Bay Company in December, 1821. Under its provisions the Company controlled, except for the valley of the St. Lawrence and the maritime provinces, the whole of the area which is now the Dominion of Canada east of the Rocky Mountains, and, to a more limited extent, the country at present comprising the Dominion of Canada west of the Rockies and the Pacific Northwest of the United States. This control was of three types: in Rupert's Land it was based on the extensive and long-established proprietary rights under the Company's charter; between Rupert's Land and the Rockies it consisted of an exclusive right to all trade with the Indians; and west of the Rocky Mountains, from the Spanish possessions on the south to the Russian territory on the north, it consisted of the sole British right to trade with the Indians.

In addition, the act of July 2, 1821, extended the jurisdiction of the courts of Upper and Lower Canada over Rupert's Land and the jurisdiction of the courts of Upper Canada over the Indian territory to the westward of Rupert's Land. Many officers of the Hudson's Bay Company were appointed justices of the peace under this act, a circumstance which tended to increase the authority of the monopoly's representatives. Also, under the license of exclusive trade, the Company's directors were required to give security for ensuring "as far as in them might lay" the due execution of all criminal processes and the more serious civil processes "within all territories included in that Grant."

Due to some changes occurring in the structure of the Company, the firm in 1838 surrendered this trading license to the Crown before its expiration date and was granted a new one, containing essentially the same terms, which was to run for twenty-one years from May 30, 1838. As shall be seen, the expiration date of this second license is of considerable importance in the history of Fort Vancouver, and it is necessary that the terms of the license be thoroughly understood. Particularly should it be noted that nothing in the license in any way impaired the ancient charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, nor did that

¹⁸ The text of the Parliamentary act may conveniently be found in Hudson's Bay Company, Charters, Statutes, Orders in Council, &c. Relating to the Hudson's Bay Company (London, 1931), 93-102.

charter expire with the expiration of the license on May 30, 1859.¹⁹

Preparations to abandon the Columbia Department

When the Hudson's Bay Company inherited control of the Columbia Department in 1821, it knew little about the region. One of the Company's employees, Joseph Howse, had crossed into the Flathead country during 1810-1811 and had returned with favorable accounts of the trading possibilities there, but no further steps had been taken in that direction. The small bits of information concerning the Columbia which did fall into the hands of the Governor and Committee in London at the time of the merger and shortly thereafter were chiefly discouraging. The record of continuous deficits made the directors profoundly reluctant to pour money into what seemed to be a bottomless drain. Indeed, wrote a member of the Committee in 1838, the trade had proved so unprofitable between 1818 and 1822 and the district so difficult of management, "that several of the leading and most intelligent persons in the country strongly recommended that the Company should abandon it altogether."²⁰ By February, 1822, the Governor and Committee were so discouraged at the chances of being able to make the department pay, that they were prepared to take this drastic step.

The decision had been made only with the greatest reluctance. In a letter to the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade, the Governor of the Company later implied that the only reason the abandonment had not been definitely ordered was that it was felt the "honour of the concern would, in a certain degree, be compromised" should territory held under the Crown's license of exclusive trade be relinquished.²¹ Writing to George Simpson in February, 1822, however, the Governor and Committee voiced the consideration which probably was uppermost in their minds at the time. "If by any improved arrangement the loss can be reduced to a small sum," they advised, "it is worth a serious consideration, whether it may not be good policy to hold possession of that country, with a view of protecting the more valuable districts to the North of it."²²

¹⁹ The text of the license of 1838 may be found, among other places, in Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company [London, 1857] (hereinafter cited as Select Committee, Report), 414-416.

²⁰ J. H. Pelly to Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade, London, February 7, 1838, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 339-344.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Governor and Committee to G. Simpson, London, February 27, 1822, in H. B. S., III, 300-312.

In other words, the trade of New Caledonia was considered so important that the Company was willing to endure a small loss in the Columbia Department in order to keep the latter area as a buffer against competition in the former. Since other British subjects were forbidden by royal license to trade in the Oregon country, the only possible competitors the Company could have had in mind were Americans, who had long engaged in the coastal trade and who had sent occasional trapping parties westward across the Rockies.

Also, the Company was fully aware that the occupation of the lower Columbia basin was at that time a matter of much importance to the British government and to British interests in North America. Although Great Britain and the United States each claimed the whole of the territory lying west of the Rockies, from the Spanish possessions on the south to those of the Russians on the north, they both were willing to accept a partition. During the negotiations leading to the Convention of 1818, the United States had proposed that the boundary be drawn along the forty-ninth parallel from the Rockies to the Pacific. Great Britain, on its part, had suggested that the line follow the forty-ninth parallel to the main branch of the Columbia and then down that stream to its mouth. The offers had been rejected, but these precedents actually limited the area of contention to the region between the Forty-ninth parallel and the lower Columbia. The Governor and Committee realized that the existence of Hudson's Bay fur trading posts on the disputed ground would strengthen British claims to the Columbia River boundary.

Despite all these considerations, the Honourable Company desired to withdraw from the region if continued occupation would involve any serious financial sacrifices. Governor Simpson was instructed on February 27, 1822, to direct the attention of the Council of the Northern Department to the subject and to collect all possible information concerning the Columbia. Should the result of his inquiries be unfavorable to continuing the trade in the district, he was ordered to consider whether the Columbia posts should continue to operate until their goods were nearly exhausted or whether they should be abandoned and their goods transported to New Caledonia at the end of the operations for the winter of 1823-1824.²³

Decision to remain on the Columbia

As was so frequently the case, Governor Simpson had anticipated the wishes of the Committee and had already taken steps to inform himself of conditions on the Columbia. At the first meeting of the Council in August, 1821, two chief factors and two chief traders had been appointed to the Columbia district, and these men were expected to send in reports concerning the region under their charge. Three out of these four commissioned gentlemen, however, had been partners

²³ H. B. S., III, 300-312.

in the old North West Company. Perhaps with this fact in mind, Simpson took care to see that he had another, and possibly less prejudiced, source of information. He personally selected the clerk who was to be sent as accountant to Fort George and "requested" that young man to make a "full and accurate report" of affairs in the department.²⁴

Early the next summer the reports from the new officers reached Simpson. They contained some notes of optimism. The trade of the interior posts, wrote Chief Trader John Lee Lewes, "has this year far exceeded any thing hitherto," and he was in hopes that the ensuing year would be "still more favorable."²⁵

After a discussion of the matter at its meeting at York Factory in July, 1822, the Council for the Northern Department decided that because of the increased returns from the Columbia, "combined with considerations of policy and self preservation," the department should be maintained "by way of barrier and check to Intruders, even admitting it should afford no profit."²⁶ Simpson wrote to the Governor and Committee that it "might be premature" to relinquish the Columbia trade. With economy and perseverance, he said, the district might be made to support itself, provided there was no competition from Americans. Every officer conversant with the country, he argued, believed that it would "not be politic" to withdraw, since there was little likelihood of further losses and the area "serves to check opposition."²⁷

These reports of improved returns undoubtedly had their effect on the Committee in London. But these gentlemen were also influenced by other considerations. In a ukase of 1821 Russia had claimed the entire Pacific coast as far south as the fifty-first parallel, and there were fears in England that earlier Russian plans to seize the coast all the way down to California might be revived. Reports that the United States was planning to settle the Oregon country were also in circulation. The Committee began to see visions of losing not only the Columbia and the coastal region, but some of its New Caledonia trade as well. Aroused to action, the directors ordered an extension of the Company's posts into the territory west and north of Fraser River in New Caledonia, and they began to think of strengthening their position on the Columbia and of entering the coastal trade.

²⁴ H. B. S., III, 399; H. B. S., IV, xv.

²⁵ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 176-177.

²⁶ H. B. S., III, 415.

²⁷ Ibid., 337-341, 341-357; H. B. S., IV, xvi-xvii.

It is clear that by September, 1822, the Company no longer entertained any intention of withdrawing from the Columbia and thus leaving the way open for Russians and Americans to establish bases from which they could push into the interior. "We think it desirable to continue the trading establishment there for the present," the Committee officially informed Simpson on March 23, 1823, "tho' it may not be very profitable, and we shall be able to form a more correct opinion upon this subject in a year or two."²⁸

Administrative changes on the Columbia, 1821-1824

Even during this period of doubt concerning the future of the Columbia trade, the Company's directors and Governor Simpson took measures to put an immediate end to the practices which had made the department unprofitable under the North West Company. As a first step in this direction, the Governor and Committee decided to discontinue the Nor'Westers' system of supplying New Caledonia from Fort George at the mouth of the Columbia River. In February, 1822, Governor Simpson was instructed to establish a depot at Norway House, north of Lake Winnipeg, as an intermediate station by which supplies could be shipped from York Factory, on Hudson Bay, to the New Caledonia and Mackenzie River districts. Henceforth, it was ordered, New Caledonia should receive its outfits and send out its annual returns by the long canoe and portage route up the Peace River and across the Rockies. Simpson concurred in this move. The new arrangement, he said, would be cheaper, would close a path by which the "opposition" might reach New Caledonia from the Columbia, and would bring more commissioned gentlemen to the seat of government of the Northern Department, where their conduct of affairs could be subjected to a thorough scrutiny.²⁹

The system for outfitting the Columbia district also came in for an overhauling. The Committee believed that its posts in that department should be supplied directly from London and that the goods could be sent more cheaply by hiring vessels or paying freight than by continuing the former arrangement of the North West Company with J. and T. H. Perkins of Boston. It proved impossible to make the change of carriers immediately, however, and the ship Houqua, a Perkins vessel, was employed in 1821 to take provisions for the winter of 1822-1823 to Fort George and to carry the furs for 1822 to Canton to be sold through Perkins & Company, the Boston firm's Canton agents. These returns were the first from the Columbia belonging to the new Hudson's Bay Company.

²⁸ H. B. S., III, xxx; H. B. S., IV, xvii-xix.

²⁹ H. B. S., III, 300-312, 341-357. For a description of the new route and a brief discussion of the traffic over it, see Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 349-350.

The Governor and Committee considered that "at all events" it was "not desirable under present circumstances" to continue disposing of its furs through the American agents, and in April, 1822, Perkins & Company were informed that no further consignments of beaver from the Columbia to China were intended. The directors planned in the future to bring the returns to London, from whence, if they could not be sold profitably in England, they could be sent to Canton in vessels of the East India Company. In conformity with this decision, the Governor and Committee chartered the brig Lively in the fall of 1822 to carry to Fort George the supplies for the winter of 1823-1824 and to bring the departmental fur returns for 1823 direct to London. Thus was inaugurated a system which was to continue as long as the Hudson's Bay Company maintained on the Columbia River the depot for its western departments.³⁰

Another group of changes was aimed at cutting the costs of operations on the Columbia and improving the quality of the management. Instead of receiving frequent transfers, chief factors assigned to the department were reappointed year after year by Governor Simpson and the Council whenever there was not good reason for doing otherwise. Chief traders were also encouraged to remain at their western posts for periods of two years or longer. By thus slowing down the turnover of personnel, the efficiency of departmental operations was increased. At the same time, care was taken to appoint men of ability to the Columbia. Among the employees sent across the mountains in 1823, for instance, were Peter Skene Ogden and John Work, two clerks who were to rise to positions of much responsibility in the western fur trade.³¹ In addition, Governor Simpson informed the chief factors in charge of the department in 1822 that their "Establishment of Clerks & Men" was "very heavy" and took steps to reduce it by sending them the names of the few employees whose contracts the Council saw fit to renew.³²

Beginning with the very first shipment in 1821, the Company began to cut down on the size of the trading outfits and the amount of supplies sent to the Columbia. Governor Simpson contemplated a still more drastic step. By producing more food on the Columbia, he informed the Committee in July, 1822, it might soon be possible to reduce the importation of provisions "to a small scale." It appears, however, that he made little progress with his scheme to

³⁰ H. B. S., III, xxx-xxxi, 300-312, 334-335; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 177-178, 191-193, 207-208; O'Neil, The North West Company on the Pacific Slope, 196.

³¹ H. B. S., IV, xx-xxi.

³² H. B. S., III, 412-414.

make the department more self-sustaining until he visited the region himself two years later.³³

Perhaps of even more significance for the future prosperity of the department, and certainly more revealing of the directors' plans for the territory, were measures taken with a view to expanding the Company's operation on the Columbia. As early as September, 1822, the Governor and Committee instructed the chief factors in charge of the district to send, besides the usual detailed statement of proceedings and the duplicate sets of accounts, a "full and detailed Statement of the Trade of the Columbia Department," with special attention to be paid to the resources of the country so that the Committee might "ascertain the possibility of bringing other products as well as Peltries to a profitable market." The factors were also asked for an opinion as to the advisability of employing a vessel on the coast to collect furs and to procure provisions from California or elsewhere. Clearly the Honourable Committee by this time was not planning to contract the Company's activities on the Pacific Slope.³⁴

Probably in response to this prompting, the factors during the next several years sent barrels of cured salmon to London as a demonstration that at least one other business beside fur trading could be developed on the Columbia. Unfortunately, the first barrel was badly spoiled, and up to 1825, at least, the Committee remained emphatically unimpressed concerning the value of Columbia River salmon as an article of commerce.³⁵ Attempts were also made to push fur trading northward up the coast from the mouth of the Columbia, but the drive appears to have been only half-hearted, and the factors let themselves be dissuaded from further efforts in this direction by hostile demonstrations on the part of the natives.³⁶

Actually, the only important progress made in expanding operations prior to 1824 was in regard to the Snake country brigades. Following the end of the North West Company's rule, the expeditions up the Snake River and into the area south and east of the Columbia had been neglected by the officers of the new company despite the fact that these parties produced the richest hauls of furs in the entire department. But Governor Simpson was interested in the matter. In 1822 the Council assigned Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy to Spokane House, the headquarters of the Snake parties. At his orders, a brigade was sent out in 1823 which brought back over 4,000 Beaver pelts. Pressed by Simpson for still more vigorous action, the Council

³³ H. B. S., III, 302, 334-336, 343, 415.

³⁴ Ibid., 334-336.

³⁵ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 240, 252.

³⁶ Ibid., 195-196.

of 1823 directed Peter Skene Ogden to take over Spokane House and to put the Snake brigade under Clerk Alexander Ross. The expedition during the summer of 1824 returned with more than 4,900 beaver. Despite difficulties with Indians and competition from American trappers, the Snake country brigade was back on its feet as a prime producer of profits for the Columbia Department.³⁷

Plans to move north of the Columbia;
origin of Fort Vancouver

As a matter of fact, the Hudson's Bay Company could do little about its plans for expansion in the Columbia Department until 1824. The entire Oregon country was the subject of an international wrangle. Both the United States and Great Britain were pressing Russia to give up her claim to the coastline as far south as fifty-one degrees. Also, the two former nations had once more opened negotiations between themselves concerning a boundary line from the Rockies to the Pacific. As long as the possibility remained that some of its most important fields of actual and contemplated operations might be transferred by treaty to foreign governments, the Company was in no position to put into effect a long-range program involving any considerable expenditures. Meanwhile, the Governor and Committee continued to take advantage of every opportunity to increase their knowledge of the geography and trade conditions on the Columbia.

Through some of its proprietors and directors, the Hudson's Bay Company maintained close relations with the British government. The Foreign Office occasionally called upon the Company for information regarding conditions in North America; and, on its part, the firm did not hesitate to offer suggestions concerning foreign affairs in which it had an interest.

Probably as the result of this close association, the Governor and Committee appear to have been in a position to predict the results of the British discussions with Russia and the United States many months before the negotiations were officially terminated. "We observe that your attention is directed to the Columbia," they wrote to Simpson on March 12, 1824, "we think the trade should be extended in the Snake Country, and also along the Coast to the Northward."³⁸ As Dr. W. Kaye Lamb has pointed out, such a program could be executed "only if Russia modified her claims to the Coast, and if the United States refused to accept the boundary line which Great Britain was prepared to offer -- the Columbia River."³⁹

³⁷ H. B. S., IV, xxi-xxii.

³⁸ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 208. Concerning relations between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Foreign and Colonial offices, see ibid., p. 241, note 54; H. B. S., IV, xvii-xviii.

³⁹ H. B. S., IV, xxii.

And such was the course of events. By an agreement with the United States in April, Russia withdrew her claims to the coast south of the Portland Canal, in latitude 54°40'. It was reasonable to assume that a similar arrangement would be made with Great Britain, although a formal convention to this end was not concluded until February, 1825. The possibility of losing territory to the United States was temporarily ended in July, 1824, when the boundary negotiations between that country and Great Britain were suspended. The Company could now be sure that the Oregon country would remain under joint occupation during the immediate future.

As soon as the Governor and Committee were reasonably certain that these developments would take place, they moved rapidly to put their pre-determined plans into effect. They continued to regard the Columbia Department primarily as a defensive zone for the protection of the interior, but they intended to strengthen the barrier by aggressive measures which might, at the same time, be made to produce a profit. Their program, as outlined by correspondence during the summer of 1824, had three main phases:

First, they planned to have the trade possibilities of the coast north of the Columbia River thoroughly explored. Governor Simpson had requested that the annual supply ship might be used for this purpose, and evidently it was at least partly in compliance with this suggestion that the brig William and Ann, purchased by the Company in 1824 for the voyages to the Columbia, was dispatched some months earlier than the usual sailing date of the supply ships. The chief factors at Fort George were instructed on July 22, 1824, to send the new brig up the coast as far as the Portland Canal, or even to Sitka if necessary, for the purpose of finding good harbors and rivers which might serve as avenues of communication with the interior.

Second, the Snake River region was to be ruthlessly exploited while the company's brigades still had access to it. "As we cannot expect to have a more Southern boundary than the Columbia in any Treaty with the Americans (altho' we are entitled to it from occupancy)," the factors were told, "it will be very desirable that the hunters should get as much out of the Snake Country as possible for the next few years."⁴⁰

Third, they intended to strengthen the position of Great Britain, and of the Company, in the territory in dispute with the United States -- the region lying between the forty-ninth parallel and the lower Columbia. They had abandoned hope of retaining permanently any control over the area south of the river, but they were determined to do everything possible to keep the United States from obtaining the country to the north of it. Since, as they told

⁴⁰ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 240-242.

the officers in charge at Fort George, "in the present day occupying the soil is considered as the best title," the directors planned that when discussions over the boundary should be resumed, the negotiators would be faced with the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company was firmly "occupying the soil" along the north bank of the Columbia. To this end the chief factors in the department were ordered on July 22, 1824, to abandon Fort George, which was on the south shore of the stream, and to erect a new headquarters on the north bank. They were, furthermore, to "remove from the South side of the River everything belonging to the Company." And posts already established north of the intended boundary were to be put in good repair.⁴¹

There is evidence that the Hudson's Bay Company did not decide to make this important shift in the location of its permanent improvements entirely of its own volition. It is more than probable that the British government encouraged the move. Indeed, unless the governor of the Company later indulged in a bit of subtle flattery, the decision to change the headquarters of the department to a more strategic location was made at the suggestion of none other than George Canning, British Foreign Secretary. "In compliance with a wish expressed by you at our last interview," wrote Governor J. H. Pelly to Canning on December 9, 1825, "Governor Simpson, when at the Columbia, abandoned Fort George on the South side of the River and formed a new Establishment on the North side."⁴²

Another reason for the decision to abandon Fort George was given a prominent place in the "public" letters of the Company -- the type of official correspondence which was meant for the eyes of more than one commissioned officer. In accordance with the Treaty of Ghent which ended the War of 1812, Fort George, as a post seized by force of arms during that conflict, had been formally restored to the United States in 1818. The representative of the American Government who officially received the post had left the scene almost immediately after the ceremonies, however, and the fort had remained in the hands of the North West Company, whose officers -- albeit somewhat with their tongues in their cheeks -- had promised to "occupy and protect it" under the United States flag until the American President should order their removal.⁴³ There the matter had rested ever since,

⁴¹ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 240-242.

⁴² Ibid., 257-260; also Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XX, 25-34. A letter written by Deputy Governor N. Garry to R. W. Hay, British under-secretary for colonial affairs, May 7, 1828, repeats the assertion that the move was made "by the desire of Mr. Canning" and to avoid risk of collision with the Americans, whose government claimed the site of Fort George. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 297.

⁴³ T. C. Elliott, "The Surrender at Astoria in 1818," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XIX (December, 1918), 271-282.

although the Governor and Committee purported to be greatly concerned lest some Americans should suddenly appear and demand the fort.

"There seems no necessity for our keeping in repair the present Fort when the Americans have the right of taking possession of it when they please," the directors wrote to Governor Simpson on June 2, 1824.⁴⁴ This useless expenditure for upkeep plus the need of having a fort "of our own to which we could move" should the Americans ask for Fort George or be awarded the south bank of the Columbia, were the reasons assigned in the "public" letters for the orders to build a new headquarters. Private letters, however, clearly indicate that considerations of international politics were paramount.⁴⁵

That the boundary dispute was uppermost in the minds of the Committee is also revealed by the instructions issued from London concerning the construction of the new post. "You should therefore," the chief factors at Fort George were told, "without delay commence a Fort on the North side of the River, selecting a spot which will command the entrance of the River convenient to the vessels frequenting it, sufficiently elevated if possible to be well seen from the sea and in a dry place with good water." Either Cape Disappointment or Point Ellice were suggested as desirable localities, and the officers were given permission to employ carpenters from the William and Ann to help in the construction work. In short, the gentlemen of Fort George were to build a new headquarters in a hurry, and although the structure was to be conveniently located for purposes of the fur trade, its site was to be chosen principally with an eye to the international situation.⁴⁶

By the time these orders to the chief factors reached the Columbia, the departmental headquarters had already been moved to the north bank of the river. Nevertheless the instructions are important as showing the intentions of the Committee and the considerations which lay behind their decisions. It was either a notice of these decisions sent to Governor Simpson, or a similar program evolved by Simpson from like considerations, which led directly to the withdrawal from Fort George and to the founding of Fort Vancouver during the winter of 1824-1825.

Governor Simpson plans to visit the Columbia

Despite Simpson's great interest in the Columbia Department during the period 1821 to 1824, he actually had been able to devote relatively little personal attention to affairs in that section of his domain. After his appointment as governor of the Northern

⁴⁴ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 210.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 240-242.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Department in 1821, his first problem had been to clear up the wreckage left by the struggle between the two great companies in the territory east of the Rockies. Old animosities had to be salved; habits of wastefulness and relaxed discipline had to be corrected; and the practices of debauching the Indians and exhausting the fur producing districts had to be ended. The union had eliminated the necessity of keeping duplicate trading posts, outfits, and forces of employees in the areas formerly in dispute. The least suitable posts had to be abandoned and the superfluous personnel discharged or retired.

These tasks kept the new field governor busily employed for the first three years of his incumbency. By a series of whirlwind tours, during which he drove his subordinates as relentlessly as himself, he visited the chief districts of his department east of the mountains. His ruthless efficiency, his harsh discipline, and his sudden imposition of order and economy upon the fur trade necessarily aroused some enmity, but at the same time he possessed a tact and an "exterior of affability" which won for the new regime the loyalty of many disgruntled employees.

Quickly mastering every detail of the Company's operations, he effected sweeping changes. Between 1821 and 1825 he reduced the number of employees from 1983 to 827; wages were cut in half; many posts were abandoned or shifted to new locations; and the transportation system was revamped. Through these and many other measures, the Northern Department of Rupert's Land was completely reorganized, the formerly semi-independent wintering partners were made strictly subordinate to the will of the governor, and George Simpson demonstrated beyond a doubt his vast talents as an administrator of the fur trade.⁴⁷

By the latter half of 1823, things were well enough in hand so that Governor Simpson could consider absenting himself from Rupert's Land for a period of several months. He was anxious to visit the Columbia Department and personally attend to straightening out its affairs, but he also had long hoped to return to England to get married. He had broached the subject of a leave of absence for the latter purpose as early as 1822, but the reply had not been too encouraging. His coming home, he was told, would "depend in some measure" on his being satisfied that his absence would "not be attended with any serious mischief."⁴⁸

⁴⁷ H. B. S., III, xxiii-xxix; H. B. S., IV, xii-xiii; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, xviii-xxi.

⁴⁸ A. Colville to G. Simpson, London, March 10, 1823, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 189-191.

The next year he brought the matter up again, but this time he left it up to the officers of the Company to decide "whether I go to England or to the Columbia next season."⁴⁹ The Committee's answer must have surprised even the outspoken Simpson by its bluntness. "A wife I fear would be an embarrassment to you until the business gets into more complete order," he was told on March 11, 1824, by Andrew Colville, a director in the Company and his chief friend on the Committee. Instead, it was suggested that the field governor devote his immediate attentions to completing a reorganization of the Red River settlement. When that task should be completed, said the Committee in another letter, they were "anxious" to have him visit the Columbia.

The directors, however, did not approve of a plan which Simpson had earlier suggested, a plan under which he would leave for Fort George about September 10, 1824, and make most of the trans-continental journey under winter conditions. Such a trip, they informed him, would be attended with "needless risk and fatigue," and besides would leave him "too little time while in the Columbia Country." It would be better, they advised, to postpone the trip until the summer of 1825.⁵⁰

To Simpson, the most important sentences in these dispatches were those which made clear the Committee's desire that he "cross the Mountain" before the end of 1825. He also knew what the directors did not -- that his presence absolutely would be required at Red River during the summer of that year. "I therefore in order to accomplish both objects determined on going to the Columbia this Fall," he informed Colville on August 9, 1824. In thus going contrary to the Committee's suggestions, he added unabashedly, "I have alone consulted the welfare of the Company & Colony interests and laid aside all feeling or consideration in respect to my own ease and comfort as by starting so late as the 15 Inst I shall be exposing myself to great hardships and fatigues."⁵¹

Preparations for Simpson's journey: Dr. John McLoughlin appointed to the Columbia District

Simpson's long-standing interest in the Columbia had given him a basic fund of information concerning the problems of that department. His knowledge must have been considerably increased during the winter of 1823-1824 when he passed some months at Red River with Chief Factor Donald McKenzie, who had been in charge of the Snake

⁴⁹ G. Simpson to A. Colville, York Factory, September 8, 1823, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 204.

⁵⁰ A. Colville to G. Simpson, London, March 11, 1824, in ibid., 205-206; Governor and Committee to G. Simpson, London, March 12, 1824, in ibid., 208.

⁵¹ Ibid., 242-246.

country brigades under the North West Company.⁵² As a result of his own investigations, coupled with what he had gleaned from the dispatches of the Committee, the governor had, by the summer of 1824, reached some tentative conclusions as to what reforms might be necessary on the Columbia. In formulating his program he evidently had received little help from the field partners. "Our Council know little about that Country having confined their attention to the mere trafficking with Indians and not taking an enlarged view of its affairs either in regard to political or commercial prospects," he told the Committee; "indeed there is a general feeling against it and I believe they would gladly throw up all interest in the trade on the West side of the Mountain (New Caledonia excepted) if left to themselves."

Although more sanguine as to the possibilities of making the territory profitable, even Simpson hesitated to recommend "any experiment or deviation from the established course that would involve expense" at a time when the firm's tenure on the Columbia was uncertain. He believed that if Americans settled at the mouth of the river, the Hudson's Bay Company would have to abandon the area and move northward to avoid ruinous competition. In that case he hoped that a new depot might be set up at the mouth of the Fraser River for the supply of the interior. He did not think the Spanish settlements on the Pacific coast of the Americas would prove reliable as sources of supplies or as markets for the products of the Columbia, but he was anxious to make another attempt at direct trade with China. He suggested that with a small vessel a "profitable coasting trade might be carried on." He had already asked that the supply ship for 1824 might be used to explore the northern shore line, and he planned to investigate some of the inland routes of communication himself.⁵³

Another step in Simpson's preparations was taken on July 10, 1824, when the Council for the Northern Department met at York Factory. Among the appointments made by the Council was that of Chief Trader James MacMillan "to accompany Governor Simpson to the Columbia." MacMillan was a plain, uneducated man, but he had a vast store of practical knowledge about the fur trade west of the Rockies. He had helped David Thompson open the Columbia for the North West Company and had spent most of the time since 1808 in that country. Few men were as well qualified to give Simpson information concerning the field of his proposed labors as was James MacMillan.⁵⁴

⁵² H. B. S., III, xxxii; H. B. S., IV, xxiii.

⁵³ G. Simpson to A. Colville, York Factory, August 9, 1824, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 242-246.

⁵⁴ For a brief biography of MacMillan see H. B. S., III, 450-451.

Even more important for Simpson's long-term program for the Columbia was another appointment made by the Council of 1824: the assignment of Chief Factor John McLoughlin to the department. This move was given added significance by the fact that Alexander Kennedy, who had been a chief factor on the Columbia since 1822, was given permission to return east in the spring of 1825. It was thus known and intended that after Kennedy's departure, McLoughlin would remain as the sole chief factor in the department.⁵⁵

John McLoughlin

The man whom Simpson was thus entrusting with the management of the highly critical Columbia Department and who would have the responsibility of executing any program the Governor might put into effect there was thirty-nine years old at the time of his appointment, and of those years, twenty-one had been spent in the fur trade. Born at Rivière-du-Loup, on the south bank of the St. Lawrence some 120 miles below Quebec, John McLoughlin was the descendant of Scotch, Irish, and French-Canadian ancestors. He was baptized a Catholic but appears to have been brought up in the Protestant faith. At about the age of fourteen the boy was apprenticed to a physician in Quebec, and some five years later he was licensed to practice medicine, surgery, and pharmacy.

It was as an apprentice surgeon that McLoughlin entered the service of the North West Company in 1803. In spite of promises made to him before he joined the Nor'Westers by Simon McTavish, the controlling figure in the firm, McLoughlin's rise in rank was slow and painful, and it was not until his very genuine talents as a fur trader became recognized that he finally achieved a partnership in 1814. Dissatisfied with the prospects of the company, McLoughlin led the fight of the wintering partners against the Montreal agents, a struggle which helped bring about the merger with the Hudson's Bay Company. He was one of the representatives of the wintering partners at the negotiations in London during the winter of 1820-1821.

Upon the union of the companies, McLoughlin was made a chief factor, but owing to illness he was not able to take an appointment immediately and spent much of his first year as a Hudson's Bay man in Europe. During the next two seasons he had charge of a Company post at Rainy Lake, west of Lake Superior. Here he beat back an active American competition and was able at the same time to increase the returns of his district. Such results won the favorable attention of Governor Simpson.

Not a little of McLoughlin's success as a fur trader was due to his personal appearance. Standing six feet, four inches in height, his powerful, well-knit frame gave an impression of physical strength which was almost overwhelming. His blue-gray eyes flashed out

⁵⁵ H. B. S., III, 16, 71-72, 84.

beneath "huge brows," and crowning his rosy-checked face was a magnificent head of prematurely white hair which he allowed to flow down onto his broad shoulders.

A "bustling, active man," McLoughlin possessed a very positive and decisive mind. Impatient of opposition, he sometimes employed his immense physique, his "great voice," and his dignified and commanding manner to carry all before him. As Governor Simpson noted, a difference of opinion with him almost amounted to a declaration of hostilities. He tended to be impetuous and sometimes petulant; he occasionally flew into ungovernable rages and could be unreasonably stubborn. Yet, he had a great fund of compassion and breadth of understanding. When he wished, no man was a more pleasant conversationalist or a more gracious host. And above all, there was about him an integrity and grandeur of character which lifted him out of the ranks of ordinary men.⁵⁶

Considering the circumstances of the appointment, there can be no doubt that McLoughlin was selected for the Columbia post on the basis of his merits. He had demonstrated an ability to best American competition on one frontier, and undoubtedly Simpson believed

⁵⁶ There are a number of biographies of John McLoughlin, among which may be mentioned Frederick Van Voorhies Holman, Dr. John McLoughlin, the Father of Oregon (Cleveland, O., 1907); Robert Cummings Johnson, John McLoughlin; Patriarch of the Northwest (Portland, Ore., 1935); and Richard Gill Montgomery, The White-Headed Eagle, John McLoughlin, Builder of an Empire (New York, 1934). All accounts of McLoughlin's career prior to the time he left the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1846, however, have largely been superseded by the splendid introductions written by Dr. F. Kaye Lamb for the three volumes of The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committees, edited by E. E. Rich and published by the Champlain Society and the Hudson's Bay Record Society (Toronto; London, 1941, 1943, 1944).

All of the above works contain descriptions of McLoughlin and estimates of his character. In addition, the present sketch is based upon the following: Neil M. Howison, "Report of Lieutenant Neil M. Howison on Oregon, 1846," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XIV (March, 1913), 22-23; H. S. Lyman, "Reminiscences of F. X. Matthieu," in ibid., I (March, 1900), 95; and Oscar Osburn Winther, Book Review of Douglas MacKay's The Honourable Company, in ibid., XXXVIII (September, 1937), 371-372. See also J. Quinn Thornton, "History of the Provisional Government of Oregon," in Constitution and Quotations from the Register of the Oregon Pioneer Association . . . 1874, 51.

him the field partner most qualified to meet the opponents who were rumored to be heading for the Oregon country. But there were some in the ranks of the Company who looked upon the Doctor's assignment to the Columbia as a form of banishment. McLoughlin was known as somewhat of a radical, an organizer of opposition parties, and it was said that some of the "slow coaches" among the former Hudson's Bay field officers did not want "so stirring a man" near them and were glad to ship him off beyond the mountains where he would have enough to do and think about to keep his attentions directed exclusively to the Company's routine business.⁵⁷

After the appointment was officially sanctioned, McLoughlin lost little time in preparing for his journey to the Pacific Coast. The Council convened on July 10, 1824, and seventeen days later the Doctor set out from York Factory with two canoes and fourteen men who were to serve as reenforcements on the Columbia.⁵⁸

Simpson's Journey to Fort George

Governor Simpson was not able to start westward as early as McLoughlin. The details of winding up the year's business and preparing his correspondence kept him at York Factory for nearly three weeks beyond the Doctor's departure. And when his tasks were completed, he "spun out" the time still further, vainly awaiting the arrival of a Company ship bearing the summer dispatches from the Committee. But at length the lateness of the season made any additional delay impossible. On August 15 he gave up his vigil and commenced his voyage. With him in his single canoe went Chief Trader MacMillan, eight voyageurs, a personal servant, and an Indian guide.

Traveling with even more than his usual haste, Simpson caught up with the McLoughlin party on September 26 near the Athabaska River. The Governor noted with malicious satisfaction the Doctor's very evident embarrassment at being thus overtaken in spite of a twenty-day start. "He was," wrote Simpson in his journal, "such a figure as I should not like to meet in a dark Night in one of the bye lanes in the neighborhood of London, dressed in Clothes that had once been fashionable, but now covered with a thousand patches of different Colors, his beard would do honor to the chin of a Grizzly Bear, his face and hands evidently Shewing that he had not lost much time at his Toilette, loaded with Arms and his own herculean dimensions forming a tout ensemble that would convey a good idea of the high way men of former Days."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ William Fraser Tolmie, "Letter from Dr. Tolmie," in Transactions of the . . . Oregon Pioneer Association for 1884, 30-31.

⁵⁸ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 3-4.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 23.

Joining forces, the two parties traveled together for the remainder of the journey. Still maintaining the same swift pace, they crossed the Rockies by way of Athabaska Pass to the headwaters of the Columbia and descended that stream to its mouth. Despite stops at Spokane House, Okanagan, and Fort Nez Percés, they arrived at Fort George on November 8. Simpson's voyage had occupied eighty-four days, a full twenty days less than that of any previous canoe party.⁶⁰

Description of the Columbia Department, 1825

At the time of the arrival of Simpson and McLoughlin to take up the task of its reorganization, the Columbia Department was a vast, sprawling territory without well-defined boundaries. In general, it consisted of the entire Columbia River watershed. The eastern and western limits were quite definitely fixed by the summit of the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, respectively, but no one had ever established precise lines on the north and south.

By a treaty with the United States in 1819, Spain had agreed to recognize the forty-second parallel as the northern limit of her territories west of the Rockies, and as long as Oregon continued to be jointly occupied by the United States and Great Britain, this line, in theory, formed a southern boundary for the jurisdiction and rights of the Hudson's Bay Company. But in practice the trapping grounds of the Company's fur brigades in 1824 extended south of the forty-second parallel into what is now northern Utah. Later these expeditions were to range to the southern limits of the present Nevada and California.

On the north the precise boundary between the departments of the Columbia and New Caledonia was likewise undefined. Roughly speaking, the dividing line came at the watershed between the Fraser and Columbia rivers, with the post at Kamloops, on Thompson River, forming a "connecting link" between the two jurisdictions.⁶¹ But as a matter of fact, in 1824 and for many years thereafter, Kamloops, although located on a tributary of the Fraser, was definitely under the control of the Columbia Department. For this reason, modern map-makers sometimes show the boundary as a straight line along the parallel of latitude connecting the northern end of Chilko Lake with the present Donald Station on the upper Columbia.⁶²

As Governor Simpson outlined the organization of the district in 1824, there were four main fur-trading posts in the Columbia

⁶⁰ Full details concerning Simpson's journey are available in his journal of the trip, printed in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire.

⁶¹ H. B. S., IV, xii.

⁶² Edward Ermatinger, Edward Ermatinger's York Factory Express Journal . . . 1827-1828 [Ottawa, 1912], map facing p. 132.

Department, with several subsidiary posts. The chief posts, with their respective dependencies, were as follows:

1. Thompson's River, or Kamloops, situated at the confluence of the north and south branches of Thompson River. Almost due south from Kamloops, at a distance of "about Eight Days March . . . with loaded Horses," was the subsidiary outpost of Fort Okanagan, at the junction of the Okanogan River with the Columbia.

2. Spokane House, located near the confluence of the Spokane and Little Spokane Rivers, some ten miles northwest of the present city of Spokane. The subsidiary posts supplied from Spokane House were Kootenai House and Flathead Post. The Snake country brigade also rendezvoused at Spokane House.

3. Fort Nez Percés, or Walla Walla, located on the east bank of the Columbia at the junction of that stream with the Walla Walla River.

4. Fort George, situated on the site of the present city of Astoria, on the south bank of the Columbia a few miles from the sea.⁶³

Reorganization of the Columbia Department, 1824-1825

On his way down the Columbia to Fort George, Governor Simpson, both by inquiry and personal observation, searchingly examined the conduct of the Company's affairs in this far-flung western territory. What he found did not please him in the least. Everywhere he discovered too many signs of the incompetence, waste, and extravagance which had plagued the department in the days of the North West Company. "Everything appears to me on the Columbia on too extended a scale except the Trade," was his scathing summary of the situation. "It is now however necessary that a radical change should take place and we have not time to lose in bringing it about," he noted in his journal upon his arrival at Fort George.⁶⁴

During the next four months Simpson remained at Fort George drawing up a series of far-reaching reforms. A number of the proposed measures were inaugurated before he left the department for Norway House during the next spring. As the program grew in his mind, he became enthusiastic over the possibilities for profits in the region. The coastal and interior trades, he found, were "unquestionably worth contending for," and he came to fear less and less the possible dangers from American and Russian competition. He dreamed of a great western fur empire in which the trade of the Columbia and New Caledonia departments would be combined with the coastal trade and the whole, through the assistance of the East India Company, developed into a triangular commerce between the Columbia, Canton,

⁶³ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 43-44, 50-51, 54, 66.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 65.

and South America. If this program could become a reality, he prophesied, the Columbia trade could "not only be made to rival, but to yield double the profit that any other part of North America does for the Amount of Capital employed."⁶⁵

As was generally his practice, the Scot governor first turned his attention to measures of economy. It would be possible, he insisted, to reduce the number of officers, clerks, and hired hands employed in the department from 151 to 83, with a consequent saving of £2,040 per annum. The commissioned gentlemen were warned to cut costs in all branches of the business, to disregard "little domestic comforts," and, in particular, not to "be influenced by the Sapiant councils of their Squaws." The number of boats and the amount of trading goods employed were also drastically cut. The large forces hitherto kept at Fort George to transport these goods and the food supplies were to be sent off on trapping expeditions instead of being permitted to spend the slack months in idleness.⁶⁶

But the largest economies were to be effected by eliminating practically all imports of foodstuffs. "I do not see why one oz. of European Stores or Provisions should be allowed on one side of the Mountain more than the other," he said, especially since there was readily available in the country plenty of fish, potatoes, and game -- "in short, every thing that is good or necessary for an Indian trader." Any wants not provided by these three staples he planned to furnish by greatly increasing the amount of grain, vegetables, and fruits grown in the country. In fact, as his enthusiasm grew, he envisioned producing enough "Beef Pork Fish Corn Butter &c &c" to develop an export trade in these items. He made plans to send seeds overland to the Columbia during the next season. "It has been said that Farming is no branch of the Fur Trade," he noted in his journal as if to justify his policy to the Committee, "but I consider that every pursuit tending to lighten the Expenche of the Trade is a branch thereof."⁶⁷

The previously planned program of aggressive expansion was also put into operation. Finding that the full possibilities of the Snake country expeditions were still not being fully exploited, he appointed Peter Skene Ogden to head the brigade and sent the former leader, Ross, to Red River Colony to be a school teacher. Ogden was dispatched immediately to conduct a fall and winter hunt so the best trapping season would not, as formerly, be lost. At Fort George, Governor Simpson directed that another brigade be sent southward up the Willamette River to exploit the country near the coast. If possible, this expedition was to explore the Umpqua River and the country beyond, even to the Colorado.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 71-72. ⁶⁶ Ibid., 58, 66, 87.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 47-50, 78. ⁶⁸ Ibid., 44-47, 88-89.

These two expeditions were part of Simpson's plan to get the most out of the country south of the Columbia before a boundary settlement would close the area to the British. But there was more to his scheme than mere greed for immediate profits. He hoped to turn the region into such a "fur desert" that American trappers would have no motive for visiting it. In this manner the hated opponents would be kept away from the Company's preserves north of the Columbia. Also, the Governor had long-range conservation plans for all of his Northern Department. If the Snake country could be made to produce huge yields, he could afford to let more of the exhausted territories east of the Rockies rest for a few years.⁶⁹

Earlier plans to develop the coastal trade were also pushed forward. He recommended that a vessel of about 150 tons be sent to the Columbia to be used in the triangular with China which he hoped could be developed. He also advocated that another small ship of 50 or 60 tons be kept constantly on the coast for trading purposes. This craft, he suggested, could be built at the Columbia depot "at little or no expense." Only eleven days after he reached Fort George, Simpson sent a party under James MacMillan to explore the lower Fraser River. MacMillan went up the stream for about sixty miles and reported it to be "a fine large River" surrounded by a country rich in beaver. Simpson ordered a post constructed there as soon as practicable.⁷⁰

Perhaps the most startling of the proposals made by the governor concerned the administrative machinery of the entire Hudson's Bay empire west of the Rocky Mountains. As already indicated, Simpson's investigations convinced him that the departments of New Caledonia and the Columbia should be merged into a single unit. Until this step should be taken, he wrote to McLoughlin as he was heading homeward in April, 1825, "it will be impossible to put the affairs of this side of the Mountain on such a regular footing as is desirable."⁷¹

To supply this immense department he planned to establish a new depot at the mouth of Fraser River. From this central point he envisioned easy water routes to New Caledonia, the Columbia, and to new forts to be built along the coast. To him the Fraser appeared "to be formed by nature as the grand communication with all our Establishments on this side of the mountain." Reversing his previous position of 1822, he declared that supplying New Caledonia from the west instead of from York Factory would effect large savings. Besides, he believed that if the Americans should become established on the Columbia, the "ruinous" competition would require moving the headquarters farther north. For these reasons he left orders with McLoughlin to move the depot from the Columbia to Fraser River during

⁶⁹ H. B. S., IV, xxvii.

⁷⁰ Ibid., xxix; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 78-79, 113-118; 248-250.

⁷¹ H. B. S., III, xxxv.

the season of 1826. As time was to reveal, however, there was one defect in this plan. Governor Simpson was not aware that Fraser and Stuart in 1808 had found the central section of Fraser River to be almost wholly unnavigable.⁷²

With an eye to the probable disposition of the land south of the Columbia, as well as for reasons of more efficient operation, Simpson ordered changes in the location of several posts in the Columbia Department. He suggested that Fort Nez Percés be moved to the west side of the Columbia, a suggestion which was later found to be impracticable. He also directed the abandonment of Spokane House and the transfer of its activities to a new post to be built near Kettle Falls on the Columbia, some seventy-five miles to the northward. During his homeward trip in 1825, the Governor personally lined out the site for the new establishment, which he named Fort Colville after his friend on the Committee. Disregarding considerations of the future nationality of the site, he located the post on the south bank of the stream where he found the best land for agricultural purposes. In his eagerness to get his food-raising program under way, he even marked out the boundaries of the proposed garden and ordered a crop of potatoes put in immediately.⁷³ The other and most important change in location ordered by Governor Simpson was the abandonment of Fort George and the construction of a new depot on the north side of the Columbia.

Reasons for the abandonment of Fort George

It is reasonably certain that Simpson knew of the desire of the Committee in London to transfer the Company's posts and headquarters into the region which, it was believed, would fall to Great Britain upon a boundary settlement with the United States. Surely the Governor acted as though he had received information concerning such a policy. On his way down the Columbia in November, he noted that Fort Nez Percés would have to be moved to the north bank should the Americans establish their claim to the country lying south of the river, and, as has been seen, before leaving for the East he recommended that this shift be made.⁷⁴ Probably he was likewise aware of the interest of the British government in the matter.

Yet, nowhere in the fragments of the correspondence between Simpson and the Committee which have thus far been published, is it made positively clear that Simpson received any instructions on this subject before his departure for the Columbia. On June 2, 1824, the Committee wrote to the field governor informing him that the chief factors on the Columbia had been ordered to shift the depot, but this letter appears to have been carried by the vessel which reached York

⁷² H. B. S., III, xxxv, lxx; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 73, 76-77.

⁷³ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 134-135, 139.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 59; H. B. S., IV, xxviii.

Factory five days after Simpson had left.⁷⁵ Indeed, it would appear from Simpson's letters written to the directors during and after his visit to the Pacific Coast that, in regard to changing the locations of posts, he acted more from conclusions derived from his own thoughts and observations than from any directions he might have received from London. No definite conclusions on this subject can be drawn, however, until the full texts of all the letters bearing upon it have been made public.

Certain it is that Simpson took an immediate dislike to Fort George the moment he laid eyes on it. The establishment was, he noted in his diary, "a large pile of buildings covering about an acre of ground well stockaded and protected by Bastions or Blockhouses, having two Eighteen Pounders mounted in front and altogether an air or appearance of Grandeur & consequence which does not become and is not at all suitable to an Indian Trading Post."⁷⁶

As early as 1814 the North West Company had found the location of Fort George unsatisfactory. The damp climate at Astoria was injurious to their furs and stores of supplies; the post was not conveniently located for purposes of trade, was open to attack by sea, and was unhealthful for the men. The Nor'Westers searched inland for a more suitable site for their depot but, except for one temporary move, never actually made the shift.⁷⁷ Perhaps Simpson noted the same drawbacks to the spot. Also, like the Committee in London, he was aware that the Hudson's Bay Company occupied Fort George merely "by sufferance" of the United States. "By putting off the evil Day we are merely accommodating our opponents by improving and keeping in repair a Fort for their reception," he wrote to the directors on March 10, 1825; "by abandoning it at once it will to them be useless and we can at no expence and little inconvenience erect a Fort sufficient for all purposes of Trade."⁷⁸

Far outweighing all other considerations in Simpson's mind, however, was the fact that the neighborhood of Fort George was not suitable for the large agricultural establishment which he was determined to put into operation at once. Since the days of Astor's men, a certain amount of agriculture had been carried on at Fort George. During 1824 the post garden produced 1800 bushels of potatoes of excellent quality. Peas, carrots, radishes, cabbages, and turnips were also raised, and there were thirty-one head of cattle and seventeen hogs in

⁷⁵ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 5, 210.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁷ See citations in Clark, History of the Willamette Valley, I, 146; H. B. S., IV, xxviii; O'Neil, The North West Company on the Pacific Slope, 178-179.

⁷⁸ H. B. S., IV, p. 4, note 2.

the Fort George herds. But the soil appeared generally poor, the ground was so uneven that only fifteen or twenty acres could be plowed, the heavy stand of timber made it difficult to clear land, and Simpson felt that the sea air was unsuitable for the raising of Indian corn and grain.⁷⁹

The "main object" in abandoning Fort George and finding a new location for the headquarters was "that of rendering ourselves independent of foreign aid in regard to the means of Subsistence." Simpson told the Committee four years later.⁸⁰ Long after the event John McLoughlin also testified that the move to the new location had been determined on because "it was a place where we could cultivate the soil and raise our own provisions."⁸¹

Search for a new site

The exact day upon which Simpson decided to move the depot is not known. In a letter to the Governor and Committee of October 6, 1825, McLoughlin merely dates the determination as "on last fall."⁸² It is known, however, that "a few Days" after Simpson's arrival at Fort George on November 8, 1824, the Governor, Chief Factors McLoughlin and Kennedy, and Thomas McKay, a clerk, set out in an open boat to cross the river and visit Baker Bay and Cape Disappointment "in order to ascertain if there was a spot thereabout fit for the site of a new Establishment." But the craft began to leak badly, and the party never completed the trip, considering themselves fortunate to get back to shore alive.⁸³

It was probably soon after this abortive expedition that Simpson designated John McLoughlin and Alexander Kennedy to search for a suitable location for the proposed depot. The two chief factors did not bother again to direct their attentions to Baker Bay or Cape

⁷⁹ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 87, 105-106; G. Simpson to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, March 1, 1829, as quoted by the Hudson's Bay Company in an enclosure to a letter to Fay G. Peabody, July 5, 1935, which enclosure may be found in Olaf T. Hagen, Report on the Preliminary Inspection of the Proposed Old Fort Vancouver Restoration Project (typescript, National Park Service, 1936), appendix, 48-49.

⁸⁰ G. Simpson to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, March 1, 1829, in Hagen, Report, appendix, 48-49.

⁸¹ "Copy of a Document Found Among the Private Papers of the Late Dr. John McLoughlin," in Transactions of the . . . Oregon Pioneer Association; for 1880, 46.

⁸² H. B. S., IV, 4.

⁸³ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 92-93.

Disappointment. Kennedy was familiar with those locations and reported them entirely unsuitable. Instead, the factors confined their attentions to the north bank above a spot known as Chinook Point, not far from the mouth of the river. Working upstream, they found the banks to be too steep, high, or rocky for the desired purpose, or else so low as to be subject to inundation during the season of high water. Not until they passed the mouth of the Willamette and approached the vicinity of the present city of Vancouver did they find what they had been seeking.⁸⁴

Description of the site of the new depot

Above the entrance of the Willamette, the north bank of the Columbia was bordered by a broad, low-lying plain, occasionally dotted with clumps of timber and much of it covered with lakes and ponds. This land was obviously subject to floods, but five or six miles upstream from the Willamette the chances for successful crop raising looked better.

Here a broad, flat point of land jutted out from the north bank of the Columbia. The protrusion was known in 1824 as "the Jolie Prairie" or "Belle Vue Point." It was evidently believed at that time to have been the place named "Belle Vue Point" by Lieutenant Broughton on October 29, 1792, when he was surveying the river under the orders of Captain Vancouver. The latest research on the subject, however, places Broughton's "Belle Vue Point" some miles downstream from Simpson's "Belle Vue Point," and the name is now applied, by decision of the United States Board of Geographical Names, to a location on Sauvie Island at the mouth of the Willamette.⁸⁵ Simpson's "Belle Vue Point" is the one now known locally as "Scenic Point," almost directly south of the State School for the Deaf in Vancouver, Washington. The region was known to the neighboring Chinook Indians as "Skit-so-to-ho," and to the Klickitat as "Ala-si-kes," or the "place of mud turtles".⁸⁶

⁸⁴ J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 6, 1825, in H. B. S., IV, 4-6.

⁸⁵ Lewis A. McArthur, Oregon Geographic Names (2nd ed., Portland, Ore., 1944), 39; Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXV (March, 1934) 85.

⁸⁶ Tolmie, "Letter from Dr. Tolmie", in Transactions of the... Oregon Pioneer Association for 1884, 31; see also Edmund S. Meany, Origin of Washington Geographic Names (Seattle, 1923), 325.

Near this "Belle Vue Point" of 1824 the prairies were higher than downstream. Commencing, at spots, as much as fifteen feet above low water level, they sloped gently upwards away from the river for distances variously estimated as ranging between a quarter of a mile and a mile to a more sharply rising bench of land. This bench, sometimes termed the "second bank" of the Columbia, rose to about sixty feet above the river plain and on its top was what was called the "high prairie." This elevated ground was on the whole densely wooded with fir trees, but as it rolled away in gentle undulations to the northward, there were a number of large openings or "prairies" in the forest.

At "Belle Vue Point" itself, the lower or river plain was about a mile wide and ran along the river bank practically without obstructing trees for a distance of some three miles. It contained much good land for agricultural purposes, although the sections nearest the river were subject to overflow. This prairie was selected by McLoughlin and Kennedy as the site for Governor Simpson's projected farm. Under the name of "Fort Plain" it was to play an important role in the development of agriculture in the Pacific Northwest.

As the site for the stockade and buildings of the new headquarters, the chief factors chose a plot of ground about a mile back from the river, on the brow of the upper prairie and overlooking the river plain and the present Scenic Point. The buildings of the State School for the Deaf, at 2901 East 7th Street, Vancouver, today mark the site.

Reasons for locating the new headquarters away from the river

A visitor to Fort Vancouver in 1841 was told, probably by McLoughlin himself, that the site on the upper prairie had been selected because of its commanding position. The location was one which could easily be defended, a consideration of importance in a country where the natives were believed to be hostile.⁸⁷ Also, it was thought at the time that all of the lower plain was occasionally flooded. These factors evidently were considered to outweigh several obvious disadvantages of the site, such as its inconveniently long distance from the river and the fact that there was no source of drinking water close at hand.⁸⁸

Many years afterwards, James Douglas, who was not at Fort George in 1824, but who later became McLoughlin's closest associate, testified under oath that the site of the new depot had been chosen in "conse-

⁸⁷ George Foster Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 269.

⁸⁸ Charles Wilkes, Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition, during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, (5 Vols., Philadelphia, 1845), IV, 335.

quence of the beauty of its situation;⁸⁹ Undoubtedly the spot possessed an unusual natural charm. A number of visitors during the early days have left enthusiastic descriptions of the magnificent outlook from the location. "The view from this place is truly beautiful," wrote Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, commander of the United States Exploring Expedition in 1841: "the noble river can be traced in all its windings, for a long distance through the cultivated prairie, with all its groves and clumps of trees; beyond, the eye sweeps over an interminable forest, melting into a blue haze, from which Mount Hood, capped with its eternal snows, rises in great beauty."⁹⁰ How much such sublimity of scene influenced McLoughlin and Kennedy, however, is not known.

Another point upon which the records are not clear is whether or not Governor Simpson personally visited the chosen site and gave it his stamp of approval before construction was commenced. It would have been quite in keeping with his character for him to have done so, but the evidence upon the point is conflicting. In his journal he gives a glowing description of the site "we have selected"; and in a passage written before leaving Fort George in the spring, he mentions the beauties of the spot in a manner indicating familiarity with it. However, on his way down the Columbia in November he had stopped at "the Jolie Prairie" and had been favorably impressed by it.⁹¹ Moreover, McLoughlin later wrote that "immediately on Mr. Kennedy and my Return to Fort George" from examining the country upstream, a party was sent to start the construction of the new post.⁹² If taken literally, these words would seem to indicate that Simpson acted merely upon the reports of his chief factors and upon what he remembered of the vicinity from his earlier stopover.

Certainly the Governor was enthusiastic about the location. He liked its handsome situation and believed the climate to be "so fine that Indian Corn and other Grain cannot fail of thriving." He wrote almost rapturously that "a Farm to any extent may be made there, the pasture is good and innumerable herds of Swine can fatten so as to be fit for the Knife merely on nutritious Roots that are found here."

McLoughlin reported, somewhat apologetically it would seem, that he and Kennedy could find "no eligible Situation to Build a

⁸⁹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], p. 51.

⁹⁰ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 335.

⁹¹ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 63-64, 87.

⁹² J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, October 6, 1825, in H. B. S., IV, 5.

on nigher the Entrance of the River"; and he and Simpson both appear not to have known whether or not seagoing vessels could ascend the river as far as the new site. But these last considerations did not worry Simpson in the least. It was his plan to have the main departmental depot established on Fraser River within a year or two, and ^{the} distance of "Belle Vue Point" from the harbor at the Columbia's mouth appeared to him "of little importance" for "a secondary Establishment." The small coasting vessel which he planned to have built, or lighters and canoes, could be used to transport goods up and down the river. Neither did Simpson believe that the fur trade conducted at Fort George, already declining, would suffer any considerable loss by the change. The neighboring Indian chiefs, he maintained, would bring their furs to the Company's new location.⁹³ As far as the Governor was concerned, "the Holic Prairie" site was perfectly satisfactory. He ordered building to commence.

⁹³ H. B. S., IV, 4; Hagen, Report, appendix, 48-49; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 86-88, 106.

Chapter II

OLD FORT VANCOUVER, 1824-1829

The first buildings

It was probably late in November or early in December, 1824, when the work party sent out by Governor Simpson reached the site selected for the new depot. Under whose supervision the construction was commenced is not known, but undoubtedly McLoughlin visited the scene of operations at frequent intervals. At any rate, the building was pushed forward at a rapid pace.

By March 18, 1825, Governor Simpson was able to note in his diary that the new fort was "well picketted covering a space of about $3/4$ ths of an acre and the buildings already completed are a Dwelling House, two good Stores an Indian Hall and temporary quarters for the people."¹ From remarks made by subsequent visitors to the post it would appear that the "Little Emperor" used the term "completed" somewhat loosely, but it is clear that substantial progress had been made in the short space of about three months.

Coincident with the first blows of the axe which felled the timber for the new buildings was the laying out of Governor Simpson's cherished farm. Sod was broken on the upper prairie adjoining the construction site, and a field was laid out for potatoes and other vegetables.²

Description of the new post

Beyond the brief word-picture given in Simpson's journal, practically nothing is known of the appearance and ground plan of the new depot.³ But from certain hints dropped by travelers, a few generalizations may be made.

Dr. John Scouler, who visited the Columbia during 1825 as medical officer on the Company's brig William and Ann, mentioned

¹ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 124.

² John Scouler, "Dr. John Scouler's Journal of a Voyage to N. W. America," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, VI, (June, 1905), 174.

³ It is understood that the forthcoming Volume X of the Hudson's Bay Company Series, published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society and the Champlain Society, will contain a report by Governor Simpson for the year 1826/27, which contains descriptive matter concerning Fort Vancouver. J. Chadwick Brooks to J. A. Hussey, London, January 21, 1948.

in his journal that the new post was "built on the same plan" as Fort George, but was not so large.⁴ While it would be rash to interpret Scouler's words too literally, they would appear to indicate that the establishment at the "Jolie Prairie" was surrounded by a stockade formed of fir log pickets, each of which was from twelve to fifteen feet in height and about six inches in diameter. This palisade enclosed a rectangle of ground about three-quarters of an acre in area. At two diagonal corners, probably the southwest and the northeast, stood bastions or blockhouses built of stout logs or square-hewn timbers.

The main entrance probably was a large double gate located in the south wall of the palisade, overlooking the river. This gate must have opened into a large square court, around which were ranged the buildings mentioned by Governor Simpson. If the plan of Fort George was followed exactly, the Indian Hall or trading shop and the storehouses formed the east side of the court, while the officers' dwelling and the shelters for the servants ranged along the north and west sides.⁵

Dedication and naming of Fort Vancouver

Even while construction of the storehouses was going on, lighters and canoes were kept busily traveling up and down the river transferring stores and supplies from Fort George to the new depot. By March 16, all the valuable property had been removed from the former Astoria. On that day, accordingly, when Governor Simpson, with Chief Factor Kennedy and Chief Trader McMillan, left Fort George to begin their long homeward journey to Norway House, there was nothing to keep McLoughlin at the mouth of the river any longer. In company with the Governor, the Doctor set out up the Columbia to assume charge of the new headquarters.

"Belle Vue Point" was reached at eleven o'clock on the morning of March 18. Governor Simpson had nothing but praise for those who had built the post and selected its location. "It will in Two Years hence be the finest place in North America," he predicted, "indeed I have rarely seen a Gentleman's Seat in England possessing so many natural advantages and where ornament and use are so agreeably combined." Evidently the Governor had little objection to "an air or appearance of Grandeur & consequence" in a fur-trading post when he himself founded it!

⁴ Scouler, "Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, VI (June, 1905), 174.

⁵ For descriptions of Fort George see Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XIX (December, 1918), plate opposite p. 271; XXXVIII (December, 1937), 111-117.

All that night Simpson sat up making last-minute arrangements for the government of the Columbia Department after his departure. And when dawn broke on March 19 there was but one more task to accomplish before he could say farewell to Dr. McLoughlin. His own journal best records the event:

At Sun rise mustered all the people to hoist the Flag Staff of the new Establishment and in presence of the Gentlemen, Servants, Chiefs & Indians I Baptised it by breaking a Bottle of Rum on the Flag Staff and repeating the following words in a loud voice, "In behalf of the Hon^{ble} Hudsons Bay Co^y I hereby name this Establishment Fort Vancouver God Save King George the 4th" with three cheers. Gave a couple of Drams to the people and Indians on the occasion. The object of naming it after that distinguished navigator is to identify our claim to the Soil and Trade with his discovery of the River and Coast on behalf of G^t Britain. If the Hon^{ble} Committee however do not approve the Name it can be altered. At 9 o'Clock A. M. took leave of our Friend the Dr, embarked and continued our Voyage.⁶

In referring to Vancouver's "discovery" of the Columbia River, Governor Simpson had in mind the patriotic, if somewhat novel and specious claim advanced in 1792 by the explorer and his assistant, Lieutenant Broughton. Making "a fine distinction between the river and its estuary," the two British navigators stoutly maintained that Captain Gray had never seen the Columbia and that the true credit for its discovery should go to Broughton. This theory proved too much even for some Britons to swallow, however, and the point was not greatly stressed in later negotiations over the Oregon boundary.⁷

Simpson's choice of a name for the post was not, as some have supposed, an attempt to link the site of the depot with Lieutenant Broughton's "Point Vancouver"-- a projection seen by the explorer from the point of his farthest ascent of the Columbia and named by him after his commander. Broughton's "Point Vancouver" was a number of miles upstream from "the Jolie Prairie," and this fact was clearly recognized by the people on

⁶ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 122-124. In the possession of the Vancouver Historical Society, Vancouver, Washington, is an old Hudson's Bay Company flag -- white with the arms of the Company painted on it in colors -- which, it has long been claimed, was used at the dedication of Fort Vancouver in 1825. The documentation on this point, however, is not all that could be desired. Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXIX (September, 1938), 327.

⁷ Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast (2 vols., San Francisco, 1886), II, 324.

the spot in 1825.⁸

The removal of the headquarters and depot to Fort Vancouver was later fully approved by the Committee in London.⁹ And evidently the directors also approved of the name selected by Simpson, because no attempt was made to change it. The post remained "Fort Vancouver" as long as it continued its existence, and the name is perpetuated today by the City of Vancouver which grew up on the lands occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company's establishment.

McLoughlin: supreme ruler of the Columbia

When Simpson turned his back on Fort Vancouver and struck out for Norway House, he did not feel that his work on the Columbia had been completed. To implement the reforms and "to put the Machine in full play" he believed his presence would be "absolutely necessary on this side the Mountain one more Winter at least." In fact, so engrossed had he become in the affairs of the western department that he hoped the Committee would permit him to spend twelve or eighteen months personally supervising the trade of the Pacific Coast.¹⁰

Meanwhile, he intended that the administration of the department should be in the capable hands of the man he had selected for the task. Since the days of the union, in 1821, the question of the extent of the authority of a chief factor over other chief factors or even over the chief traders in his district had been a matter of some dispute. Particularly had this been true on the Columbia. In theory the chief factor at Fort George had been entrusted with the superintendency of the department generally, but Simpson found that McLoughlin's predecessors had declined to exercise their authority to its full extent. Every commissioned gentleman in charge of a post had considered "that he alone had the entire control in all matters and arrangements connected therewith" and had treated the chief factor at the departmental headquarters merely as a "store keeper or agent placed there to answer his demands."

Determined to put an end to this state of affairs, the Governor wrote McLoughlin a letter a few days before his departure. Due to the distance of the department from the Committee and Council, he said, it was essential for McLoughlin to take over the

⁸ David Douglas, Journal Kept by David Douglas During His Travels in North America 1823-1827... (London, 1914), 107.

⁹ Governor and Committee to G. Simpson, London, February 23, 1826, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 266.

¹⁰ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 122-123.

direction of the trade. "I beg leave to recommend nay to request the favor of your exercising the powers vested in you," he wrote, specifying further that the Doctor was to have "a certain discretionary or controlling power in the appointments, Outfits, distribution of the people and other important arrangements." Any resistance to his authority was to be reported to the Committee in London.¹¹

These orders were undoubtedly a source of much satisfaction to McLoughlin, but actually they did not mean that he had any great freedom of action as far as managing the trade was concerned. Simpson left detailed instructions covering practically every phase of the business, and new orders continued to arrive from the Governor during succeeding years. It was not until much later that McLoughlin began to act on his own responsibility to any appreciable extent, and when he did, his course resulted in what was, in essence, his dismissal from the Company.

Although relations between the Governor and McLoughlin appear to have been perfectly friendly during the winter they spent together at Fort George, and although the two men were in general accord concerning the policies adopted, yet it must have been with some relief that the Doctor watched Simpson disappear up the broad Columbia. A district manager had little opportunity to exercise his proper functions when the "Little Emperor" was about, and McLoughlin was probably heartily glad that those sharp blue eyes, "ever ablaze in peace or war," were to be directed elsewhere for at least a brief period. Besides, he had already begun to doubt the wisdom of a few of the measures advocated by his chief.

Abandonment of Fort George

When Simpson and McLoughlin started from Fort George for the new depot on March 16, all the property of the old establishment had not yet been transferred. Alexander McKenzie, a clerk who also served as a surgeon and trader, a man named "Cartie" or perhaps "Cartier," and eight other employees were left behind with the expectation that they would remain two or three weeks until the "few remaining articles" were removed.¹²

¹¹ G. Simpson to J. McLoughlin, March 10, 1825, as quoted in H. B. S., III, xxxv; H. B. S., IV, lii-liii. McLoughlin's extended powers were later confirmed by a resolution of the Council for the Northern Department.

¹² Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 122. A valuable picture of the freighting operations is given in Nellie B. Pipes, ed., "The Journal of John Work, March 21-May 14, 1825", in Oregon Historical Quarterly XLV (June, 1944), 138-146.

The transfer took longer than expected, however. A war broke out among the Indians near Fort George, and a large number of them congregated about the former depot. Fearing that they might be encouraged to attack the post when they saw how few men were guarding it, McLoughlin was forced to send down a reenforcement from Fort Vancouver, and the work of transporting property was temporarily halted. On April 24, the brigade bringing the furs from the interior arrived at the new depot, an addition to his staff which enabled the Doctor to renew his lightering operations. Beginning on April 26, he kept all the boats at his disposal "constantly employed" at this task. Nevertheless it was June 7 before the last boats and the last men left Fort George, and only when they reached Fort Vancouver on June 11 was McLoughlin at last able to say that the shift of the departmental depot had been completed.¹³

A visitor to Fort George in September, 1825, found the place "entirely abandoned" by the Company and in the possession of the Indians, who were rapidly reducing it to a state of "ruin & filth."¹⁴ The tender mercies of the savages, aided by fire, brought the once proud fort nearly to complete ruin during the next several years. But during 1829 McLoughlin sent a party to re-occupy the post, and thereafter it continued to operate on a much reduced scale well into the period of American rule of the Oregon country.

Continued construction at Fort Vancouver

The same factors which had slowed the transfer of property also helped to retard construction work at Fort Vancouver. The necessity of sending reenforcements to Fort George "in a great measure" put a halt to McLoughlin's building operations. Then, on April 11, 1825, the brig William and Ann, dispatched by the Company from London with the annual supplies, anchored in the Columbia opposite Fort George. It evidently was not considered feasible at the time to take so large a vessel -- about 161 tons-- up the river to the new depot. At any rate, the William and Ann discharged her cargo at Fort George, and all the goods had to be freighted upstream in lighters, causing a further drain on the manpower available for construction.

In addition, the vessel required extensive repairs. Since McLoughlin had orders from the Committee and from Simpson to employ the William and Ann during the summer to make the long-projected voyage of exploration on the Northwest Coast, he directed Alexander McKenzie at Fort George to drop all other activities and aid in

¹³ J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 6, 1825, in H. B. S., IV, 5-6.

¹⁴ Scouler, "Journal", in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, VI (September, 1905), 277.

getting the ship ready for sea. A caulker was sent down from Fort Vancouver to aid in the task, and iron work and timber were supplied. Perhaps the blacksmithing was done at the forge which, according to tradition, the old Astorian William Cannon set up under a majestic fir tree during the construction of Fort Vancouver.¹⁵

But the arrival of the William and Ann did forward the building at Fort Vancouver to a certain extent. In her hold the directors had sent out some bricks and tiles which evidently had been requested by some of the earlier chief factors for use at Fort George. The cost was "trifling," the Committee told Simpson, a fact which became only too apparent to McLoughlin. He found the bricks to be "of a very inferior quality," but seemingly they were used for making chimneys at Fort Vancouver. Also, the two carpenters sent out in the vessel for the new depot did not know how to caulk. Being thus of little use for the repair of the William and Ann, they may have been sent up to Fort Vancouver for the summer. They both returned to England in the fall, however.¹⁶

During most of the remainder of 1825, an acute lack of manpower brought the construction work at the new depot practically to a standstill. McLoughlin was required by his orders to send out all of his available men on the various expeditions projected by Governor Simpson and the Committee. The William and Ann sailed for the north on June 2, the brigade for the interior posts left on June 21, and the expedition up the Willamette took its departure on August 20. For some time after this last date, the entire staff of Fort Vancouver consisted of the Doctor, a clerk, two upper-grade servants, and seven "common men."¹⁷

The lack of progress in building is graphically illustrated by the plight of David Douglas, a botanist who arrived in the William and Ann to collect specimens on behalf of the Royal Horticultural Society. Arriving at Fort Vancouver on April 20, he found that there were "no houses yet built," words which would seem to indicate that the "temporary quarters for the people" mentioned by Simpson were nothing more than tents. There being no

¹⁵ S. A. Clarke, Pioneer Days of Oregon History (2 vols., Portland, Ore., 1905), I, 184-185; Clinton A. Snowden, History of Washington; the Rise and Progress of an American State (4 vols., New York, 1904), I, 477.

¹⁶ J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 6, 1825, in H. B. S., IV, 1-5, 21; Governor and Committee to G. Simpson, London, June 2, 1824, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 210.

¹⁷ J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 6, 1825, in H. B. S., IV, 1-11

better accommodations available, Douglas was housed in a tent, which was later replaced by a lodge of deerskin. When this structure became too small to house his growing collections, he was placed in a bark hut near the river bank. On Christmas Eve heavy rains flooded this dwelling until there were fourteen inches of water in it. "As my lodgings were not of the most comfortable sort," he noted in his journal, "Mr. McLoughlin kindly invited me to a part of his house in a half-finished state. Therefore on Christmas Day all my little things were removed to my new dwelling."¹⁸

Even during the next year when he had more men available, McLoughlin did not press the construction of permanent buildings. He knew that it was Simpson's intention to shift the departmental depot to Fraser River as quickly as possible, although he had some doubts concerning the suitability of that location. Furthermore, he believed that should the area south of the Columbia be granted to the United States, the trade of the north side alone would not be sufficient to pay the costs of maintaining any post on the north bank of the river. In order to keep his men from deserting to the opponents when they arrived, he considered it necessary to construct a new depot to the northward before the Americans should get established on the south bank. For these reasons, he told the Committee on September 1, 1826, "I erected only such Buildings at this place as are immediately required." The main effort of his available manpower was directed to the construction of two small vessels to be used in the coastal trade and in moving the headquarters to their new location.¹⁹

It was not until late in 1827 that McLoughlin received the assuring word from Simpson that no arrangement concerning a boundary was likely in the near future, and probably not until the summer of the next year did he learn that on August 6, 1827, the joint-occupation agreement had been indefinitely extended.²⁰ While the matter of the permanent location of the departmental depot had not yet been settled, McLoughlin could now be reasonably certain that the posts on the north bank of the Columbia would not be abandoned altogether.

Perhaps it was this assurance which induced him to go ahead with some additional permanent improvements at Fort Vancouver. It was in 1828, evidently, that a small sawmill was erected on a stream about five or six miles above the fort and almost immediately on the north bank of the Columbia.²¹ It is probable, however,

¹⁸ Douglas, Journal, 106-107, 152

¹⁹ H. B. S., IV, 32.

²⁰ Ibid., lv-lvi.

²¹ Ibid., lxxiii.

that little was done in the way of permanent building within the stockade itself. As shall be seen, before much could have been accomplished along this line, an event occurred which was to change the entire picture of Fort Vancouver's intended destiny.

The only known description of the old Fort Vancouver as it stood at the moment of its greatest development is the very brief one by the American trapper, Jedediah Smith, who spent the winter of 1828-1829 within its hospitable walls. He noted that the establishment housed "mechanics of various kinds, to wit, blacksmiths, gunsmiths, carpenters, coopers, tinner and baker." He observed that the Company had a "good" sawmill on the river above the fort and also a grist mill "worked by hand, but intended to work by water." Since McLoughlin had built two small coasting vessels by the time of Smith's visit, the inference is that there was also a boatyard and perhaps a boatshed down on the bank of the Columbia. In regard to armament, Smith later stated that "twelve pounders were the heaviest cannon which he saw."²²

The Fort Vancouver Farm, 1824-1829; field crops

As has been seen, a portion of the "handsome" upper prairie of some 300 acres on which Fort Vancouver was located had been broken by the plow at about the same time the construction of the post had commenced. Early in the spring of 1825 a large crop of potatoes, two bushels of peas, some beans, and perhaps a few seeds of other garden vegetables were planted. The returns of that first year were heartening, amounting to 900 barrels of potatoes and 9 1/2 bushels of peas.

Late in that same year the fall express from Hudson Bay brought a generous freight of seeds from Governor Simpson. The seed was not of good quality and had been damaged in transit, but it was nonetheless welcome. It was evidently early in 1826 that McLoughlin planted two bushels of spring wheat, an act which is generally held to mark the beginning of wheat growing in the present State of Washington. At the same time he planted two bushels of barley,

²² J. S. Smith, D. W. Jackson, W. L. Sublette to J. W. Eaton, St. Louis, October 29, 1830, in 21 Cong., 2 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 39, pp. 21-23. The matter of the armament at Fort Vancouver during this early period is interesting but not entirely clear. The armament at Fort George in 1818, as listed by a naval officer who presumably knew artillery, was as follows: 2 heavy 18-pound cannon, 6 6-pound cannon, 4 4-pound carronades, 2 6-pound guns whose description cannot be deciphered by the present writer, and 7 swivels. Presumably all those guns remained at Fort George until 1825 and were then carried to Fort Vancouver, but no later visitors report seeing so many guns. Undoubtedly some were used to arm various vessels on the coast, and probably some were sent to posts established after 1825.

one bushel of oats, some Indian corn, and a quart of timothy. Although the potato crop for 1826 was poor, the grains and other vegetables yielded well. After the harvest McLoughlin was able to tell the Committee that it would no longer be necessary to import Indian corn into the Columbia department, and he could predict that after 1828 the wheat grown at Fort Vancouver would supply all the flour needed in the Company's establishments west of the Rockies.

Through the expedient of saving and replanting the greater part of the grain yields, the Doctor was able to make his forecast come true. The wheat crop of 1828 amounted to between 800 and 1000 bushels, the kernels "full and plump, and making good flour." That year fourteen acres of peas, eight acres of oats, and four or five of barley were harvested, in addition to the yield from a "fine" kitchen garden. In November Governor Simpson was able to boast that "we have now a two years stock of Grain on hand, so that we shall not require either Flour or Grain from England in future."²³

The Fort Vancouver Farm, 1824-1829: fruit

When Jedediah Smith reached Fort Vancouver in August, 1828, he found "some small apple trees and grape vines" growing at the establishment. Although he probably was not aware of the fact, he was gazing upon the first cultivated fruits in the Pacific Northwest.²⁴

Knowledge of the exact origin of these trees and vines has perhaps been forever lost in the tangled mass of fact, tradition, and fiction which over the years has grown up concerning them. But new documents are continually being made public, and hope remains that someday it will be possible to quiet for once and for all the doubts surrounding the beginnings of fruit culture at Fort Vancouver.

As early as 1836 a visitor to the Hudson's Bay depot on the Columbia heard and recorded the story of the origin of the apple trees and grape vines at the establishment. According to this

²³ This account of crop raising at Fort Vancouver is based largely upon contemporary letters, to be found in the following sources: H. B. S., IV, 31, 44, 50-51, 66-67; Werk, Fur Trade and Empire, 270, 291, 301; 21 Cong., 2 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 39, p. 22. See also: "Copy of a Document found among the Private Papers of the Late Dr. John McLoughlin," in Transactions of the...Oregon Pioneer Association; for 1880, 46; Scouler, "Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, VI (September, 1905), 174.

²⁴ 21 Cong., 2 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 39, p. 22; J. R. Cardwell, "The First Fruits of the Land. A Brief History of Early Horticulture in Oregon," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, VII (March, 1906), 28.

account, twelve years earlier a gentleman attending a dinner party in London had put the seeds of the grapes and apples which he ate for dessert into his vest pocket. Shortly thereafter he made a voyage to the Columbia, where, discovering the seeds still in his pocket, he left them at Vancouver to be carefully planted.²⁵

Essentially the same story, with some romantic embellishments, was in later years told by descendants of John McLoughlin.²⁶ Undoubtedly it is fundamentally true, and upon its authority some historians have assigned the date 1825, or even 1824, to the beginnings of fruit culture on the Columbia.

Disconcertingly, however, many of these same stories name Lieutenant AEmilius Simpson, superintendent of the Company's shipping on the Pacific Coast, as the man who brought the seeds in his vest pocket. And here again, contemporary evidence seems to substantiate the legend. While on a visit to the Hawaiian Islands, seemingly in 1828 or very early in 1829, Simpson told a missionary about the agricultural possibilities of the Oregon country and the activities at Fort Vancouver. "He says," related the missionary in a letter of February, 1829, "he has himself planted the grape and the apple at that place."²⁷ But Simpson did not leave England until early in 1826 and did not reach Vancouver, after an overland journey from York Factory, until November 2 of that year. Thus, if he did bring the original apple and grape seeds with him, they probably were not planted before the spring of 1827.²⁸

The Fort Vancouver Farm, 1824-1829: livestock

According to Governor Simpson, the livestock at Fort George at the time of its abandonment numbered thirty-one head of cattle and seventeen hogs, the heritage of the small herds built up by the Astorians and Nor'Westers, chiefly through imports from California and the Hawaiian Islands. McLoughlin himself stated in 1833 that there were only seventeen cows in 1824. These animals, or most of them, were transferred to Fort Vancouver early in 1825. McLoughlin later asserted that the original herd of cattle at the new depot

25. Narcissa Whitman, "A Journey Across the Plains in 1836. Journal of Mrs. Marcus Whitman," in Transactions of the...Oregon Pioneer Association for 1891, 63.

26 See Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast, II, 441.

27 H. Bingham to J. Everts, February 16, 1829, in George Verne Blue, "Green's Missionary Report on Oregon, 1829," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXX (September, 1929), 264-265.

28 For a short biography of Lieut. Simpson, see H. B. S., III, 454-455.

totalled only twenty-seven head, large and small. In addition, a sizeable herd of horses was quickly built up at Vancouver, either through transfer from other posts or through purchases from the Indians. A visitor in May, 1825, noted that 120 horses, in addition to the cattle, were grazing on the large plain between the fort and the river.

In order to increase the size of his herds as rapidly as possible, McLoughlin determined that no cattle should be killed, except an occasional bull to supply rennet for cheese-making. This policy received hearty support from Governor Simpson and was rigidly adhered to, despite occasional grumblings from the employees and the sometimes vehement protests of visiting seamen, until 1836, when the first cow was killed for food.

Fort Vancouver quickly proved to be an ideal location for the raising of cattle. Under McLoughlin's wise conservation program, the herds increased rapidly. In March, 1829, Governor Simpson could report that the stock of cattle at Vancouver was 153 head, "independent of calves."

The hogs, on the other hand, got off to a slow start. Four of them died the first year from eating poisonous plants, and wolves devoured several more during the next season. But after 1826 the rate of increase gave no grounds for complaint. By the spring of 1829 there were some 200 hogs at Vancouver, and in addition a substantial number had been slaughtered for consumption as salt pork or to provide fresh meat for the table.

Besides cattle, horses, and hogs, there were about fifty goats at the depot by March, 1829; and a visitor who was at the fort during the winter of 1828-1829 noticed "the usual domestic fowls." Although still dependent to some extent upon imports of salted meat, the Columbia Department by the spring of 1829 was well on its way to becoming the self-sustaining unit which Governor Simpson had planned.²⁹

Western headquarters and depot

When he returned to York Factory from the Columbia in the summer of 1825, Governor Simpson was still of the opinion that New Caledonia should be outfitted from the West Coast rather than Norway House, but he had changed his mind concerning the immediate use of Fraser River as the route of supply. Perhaps he realized that the depot planned for the mouth of the Fraser could not be constructed during the next year; or, more likely, he had encountered

²⁹ See sources cited in note 23 above; also Hagen, Report, appendix, 48; J. McLoughlin to [J. McLeod?], Fort Vancouver, March 1, 1833, in Washington Historical Quarterly, II (January, 1908) 167-168.

someone who had experienced the turbulence of the middle Fraser and had convinced him that it might at least be well to explore the route further before entrusting the precious outfits and returns to its rushing waters. At any rate, when the Council for the Northern Department met at York Factory in July, it directed the resident chief factor of New Caledonia to take the fur returns of his district to Fort Vancouver in the spring of 1826 and to receive there his supplies for the ensuing season.

These instructions were obeyed, the route used being that opened by the Northwesters in 1813. The Fraser was navigated as far as Fort Alexandria, from whence pack horses carried the goods to Kamloops and on to Fort Okanagan. From the latter place, boats were employed to descend the Columbia to Fort Vancouver.

The inauguration of the new system of supply was not too happy. A loss of horses at Alexandria in 1826 made it impossible to ship all the furs to Fort Vancouver, and some returns continued to be sent to York Factory. Because the Columbia could not supply the buffalo and other large skins necessary for fur-trading operations, leather was still sent annually to New Caledonia from east of the Rockies. The new route, however, was generally satisfactory and was used until the Oregon Treaty of 1846 made it necessary to find another north of the forty-ninth parallel in order to avoid American tariffs.³⁰

In February, 1826, the Governor and Committee told Simpson that they approved his plan of attaching New Caledonia to the Columbia Department, but Simpson himself appears to have approached the actual amalgamation of the two districts into a single administrative unit with some degree of caution.³¹ The action of the Council in 1825 did, in effect, unite the areas for the purposes of supply and transportation, but there is no clear indication in the minutes that any closer union was intended. In the minutes of the Council of 1826 the two districts continue to be treated as separate units, and the chief factor of New Caledonia was specifically authorized "to make the requisite appointments of Officers and Servants, to the different Posts and stations as he may see fit." The only indication of a trend toward unity, if it may be called such, is a provision requiring the New Caledonia accounts to be closed and sent to York Factory "in the same manner and on the same principle as those from the Columbia District."³²

³⁰ H. B. S., III, lxiv, 106, 115-116; H. B. S., IV, lfv; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, p. 76, note 133.

³¹ Governor and Committee to G. Simpson, February 23, 1826, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 266.

³² H. B. S., III, 145.

Not until 1827 do the minutes of the Council indicate that another step in the merger had been taken. In the record of the proceedings for that year there is definite mention of "the New Caledonia section of the Columbia Deptmt.," and the arrangements for the two districts clearly reveal a tendency to consider all the territory west of the Rockies as a single unit. Most important was the proviso that "the annual Accounts of the Columbia Department including the section of New Caledonia be made up in one complete set and not as heretofore in two distinct sets and that they be forwarded under the charge of the Columbia Accountant p. Express Canoe sufficiently early to be at Edmonton on or before the 10 May."³⁵ From this date New Caledonia and the Columbia Department were firmly merged for purposes of finance.

As regards the actual administration of trading operations and the supervision of personnel, however, the matter of the degree of unification obtained is not so clear. There was obviously an intent to make New Caledonia a subordinate district of the larger Columbia Department. The term "New Caledonia section of the Columbia Department" was soon abandoned, but New Caledonia appointments generally continued to be listed by the Council under the heading "Columbia Continued -- New Caledonia."³⁴ Not until 1840 did the minutes of the Council specifically state that New Caledonia was "comprehended" within the Columbia Department. Two years later the extent of the larger administrative unit was made crystal clear by the statement that the Columbia Department was "understood to comprehend the Columbia proper, the N. W. Coast, New Caledonia, Sandwich Islands, and the Marine Department."³⁵

As early as 1829, Simpson described McLoughlin as the "head factor and chief resident-Manager of the Hudson's Bay Company on the western coast of the continent."³⁶ Undoubtedly such was the case in theory. In actual practice, however, McLoughlin showed very little interest in the affairs of New Caledonia, and the management of that district was left to its resident chief factor. The practical autonomy of New Caledonia was recognized by the Council of the Northern Department, which generally specifically provided that the chief factor there was to have discretion to assign posts to the personnel within his own jurisdiction.

³³ H. B. S., III, 187.

³⁴ Ibid., passim; Oliver, The Canadian North-West, I, 637-688; II, 689-871.

³⁵ Oliver, The Canadian North-West, II, 809, 846.

³⁶ G. Simpson to the Manager, Russian American Company, March 20, 1829, as quoted in H. B. S., IV, liv.

Much is said in histories of the Hudson's Bay Company about the four great departments into which its territories in North America were divided — the Northern, the Southern, the Montreal, and the Columbia. But it should be borne in mind that the Columbia Department was by no means on an equal footing with the Northern Department. All during the period of McLoughlin's chief factorship, the affairs of the Columbia were under the control of Governor Simpson and the Council for the Northern Department. Indeed, from the minutes of the Council, one gains the impression that for all practical purposes the Columbia and New Caledonia were treated as separate districts and on a par with the regular fur-trading districts east of the mountains. Merely because of his great distance from the seat of government and because of the multifarious nature of the operations under his charge was the chief factor on the Columbia permitted a somewhat greater discretion than was granted to other district managers.

As long as McLoughlin remained the sole chief manager of the Columbia Department, therefore, his jurisdiction for the purposes of operations and personnel management consisted of the Columbia district proper and, as they were developed, the Northwest Coast, the coastal shipping, and the outposts in California and Hawaii. And even over this territory he generally merely carried out the policies laid down by Governor Simpson, who, in turn, received his instructions from the Committee in London. These facts must be considered when speaking of Fort Vancouver as the headquarters for all the operations of the Hudson's Bay Company west of the Rocky Mountains.

The matter of the permanent location of the Company's main western depot was likewise slow in being settled. The doubts Simpson had shown at the Council meeting of 1825 concerning the suitability of the Fraser as a route of supply were evidently strengthened during the remainder of that year. "It is not my opinion that it affords a communication by which the interior Country can be supplied from the Coast, or that it can be depended on as an outlet for the returns of the interior," he told a representative of the British government in January, 1826; and at the same time he stated that the free navigation of the Columbia, "the only navigable River to the Interior from the Coast, we are acquainted with," was essential for the conduct of the Company's business west of the mountains.³⁷

37

G. Simpson to H. U. Addington, London, January 5, 1826, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 264-266. It should be borne in mind that in this letter Simpson was giving the government material to be used in the boundary negotiations, and he probably magnified the case for the Columbia and against the Fraser to suit the requirements of the occasion.

The London directors also had some doubts on the subject. In February, 1826, they directed Simpson to establish the projected post on Fraser River "next season if possible," and went on to say that the "central situation" of the new establishment would probably prove it "to be the proper place for the principle depot." But Simpson was told not to move the depot to the Fraser "until we have passed at least one year there and acquired a knowledge of the character and disposition of the Natives and ascertained whether the navigation of the River is favorable to the Plan of making it the principal communication with the Interior."³⁸

McLoughlin, meanwhile, had been investigating the Fraser River. Late in 1826 and early in 1827 he reported to his superiors that the stream was very dangerous and almost entirely unnavigable in certain sections.³⁹ Nevertheless, Simpson during this same period swung back to his earlier opinion concerning the northern waterway. In July, 1827, he told McLoughlin that the New Caledonia returns and supplies should be transported by way of Fraser River if the navigation of that stream should be practicable "of which from the various reports that have reached us there can be no doubt." Within a few years, he predicted, the mouth of the Fraser would undoubtedly "become our principal Depot for the country west of the Mountains."⁴⁰ While the pros and cons were thus being debated, the depot continued to rest uneasily at Fort Vancouver. Not until the autumn of 1828 was the idea of moving it to the Fraser definitely abandoned.

Development of the Columbia Department, 1825-1829

This uncertainty concerning the location of the depot and the possibility that the country south of the Columbia might pass at any time to the United States made it difficult for McLoughlin to carry out any long-range program during the first years of his incumbency at Fort Vancouver. Only after the renewal of the joint-occupation agreement in 1827 was the way ahead of him somewhat clear. The London Committee made it plain that a still more aggressive policy was to be carried out on the West Coast as a result of the Convention. "It becomes an important object to acquire as ample an occupation of the Country and Trade as possible, on the South as well as on the North side of the Columbia River," Simpson was told. Any American traders appearing in the area were to be vigorously opposed; they were to be undersold until they became discouraged with the trade.⁴¹ It may be assumed that Simpson lost no time in passing these orders on to McLoughlin.

³⁸ Governor and Committee to G. Simpson, London, January 16, 1826, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 267.

³⁹ H. B. S., IV, lix.

⁴⁰ H. B. S., III, lxxv-lxxvi; H. B. S., IV, lviii.

⁴¹ Governor and Committee to G. Simpson, London, January 16, 1828, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 294-295.

The new policy is revealed in the matter of the transfer of the activities of Spokane House to the new Fort Colville. The shift had finally been made in 1826, but due to the boundary question, McLoughlin had not rushed matters and had been dilatory about making substantial improvements. After an assurance from Simpson in 1827 that there was no possibility of the line being settled for many years, however, the buildings at Colville were pushed ahead more rapidly. As at Vancouver, extensive farming and stock-raising activities were carried on, and with the later introduction of a flour mill and bake shop, as well as the usual blacksmith and carpenter shops, Colville became a center of supply for the upper Columbia and New Caledonia areas.⁴²

The Snake brigades continued to extend their operations. Peter Skene Ogden's expedition of 1824-1825 ran into some difficulties. Twenty-three of Ogden's men deserted to an American party encountered on Bear River, and some of the deserters took their furs, traps, and horses with them. Furthermore, the leader of the American party told Ogden to leave the country, saying the territory belonged to the United States. Despite these and other troubles, Ogden returned to Fort Nez Percés in November, 1825, with the "very handsome" returns of 3,188 made beaver. Partly to reap more such profits and partly to hurl the defy at the Americans who had ordered the Company out of grounds open to the citizens of both nations, McLoughlin sent Ogden out again almost immediately. In order to reduce desertions, the Doctor decided to lower the prices on goods sold to the freemen and to raise the prices paid for furs. These changes, effective in the summer of 1826 did much to improve the morale of the men. The reforms were later approved by both Simpson and the Committee, and they were of some importance since, as Dr. W. Kay Lamb has pointed out, they marked the first occasion upon which McLoughlin "personally intervened decisively in the affairs of the Columbia District."⁴³

In 1828 and 1829 Ogden pushed the limits of his operations as far as the Great Salt Lake, the Humboldt River, and Pit River in northern California; and during 1829 and 1830 his party ranged through the San Joaquin Valley. By 1831 a number of new trapping areas had been discovered, and McLoughlin, somewhat too optimistically as it turned out, was able to write that one of the chief objects of the Snake expeditions had been accomplished. "I broke up the American party in the Snake Country," he boasted, "and I did this simply by underselling them and showing them we could afford to sell the trappers at European servants' prices."⁴⁴

⁴² H. B. S., IV, lvi; Winther, The Great Northwest, 62.

⁴³ H. B. S., IV, lxxv; see also H. B. S., III, lxvi-lxviii.

⁴⁴ H. B. S., III, lxix.

Next to the Snake brigades, the most important trapping expeditions under McLoughlin's jurisdiction were the "Southern" parties. Governor Simpson designated Finan McDonald, a clerk, to lead the first of these revitalized brigades to the Umpqua territory and left instructions that the hunt was to be pushed to the "Banks of the Rio Colorado." Delayed by the Indian troubles at Fort George in the spring of 1825, however, McDonald got a late start. Crossing southeastward to the Klamath country, his expedition was not a success, and he was forced to finish out the season in company with Ogden's Snake country brigade. In 1826 the command of the Umpqua expedition was turned over to Chief Trader Alexander Roderick McLeod. During the summer of 1826 and the winters of 1826-1827 and 1827-1828, he trapped to the southward, reaching the Klamath in 1827, but achieved no measure of success as far as returns were concerned. After recovering the furs lost by Jedediah Smith's company on the Umpqua during the fall of 1828, McLeod crossed the mountains to the Sacramento Valley during the next year. But on the return journey his company were caught in a severe storm and were forced to cache their furs. These "Southern" parties were outfitted directly from Fort Vancouver and while they never produced large profits, "they served the important strategic purpose of keeping the country occupied, and frequently gave employment to men who would otherwise have been relatively idle."⁴⁵

In addition to the Snake and Umpqua brigades, there were several other trading and trapping parties which operated with some regularity in the Columbia Department. Small expeditions were sent out at intervals, for instance, to carry the trade to the Flathead, Kootenay, Cayuse, and Blackfeet Indians.⁴⁶

The coastal trade

McLoughlin did his best to carry out the wishes of the Committee and Governor Simpson concerning the extension of the trade along the coast, but during the first five or six years of his rule on the Columbia he was able to accomplish relatively little in this direction. As instructed from London, he sent the supply vessel William and Ann northward during the late summer of 1825, but due largely to the hesitancy and timidity of the ship's captain, the cruise was a failure. Only about four hundred furs were procured, and little knowledge of the shore line was gained. But from the number of American vessels reported by the William and Ann to have been on the coast, McLoughlin gained the impression that the trade was definitely worth competing for, and he also learned that the Nass River area was a rich trading center which should be developed in the future.

⁴⁵ H. B. S., IV, lxxviii-lxix; see also H. B. S., III, 448-450; and Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 88-89.

⁴⁶ H. B. S., IV, lxxviii-lxix; Winther, The Great Northwest, 70-71.

The experiences of the cruise of the William and Ann revealed a weakness in the administrative organization of the Columbia Department; McLoughlin found that he had no authority to give direct orders to the captain of the vessel. When Governor Simpson heard of this difficulty, he recommended that in the future captains of ships visiting the Columbia or operating on the coast should be subject to control by the resident chief factor. In the fall of 1826 Lieutenant AEmilius Simpson arrived at Fort Vancouver to take charge of a vessel being sent from England for use in the coastal trade. He was definitely subordinate to McLoughlin. Lieutenant Simpson's arrival marked the actual beginning of the "Marine Department," whose affairs were later to make up such a substantial proportion of the business which centered at Fort Vancouver, although the formal establishment of this division of McLoughlin's district was not made until 1829.

The slow progress made in the coasting trade after 1825 was due principally to the lack of supplies, ships, and men. Because of the necessity of underselling the American opposition, the maritime trade required a large stock of goods, and it was difficult to estimate needs ahead of time. McLoughlin therefore asked the Committee to send him a year's outfit in advance. Not until 1828 did the directors make any attempt to comply with this request, and then the loss of the William and Ann with most of her cargo at the mouth of the Columbia in 1829 largely nullified the effort. It was some time before McLoughlin possessed an adequate supply of trade goods, and in the meantime he often had to find other occupation for such shipping and manpower as he did have available for the coasting business.

In compliance with plans laid down by Governor Simpson, the Doctor soon began the construction of two small wooden vessels at Fort Vancouver. The first, a sloop of thirty tons, was launched on August 17, 1827. Named the Broughton in honor of the first European known to have ascended the Columbia as far as the site of Fort Vancouver, she proved too small for ocean service, but was useful on the river and as a tender for the supply ships. The second craft turned out from the Fort Vancouver shipyard was the Vancouver, a vessel of about sixty tons. Her launching was long delayed due to a lack of iron work and seasoned timber. It appears to have been 1828 before she was ready for service, and it was an even longer time before she was equipped for duty at sea. The difficulties encountered by McLoughlin in constructing these vessels quite discouraged him with the prospects for successful shipbuilding on the Columbia. Nevertheless, the yard at Vancouver continued to be used intermittently, and as late as 1846 a trim little craft of seventy-four tons and measuring seventy-six feet ^{over} all, slid down the ways into the broad stream before the fort.

The dearth of shipping was somewhat relieved in the spring of 1827 by the arrival of the seventy-ton schooner Cadboro, sent by the Committee from London to remain permanently on the coast. But the necessity of using the Cadboro for the founding of Fort Langley on Fraser River, and the lack of an advance supply of trade goods prevented the new vessel from effectively fulfilling her proper functions in the maritime fur trade. McLoughlin believed the Cadboro to be too small and too weakly armed for coastal operations. He desired vessels of about two hundred tons in order to command the respect of the natives.

The Committee in London had arrived at a similar estimate of the situation. In 1828 they inaugurated a program under which three sizeable vessels -- of about two hundred tons each -- would be employed in the Columbia trade. Two of the ships would be occupied making the annual voyages from and to London, while the third would operate on the coast. But here again, it was several years before McLoughlin derived much benefit from the arrangement. The loss of the William and Ann in 1829 and the wreck of the Isabella at the same spot during the next year greatly hampered the Hudson's Bay Company in meeting American competition on the Northwest Coast.

Governor Simpson's drastic cuts in personnel were in some degree responsible for McLoughlin's failure to push the coasting operations. He did not have enough men to meet the Americans in the interior and on the Pacific at the same time. Simpson later realized his mistake and sent reinforcements overland. Nevertheless, so weak was the complement of the Department that in order to compete with two American vessels which appeared in the Columbia in 1829, he was forced to reduce the staff at the newly-established Fort Langley. He had no men available for any further operations up the coast.⁴⁸

Founding of Fort Langley, 1827

Desertions and other personnel problems made it impossible for McLoughlin to carry out Governor Simpson's hope of founding a post at the mouth of Fraser River during 1826. But in July of that year Simpson ordered the Doctor to establish the fort during the next summer. The Cadboro, due at Vancouver from London, was to be used for the purpose, and additional men were sent over the mountains to help with the task.⁴⁹

In June, 1827, accordingly, McLoughlin dispatched the Cadboro northward with the supplies and equipment for the construction and outfitting of the new post. A few days later James McMillan, now

⁴⁸ This sketch of the coastal trade is based almost entirely upon H. B. S., III, lxix-lxxi; H. B. S., IV, lxix-lxxiv, 29, 61-62.

⁴⁹ H. B. S., III, lxix.

a chief factor, started by way of Cowlitz River with the personnel of the establishment. After firmly establishing a route of communication overland to Puget Sound, McMillan boarded the Cadboro, and the combined parties sailed to Fraser River. There, on the left bank of the stream about twenty-eight miles above its mouth, they founded Fort Langley. Thus was established the first of the posts on the Northwest Coast, posts which were eventually to extend the rule of the Columbia Department far up into Russian Alaska.⁵⁰

Development of Industries at Fort Vancouver,
1825-1829

McLoughlin was anxious to have his department show a profit, and he overlooked no possible sources of revenue. During his first season he shipped to London three swan skins and some isinglass "to see what they would sell for and to know if worth collecting."⁵¹

The opportunity to make money by shipping the products of the Columbia directly to other ports in the Pacific was not overlooked. On February 23, 1826, the Governor and Committee suggested to Simpson that the small vessel to be fitted out for the coastal trade might visit the Russian settlements in Alaska "in order to open a communication and make further inquiries."⁵² But McLoughlin's thoughts were turned in another direction. As early as September, 1826, he informed the directors that he believed salted salmon could be sold in California. He requested that eight or ten barrels of salt be sent from London for the putting up of forty or fifty barrels of salmon, which could be sent to Monterey as an experiment. A thousand barrels a year could be produced on the Columbia alone, McLoughlin said, and he understood that salmon were even more abundant on Fraser River. Besides, he added prophetically, it was "certain if the Americans come they will attempt something in this way."⁵³

In the fall of 1827 the Doctor found that he had no goods with which to outfit the Cadboro for further trading on the coast,

⁵⁰ Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast, II, 476-483; H. B. S., IV, 43-44, 53; Robie L. Reid, "Early Days at Old Fort Langley," in British Columbia Historical Quarterly, I (April, 1937).

⁵¹ J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 6, 1825, in H. B. S., IV, 16.

⁵² Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 267.

⁵³ J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, September 1, 1826, in H. B. S., IV, 37.

and rather than have her lie idle, he sent her southward to California. Her chief errand was to get salt and other provisions, but her captain was instructed to investigate the possibility of developing a market for salmon and lumber. Lieutenant Simpson returned with the welcome intelligence that a 250-pound barrel of salmon would bring \$30 in Monterey, while planks would find a ready sale at \$40 to \$50 a thousand feet.⁵⁴

Heartened by this report, McLoughlin put up what salmon he could when salt and men were available. At Fort Langley a large catch was made the first year of the establishment's existence, and the industry developed there on a larger scale and more rapidly than at Vancouver. Nearly 300 barrels were prepared for export at Fort Langley in 1830. McLoughlin shipped to California and the Hawaiian Islands the surplus not needed to feed the Company's employees in the western department, but the industry never produced the substantial profits of which the Doctor had dreamed.⁵⁵

The lumber business ran a somewhat similar course. As has been seen, McLoughlin had a small mill in operation near Fort Vancouver in 1828. When Governor Simpson visited the Columbia during the winter of 1828-1829, he came to share the Doctor's view that the lumbering operations would produce a substantial revenue. In fact, he went so far as to predict that the sawmills might prove as profitable as the entire coastal fur trade. Even the single saw then in operation, he observed, could turn out 300,000 feet of boards a year, and the annual expenses of running the mill was but \$150. At sixty dollars a thousand feet, he envisioned the realization of "handsome profits," and even at forty dollars, he believed the trade "worthy of our attention." With McLoughlin he visited the falls of the Willamette River and personally selected the site for another mill. There, he said, enough saws could be employed "to load the British Navy." McLoughlin was directed to prepare the location to receive machinery to be sent from England. By 1832 a mill race had been blasted out and timbers squared for the mill structure. The Doctor later changed his mind, however, and he erected the new mill on the Columbia above Fort Vancouver.⁵⁶

It was in 1829, evidently, that McLoughlin shipped his first load of lumber to the Hawaiian Islands. Substantial quantities continued to be shipped for many years, but the market was never as good as had been anticipated.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ H. B. S., IV, Lxxiii, 54.

⁵⁵ Ibid., xciii; Winther, The Great Northwest, 83-84.

⁵⁶ H. B. S., IV, xcii; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 298.

⁵⁷ H. B. S., IV, xciii, 77.

Another industry which started early at Fort Vancouver was brewing. From two bushels of barley planted in 1826, McLoughlin received a yield of twenty-seven bushels. These results were so gratifying that the Doctor decided to use only half of the crop for seed.⁵⁸ A part or all of the remainder was evidently devoted to an experiment in beer making. A missionary who met Lieutenant Simpson in the Hawaiian Islands wrote in 1829 that the Company soon expected to be able to export beer in small quantities from the Columbia.⁵⁹ The available records do not reveal the extent to which this hope was realized, but undoubtedly McLoughlin's experiment marked the beginning of the brewing industry in the Pacific Northwest.

Visitors to Fort Vancouver, 1825-1829

Long before its buildings were completed, Fort Vancouver began to play its rôle of haven and headquarters for visitors to the Oregon country. The first of the long line of travelers -- as distinguished from Company employees -- to enjoy McLoughlin's hospitality was David Douglas, a botanist sent by the Royal Horticultural Society of London to collect plants in Northwest America. Arriving at the mouth of the Columbia in the Hudson's Bay Company vessel William and Ann, in April, 1825, he soon ascended the river to Fort Vancouver, which became his headquarters for the next two years. From the depot he ranged over most of the Columbia region, sometimes with Company employees, sometimes with an Indian guide, but oftentimes with only his dog for company.

Although not the first botanist to visit the Northwest, he was the first to make the region the subject of a specialized and systematic study. Among the many hundreds of new species he discovered was the "most beautiful and immensely large tree," the sugar pine. His many specimens were classified and prepared for shipment at Fort Vancouver. Not the least of his contributions to human knowledge and enjoyment were the seeds he sent back to England. As a result of his work, clarksia, several species of pentstemons, lupines, and other flowers were soon blooming in English gardens. The magnificent Douglas fir bears his name and commemorates the visit of Fort Vancouver's first guest.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ J. McLoughlin to G. Simpson, Fort Vancouver, March 20, 1827, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 291.

⁵⁹ H. Bingham to J. Everts, February 16, 1829, in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXX, 264-265.

⁶⁰ A. G. Harvey, "David Douglas in British Columbia," in British Columbia Historical Quarterly, IV (October, 1940), 221-243. Accompanying Douglas to the Columbia in the William and Ann was Dr. John Scouler, surgeon of the vessel. He too was a botanist, but his chief interest was the fauna of the region. Before the ship sailed for England in the fall, Scouler made two visits to Fort Vancouver, and upon his final departure he recorded in his journal his obligation to "every individual connected with the establishment" for the kind and polite reception he had received. Since he was on the Company's payroll, however, he can scarcely be described as a visitor.

In the spring of 1827 Douglas left with the Company's annual express to return to England by way of Hudson Bay. At the time of his departure he paid tribute to the kindness of the officers and servants at Fort Vancouver. "I cannot forbear expressing my sincere thanks," he wrote in his diary, "for the assistance, Hospitality, and strict attention to my comfort which I uniformly enjoyed during my stay with them — in a particular manner to Mr. McLoughlin."⁶¹ And thus began the long line of testimonials to the generous welcome accorded all properly accredited travelers at the headquarters of the Columbia Department.

The next visitor to Fort Vancouver arrived entirely unheralded and without credentials. At about eight o'clock on the night of August 8, 1828, the inhabitants of the post were astounded to find at their gate a white man, badly wounded and almost destitute of clothing. He announced himself as Arthur Black and believed himself to be the only survivor of a party of American trappers under the command of Jedediah Smith who, while traveling from California up the coast on their way to the Great Salt Lake, had been attacked by Indians on the Umpqua River. Two days later Smith and two other men reached Fort Vancouver, and subsequent investigation revealed that these four men were all that remained alive of Smith's original nineteen.

McLoughlin took the men in and afforded them all the help and hospitality the post could afford. A southern brigade under Chief Trader McLeod was preparing at the time to leave for the general region in which the massacre had occurred, and McLoughlin speeded its departure, instructing McLeod to determine the cause of the attack and to punish the Indians if it should prove "expedient" and "practicable" to do so. McLeod was also to endeavor to recover Smith's property. Finding that Smith's men had in a large measure provoked the Indians to the murders, McLeod did not take any action against them; but other Indians, acting under orders of the Hudson's Bay Company to recover Smith's property, did exact some measure of vengeance. Eventually most of the horses, furs, and trade goods belonging to the Americans were gathered in by the Company, and Governor Simpson later paid Smith a fair price for them. No charge was made for the services rendered in recovering the property nor for the food, lodging, and clothing received by the survivors.

In the spring of 1829 Smith and one of his men set out overland for the American trapping rendezvous in the Great Basin. Upon his return to St. Louis in 1830 he and his partners wrote a letter to the United States Secretary of War, warning the Government of the extensive operations of the Hudson's Bay Company and the "permanent" nature of the firm's improvements in the Oregon country. But even

⁶¹ Douglas, Journal, 242. For a biography of Douglas, with an extensive account of his work in the Northwest, see Athelstan George Harvey, Plant Explorer. Douglas of the Firs: A Biography of David Douglas, Botanist (Cambridge, Mass., 1947)

in this letter Smith acknowledged that he had been treated with the greatest of kindness and fairness by Governor Simpson and other representatives of the Company on the Columbia.⁶²

Governor Simpson's second visit, 1828-1829

Not until 1828 was Governor Simpson able to make his long planned return visit to the Columbia. Leaving York Factory in July of that year, he crossed the continent by way of Peace River and New Caledonia. After a side trip to Kamloops, he made an exciting and perilous descent of Fraser River to Fort Langley, and from thence he traveled by way of Puget Sound and Cowlitz River to Fort Vancouver, where he arrived on October 25, 1828.⁶³

While the coastal trade had not been pushed as he had hoped, and although the profits of the Columbia Department were not great, Simpson was highly pleased with the progress McLoughlin had made during his absence, particularly at Fort Vancouver. On every hand he found evidence of the Doctor's "activity and perseverance." Although the Indian trade at the post was small, the principal object for which it had been founded, "that of rendering ourselves independent of foreign aid in regard to the means of Subsistence," had been achieved. "In short," Simpson wrote to the Governor and Committee on March 1, 1829, "never did a change of System and of management produce such obvious advantages in any part of the Indian Country as those which the present State of this establishment in particular, and of the COLUMBIA department as a whole at this moment exhibits."⁶⁴

"Your whole administration," he told McLoughlin, "is marked by its close adherence to the spirit of the Gov^t and Committees wishes and intentions, and is conspicuous for a talent in planning and for activity & perseverance in execution which reflect the

⁶² J. S. Smith, D. E. Jackson, W. L. Sublette to J. H. Eaton, St. Louis, October 29, 1830, in 21 Cong., 2 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 39, pp 21-23. For the story of Jedediah Smith and his stay at Fort Vancouver, see H. B. S., IV, 68-70, and the authorities cited therein. The best account of the incident is in Francis A. Wiley, Jedediah Smith in the West (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1941).

⁶³ For a journal of this journey see Archibald McDonald, Peace River, A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific by the Late Sir George Simpson...in 1828. Journal of the Late Chief Factor, Archibald McDonald... (Ottawa, 1872).

⁶⁴ Hagen, Report, appendix, 48-49; see also H. B. S., IV, lxxv; and Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 299-301.

highest credit on your judgement and habits of business."⁶⁵

With his usual industry, Governor Simpson spent the winter investigating every phase of the trade on the Pacific Coast. Before starting homeward in March, 1829, he gave McLoughlin a detailed set of instructions for the conduct of the business in the immediate future. Among other measures, a new post was to be established up the coast at Nass during 1830. The timber trade was to be pushed vigorously. McLoughlin was directed to build two vessels of 200 tons each for use on the coast and for the transportation of lumber to market. The mill at Vancouver was to be kept constantly busy and was to be moved as soon as possible to the falls of the Willamette, where furs were to be traded, salmon caught, and cattle herded. Farming operations at Fort Vancouver were termed "of vital importance to the whole business of this side the Continent," and were to be expanded "until our Fields yield 8000 Bushels of Grain p Annum, our Stock of Cattle amounts to 600 head and our Piggery enables us to cure 10,000 lb of Pork p^r Annum." The number of men to be permanently attached to Fort Vancouver was fixed at thirty-two, while the total of officers and men for the department as a whole was fixed at 224.⁶⁶

The Governor also made an attempt to open trade with the Russians in Alaska. On March 21, 1829, he wrote to the Governor of the Russian American Company offering to sell manufactured goods brought from England and as much as five thousand bushels of grain and ten thousand pounds of salt pork and beef per year from Fort Vancouver. This proposal was delivered at New Archangel by Lieutenant Simpson during the course of the year and was favorably received by the Russian governor, but the Company in St. Petersburg refused to approve it.⁶⁷

Fort Vancouver becomes the permanent departmental depot

As a result of his canoe voyage down Fraser River in the fall of 1828, Governor Simpson came to realize for once and for all that his dream of supplying the interior posts by that stream was entirely impracticable. In a letter to the Governor and Committee in March, 1829, he freely confessed the error of his previous conceptions. "I should consider the passage down, to be certain Death, in nine attempts out of Ten," he wrote. "I shall therefore no longer talk of it as a navigable stream, altho' for years past I had flattered myself with the idea, that the loss of the Columbia would in reality be of very little consequence to the Honble. Comp. interests on this side of the Continent."⁶⁸

⁶⁵ G. Simpson to J. McLoughlin, Fort Vancouver, March 15, 1829, in Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 308.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 308-310.

⁶⁷ H.B.S., III, lxxi; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 311-312, 313-317

⁶⁸ H.B.S., IV, lix.

The Convention of 1827 had made it clear that the trade in the area south of the Columbia would not be cut off for a number of years. Since the Columbia would thus continue to occupy a fairly central position in the Company's sphere of operations in the West, and since Simpson now acknowledged it to be the most practicable route for the supply of the interior, it was plain that the most suitable location for the departmental depot was near the mouth of this stream. During Simpson's visit, it was determined to continue the depot at Fort Vancouver on a more or less permanent basis.

Possibly this decision was facilitated by the knowledge that the Columbia was navigable by the annual supply ships at least as far as Fort Vancouver. For a year or two after the founding of the post this point appears to have been somewhat in doubt. In the spring of 1825 the William and Ann had discharged her cargo at Fort George without making any attempt to ascend the river. In the fall of that year it had required McLoughlin's specific order to induce the captain of the vessel to come upstream for loading. "My object in wishing him to come as high up the River as possible was to facilitate putting the Cargo on Board and to get all the Information we could regarding the Navigation of the River," McLoughlin reported to the directors.⁶⁹

How far the William and Ann came upstream is not clear, but probably she did not come all the way to Vancouver, since the next annual supply ship went only as far as a spot known as "Douglass's Reach." It evidently was not until the William and Ann's second visit, in 1827, that an ocean going vessel anchored in front of Fort Vancouver.⁷⁰ From that time until 1845 the annual supply ships came directly from England to Fort Vancouver.

Fort Vancouver is moved to new location

The location of Fort Vancouver on the bluff overlooking the river plain was not entirely suited to the requirements of a permanent and extensive supply depot. Every article received for storage and every article shipped out to other posts or to England had to be transported by "a high and rugged road" over the mile which separated the fort from the Columbia. There were no springs on the bluff, nor could water be found by wells of practicable depth. In 1885, Dr. William McKay, who had lived at the old fort as a very young child, claimed to remember that "old La Pierre" was kept employed hauling water to the stockade from the Columbia. La Pierre made two trips a day with a wagon pulled by Lion and Brandy, two huge oxen. His load for each

⁶⁹ J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 6, 1825, in H.B.S., IV, 21.

⁷⁰ H.B.S., IV, 35-36, 39.

trip was only two puncheons or casks.⁷¹ Such an arrangement might have satisfied the needs of a small Indian trading post, but it could not supply the water necessary for a main depot with a large premanent staff.⁷²

In addition, some of the reasons for establishing the post on the bluff in the first place were no longer of great importance in 1829. The neighboring Indians had proved to be generally peaceable, and it was no longer felt necessary to maintain a commanding site purely for defensive purposes. Also, experience had shown that not all of the lower plain was subject to flooding as had previously been believed. There were locations closer ⁷³ to the river which appeared to escape even the highest freshets.

For these reasons, therefore, it was decided to shift the post to a site nearer the river. A location was chosen on a high spot on the Fort Plain, about a mile west of the old fort and about four hundred yards from the north bank of the Columbia. A short distance west of the new site a pond led back from the river for about two hundred yards, making a convenient place to water stock and to land small boats.

Chief drawback of the new location was the fact that the lands between it and the river were subject to periodic overflow. In later years a visitor reported that it was "not unusual to have all communication with the Hudson Bay fort cut off except by bateaux and rafts".⁷⁴

In spite of the importance of the move, neither Simpson nor McLoughlin appears to have reported any exact details to the Committee in London. From information available for study to the present time, it is impossible to determine the exact date of the decision or of the start of the work on the new fort. Jedediah Smith later reported that the construction was commenced in the spring of 1829, and by the time he left, March 12, 1829, the work had progressed far enough for him to observe that the new stockade was about three hundred feet square.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Clarke, Pioneer Days of Oregon History, I, 182-183

⁷² Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 335.

⁷³ Ibid.; Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 269.

⁷⁴ War Department, Surgeon-General's Office, A Report on Barracks and Hospitals, with Descriptions of Military Posts (Circular No. 4, Washington, 1870), 421.

⁷⁵ J. S. Smith, D. E. Jackson, W. L. Sublette to J. H. Eaton, St. Louis, October 29, 1830, in 21 Cong., 2 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 39, pp. 21-23.

In this quiet manner, without fanfare or publicity, was commenced the construction of the establishment which for another twenty years was to be the headquarters and depot for the operations of the Hudson's Bay Company west of the Rockies. This new structure was the Fort Vancouver known to the American emigrants and settlers in the Oregon country; it was the Fort Vancouver whose remains have lately been unearthed and whose memory it is intended to perpetuate by the proposed Fort Vancouver National Monument.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ The fate of the old fort on the hill remains somewhat in doubt. Probably some of the buildings were dismantled and reconstructed on the new site. Titian R. Peale, who visited Fort Vancouver with the Wilkes Expedition, later testified that no trace of the old fort was visible in 1841. Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 345-346. On the other hand, Dr. H. A. Tuzo, Hudson's Bay medical officer at Vancouver, swore that some remains could still be seen at the time of his arrival at the post in 1853. Ibid., [II], 177-178.

Chapter III

HISTORY OF FORT VANCOUVER, 1829-1846: A BRIEF OUTLINE

(NOTE: The two following chapters make no pretence at being a complete or well-balanced history of Fort Vancouver for the forty-year period between 1829 and 1869. In general only those topics are treated which contribute directly to an understanding of points mentioned in the detailed history of the physical structure of Fort Vancouver which comprises chapters V and VI of this report.)

Between 1829 and the early 1840's, the story of Fort Vancouver is largely that of its growth as the depot and headquarters of the constantly expanding Columbia Department. Except for its position as a great agricultural establishment, the importance of the post was largely dependent upon its rôle as the administrative and supply center for the vast Hudson's Bay Company territory west of the Rockies. The history of the fort and the history of the department, therefore, are inseparable.¹

The coastal trade

As has been seen, the Company's policy in the Columbia region after 1827 was largely directed toward obtaining every benefit from the legal rights assured it as a British Corporation under the "joint occupation" agreement. The two main phases of this program were an unrelenting campaign to drive the "Boston peddlers" from the coast and the creation of a "fur desert" south and east of the Columbia region. With these two ends accomplished, the firm would be free to exhaust the southerly section of the area in dispute with the United States before the boundary was settled, and it could, as well, protect and preserve the fur resources of the rich northerly regions.

To oppose the Boston vessels, the program of building trading posts on the coast and of placing trading vessels on the coastal waters was greatly expanded. Following the founding of Fort Langley in 1827 and the reopening of Fort George in 1829, the next steps were the building of Fort Simpson, on Nass River, in 1831; Fort McLoughlin, on Millbanko Sound, in 1833; and Fort

¹ Except where otherwise indicated, the two following chapters are based upon Dr. W. Kaye Lamb's introductions to the three volumes of The Letters of John McLoughlin, edited by E. E. Rich (H.B.S., IV, VI, VII); and upon appropriate chapters in F. W. Howay, W. N. Sage, and H. F. Angus, British Columbia and the United States (Toronto; New Haven; London, 1942); and Winther, The Great Northwest.

Nisqually, at the southern end of Puget Sound, in 1833. The latter post was intended chiefly as an agricultural center and a shipping point, since by using the overland route which connected it to Vancouver, the dangerous ocean voyage by way of the mouth of the Columbia could be avoided.

One of the greatest obstacles which plagued the Company in its efforts to drive the Americans from the coast was the fact that the Boston vessels were able to carry on a very profitable business supplying provisions and trade goods to the Russian American Company in Alaska. Thus, even if their ventures in the fur trade did not pay well, the Americans were nonetheless attracted to the northwestern shores.

For a number of years Governor Simpson had endeavored to induce the Russians to give the Hudson's Bay Company an exclusive contract to furnish the supplies needed in Alaska, but his efforts were not successful. But finally, in 1839, Simpson and Baron Wrangell, of Russian American Company, signed an agreement whereby the Hudson's Bay Company obtained a ten-year lease of the narrow coastal strip of Russian territory between 54° 40' north and Cape Spencer. In return, the British firm agreed not to trade in the remaining Russian territory and also to pay an annual rent of 2000 land otter skins. In addition, the Hudson's Bay Company contracted to sell at specified prices a certain number of additional furs and to supply quantities of agricultural products such as flour, barley, peas, butter, salted beef, and hams.

Upon his return to Fort Vancouver in October, 1839, after a visit to Europe, Chief Factor McLoughlin acted to take over the coastal strip from the Russians. Chief Trader James Douglas in 1840 occupied Fort Stikine, now the site of Wrangell, Alaska; and later in the same year he built a new fort at Taku, farther north.

As a result of a visit of Governor Simpson to the Columbia Department in 1841-1842, the number of posts on the northwest coast was somewhat reduced, the trade being conducted by shipping operating from the new depot of Fort Victoria, erected on the southern tip of Vancouver Island in 1843. Partly due to changed conditions brought about by the boundary settlement of 1846, a number of new posts were built in the coastal region in the late 1840's and early 1850's. Fort Yale, founded in 1848 at the head of navigation on the Fraser River, was the first of these establishments, and others followed in quick succession. By the time they were built, however, Fort Victoria had replaced Fort Vancouver as the depot and headquarters for the Company's territory west of the Rockies, and their story forms no part of the history of the old headquarters at Vancouver.

The shipping

The Marine Department, the founding of which has already been discussed, was likewise expanded during the 1830's, in spite of McLoughlin's preference for trading posts rather than ships as the means of conducting the coasting trade. By 1833, five vessels had been assigned to this purpose. The most notable advance came in 1836, when the famous steamship Beaver reached Fort Vancouver under sail from England. Her engines were installed at the departmental headquarters, and her trial run and her departure upon her first sea voyage under steam were the occasions for picturesque ceremonies.² With the arrival of the Beaver and the new barque Columbia in 1836, the number of vessels employed on the coast and in the annual voyages to and from London reached seven.

The interior fur trade

During the 1830's the Company was singularly successful in its attempts to exclude competition from the Columbia region. During the first half of the decade three notable attempts were made to penetrate the firm's defenses by land. All three were by novices in the fur trade, and all ended in failure.

Captain B. L. E. Bonneville, an officer on leave of absence from the United States Army, crossed the Rockies with a large company of trappers organized by himself in 1832. Twice in 1834 he attempted to obtain trading goods from the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Nez Percés. He was treated well at the post, but it was made clear to him that he could expect no help from the Company in his trading operations. Unsuccessful in his hunting, he was forced to retire from the business in 1835.

Nathaniel Wyeth, a Boston ice merchange who had been fired with an enthusiasm for Oregon through the writings of Hall J. Kelley, conceived the idea of forming a trading company to operate in the Columbia region. Despatching a ship loaded with trading goods to the Columbia, he set out overland with a party of men to meet the vessel. Weakened by desertions, his company numbered only eleven men when it reached Fort Vancouver in the fall of 1832. Upon its arrival, Wyeth's party broke up; and, learning that his ship had been wrecked, he was forced to return to Boston during the next year.

Not deterred by this failure, Wyeth organized the Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company. He sent another vessel to the Columbia and in 1834 once more started for Oregon, this time at the head of a larger party, well loaded with trade goods. Unable to find a market for his stock among the American trappers at Green River, he established Fort Hall on Snake River during the summer. Pressing on with a section of his company, he was again at Fort Vancouver in September, 1834.

² See Parker, Journal, 314-315, 347.

Although he knew that Wyeth had come to establish an opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company, Dr. McLoughlin welcomed the newcomers "in his usual manner." John Kirk Townsend, a naturalist who had crossed the continent in Wyeth's party, recorded that the Doctor "requested us to consider his house as our home, provided a separate room for our use, a servant to wait on us, and furnished us with every convenience which we could possibly wish for. I shall never cease to feel grateful to him for his disinterested kindness to the poor houseless and travel-worn strangers."³

Wyeth's ship, the May Dacre, reached the Columbia safely, and a fort and farm were erected on Sauvie Island. But both trapping and salmon fishing turned out badly for Wyeth, and the next year he was forced to start eastward. The Hudson's Bay Company erected a new post, Fort Boise, east of Fort Nez Percés to cut off the trade to Wyeth's Fort Hall. The Boston ice merchant was glad enough, some time later, to sell the latter establishment to the Company, by which it was maintained for a number of years.

Although the Company had ordered McLoughlin to oppose Wyeth, the Doctor had not resorted to any harsh or underhanded measures to discourage him. In fact, he had entered into an agreement with the Bostonian to divide the trade. McLoughlin knew that Wyeth's small capital and lack of experience could not cope with the task of breaking the Hudson's Bay monopoly and that the new enterprise would fail of its own accord. To the end of his days, Wyeth was grateful for the kindness shown him at Fort Vancouver, and he believed that the Company had treated him fairly.

Another arrival at Vancouver in 1834 was Hall. J. Kelley, the Boston school teacher whose writings had done so much to arouse the interest of the United States in Oregon. In 1832 Kelley started for the Columbia, supposedly at the head of a large party of emigrants. But at the last moment, most of his prospective settlers failed to materialize. By the time he reached Monterey, California, after a trip through Mexico, his companions had all left him. In California, however, Kelley met Ewing Young, a trapper, and nine other persons, whom he persuaded to accompany him to Oregon as settlers. On the way north Kelley fell desperately ill of malaria and probably would not have survived the trip had it not been for the help of Michel Laframboise, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Kelley and Young found that they were not welcome at Fort Vancouver. An accusation had been received from the governor of California that the two men had stolen horses in the southern territory. Also, McLoughlin was not disposed to receive

³ Townsend, Narrative, 296.

with open arms a colonizer and a man who for years had defamed the Hudson's Bay Company. Nevertheless, Kelley was housed in the village, was given food and medical attention, and finally, was provided with a free passage to the Hawaiian Islands in a Company vessel. Kelley failed in his main purpose of establishing a sizable colony of Americans in the Columbia Department, but he did bring with him ten men, "the first to come to Oregon for the sole purpose of settling on the land and making their homes."⁴

In addition to meeting the challenge of specific competitors, the Company vigorously pushed its plan to exhaust the regions south of the Columbia. The Snake expedition under John Work in 1830-1831 traveled southward as far as Utah Lake and returned with a very poor harvest of furs. Two years later McLoughlin stated that the Snake country was "ruined." In 1835 the Governor and Committee suggested that these unprofitable hunts be abandoned; and the founding of Fort Hall by Wyeth in 1834, followed by the establishment of the Company's Fort Boise, marked the end of the Snake trapping expeditions, although trading parties continued to operate in the region for a considerable period.

The exploitation of California was later in developing but continued for a longer period. Started under the leadership of A. R. McLeod in 1829, the fur brigades from Fort Vancouver to the Central Valley of California had by 1835 become annual events headed by Michel Laframboise. They continued until about 1843.

In the years after 1829, the number of inland posts in the Columbia Department continued to increase to accommodate the Company's expanding activities. By 1846 the posts maintained by the firm and its subsidiary, the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company, in the area south of the forty-ninth parallel included Fort Vancouver, Cowlitz, Fort George, Chinook or Pillar Rock, Cape Disappointment, Fort Umpqua, Fort Nez Percés, Fort Boise, Fort Hall, Fort Okanagan, Fort Colville, Kootenai Post, Flathead Post, Champoug, Coweeman, and Fort Nisqually.

Outposts in California and Hawaii

As has been seen, both McLoughlin and Governor Simpson had early planned to extend the trading activities of the Columbia Department southward into California. The first tentative step to open commerce by sea with the Mexican settlements was made in 1827, but the lack of shipping made it impossible to take advantage of the California market at more than spasmodic intervals during the 1830's.

⁴ Howay, Sage, and Angus, British Columbia and the United States, 38.

As early as 1835, Governor Simpson appears to have suggested that a trading post be opened in California, but not until 1839 did the Governor and Committee recommend that attention be given to this subject. Negotiations were carried on with the California authorities during 1840 and the early part of 1841, and in the latter year property was purchased and a merchandising store was opened at San Francisco.

When Governor Simpson visited California early in 1842, however, he took a very pessimistic view of the outcome of the venture, and ordered McLoughlin to close the San Francisco establishment by the end of 1843. McLoughlin resisted the decision with vigor and found excuse after excuse for delaying the closing of the post. Finally, early in 1845, he issued the required instructions, but meanwhile the suicide, in January, 1845, of William Glen Rae, the Company's manager at San Francisco and the Doctor's son-in-law, had for all practical purposes put an end to the California venture.

The brigades to California had ended about two years earlier. Thus, when Dugald Mactavish finally closed the affairs of the San Francisco store and sold the property early in 1846, California ceased to be a field of operations for the Columbia Department.

The beginnings of commerce between the Columbia and the Hawaiian Islands have already been discussed. During the earliest years of this trade the Hudson's Bay Company had entrusted its affairs in the Islands to the hands of the British consul at Honolulu. But in 1833 the firm decided to open its own agency for the Sandwich Islands, and the new establishment was placed under the jurisdiction of the Columbia Department. In 1844, however, the Council for the Northern Department, feeling that McLoughlin had "fully as many irons in the fire" as he could attend to, resolved to detach the Sandwich Island agency from the Columbia Department and place it directly under the authority of the Council and the directors in London.⁵

For a few years, therefore, the vast trading empire administered from Fort Vancouver included posts in two foreign countries. The removal of these establishments from the jurisdiction of the Columbia Department appears to have been a part of a revised program of operations inaugurated by Governor Simpson as a result of his visit to the Pacific Coast in 1841-1842, a program which was made necessary by conditions of trade and international politics and which resulted in the end of Fort Vancouver's reign as the preëminent Hudson's Bay Company post west of the Rockies.

⁵ H. B. S., IV, xciii; VII, p. 91, note 2.

The Puget's Sound Agricultural Company

As early as 1832, Dr. McLoughlin had conceived the idea of an independent company to conduct agricultural operations in Oregon, but no real action was taken on this plan until 1839, when the Company signed the contract with the Russian American Company, agreeing to supply quantities of agricultural products to the Russian settlements in Alaska. Some of the London directors believed it more prudent for the Hudson's Bay Company not to engage in activities outside of the main business of the fur trade, and McLoughlin's project of a separate company was adopted as the means of fulfilling the agreement with the Russians.

McLoughlin was in London at the time the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company was formed in 1839. Legally the new firm was quite independent of the Hudson's Bay Company, but in fact it was a subsidiary corporation. Its plan of operations went far beyond the mere supplying of the Russians. The directors of the new firm envisaged a trade in farm products which would reach to many parts of the world. McLoughlin was placed in charge of the new company's affairs in the Columbia Department, but he also continued his former activities in the Hudson's Bay Company.

The Puget's Sound Agricultural Company established two large farms in the region between the upper Cowlitz River and the southern end of Puget Sound, at Cowlitz River Landing and at Fort Nisqually. Immediate management of the new establishments was entrusted to Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, with headquarters at Fort Nisqually; but the general supervision remained with Dr. McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver.

In order to get the new farms in operation, the Hudson's Bay Company transferred most of its livestock and farm implements in the Oregon country to the account of the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company. Although the farms at Fort Vancouver, Fort Colville, and other posts continued to be operated on a large scale by the Hudson's Bay Company, the firm's main agricultural effort was shifted to the new subsidiary.

Advent of the Protestant missionaries

While the Hudson's Bay Company was successful in repelling commercial rivals on the Columbia during the 1830's, it could do little about the missionaries and settlers who began to trickle into the Oregon country during the same decade. The first of the missionaries to arrive were the Methodists, the Rev. Jason Lee, the Rev. David Lee, and three laymen, who came with Wyeth in 1834. In seeking a place to establish their mission, it was only natural that they should head for Fort Vancouver, the headquarters of the department and the place where they could expect to gather the greatest amount of information concerning the country.

Dr. McLoughlin made the newcomers welcome in his usual hosp-

itable fashion. Jason Lee noted in his journal that the Doctor "seems pleased that Missionaries have come to the country and freely offers us any assistance that is in his power to render. It is his decided opinion that we should commence somewhere in this vicinity."⁶

Almost certainly as the result of McLoughlin's suggestion—the Doctor was anxious to confine American settlement to the area south of the Columbia—the Lees decided to establish their mission in the Willamette Valley. The Doctor furnished boats and other aid to speed the work, and he and other officers and men of the Company later subscribed funds to the cause.

When fifty-two persons arrived in the Lausanne in 1840 to strengthen the Methodist mission, Dr. McLoughlin afforded them all the hospitalities of Fort Vancouver. The Rev. Gustavus Hines, one of the passengers in the vessel, bore testimony to the uniform kindness extended by the Hudson's Bay Company's officers to the Methodist missionaries until their establishment broke up in 1844. "Few persons," he wrote, "whether coming by land or sea, have ever visited Vancouver without being received with a hospitality which knew no bounds, until every want of the traveller was supplied. Innumerable have been the favors conferred by them upon the American missionaries, and their assistance has been rendered at times when great inconvenience and even suffering would have resulted from neglect."

In 1835 the Rev. Samuel Parker reached the Columbia, having been sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to investigate conditions to be met in working among the Nez Percés and Flatheads. After being aided at the Company's posts on the upper Columbia, Parker headed for Vancouver, where, he later wrote, he "expected to find a hospitable people and the comforts of life." He was not disappointed. McLoughlin invited him to make the "Ty-ee House" his home for the winter. After having received free lodging and food and after having been transported by the Company without charge during a number of exploring trips in Oregon, Parker was given passage to the Hawaiian Islands in one of the firm's vessels during the next year.

Meanwhile, Dr. Marcus Whitman, with the Rev. H. H. Spalding and W. H. Gray, had set out under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to establish the institutions for which Parker had supposedly made the preliminary reconnaissances. Reaching Fort Vancouver in the fall of 1836, they received a cordial welcome and were aided in building their stations at Waillatpu, near Walla Walla, and at Lapwai, near the present Lewiston, Idaho.

⁶"Jason Lee Memorial Address," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, VII (September, 1906), 230.

Settlement of the Willamette Valley

While the establishment of the Protestant missions in the Oregon country was merely aided by help received from Fort Vancouver, the settlement of the Willamette Valley by farmers was, in effect, a direct result of the presence of the Company's headquarters on the Columbia. For a number of years—even before 1824—a small number of freemen had resided in the valley, but they had lived chiefly by trading and hunting, and the Company had made several efforts to remove them, "lest they should form the nucleus of a colony."

In the late 1820's the desire of discharged servants of the Company to remain in the country, contrary to the firm's regulations, was frequently expressed. Finally, in 1829, McLoughlin agreed, for reasons of expediency, to supply Etienne Lucier, a Company servant whose time had expired, with farming implements and to allow him to settle in the region. "From this beginning," states W. Kaye Lamb, "a settlement was to grow, and both McLoughlin and Simpson realized fully that it was both natural and inevitable that it should."⁷

By 1832 there were about eight settlers on the Willamette, all former employees of the Company. During the next year, however, McLoughlin "liberally engaged" to lend John Ball, an American who had come to Fort Vancouver with Wyeth, a plough, axe, oxen, cattle, and other articles necessary to start a farm in the valley.⁸

From that date the growth of an American population in the Willamette Valley was slow but steady. In 1838 the adult male population of the region consisted of twenty-three French-Canadians, ten members of the staff of the Methodist Mission, and eighteen additional Americans. By the time of Governor Simpson's visit in 1841, there were sixty-five Americans and sixty-one French-Canadians in the valley.

The Hudson's Bay Company realized by 1839 that the increasing American immigration threatened its position on the Columbia, and at the end of that year the directors issued instructions for the encouragement of British settlers to migrate from Red River to the region north of the Columbia. One hundred and sixteen such immigrants actually reached Fort Vancouver in 1841 and were settled at Cowlitz and Nisqually, but most of them soon drifted to the Willamette Valley.⁹

⁷ H. B. S., IV, cxxiii.

⁸ Hulbert, The Call of the Columbia, 180.

⁹ H. B. S., VII, xxx-xxxi.

As early as 1841 Sir George Simpson reluctantly admitted that Great Britain had little chance of obtaining the Columbia River as a boundary line. The preponderance of the American settlers really began to make itself felt after 1842. In that year some 140 immigrants arrived from the United States. The "great immigration" of 1843 brought about 875 persons, while some 1400 arrived in 1844 and nearly 3000 in 1845.

Along with the population, a sentiment in favor of a local government grew in the Willamette Valley. Led by the Methodist missionaries, the American settlers sent several petitions to Congress asking that American laws be extended over Oregon. A strong effort to organize a provisional government was made by the American immigrants in 1841, but it came to naught, largely because of McLoughlin's influence over the French-Canadians and because Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, of the United States Exploring Expedition, advised the Americans to take no action until the boundary was fixed.

In 1843, however, a Provisional Government was formed by the American settlers. The French-Canadians, still dominated by the Hudson's Bay Company, remained aloof from the movement until 1844, when McLoughlin withdrew his opposition. In the summer of 1845, the Doctor agreed to permit the Company's establishments to come under the jurisdiction of the Provisional Government and to pay taxes, although the allegiance to Great Britain of the Company and its officers was not prejudiced. By cooperating with the Americans, McLoughlin felt that the firm would actually gain, through having an organized machinery of government which could be employed for the collection of debts, protection from lawless elements, and the eviction of trespassers from the lands claimed by the Company.

Effect of population increase upon Fort Vancouver, 1840-1846

The great increase in the population of the Willamette Valley during the early 1840's had some important effects upon Fort Vancouver. Up to about 1843 the establishment was the central point in the economic life of the entire Oregon country. It was practically the only source of supplies in the region. Settlers already in the Willamette Valley could produce scarcely enough food to satisfy their own needs and to repay their debts to the Company. Therefore newly-arrived immigrants, who nearly all reached the Columbia in a destitute condition, were forced to turn to Fort Vancouver for food, as well as clothing and the equipment needed to start farms.

McLoughlin received the newcomers with kindness. He frequently loaned them farming implements, seed, and cattle. Since most of them had no money, he allowed them to make purchases on credit, a policy which brought upon him the disapproval of Governor Simpson and the directors.

While humanitarianism undoubtedly motivated the Doctor in his conduct toward the immigrants, there was also an element of self-preservation involved. The newcomers were of the type who would have raided the Company's warehouses rather than starve because they lacked ready cash to purchase food. By furnishing supplies on credit, Dr. McLoughlin believed he was saving Fort Vancouver from being looted or even being burned to the ground. Also, by lending out equipment for the founding of new farms, the Doctor was ensuring that there would be enough food to meet the needs of the next annual migration.

But by about 1843 and 1844 the focus of economic life in Oregon began to shift to the Willamette Valley, to the neighborhood of Oregon City. Americans opened retail stores which gradually attracted much of the trade away from Fort Vancouver. McLoughlin was forced to open a branch store at the falls of the Willamette to meet this competition.

Beginning in about 1845, fewer and fewer members of the yearly migrations stopped at Fort Vancouver on their way to the Willamette. The new settlements were by that time nearly self-sufficient and could supply the wants of the newcomers. And after the Barlow Road was opened in 1846, Fort Vancouver was no longer on the main route of travel from the Missouri frontier to the chief area of settlement.

Troubles with squatters

Another result of the increased population was to bring encroachments upon the Company's lands at Fort Vancouver and elsewhere. The best farming lands in the Willamette Valley were quickly taken up by the earliest arrivals, and later settlers were forced into the marginal areas or into the more distant sections. It was little wonder that they looked with envious eyes upon the fertile fields at Fort Vancouver. And it was very easy for them to reach the conclusion that the Oregon country by right belonged to the United States and that, therefore, no foreign corporation was entitled to occupy extensive tracts of the best lands in the territory.

In June, 1844, the Oregon Provisional Government passed an act which provided that every settler should, subject to certain conditions, be entitled to the possession of 640 acres of land. Dr. McLoughlin was quick to see that this measure provided machinery whereby adverse claimants could contest the Company's claims, but he hit upon a scheme by which he hoped to utilize the act to strengthen the rights of the Company. During 1845 he laid out nine lots, each one mile square, in the neighborhood of Fort Vancouver and had them registered in the names of nine officers and employees of the Company. After the Treaty of 1846 made it clear that the "possessory rights" of the firm were to be respected, these individual claims were withdrawn in favor of the Hudson's

Bay Company.¹⁰

Despite McLoughlin's precautions, settlers soon attempted to establish claims upon the lands occupied by the Company at Vancouver. The best known of these squatters was Henry Williamson, who first posted notice of a claim near the fort in February, 1845. The officers of the Hudson's Bay Company repeatedly ejected him from the land and even lodged a complaint with the Provisional Government, but Williamson maintained at least a show of occupation until several years later, when his representative was killed by another settler-claimant.

Administration of the Columbia Department, 1838-1841

In the spring of 1838, John McLoughlin left the Columbia to begin a long-delayed furlough in Europe. During his absence the Columbia Department was divided into three jurisdictions. Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden remained in charge of New Caledonia; Chief Factor Samuel Black was placed in control of the posts on the upper Columbia; and Chief Trader James Douglas was given the supervision of Fort Vancouver, the lower Columbia, the coastal trade, the shipping, and the expeditions.

When in London, McLoughlin conferred with the directors of the Company and evidently made a very favorable impression upon them. The lease of the Alaska "panhandle" from the Russians and the consequent formation of the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company had enlarged the Columbia Department and greatly increased the responsibilities of its director. At a meeting held on February 27, 1839, the Governor and Committee decided that McLoughlin was the man best fitted to assume this added burden, and they appointed the Doctor "to the principal superintendence or management of the Columbia District" at a salary of £ 500 per year in addition to his compensation as a chief factor.¹¹ He returned to Fort Vancouver and once more took up the direction of the Columbia Department in October of that same year.

Dispute between McLoughlin and Simpson

In August, 1841, Sir George Simpson reached Fort Vancouver on his first visit to the Columbia since 1829. As far as is known, relations between the Governor and McLoughlin were cordial and friendly during the first part of Simpson's stay. But early

¹⁰ For information on this matter, see Howard J. Burnham, "Government Grants and Patents in Vancouver, Washington," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XLVIII (June, 1947), 7-8; H. B. S., VII, 107-108, 237-238.

¹¹ H. B. S., IV, cxxvii; VI, xii.

in September, the Governor left for a tour of inspection of the Company's posts on the Northwest Coast. Upon his return late in October, he informed the Doctor that a complete reorganization of the coastal trade should be made. He believed that the agreement with the Russians had changed the character of the business, that American vessels would no longer come to the coast, and that operations would consist chiefly of periodic collections of furs from the Indians. The Governor proposed, therefore, to abandon all the northern coast establishments except Fort Simpson and to carry on most of the trade by means of the steamer Beaver.

Against this plan McLoughlin protested vigorously. He had an intense prejudice against the Beaver and believed that forts could serve the ends of the trade more satisfactorily and at less expense than vessels. The matter came to a climax at a meeting held between the two men at Honolulu in February and March, 1842. After a series of bitter debates, Simpson felt it necessary to order McLoughlin directly to abandon Taku and Fort McLoughlin in 1843 and to build a new depot on Vancouver Island. The quarrel over this matter caused a rift between the two men which was never mended. All personal correspondence between them ceased, and additional differences were to widen the breach still farther.

The next, and most grievous, quarrel was not long in coming. Before going to Siberia on his way around the world, Simpson paid another visit to some of the Company's northern posts. Reaching Stikine on April 25, 1842, he found that on the night of April 20, John McLoughlin, jr., son of the Doctor and in charge of the post, had been killed by one of his own men. Simpson made a rather superficial inquiry into the affair and accepted the story told by the employees that young McLoughlin had been leading a life of drunkenness and profligacy and by his violent and cruel treatment of his associates had brought his death upon himself. Simpson turned the murderer over to the Russian authorities for investigation and was disposed to let the matter drop there, feeling that further action would only succeed in bringing unfavorable publicity upon the McLoughlin family and the Company.

Doctor McLoughlin, however, was not willing to let the matter rest. After a long and thorough investigation he was able to show that the charges against his son were largely false and that the murder was a premeditated crime. He went even further, saying that by leaving the younger McLoughlin in charge of Stikine without competent assistants, Governor Simpson had brought on the crime and was thus responsible for it. The Doctor also rounded up all of the men involved in the affair and insisted that they be brought to trial. Aware of the legal difficulties involved, the Company refused to accede to this demand, and in the end even the chief culprits escaped without trial.

The affair of his son's murder occupied much of the Doctor's time for about four years, and references to it filled his dispatches to the Company. His stubborn insistence upon his extreme

view at last made it necessary for the directors to support Simpson, and the Doctor was ordered to compose his differences with the Governor. When he refused to obey and continued to harp upon the same unceasing theme in his reports, the directors decided that a change in the management of the Columbia Department would be necessary.

McLoughlin removed as superintendent of Columbia Department

In addition to the quarrel between McLoughlin and Simpson, there were other factors which made the Governor and Committee dissatisfied with the Doctor's direction of affairs west of the Rockies. Chief among them was a decline in revenue from the Columbia Department. McLoughlin's delay in closing out the California post, his large credit advances to American settlers, his expenditures at the falls of the Willamette, and disappointing financial returns from the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company were all in the minds of the directors in the fall of 1844, when it was determined to relieve the Doctor of the exclusive superintendency of the Columbia Department and to end his salary of £500.

In conformity with this resolve, the Council of the Northern Department, at its meeting in June, 1845, appointed a Board of Management of three members to assume control of the Company's affairs west of the Rockies. For Outfit 1845 this Board was to consist of McLoughlin, James Douglas, and Peter Skene Ogden.

Resignation of McLoughlin

Not content with relieving McLoughlin from his commanding position on the Columbia, Governor Simpson took advantage of a rather singular circumstance to make certain that the troublesome Doctor would remove himself from the Company's affairs. As has already been discussed, the Hudson's Bay Company had determined to occupy a tract of land at the falls of the Willamette as early as 1828, and shortly thereafter preparations had been made to construct a mill there. Although the mill was not built for a number of years, the claim was kept alive.

But as the American population continued to grow, other settlers cast longing eyes at this valuable location. McLoughlin soon realized that as a foreign corporation, the Hudson's Bay Company had very little chance of holding the claim in its own name. Therefore he announced publicly that the claim was in his own behalf, but he maintained in private that it was held for the benefit of the Company. In 1843 he constructed a sawmill at the falls in his own name, using machinery which belonged to the Company.

The Hudson's Bay Company, however, did not approve of the expenditures made in McLoughlin's name at the falls of the Willamette and charged them to McLoughlin's account. Meanwhile, convinced that the only way to retain possession of the property

was to be able to swear that it was actually his, McLoughlin sent Governor Simpson drafts to cover the costs of the improvements at the falls,

On June 15, 1845, Simpson informed the Doctor that his offer had been accepted and that the Company relinquished all rights to the claim and the mills. At the time he accepted the drafts, the Governor knew, and the Doctor did not, that the special superintendency of the Columbia had been ended and that McLoughlin had been ordered to return east of the Rockies at an early date. Since Simpson knew that the ownership of the mills would require McLoughlin's personal attention and would thus make it impossible for him to obey the order to leave the Columbia, he also knew that the acceptance of the drafts would actually force McLoughlin's retirement from the Company.

The effect of the action was as had been anticipated. McLoughlin went on furlough in 1846 and never returned to active duty with the firm.

After McLoughlin left Fort Vancouver for Oregon City in January, 1846, Chief Factors Peter Skene Ogden and James Douglas took over the management of the department and of Fort Vancouver. Ogden, being the senior chief factor, was technically in charge of the fort; but his duties kept him much in the field, and Douglas handled most of the detailed work at Vancouver, as, in fact, he had done for a number of years before McLoughlin's retirement.¹²

Removal of depot to Fort Victoria

The old proposal to locate the departmental depot on the Northwest Coast reappeared about 1834. Because of the fever epidemics which had swept the lower Columbia Valley after 1829, the Governor and Committee believed that the site at Vancouver was unhealthful, and they also desired to have the depot nearer the center of the coastal trade. In 1835 both Governor Simpson and the directors instructed McLoughlin to take action toward that end, but the Doctor failed to do so. Rather, he replied that the move would be merely "incurring the expense of an additional Establishment to no purpose," since Fort Vancouver was the only suitable supply center for the vast interior area.¹³

Two years later McLoughlin again put off the matter by declaring that no suitable site had been discovered. But in the

¹² T. C. Elliott, "Peter Skene Ogden, Fur Trader," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XI (September, 1910), 262-263; W. N. Sage, "James Douglas on the Columbia, 1830-1849," in ibid., XXVII (December, 1926), 379-380.

¹³ H. B. S., IV, 155.

spring of 1838, Chief Trader James Douglas, in charge of Fort Vancouver during McLoughlin's absence on furlough, reported to Simpson that a good location for the new depot had been found by Captain W. H. McNeill while exploring the southern end of Vancouver Island in the Beaver. McLoughlin visited the site in 1839 but dismissed it as "not a place suitable to our purpose."¹⁴ Meanwhile, the Governor and Committee decided to delay action on the matter of a new depot until Governor Simpson could visit the region in person and choose the location for the proposed establishment.

Sir George Simpson reached the Columbia during the summer of 1841, and his observations only confirmed his earlier belief that the depot should be shifted from Fort Vancouver. The delays and dangers encountered in crossing the bar at the mouth of the Columbia, he told the Governor and Committee, recalled his 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."¹⁵

Simpson had also come to the belief that Fort Vancouver was too near the American settlements in the Willamette Valley, and he feared that the depot might be attacked and plundered. In addition, he realized by 1841 that the boundary line between British territory and the United States in the Oregon country might be north of the Columbia River. He therefore decided that a new post should be built on the southern end of Vancouver Island and that it should gradually become the headquarters for the Columbia Department. On March 1, 1842, he issued specific orders to McLoughlin to construct the new depot.

In spite of his violent objections to the proposed new headquarters, the Doctor had no choice but to obey. In the summer of 1842 he sent James Douglas to reexamine Vancouver Island and to select the exact location for the post. Douglas chose a site on the present Victoria Harbour, and in 1843 he commenced the construction of the new establishment. Still fighting to keep the depot at Vancouver, McLoughlin instructed Douglas to build only a small fort, about seventy yards square; but Douglas was convinced that the new

¹⁴ J. McLoughlin to G. Simpson, March 20, 1840, as quoted in W. Kaye Lamb, "The Founding of Fort Victoria," in British Columbia Historical Quarterly, VII (April, 1943), 77.

¹⁵ G. Simpson to Governor and Committee, Honolulu, March 1, 1842, as quoted in Lamb, "The Founding of Fort Victoria," in British Columbia Historical Quarterly, VII (April, 1943), 81.

post must eventually become a center of widespread operations, and on his own responsibility he commenced a stockade of considerably greater dimensions. Named Fort Victoria by order of the Council of the Northern Department in 1843, the new post quickly grew in importance.

The arrival of the "great immigration" of 1843 and the organization of the Oregon Provisional Government made it clear that the Company could not hope to maintain its position of dominance on the Columbia and that the area would fall to the United States. The uncertainty surrounding the future of Fort Vancouver was recognized by the Governor and Committee in London. Late in 1844 they instructed the captain of the annual supply ship Vancouver to proceed directly to Fort Victoria rather than to the Columbia. The vessel reached Victoria in February, 1845, and there landed the portion of her cargo destined for the Northwest Coast. Late in March she visited Vancouver to discharge the supplies for the Columbia and the inland posts.¹⁶

In January, 1845, Simpson warned McLoughlin of the large immigration expected to reach Oregon from the United States during the year. In order to "guard against lawless aggression," the Governor recommended that no more goods be kept at Fort Vancouver than absolutely necessary to meet immediate demands. The "reserved outfit" for the Columbia River posts—that maintained for a year in advance as a protection in case of a disaster to the supply ships—should be kept at Fort Victoria along with all the supplies for the Northwest Coast. Furthermore, said Simpson, the furs for the entire Columbia Department should be collected at Victoria instead of Fort Vancouver, and the vessels sailing for England with the annual returns should take their departure from the new post. In other words, the departmental depot was to remain at Fort Vancouver no longer.¹⁷

During the spring of 1845, McLoughlin took the first step to effect the change by ordering the furs from the coast to be left at Fort Victoria. On July 19 of that year he promised the Governor and Committee that the returns from the interior would be sent there as soon as a vessel was available.¹⁸

The Oregon Treaty of 1846

According to one eminent historian, the removal of the depot to Fort Victoria in 1845 made it possible for Great Britain during the next year to propose the forty-ninth parallel as an international boundary dividing the Oregon country, since the action demon-

¹⁶ H. B. S., VII, 177-191.

¹⁷ H. B. S., VII, p. 87, note 3.

¹⁸ Ibid., 75-94.

strated that the Columbia River was not so essential to the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company as the firm had previously maintained. There is probably some substance to this theory, although it has been disputed. Undoubtedly even more important in influencing the British to make the offer was the fact that the British government did not believe the area between the forty-ninth parallel and the Columbia was worth fighting for and that the English people "knew nothing and cared less about Oregon."¹⁹

In addition to fixing the boundary, the treaty—concluded on June 15, 1846—contained several clauses of great importance to the Hudson's Bay Company. The "possessory rights" of the Company and other British subjects who already occupied land or other lawful property in the area south of the forty-ninth parallel were to be respected. The farms, lands, and "other property of every description" belonging to the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company were to be confirmed. And the Company and other British subjects trading with the firm were to have the same right to the free navigation of the Columbia River to the ocean as was possessed by American citizens.

The Hudson's Bay Company and its subsidiary, the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company, made a great show of being disappointed in the Oregon Treaty, complaining that they would be forced to abandon their seventeen establishments which fell within the boundaries of the United States and that they would lose all their trade. Actually, as letters show, they felt that they had come off better than they had reason to expect.²⁰

Upon orders of Governor Simpson, who was already looking ahead to the time when the Company could sell its property south of the boundary line to the United States, the firm's officers on the Columbia made an inventory late in 1846 and early in 1847 of the property of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company. The land claimed at Fort Vancouver amounted to 3,960 acres, of which 1,419 1/2 were under cultivation.²¹ The extent of the land claimed at Vancouver was later considerably increased.

¹⁹ See Howay, Sage, and Angus, British Columbia and the United States, 128-129.

²⁰ Howay, Sage, and Angus, British Columbia and the United States, 128-130.

²¹ Ibid., 130.

Chapter IV

HISTORY OF FORT VANCOUVER, 1846-1869; A BRIEF OUTLINE

The Oregon Treaty of 1846 greatly affected the operations of the Hudson's Bay Company in the section of the Columbia Department which lay south of the forty-ninth parallel. Despite the guarantee of its "possessory rights," the firm encountered many difficulties in carrying on its business within the borders of a foreign country. In addition to having to pay customs duties upon its imported trade goods and being subject to various regulations and restrictions, the Company found itself opposed by elements, both on the Pacific Coast and in the national government at Washington, which were determined to reduce the firm's rights to the lowest possible terms. On the other hand, the Company, with a view to obtaining the highest possible price for the sale of its rights to the United States, was not particularly modest in asserting the value of its claims.

In spite of the obstacles it had to face, the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed some exceedingly profitable years in the new Oregon Territory, particularly during the early period of the California gold rush. But when the mining excitement declined, local competition cut into much of the firm's merchandising business; and the increase in population and the Indian Wars of the late 1840's and the 1850's much reduced the fur trade. Squatters moved onto the Company's farms, and settlers appropriated many of its cattle and improvements. Post after post was reluctantly abandoned, and in 1860 the Hudson's Bay Company announced that it was withdrawing entirely from the country south of the forty-ninth parallel. From what information is available, however, it appears that this announcement was somewhat premature. The few remaining establishments in the lower Columbia area were abandoned in 1860, but Fort Colville and perhaps other northern posts evidently continued to operate for several additional years.

Fort Vancouver continues as a subsidiary depot

The transfer of much of the departmental depot to Fort Victoria in 1845 did not have a great immediate effect upon the importance of Fort Vancouver as a great distributing center for the fur trade west of the Rockies. The posts in New Caledonia, on Thompson River, on the upper Columbia, as well as those on the lower Columbia and the Umpqua, continued to receive their supplies and send out their returns through Fort Vancouver.

But the Oregon Treaty of 1846 made necessary additional changes in the Company's supply and transportation systems. It was seen that the expense and inconvenience of passing goods destined for the interior posts north of the forty-ninth parallel through the United States customs at the mouth of the Columbia would be prohibitive. In 1847, therefore, a new route was pion-

ceeded from Kamloops, on Thompson River, westward across the mountains to navigable water on the lower Fraser River. In 1848 the returns from the northern posts were brought out by this new trail, which did not cross through United States territory. Thereafter the old pack train route from Kamloops to Okanagan played only a minor role in the fur trade of the Hudson's Bay Company.¹

In general, the posts south of the forty-ninth parallel continued to be supplied through Fort Vancouver after 1847, but from the information at hand it is difficult to state exactly which posts were so supplied at any particular date. One witness later testified that he thought Colville received its supplies by the Columbia route for a number of years.² But about 1855 or 1856 Colville, a distributing center from which goods were sent to the posts in the eastern interior, began to receive its supplies from Fraser River, although products of American manufacture still continued to come in by the Columbia.³ In 1856, for instance, two boats were sent from Colville to Vancouver for cargoes of trading goods.

The same uncertainty surrounds the date at which the furs collected at Colville from the interior posts south of the boundary line ceased to be sent to Vancouver. It appears that in 1853 the river boats of the Company brought down the returns from Fort Colville as of old.⁴ But in 1856, apparently, no furs were carried by the boats which went downstream from Colville for trading goods, indicating that the returns for the upper Columbia may have gone out by way of Fort Langley.⁵

By the latter half of the 1850's, therefore, Fort Vancouver had ceased to be an important depot for the Company's interior fur trade. But until it was abandoned in 1860, the establishment maintained some semblance of its former position by serving as the center for the firm's general merchandising business in Oregon and Washington territories.

¹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 44, 58, 101-102; Finlayson, "A Biography of Roderick Finlayson," in The Washington Historian, II (January, 1901), 72. The outbreak of the Cayuse Indian War, in 1847 and 1848, also was a factor in turning traffic over the new trail.

² Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 101.

³ Ibid., 127-128; [VIII], 106.

⁴ Theodore Winthrop, The Canoe and the Saddle; or Klallam and Klickitat, edited by John H. Williams (Tacoma, 1913), 250-253.

⁵ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 127-128.

Removal of the departmental headquarters to Victoria

After John McLoughlin went into virtual retirement at the beginning of 1846, the Board of Management of the Columbia Department consisted of Chief Factors Peter Skene Ogden and James Douglas. At a later date Chief Factor John Work was also appointed to the Board.⁶

The headquarters of the department continued at Fort Vancouver until 1849. In January of that year the British government ceded Vancouver Island to the Hudson's Bay Company, and James Douglas was appointed the firm's agent on the island. On May 17, 1849, Douglas left the old post on the Columbia to take up his residence at his new station. He reached Nisqually with his family on May 25 and embarked on the Cadborough on June 1. He landed at Victoria on the afternoon of June 6, under a salute of nine guns. It is stated that he carried with him the bulk of the records and papers belonging to the Company's principal office on the West Coast.⁷

Despite the fact that Peter Skene Ogden, the senior chief factor, remained at Fort Vancouver, the move of James Douglas to Fort Victoria is generally held to mark the removal of the departmental headquarters to the latter place. Douglas was joined at Victoria by Chief Factor John Work, the remaining member of the Board of Management.

Even after Douglas shifted the administrative headquarters to Victoria, however, Fort Vancouver evidently continued to serve as the financial center for the Company's operations west of the Rockies. According to the testimony of Dugald Mactavish, the books and accounts for all the western posts continued to come to Fort Vancouver each spring for closing, and from there they were sent by the annual express to York Factory.

⁶ It is generally stated that Work was appointed one of the managers of the Columbia Department in 1849. See H. B. S., IV, 356-358. However, according to information contained in a letter from the Hudson's Bay Company to J. A. Hussey, dated London, January 21, 1948, it would appear that Work may have been a member of the Board as early as Outfit 1846/47..

⁷ H. B. S., VII, 309-314; Theodore Talbot, The Journals of Theodore Talbot, edited by Charles H. Carey (Portland, Oregon, 1931), 88; Snowden, History of Washington, III, 186; Hudson's Bay Company to J. A. Hussey, London, January 21, 1948, MS, in possession of the writer. The last-mentioned letter also states that it was not until 1849 that the Company's vessels proceeded directly from London to Victoria instead of to the Columbia "as previously." As has been seen, however, this practice actually began in 1845, although it may not have been a regular procedure until 1849.

The formation of the Oregon district as a separate administrative unit in 1853 appears to have put an end to this system. In 1854 the only accounts closed at Fort Vancouver were those of the posts south of the forty-ninth parallel. Those for the establishments north of the boundary were closed at Victoria. In this same year the accounts from the Columbia and Victoria were forwarded by express to York Factory for the last time. Thereafter the books for each depot were sent directly to London.

In 1851 Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden left the Pacific Coast for an extended visit in the East. For Outfits 1851/52 and 1852/53 therefore, the Board of Management of the Columbia Department consisted of Chief Factors James Douglas, John Work, and John Ballenden.

The Oregon Department, 1853-1860

The minutes of the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land which met at Norway House in June, 1853, reveal that at that time the Columbia Department was split into two jurisdictions: the Oregon Department, with headquarters at Fort Vancouver and comprising the Company's establishments south of the forty-ninth parallel; and the Western Department, with headquarters at Fort Victoria and consisting of that part of the former Columbia Department which lay north of the international boundary. The Oregon Department had its own Board of Management, but from certain circumstances it would appear that its officers may have been subject to the orders of the managers of the Western Department.

As headquarters of the Oregon Department, therefore, Fort Vancouver regained a part of the importance as an administrative center which it had possessed until 1849. The new arrangement continued until the post was abandoned and the department closed in 1860.

For Outfits 1853/54 and 1854/55, Chief Factors Peter Skene Ogden and Dugald Mactavish were appointed to comprise the Board of Management of the Oregon Department. On September 27, 1854, however, Ogden died, and Mactavish appears to have remained in exclusive charge of the department until June, 1857, when Chief Factor William Fraser Tolmie joined him on the Board of Management.⁹ In 1858, Mactavish was succeeded by Chief Trader James Allan Grahame.

⁸ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [XI], 44-45.

⁹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 46, 215, 218, 227, 232. The date of Tolmie's appointment is not certain. According to the minutes of Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land he was included in the list of chief factors in the Oregon Department from Outfit 1856/57 to 1858/59 inclusive. The manuscript Fort Vancouver Correspondence Books would seem to indicate that Mactavish was in exclusive charge of the Oregon Department from 1854 to 1858, but the fact that Tolmie perhaps maintained his chief residence at Fort Nisqually may account for the absence of his name from the Fort Vancouver Correspondence Books. Hudson's Bay Company to J. A. Hussey, London, January 21, 1943, MS.

Managers of Fort Vancouver, 1849-1860

For the most part, the managers of Fort Vancouver were members of the Board of Management of the department in which the post was located. Down to 1853 this district was the Columbia Department; between 1853 and 1860 it was the Oregon Department.

When James Douglas moved to Fort Victoria in 1849, Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden remained in charge of Fort Vancouver. On December 6, 1851, Ogden departed to make a lengthy visit in the East, and the fort was left in the hands of Chief Factor John Ballenden, who had arrived on November 21.¹⁰

During the winter of 1852-1853, when Chief Factor Ballenden began preparations to leave Vancouver, the command of the post was temporarily turned over to Chief Trader Alexander Caulfield Anderson. He was relieved in March, 1853, upon the return of Chief Factor Ogden.

In September, 1853, Ogden was joined in the administration of Fort Vancouver by Chief Trader Dugald MacTavish, who during that year was made a member of the Board of Management of the Oregon Department. After Ogden's death in September, 1854, MacTavish remained in sole charge of the fort until about the end of June, 1858, when he was succeeded by Chief Trader James Allan Grahame. As a clerk during Outfit 1853/54 and as a chief trader during subsequent outfits up to and including that of 1857/58, Grahame had handled the routine management of Fort Vancouver under the superintendence of the departmental officers. Between 1858 and June, 1860, he served both as a member of the Board of Management and as manager of the post.¹¹

Fort Vancouver and the Indian Wars

By the time the United States took over the region in 1846, the focus of political, economic, and social life in the Oregon country south of the forty-ninth parallel had largely shifted away from Fort Vancouver to the American settlements. But for a number of years the various establishments and storehouses of the Hudson's

¹⁰ Elliott, "Peter Skene Ogden, Fur Trader," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XI (September, 1910), 269-273; Talbot, Journals, 110.

¹¹ For much of the information given above concerning the organization and personnel of the Columbia and Oregon departments the writer is indebted to the kindness of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company and of Mr. J. Chadwick Brooks, Secretary of the Company, who painstakingly answered questions concerning these topics from materials in the Company's archives.

Hudson's Bay Company continued to contain the largest single stock of food, merchandise, and, particularly, firearms in the area. Thus, in times of crisis, the settlers were quite likely to turn to the Company and to Fort Vancouver for assistance.

The post came back briefly into public attention at the time of the Whitman Massacre at Waiilatpu late in 1847. For eight days the Indians snuffed out lives and destroyed property. Fourteen persons were killed and fifth-three others, chiefly women and children, were made prisoners. Word of the disaster reach Fort Vancouver on December 6, 1847. James Douglas and Peter Skene Ogden realized that action must be taken before the Indians should learn that the Americans were preparing to send troops to avenge the murders.

Ogden and sixteen employees of the Hudson's Bay Company set off at once for Waiilatpu, where, after much negotiation, he was able to ransom the captives. Many of the released persons were brought to Vancouver, where they were given shelter for a brief period before being sent on to the care of their countrymen in the Willamette Valley. The rescue was made entirely at the initiative of the Company's officers and as an act of humanity. No compensation was ever asked or received by the firm for the services of its employees or for the ransom goods.

During the Indian wars of 1855-1856 it was feared that the savages would carry hostilities down the Columbia to the Vancouver area. Fort Vancouver was the only sizable, walled defensive work in the vicinity, and a number of settlers sought shelter behind or in the shadow of its palisades. It is stated that even some families of members of the United States military garrison at Vancouver were housed at night within the pickets of the trading post.¹²

Decline of the fur trade

The difficulties under which the Company operated in the region south of the forty-ninth parallel after 1846 were considerably increased by the open resentment against its presence expressed by many inhabitants of the area, particularly by those who coveted its lands or who desired to obtain a portion of the trade enjoyed by the firm. This hostility was not long in being reflected by the actions of public officials, both on the Pacific Coast and in the national capital.

By an act of June 5, 1850, Congress extended over Oregon Territory the law regulating trade and intercourse with the Indians, an action which had the effect of limiting commerce with the natives to citizens of the United States. The Company, however, claimed that the right to trade with the Indians was one of the "possessory rights" guaranteed it by the Oregon Treaty and was able to stave off enforcement of the law.

¹² Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 178; [IX], 13; [XI], 72-73.

Several other attempts were later made by United States officials, particularly by Isaac I. Stevens, governor of Washington Territory, to end the trading rights of the Company. But the firm protested vigorously, and the United States was constrained, "as a matter of practical diplomacy," to permit the old commerce with the Indians to continue.¹³

Unfortunately for the Company, the possession of the right to trade did not mean that the trade flourished. The fur trade, on the lower Columbia at least, had been on the decline for a number of years before 1846 and continued to do so as settlements increased. Figures are available only for the years 1840 to 1850 and reveal that, for the posts south of the forty-ninth parallel as a whole, business shrank about two thirds during that period, from about £13,000 to approximately £4500.

The Whitman Massacre in 1847 and the Cayuse War which followed cut off normal communication by water with the inland posts and were very harmful to the trade. The Indian wars of 1855-1856 again interrupted navigation and resulted in the abandonment of Fort Walla Walla, Fort Boise, and Fort Hall. These posts were never reoccupied by the Company.

In August, 1854, the United States began a program of negotiation to gather up the Indians of Oregon and Washington and to concentrate them on reservations. The execution of this policy left no Indians with whom to trade, except at Fort Colville and its dependencies, the Kootenai and Flathead posts. Although the fur trade at Colville and several other northern posts continued for a number of years, and even increased at Colville during the late 1850's and early 1860's, it was to the general merchandising business that the Company looked for its chief profits.

The general merchandising trade

Despite its reduced importance as a depot and despite the decline of the fur trade, Fort Vancouver continued as a profitable trading post for more than a decade after 1846. This prosperity was largely due to the general merchandising business, which continued to expand with the population. During the California gold rush, particularly, the Hudson's Bay wholesale and retail stores enjoyed a booming trade. One employee of the firm later estimated that for Outfit 1849/50 the profits "at and around" Fort Vancouver were about £22,000. Sir George Simpson was somewhat more conservative in 1852 when he stated that the profit on transactions at Fort Vancouver exceeded £17,000 in 1849.¹⁴

¹³ Frank E. Ross, "The Retreat of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Pacific North-west," in Canadian Historical Review, XVIII (September, 1937), 268-273. As a matter of fact, the British government in 1854 also reached the conclusion that the Hudson's Bay Company did not have the right to trade with the Indians under the Oregon Treaty, but this opinion was not made known to the United States.

¹⁴ T. C. Elliott, "British Values in Oregon, 1847," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXII (March, 1931), 43.

The changing character of the business after 1846 may be seen by the fact that in 1854 Governor Stevens of Washington Territory described the Company's trade as "now almost entirely mercantile and carried on with the settlers." The so-called Indian trade of the Company, he said was "the ordinary trade of country stores, and for cash." During 1853 the firm imported two ship-loads of assorted goods, one from New York and the other from London. A "considerable" portion of these cargoes was sold on commission at Portland, Oregon City, and other localities.¹⁵ From what little information is available, however, it would appear that during the latter part of the 1850's, increased competition and other causes reduced even the merchandising trade at Fort Vancouver.

Disputes over land claims

The hostile attitude of the populace and of certain public officials toward the Company was most evident in controversies which arose in regard to the firm's land claims. Up to about 1849 the Hudson's Bay Company was fairly successful in keeping squatters off its lands at Fort Vancouver, and only a few settlers were able to maintain a show of occupation in the face of the evictions, performed either under legal process, or, sometimes, by force, by Company employees. But between 1849 and about 1853, a large number of settlers swarmed onto the tract near the post, and by the latter date practically all of the land claimed by the firm had been taken up under the Donation Law. In 1850 Clark County, Oregon Territory, went so far as to lay out its county seat on the river bank virtually next door to the fort. About the only lands preserved from the settlers were those within the borders of the United States military reservation, which was formally established around the post in 1850; and some of the squatters even claimed lands within the reservation.

As each settler took up his land, he appropriated to his own use such of the Company's buildings, fences, and other improvements as happened to be on his claim. Particularly annoying to the officers at Fort Vancouver was the loss of the timothy crop. The Company had gone to some trouble to sow large tracts of land above and below the fort in timothy grass. It took several years before the crop "came to anything," and the yields were at their peak when the settlers moved in, cut the hay, and sold it for twenty-five dollars a ton in summer and fifty dollars a ton in winter.

The Company protested vigorously against these "agressions" and "encroachments," and the British government lodged numerous

¹⁵ I. I. Stevens to W. L. Marcy, Washington, June 21, 1854, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [XI], 220-221

representations in Washington, but without much result. United States officials in general took the view that such "trespasses" were matters for the courts. Knowing the temper of the populace, the Company's officers despaired of receiving fair treatment before the local tribunals. Therefore they could only protest and retreat—and keep account of their losses with a view to demanding compensation from the United States.¹⁶

For a number of years after 1846, the United States Government respected the possessory rights of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver to the extent that the public surveys were not extended over the lands claimed by the firm. In a letter to the surveyor general of Oregon Territory, dated July 30, 1852, Chief Factor John Ballenden defined the limits of the Company's land claim in the vicinity of the fort as they were understood by the firm's officers at that time. Included in the claim was the present Hayden Island. The boundaries set forth by Ballenden apparently were recognized by the United States General Land Office for several years.

But in 1855 the surveyor general of Washington Territory was ordered by the commissioner of the General Land Office to run the survey lines "up to actual settlements of the British claimants." When Chief Factor Dugald Mactavish pleaded that he had no authority to fix the precise limits of the firm's claims at Vancouver, the surveyor general began to run the lines over all of the land claimed by the Company. Meanwhile, the General Land Office modified its policy and decided to extend only township lines over the Hudson's Bay claims.¹⁷

The royal license by which the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed exclusive British trading privileges in the Oregon country expired on May 30, 1859. In common with many persons both on the Pacific Coast and in Washington, the General Land Office took the view—convenient but erroneous—that the Company's rights and existence in Oregon and Washington had ended with the license. On September 29, 1859, the acting commissioner of the General Land Office officially informed the surveyor general of Washington Territory that the possessory rights of the firm had expired and directed him "to extend the line of the public surveys over the tract of country in question." About a year later, on September 20, 1860, the surveyor general reported that he had "to the great satisfaction of the settlers, subdivided the land (about 33,000 acres) claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company, on the lower Columbia, which included the town of Vancouver, Fort Vancouver, and sixty or seventy donation claims."¹⁸

¹⁶ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 109-111, 116, 381-383.

¹⁷ Ross, "The Retreat of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Pacific North-west," in Canadian Historical Review, XVIII (September 1937), 273-274.

¹⁸ Ibid., 276-277

Condition of Fort Vancouver in 1860

The removal of the Company's main depot from the Columbia, the decline of the fur trade, the growth of a strong economy among the American settlements, and the "encroachments" of settlers and governmental bodies upon the lands and property of the firm all had a disastrous effect upon Fort Vancouver. Some idea of the extent of the decline in the importance of the post can be obtained by comparing the number of employees before the Oregon Treaty with that in 1860. A visitor to Fort Vancouver in 1845 reported that there were about two hundred men on the Company's rolls at the establishment. A more detailed Company estimate made during the next year gave the number as 197 salaried employees in addition to the officers. Chief Factor James Douglas later gave a slightly different figure. He said that in 1846 there were 16 officers, 215 servants under articles of agreement, and a large number of native employees who were not under formal contract. When the Company left Vancouver in 1860, there were only about fourteen officers and servants of all grades at the establishment.¹⁹

The statistics concerning the Fort Vancouver farm tell the same story. In 1845 there were about 1200 acres under cultivation at the post, and the livestock included 702 horses, 1377 cattle, 1581 hogs, and 1991 sheep. By 1860 the farm had dwindled to a miserable remnant of its former self. East of the fort the firm cultivated two fields containing about fifty acres; in front of the stockade were two small enclosures containing about twelve acres; and the garden consisted of about four acres. The Company had managed to protect a few cattle and horses from the depredations of the settlers, but practically all the fields outside the military reservation had been fenced in by squatters,²⁰ and there remained no place for the firm to pasture its animals.

Fort Vancouver Military Reservation

The final retirement of the Hudson's Bay Company from Fort Vancouver was brought about by the "encroachments" and the hostile attitude of the United States Army. The interest of the military authorities in the trading post and its vicinity dated back to May 13, 1849, when the United States steam transport Massachusetts dropped anchor in the Columbia off Vancouver and fired a salute to the fort. Aboard the vessel were Companies "L" and "M," First Artillery, sent from the East Coast to establish garrisons in the Oregon Territory. The next day the soldiers established a camp on the bank of the river, but on the twenty-first, with the approval of Chief Factor Ogden, they were moved to the top of the bluff behind the fort.

¹⁹ Schafer, "Documents Relative to Warre and Vavasour's Military Reconnoissance in Oregon, 1845-6," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, X (March 1909), 60; Clark, History of the Willamette Valley, 870; Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 52, 192.

²⁰ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 181-182, 191-192.

Captain Rufus Ingalls, Army quartermaster, arrived from California toward the end of the month and at once made preparations for the construction of buildings to house the troops. On June first he executed an agreement with Ogden for the rental of certain structures from the Hudson's Bay Company and the purchase of lumber. This agreement also provided that all improvements erected by the Army; including "temporary additional buildings," were to be considered the property of the United States.²¹ With this preliminary out of the way, the erection of a number of substantial structures on the brow of the bluff went rapidly ahead.

Without the help of the Hudson's Bay Company, officers of the Quartermaster Department later admitted, the difficulties of founding the military post would have been "almost insurmountable." Chief Factor Ogden not only rented buildings to the Army and supplied lumber, but he cashed drafts, made Indian labor available, and furnished horses and boats "at a moderate compensation" and at times when it "inconvenienced the company to do so."²²

Later in the year a large detachment of the Regiment of Mounted Rifles, under the command of Brevet Colonel W. W. Loring, reached Vancouver after an overland march. But since there was not yet sufficient housing to accommodate them at the new post, the Rifles went to Oregon City for the winter. In the spring of 1850 they returned to Columbia Barracks, as the establishment was called, and settled down as the post garrison. Colonel Loring served as commander of the Eleventh Military Department, embracing Oregon Territory, and also, on occasion, as commander of Columbia Barracks.

Captain Ingalls and other representatives of the Quartermaster Department had been quick to recognize the advantages of Fort Vancouver as a supply depot. The same features which had made the site attractive to the Hudson's Bay Company also appealed to the military authorities. In the fall of 1849 General Persifer F. Smith, commander of the Pacific Division, which included the Tenth and Eleventh Departments, visited Vancouver. He was much impressed with the agricultural possibilities of the region. "The largest potatoes, turnips, onions, beets, and radishes I have ever seen, grow on the Columbia," he reported to the Adjutant General's office. Fort Vancouver, he added, possessed "every requisite" for the principal garrison, depot, and center of all the "military concerns" of the department "for a long time." He believed that the Army could employ to advantage the buildings, farms, and mills erected by the Hudson's Bay Company, and he urged, as a matter "of great importance to public interests here," that the United States purchase the rights

²¹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 320-321.

²² 31 Cong., 2 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 1, part 2, p. 262

and property belonging to the Company.²³

In October, 1850, Colonel Loring, acting under the direction of General Smith and under authority of a letter issued by Secretary of War W. L. Marcy, January 29, 1848, directing the laying out of military reservations at posts on the route to Oregon, declared the establishment of a military reservation of about four square miles surrounding the "Military Post near Fort Vancouver." The reservation was declared subject "alone" to the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company as guaranteed by the Treaty of 1846.²⁴

Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden was consulted before this move and is reported to have given it his approval. He is said to have made the "oft repeated remark" that there was an abundance of room for both the Company and the Army. In fact, Ogden knew that without some such arrangement the lands of the firm at Vancouver would all quickly pass into the hands of the settlers who were crowding in on every hand. It was later stated by Captain Ingalls that at the time the reservation was declared, the question of the ultimate ownership of the soil was never raised.²⁵

Later correspondence by military authorities on the Columbia reveals that the Army, likewise, had been at least partly moved to take action in the matter because of the claims and encroachments of the settlers. In urging the confirmation of the reservation by the President in 1853, Colonel B. L. E. Bonneville stated that the conflicting claims of the citizens, the local government, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Army to the land about Fort Vancouver were a "constant source of irritation." The confirmation of the reserve, he said, would completely exclude all other claimants than the Army and the Company, and would give the courts some basis to "throw around us the protection of the Law." Such action, he added, "would settle the whole subject" until after the Hudson's Bay Company was "purchased out, when the reservation can be reduced to any limits, or removed altogether." It would almost appear, therefore, that some Army officers, at least, considered the military reservation chiefly as a means of protecting the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company against encroachment.²⁶

²³ P. F. Smith to W. G. Freeman, Fort Vancouver, October 7, 1849, in 31 Cong., 1 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 47, pp. 75-108.

²⁴ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 323-324.

²⁵ R. Ingalls to D. Mactavish, Fort Vancouver, September 23, 1857, in A.G.O., Fort Vancouver, Letter Sent Book, 1857-1865, MS, 7-17, in War Records Division, the National Archives.

²⁶ B. L. E. Bonneville to E. D. Townsend, Columbia Barracks, February 23, 1853, MS, in General Land Office Records, Abandoned Military Reservation Series, Fort Vancouver, Box 100, in Division of Interior Department Records, the National Archives. See also Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 47.

The settlers who had taken up claims near Fort Vancouver and, particularly, the commissioners of Clark County, Oregon Territory, who had laid out a county seat within the limits of the new military reservation, were not long in contesting the action taken by Colonel Loring. Petitions soon bombarded the office of the Secretary of War, and as a result an order was issued in 1851 to reduce the reserve to a quarter section in extent. Protests by officers on the spot, however, prevented the execution of this order. But finally, in conformity with an act of Congress, approved February 14, 1853, the Secretary of War on October 29, 1853, ordered the reservation reduced to 640 acres. During the next year, therefore, Colonel Bonneville made the required reduction, surveyed the reservation, and marked the new boundaries.²⁷

Chief Factors Ogden and Mactavish raised no objection to the new survey but made it clear to Colonel Bonneville that the Company waived none of its rights as guaranteed by treaty. They considered the reservation to be of a temporary nature and said that the Hudson's Bay Company would consider itself free to expel the military post if such action should later be deemed necessary.

The reason for the firm's lack of objections is not difficult to determine. At about the same time the managers of Fort Vancouver conveyed their sentiments on the subject to Colonel Bonneville, they likewise called to his attention a certain Mr. Willis, "sheriff of this county," who had commenced a building near the river bank south of the fort and upon whom the Company's notices that he was trespassing had had no effect. "We beg to ask your assistance in this matter," wrote Ogden and Mactavish to Bonneville, "and hope you will take the necessary steps to put a stop to the proceedings of Mr. Willis, with as little delay as possible."²⁸

Relations between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Army, 1850-60

For a number of years after the establishment of the military reservation at Vancouver, the relations between the Company and the Army were friendly and mutually beneficial. The presence of the military post brought much business to the firm's shops and mills and served to protect from encroachments such of the Company's fields and improvements as lay within the reservation boundaries.

The harmony existing between the Company and the military authorities is well illustrated by an event which occurred in 1850.

²⁷ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 354-359;; [XI], 368-373; Burnham, "Government Grants and Patents in Vancouver, Washington," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XLVIII (June, 1947), 13; Lockley, History of the Columbia River Valley, 356.

²⁸ The correspondence upon which the two paragraphs immediately above are based will be found printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 327-330.

In the spring of that year the requirements of the public service necessitated the occupation by the Army of a field, about seven acres in extent, which lay about a quarter of a mile north of the fort and upon which the firm was raising wheat. On May 28, Captain Ingalls and Chief Factor Ogden concluded an agreement by which the Army was granted permission to remove the fence around the enclosure and to occupy as much of the field as necessary simply upon payment of the value of the crop then growing on the land. There was no quibbling about the ultimate ownership of the soil and no demanding of rent for the ground.²⁹

With the passage of the years, however, this friendly relationship began to fade. The Company, on the one hand, evidently began to take a more sanguine view as to the possibilities of making good its claim to the actual land occupied by its establishments south of the forty-ninth parallel and began to value its property more highly. Also, there perhaps was the feeling that the United States Government could be encouraged to settle the matter of the claims more quickly if it was forced to pay for the privileges it enjoyed upon the Company's lands.

On the other hand, the military authorities tended to forget that they had occupied the site of the reservation with the consent and permission of the Hudson's Bay Company and came to believe that they occupied it by right. They came to regard the buildings and improvements of the Company as encumbrances which should be cleared from the reserve.

The changed attitudes of the parties involved began to be evident in about 1856. In September of that year Captain Ingalls had need of the ground occupied by an abandoned and very dilapidated corral belonging to the Company. Although he knew that Chief Factor Mactavish, then in charge of Fort Vancouver, valued this old structure "as a landmark of the possessory rights of the Company," he nevertheless requested permission to demolish it and occupy the site for the public service. Chief Trader James A. Grahame, temporarily in command of the Hudson's Bay post, replied in a polite but firm manner that he was forced to protest against this "evident trespass" upon the privileges of the firm, but hoped that "the present misunderstanding may not interrupt the very friendly relations that have always existed between us."

During the summer of 1857 Captain Ingalls again approached Mactavish, this time for permission to erect a wharf and storehouse on the bank of the river "at or near" the Company's Salmon House. The matter was referred to James Douglas and John Work, who as members of the Board of Management of the Western Department,

²⁹ P. S. Ogden and R. Ingalls, Agreement, Vancouver, May 28, 1850, MS, in Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, Box No. 1176, in War Records Division, the National Archives.

with headquarters at Victoria, had the authority to act on the subject. The two Board members replied that they were not disposed to take any responsibilities in the matter, as they knew the directors of the Company were "extremely averse to having their valuable property frittered away by such fruitless concessions." They pointed out that since 1846, one concession of right had followed another until, between squatters and concessions, there remained "but the wreck of our once flourishing settlement at Vancouver." They offered, however, to sell the Salmon House and the ground on which it stood for not less than \$30,000, or to rent the property for not less than \$1500 per year.

Before this answer had been received, Captain Ingalls informed Mactavish that "in any event" he would construct a storehouse "in a proper place." He also continued with the erection of a public wharf despite Mactavish's protests that such action constituted a "direct trespass" and the warning that the Company might seek to recover damages for the unauthorized use of its property.

When Captain Ingalls and Lieutenant Colonel T. Morris, commanding the military post at Fort Vancouver, learned of the reply from Victoria, they were highly indignant at what they termed the "unexpected" reversal of the Company's policy. They pointed out that the question of the ownership of the soil had never been raised previously and that the Army had always respected the firm's possessory rights. But, said Ingalls on September 23, 1857, in a letter to Mactavish, the opinion of the Army was that the Company was entitled "only to what it actually occupies and uses in the natural exercise of its functions under its charter and as guaranteed by the treaty of 1846." Furthermore, said the quartermaster with heat, though erroneously, the charter was due to expire in a few years, upon which event the Company's right south of the forty-ninth parallel "must cease." Under these circumstances, he added, it was not to be expected that "the United States will consent to buy its own soil."

The Army's position was summarized by Captain Ingalls as follows: "We have always been our own masters in the selection of building sites, and all lands that are now abandoned by the Hudson's Bay Company as well as all that was vacant within the limits of the present reservation, on our arrival here in 1849, we claim and hold as part and parcel of the post. The jurisdiction over this reserve, with the exception of your stockade and enclosures, has been constantly in the hands of our commanding officers; and had it been wished to put up a Storehouse on the beach or elsewhere, we should certainly have done so at any time without reference to the Company, but of course we would have been careful to molest none of its rights."

During the next two years the controversy dragged along with ever-increasing bitterness. The military authorities continued to erect buildings and fences, and on one occasion demolished an old and abandoned shed belonging to the Company. Chief Trader James A.

Grahame protested against each of these moves on behalf of the firm, but generally without other effect than to shorten the tempers of the Army officers involved. "I do not recognize any authority on the part of Mr. Grahame, to interfere in matters which concern the police and protection of this Reservation," commented a commander of the post after one of the Chief Trader's protests.

In one instance, however, the Company's complaints seem to have brought about some changes in the Army's plans. During the late 1850's it was decided to erect an ordnance depot at Vancouver, with permanent buildings to house an arsenal. But the Company objected to the move, and the protests were "so far respected" that the officer in charge of the depot was directed to construct only temporary buildings.³⁰

Matters came to a head during the spring of 1860. Needing land for, among other things, a drill ground for a battery of light artillery, Brigadier General W. S. Harney, commanding the Department of Oregon, ordered a board of officers to appraise the improvements belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company in the area south and west of the old fort. A line of stakes was set up beginning about eighty yards east of the Catholic church and running to the river; and it was General Harney's intention to clear all of the ground in the reservation west of this line. The board of officers made its examination on March 1 and reported that the tract in question contained four or five hundred yards of fence and eight or nine dilapidated and decayed buildings claimed by the Company.

Being informed of General Harney's plans, John M. Work, in charge of the trading post in the absence of Chief Trader Grahame, protested most vigorously. On the same day upon which the board of officers conducted its examination, Work informed the military authorities that to clear the ground would deprive the Company of the use of fields already leased out for the year and would force Kanaka William, "one of the Company's oldest and most faithful servants," out of the house he had occupied for more than ten years.

Two days later General Harney tersely replied through his adjutant that "the Hudson's Bay Company is not recognized as having any possessory rights in the soil of the military reserve at this

³⁰ B. Alvord to J. P. Usher, Fort Vancouver, August 28, 1863, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31. The fact that the land titles both within and without the reservation were not settled and the fact that the Army did not have funds for the purchase of sites for arsenals appear to have been even more potent reasons for the stopping of the work on the arsenal than the objections of the Hudson's Bay Company. See various letters in U. S. War Department, Records of U. S. Army Commands, Department of the Columbia, Letters Received, T2-W: A1-B167, 1859-1860, Box No. 3, MSS, in War Records Division, the National Archives.

place, in consequence of the expiration of their charter as a trading company on this coast." On March 5, Captain Ingalls told Work to remove all the improvements on the land in question or the Army would do so. Kanaka William, he added, could occupy an old house near the Catholic church "while the Company is closing up its affairs at this place."

Evidently surprised to hear that the Hudson's Bay Company was leaving Vancouver, Work decided to submit copies of his correspondence with the military officials to the "principal officers" of the firm. Meanwhile, he told Harney, "I can only submit to what seems to me to be an extraordinary and unwarrantable neglect and violation" of rights secured by treaty "on the part of those whose predecessors were tenants of the Company, on the same land upon which it is now proposed to make forcible encroachments."

General Harney at about the same time evidently began to have some fears as to the possible consequences of his course of action, because on March 5 he transmitted copies of his correspondence with the representatives of the Company to Brigadier General T. S. Jesup, the Army's Quartermaster General in Washington, D. C. General Jesup was firmly convinced that the Hudson's Bay Company's claim at Vancouver was a "stupendous fraud," and he forwarded Harney's account of the affair to the Secretary of War with the comment that the possessory rights of the Company "could not under either grant, treaty or law extend beyond the term of its charter."

Probably acting upon the recommendation of General Jesup, Secretary of War Floyd officially stated on April 30, 1860, that "the Hudson's Bay Company is not recognized as having any right, by law or treaties to land which it has occupied by virtue of its charter" south of the forty-ninth parallel, "its right of occupancy having expired." Floyd further directed that the Company's occupancy "of any part of the Military reserve at Fort Vancouver will, at once, be terminated, and all improvements removed excepting such as may be useful for the military service." Copies of this order were forwarded to General Harney on May 10.

Evacuation of Fort Vancouver by the Hudson's Bay Company

Before Secretary Floyd's directive reached Vancouver, however, events had already brought the Company's representatives on the spot to a decision to give up the old post on the Columbia. Since John Work had refused to remove the Company's improvements as requested by Captain Ingalls, the Army proceeded to "police the grounds." Between March 12 and March 26, the fences and buildings in question, including the house of Kanaka William, the hospital, the stable, and the "cow house," were destroyed. Other fences were moved back "a considerable distance" toward the pickets of the fort.

On March 25 Chief Trader Grahame returned to Fort Vancouver and was appalled to see what had occurred during his absence. He immediately reported the facts to the Company's chief represent-

ative in North America and suggested that "it would be better for us to retire north of 49° at once rather than remain here on sufferance, to be carved to pieces according to the arbitrary caprice of General Harney or any other official; and I feel fully convinced that even were we to do so, entering a protest and filing a claim for damages, our position prospectively as regards remuneration, would be much ameliorated." He added that his situation at Vancouver was becoming "more irksome, trying and unprofitable every day."

On April 12 Grahame made another "solemn protest" to Harney in the name of the Company and requested, for the information of the firm and the British government, a copy of any authorization for the General's summary dismissal of the rights of the Company. General Harney replied that no claim of the firm within the reservation was recognized and added that any privileges permitted the corporation at Vancouver since May 30, 1859, had been "conceded by the courtesy and forbearance of the Commanding General." His adjutant went on to state that, "I am further directed to communicate to you that the style of your correspondence with these Head Quarters is considered improper and objectionable, and unless changed will receive no attention in future."

Early in May, 1860, A. G. Dallas, President of the Council of the Hudson's Bay Company in North America, visited Vancouver. In view of the hostile attitude of the military authorities, he determined to withdraw entirely from the region south of the forty-ninth parallel. On May 10 he notified General Harney of the firm's intention to vacate Fort Vancouver and the adjoining lands within a month or two, as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made. "During this period," he added, "I presume, we may rely on your further courtesy and forbearance."

Dallas further expressed his surprise that officers of the United States would make an interpretation of a treaty right without some formal intimation of the fact being made by the United States Government to that of Great Britain. He once more protested against the "aggressive acts" on the part of the military and declared that the United States would be held liable for the damages received.³¹

General Harney was evidently quite pleased to hear that the Company was planning to remove itself from Vancouver. On May 10

³¹ The correspondence upon which the above account of the difficulties between the Hudson's Bay Company and the military authorities is based may be found in the following: Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 189-191; 327-367; (IX), 78-85; A.G.O., Oregon Department, Document File 212-S-1860, MSS; A.G.O., Letters Sent Book, No. 32, MS, 398-399; Records of U.S. Army Commands, Department of the Columbia, Letters Received, Q-W84: A1-R52, 1860-1865, Box No. 5, MSS; ibid., C4-P34, 1860, Box No. 4, MSS. Most of these letters have been published in 36 Cong., 1 Sess., House, Ex.Doc. No. 98; and in 36 Cong., 2 Sess., House, Ex. Doc. No. 29.

he offered to the firm "every facility" of the military post "in the fulfilment of this intention that may not be to the prejudice of the public interests of the United States."³² Captain Ingalls was similarly gracious, proffering the full use of the Government wharf, storehouse, and other facilities.³³

Whether or not the Company availed itself of these offers is not known, but the officers of the firm wasted little time in winding up the affairs of the establishment. Goods in shops and stores and all movable equipment, including much of the machinery from the grist mill, were prepared for transport to Victoria. The steamer Otter left with the first "full freight" of goods on May 7, and she evidently made two subsequent trips.

With the last load of the Company's property, the vessel was ready to sail for Victoria on June 14, 1860. On that day Chief Trader Grahame turned a large bundle of keys belonging to the fort buildings over to Captain Ingalls and announced that he was sailing in the Otter in half an hour.³⁴ With him went all the Company's employees at Vancouver except Robert Logan and W. F. Crate, who remained behind at their own request.³⁵

Diplomatic action concerning Fort Vancouver

While the Company's representatives at Vancouver were carrying out the evacuation of the old fur-trading post, protests against the "aggressions" of the military authorities were being lodged with the United States Secretary of State by the British government. Copies of the correspondence between the Army officers and the firm's agents concerning the determination to clear the ground in the southwest sector of the military reservation were sent to the directors of the Company in London, by whom they were referred to the British Foreign Office.

The Hudson's Bay Company informed the Foreign Secretary that, upon the recommendation of Chief Trader Grahame, it was disposed

³² Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 367.

³³ R. Ingalls to J. A. Grahame, Fort Vancouver Depot, May 19, 1860, MS, in Records of U. S. Army Commands, Department of the Columbia, Letters Received, C4-Per, 1860, Box No. 4

³⁴ R. Ingalls to A. Pleasonton, Fort Vancouver Depot, June 14, 1860, MS, in Records of U. S. Army Commands, Department of the Columbia, Letters Received, C4-P34, 1860, Box No. 4

³⁵ Much of the material in the two paragraphs immediately above is based upon H. B. C. Archives, B. 223/b/42, fols. 173, 175-175d, as kindly quoted in Hudson's Bay Company to J. A. Hussey, London, January 21, 1948, MS.

to abandon all its interests south of the forty-ninth parallel "rather than be subjected to the degradation of being turned out piecemeal," providing that such action would not weaken the position of the British government in protesting the measures taken by General Harney.

At the suggestion of the Foreign Secretary, however, the firm decided to await the result of "one more representation" to the United States before abandoning Fort Vancouver, "upon the understanding that if such further application should not be attended with success, the Company will then, with the approbation of Her Majesty's Government, withdraw from all their property in American Territory, and seek through Her Majesty's Government compensation from the United States for the loss they may sustain in so doing." As a result, instructions were sent late in May, 1860, to the company's agents at Vancouver not to withdraw without orders to that effect from London. But by the time these directions reached the Pacific Coast, Dallas had already moved the Company's effects to Victoria.

On May 25, 1860, Lord Lyons, the British Minister in Washington, addressed a note to the United States Secretary of State, Lewis Cass, directing attention to the actions of the military authorities in the Department of Oregon and calling upon the United States Government to "arrest the proceedings." On June 7, Cass replied in a most conciliatory manner. "The President," he wrote, "has learned with regret the occurrence of any circumstances which, in the opinion of her Majesty's Government, would seem to impair the faithful execution of any provisions of treaty of 1846."

The Chief Executive, added Cass, "does not recognize the right of any subordinate of any service to decide upon questions affecting the diplomatic engagements of this Government," and as a result, "orders have been immediately despatched to the commander of the military division of Oregon, which will prevent effectually any interference with the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, until their rights under the treaty shall be amicably adjusted between the two Governments." Any servants of the Company who might have been dispossessed by the Army were to be reinstated upon their lands, and reasonable compensation for any losses sustained in consequence of military orders would be "cheerfully" made upon proper proof.³⁶

As a matter of fact, the orders issued to the commander of the Department of Oregon as the result of Lord Lyons' protest were a good deal less stringent than Cass' letter to the British Minister indicated. Indeed, in view of the fact that the Secretary of War had endorsed Harney's actions and had, on April 30, himself dir-

³⁶ The correspondence upon which the five paragraphs immediately above are based is printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 280-281; (XI), 405-407, 409-418.

ected the removal of the Company's improvements at Vancouver, little in the way of a reprimand could have been expected. On June 7, 1860, the Secretary of War simply directed the commander of the Department of Oregon to suspend execution of the instructions of April 30 until further orders from the War Department.³⁷ As far as can be determined, these were the only orders upon the subject ever sent to the military authorities in Oregon.

Although sent by telegraph and Pony Express, these orders of June 7 reached Vancouver too late to have any effect upon the withdrawal of the Company. Upon their receipt, however, Colonel George Wright, who had succeeded General Harney in the departmental command, suspended all destruction of the firm's buildings and improvements at Fort Vancouver.³⁸

End of the Company's tenure at Vancouver

As late as August, 1863, no further orders concerning the relations between the Army and the Hudson's Bay Company had been received by the military authorities at Fort Vancouver. As one officer pointed out at that time, under the instructions of June 7, 1860, there was nothing to prevent the return of the Company to the old fort.³⁹

Indeed, for a period after the evacuation the firm appears to have maintained a token occupation. Writing to the secretary of the Company on July 19, 1860, Dallas stated that "you will have learnt that Vancouver has been already abandoned, with exception of the gatekeeper. We therefore to all intents and purposes occupy the fort, only at a smaller cost."⁴⁰

But evidently this attempt to keep up the appearance of tenancy was soon discontinued. As shall be seen, some of the buildings of Fort Vancouver were temporarily occupied by the Army after the Company left. Gradually the buildings were destroyed or fell into decay, and in or about 1866 a conflagration removed practically all traces of the old fur-trading post.⁴¹

³⁷ A. G. O., Letters Sent Book, No. 32, MS, 424-425.

³⁸ G. Wright to S. Cooper, Fort Vancouver, July 8, 1860, MS, in A. G. O., Oregon Department, Document File 212-S-1860.

³⁹ B. Alvord to J. P. Usher, Fort Vancouver, August 28, 1863, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

⁴⁰ H. B. C. Archives, B.226/b/19, p. 132, as quoted in Hudson's Bay Company to J. A. Hussey, London, January 21, 1948, MS.

⁴¹ The destruction of the buildings at Fort Vancouver is described in detail on pp. 150-154 of this report.

Hudson's Bay Company claims, 1846-1869.

Almost from the moment of the signing of the Oregon Treaty in 1846, officers of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company expressed a desire to sell their rights and property south of the forty-ninth parallel to the United States. During 1848 the firms engaged an agent to press the matter in Washington; but in spite of the very remarkable opportunities for financial gain offered to that individual should he succeed in obtaining a generous settlement, no sale was made. Discussions and diplomatic negotiations concerning the topic continued between Great Britain and the United States at frequent intervals during subsequent years, but an agreement could not be reached. During most of the negotiations the companies insisted upon a price of \$1,000,000 for their rights, but at one point, in 1855, they authorized Governor Simpson to accept \$300,000 if better terms could not be obtained.

The troubles between the Company and the United States military authorities at Vancouver in 1860 served to bring the subject once more into diplomatic channels; but the claims of the two companies and the controversy over the northwest water boundary became linked together in the discussions between the governments, and negotiations continued to drag along without a definite decision being reached. Finally, in 1863, it was found possible to consider the matter of the companies' claims separately, and a treaty was drawn up and signed on July 1, 1863, which provided that each country should appoint a commissioner and that these two men should examine and decide upon all claims arising out of the third and fourth articles of the treaty of 1846. If the commissioners should fail to agree upon any point, they were to appoint an arbitrator whose decision was to be final. In case the commissioners could not agree upon an arbitrator, the selection was to be made by the King of Italy.

Under the terms of this treaty, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company presented to the joint commission claims which, as amended, amounted to the tidy sum of \$5,449,936.67. Over \$1,200,000 of this sum represented the Company's estimate of the value of its lands and improvements at Vancouver.

The gathering of testimony concerning the value of the lands, rights, and improvements of the two companies occupied several years; and the resulting evidence, when printed, occupied about 2,400 pages. Closing arguments were not submitted until 1869, and on September 10 of that year the commissioners filed their opinions and award, made without recourse to the services of an arbitrator. The amount awarded the Hudson's Bay Company in return for the transfer to the United States of all its possessory rights and claims under the Oregon Treaty of 1846 was \$450,000, while the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company received \$200,000. Although an attempt was made by Congress to deduct taxes said to be owed by the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company to Pierce County, Washington Territory, from the sums awarded, the full amount of the awards was paid to Great Britain in two equal installments, one in 1870 and the

other in 1871. With the extinction of these claims, the long and eventful story of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver came to an end.⁴²

⁴² As will be seen by reference to the bibliography appended to this report, several articles have been printed concerning the settlement of the Company's claims, but these have largely been superseded by the definitive discussion of the subject contained in a forthcoming volume of United States, Department of State, Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America, edited by Hunter Miller (Washington, 1931-), under the heading of "Document 240, Great Britain: July 1, 1863." Through the courtesy of Mr. Richard S. Patterson, of the Division of Historical Policy Research, Department of State, the writer was permitted to read the galley proof of that portion of the volume which deals with the 1863 treaty. An account of the proceedings under this treaty is to be found in John Bassett Moore, History and Digest of the International Arbitrations to which the United States Has Been a Party, Together with Appendices Containing the Treaties Relating to Such Arbitrations, and Historical and Legal Notes (6 vols., Washington, 1898), I, 237-270.

SECTION II

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

Chapter V

FORT VANCOUVER: THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

General view

As can be gathered from the preceding historical summary, Fort Vancouver was an extensive establishment. At the height of its prosperity—between about 1844 and 1846—the multitudinous activities which were centered about the fur trading post required the occupation of an immense tract of land. The Company's holdings, as determined by the amount of territory actually in use for agricultural, grazing, and other purposes, commenced on the north bank of the Columbia at a spot known as the "Prairie de Thé," about ten miles above the fort, and continued downstream for more than thirty miles, to beyond the mouth of the Lewis, or Cathlapootle River. From the Columbia, the Company's land stretched northward for an indefinite distance generally stated to have been three or four miles in some places and ten or fifteen in others. In addition, several islands in the river were occupied, chiefly for the grazing of cattle and hogs.¹

Scattered about over these vast holdings were a large number of buildings belonging to the Company. Most imposing, of course, were those within the stockade itself, those comprising Fort Vancouver proper. In the immediate neighborhood of the fort, in 1846, were the Catholic Church, several large barns and other farm structures, the homes of the lower grades of employees which collectively made up the "Village," and a scattering of other structures, large and small. Along the river bank were two large boat sheds, a structure known as the "Salmon Store," the hospital, the "Salt House," several stables, workshops, and residences.

North from Fort Vancouver, the Fort Plain contained several dwellings for shepherds and other employees. Five or six miles upstream, the grist mill and the sawmill, with their surrounding residences, formed a sizable settlement. About a mile back from the river near the mills was the Mill Plain, where the Company had about a thousand acres under cultivation. Here also were dwellings for farmers and shepherds, a storehouse, stable, and, in 1846, seven barns. On the rolling plateau between the Mill Plain and Fort Vancouver, and back from the river at varying distances, were several openings in the forest, chief of which were First, Second, Third, and Fourth plains. Cultivation or grazing was at times conducted on these prairies, and on them were located various more or less temporary dwellings for the employees occupied there.

¹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 8,106-107;(XI), 119-122.

West of the fort and along the river was the five-mile-long Lower Plain, with additional houses, a dairy, a barn, and a "piggery." Below the Lower Plain for some ten miles farther were bottom lands on which the Company ran cattle when the area was not flooded. Here again there were various temporary structures. It is impossible to fix exactly the locations of the several dairies, sheep folds, and other improvements in the region west of the fort, as they were shifted about as part of a definite program to fertilize the soil. The Company also maintained an extensive dairy on Squvie Island. In 1846 the structures on the island included four dwellings, four "dairies," and a granary.²

Actually, very little is known concerning the history and appearance of the many structures erected by the Hudson's Bay Company on the vast holdings at Vancouver. Only a few drawings and photographs of Company buildings on the Columbia are known to exist; descriptions left by visitors are vague and contradictory; and available Company records are fragmentary and give little information concerning the physical history of the post. As might be expected, more information is available concerning the stockade and the buildings within it than the scattered subsidiary structures. The present chapter is an attempt to summarize what is known about Fort Vancouver proper.

Area enclosed by the stockade

As determined by excavations conducted during the fall of 1947 by Louis R. Caywood, archeologist for the National Park Service, the Fort Vancouver stockade formed a quadrangle approximately 732 feet long and 325 feet wide. The exact lengths of the walls, as revealed by actual measurements of their remains, were as follows:

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------------------|
| North wall | — | 731 feet |
| South wall | — | 733 feet |
| West wall | — | 326 feet |
| East wall | — | 323 feet ³ |

Since it is certain that no changes in dimensions occurred after 1860, when the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned the post, the

² This brief description of the various buildings on the Company's lands is not intended to be complete; it is based chiefly upon an inventory made in 1846-1847. See T. C. Elliott, "British Values in Oregon, 1847," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXII (March, 1931), 27-45; also Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 118-121.

³ Louis R. Caywood, Exploratory Excavations at Fort Vancouver (mimeographed, U. S., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Vancouver, Wash., 1947), 2.

above figures incontrovertably represent the size of the stockade as it stood on June 14, 1860. From an analysis of available charts and descriptions, it is further apparent that no substantial or significant changes in the dimensions had been made for at least twenty-five years prior to that date. A sampling of measurements or estimates of the size of the stockade, as given by various visitors to the fort, is presented in the following table:

| Year of Measurement | Dimensions as Originally Written | Dimensions Converted to Feet | Source of Estimate or Measurement |
|---------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 1854 | 200yds. x 175yds. | 600 x 525 | I. I. Stevens |
| 1847 | 750ft. x 330 ft. | 750 x 330 | H. B. C. Inventory |
| 1846 | 226yds. x 106yds. | 678 x 318 | M. Vavasour |
| 1845 | 220yds. x 100yds. | 660 x 300 | H. J. Warre & M. Vavasour |
| 1845 | 800ft. x 500ft. | 800 x 500 | G. Hines |
| n.d. | 250yds. x 150yds. | 750 x 450 | J. Dunn |
| 1841 | 700ft. x 400ft. | 700 x 400 | G. F. Emmons |
| 1841 | 240m. x 130m. | 787.4 x 426.5 | E. Duflot de Mofras |
| 1841 | 600+ft. x 200+ft. | 600+ x 200+ | G. Simpson |
| 1841 | 780ft. x 260ft. | 780 x 260 | S. Holmes |
| 1839 | 250yds. x 150yds. | 750 x 450 | T. J. Farnham |
| 1837 | 750ft. x 450ft. | 750 x 450 | W. A. Slacum |
| 1835 | 37 rods x 18 rods | 610.5x 297 | S. Parker |

The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this summary is that human beings, even trained engineers, are not good at estimating distances. Several of the figures given above were clearly mere guesses, but others, presented in official or semi-official reports to the governments of Great Britain and the United States, purported to give the dimensions of the fort with some degree of accuracy. Since no trends are observable in the series of estimates, however, it seems probable that all of the figures given above refer to a structure which did not significantly change in size during the period covered by the observations.

But if the stockade was not altered materially in size between about 1835 and 1860, some interesting problems are raised. In 1841, Lieutenant George Foster Emmons, U. S. N., visited Fort Vancouver as a member of the United States Exploring Expedition under the command of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes. In his journal, Emmons drew a ground plan of the post (See Plate II). Although the Lieutenant remarked that he could not "vouch for its being correct in every particular," the diagram shows every evidence of having been carefully done. According to Emmons' plan, a number of the Fort's principal buildings—including the bakery, blacksmith shop, three large storehouses on the south side of the enclosure, the granary, clerk's office, and the kitchen of McLoughlin's

residence---were backed directly against the stockade, with little or no intervening space.⁴ But subsequent maps of the fort, beginning with that drawn during the winter of 1845-1846 by Lieutenant H. Vavasour, of the Royal Engineers, indicate that the, apparently, same buildings were separated from the palisade by distances varying from about ten to twenty-five feet on the north and south sides, while the east and west palisades appear to have been pushed back forty or fifty feet (see plate IV).

The question is, of course, was the stockade enlarged between 1841 and 1845, or was Lieutenant Emmons in error when he drew his map? By a reference to the table of measurements given above, it will be noted that, for the most part, the dimensions given by visitors of 1841 would appear to indicate that the palisade was, if anything, larger in that year than in 1845 and 1846. Also, although some of the buildings in question undoubtedly were rebuilt between 1841 and 1845, a comparison of the two ground plans shows that for the most part the structures retained their same sizes and relative positions. Therefore, the probabilities are that the buildings were not moved in from the palisade walls. From the historical evidence at hand, then, it seems that Lieutenant Emmons was in error when he showed the buildings abutting against the stockade.

But during the archeological excavations conducted by Louis R. Caywood in 1947, a row of posts was found extending southward from the north wall about 687 feet from the northwest corner of the stockade. It was at first thought that these stumps represented the remains of the east stockade wall, but later another line of posts was found some fifty feet farther eastward which proved to be the actual east wall. It is quite possible that further excavations will show the first line of posts to be the remains of an earlier stockade wall rather than foundations of buildings as surmised at present.⁵

It would have been a simple matter to enlarge the fort at the time a large portion of the stockade was renewed and the bastion built about January, 1845. Furthermore, as has been seen, the fear that the fort might be set afire by the American settlers would have given the Company's officers good reason to wish to increase the distance between the stockade and the main buildings. The

⁴ Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI, (September, 1925), 264-265. Some corroboration for Emmons' representation may be found in the journal of another member of the Wilkes expedition, who noted that nearly all the buildings were "built close along the palisade." Silas Holmes, Journal of A Cruise in the United States' Brig Porpoise (photostat from the original in the Yale University Library), II, 306.

⁵ Caywood, Exploratory Excavations at Fort Vancouver, 10.

question as to the accuracy of Emmons' sketch, therefore, cannot be settled at the present time. It will be interesting to see what results are obtained when excavations at Fort Vancouver are renewed.

During the 1860's the Hudson's Bay Company claimed that the stockade at Fort Vancouver had been doubled in extent between 1836 and 1846; and the firm found at least one witness who was willing to testify under oath to this fact. "I think the fort was increased to double its original size about the year 1836," stated William Henry Gray on August 11, 1866.⁶ Gray was an American missionary who came to Oregon in 1836. At the time of his arrival at Fort Vancouver in that year he noticed that the stockade was much decayed and was being replaced by a new one. Perhaps it was the memory of this construction work which caused him to state, thirty years later, that the palisaded area was doubled in size at about the time of his first arrival.⁷

At any rate, the problem of whether or not the stockade was enlarged about 1836 is quite as vexing as that concerning the possible increase in size between 1841 and 1845. The Reverend Samuel Parker, another American missionary, visited the Columbia depot in 1835 and estimated the stockade at that time to measure 37 rods by 18 rods, or 610.5 feet by 297 feet.⁸ As can be seen from the above table, these figures are well within the margin of error for estimates of the size of the stockade as it existed in 1845 and 1860. On the other hand, Parker could have overestimated the distances and could have been describing a smaller enclosure.

The question is not made any less difficult by the description given by a visitor of 1834. John Kirk Townsend, a young ornithologist from Philadelphia, reached Fort Vancouver in September of that year after a journey across the continent with the Wyeth party. In his published narrative of the trip he stated that the stockade formed an oblong square, about 250 feet by 100 feet. Since it is extremely unlikely that any wall of the palisade was ever as short as 100 feet, it is probable that Townsend meant to write "yards" in place of "feet." And if the measurement was actually about 250 yards by 100 yards, it will be seen that the stockade had

⁶ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 184.

⁷ William Henry Gray, A History of Oregon, 1792-1849, Drawn from Personal Observation and Authentic Information (Portland, Ore.; New York, 1870), 150.

⁸ Samuel Parker, Journal of an Exploring Tour Beyond the Rocky Mountains, Under the Direction of the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions, in the Years 1835, '36, and '37 . . . (2d ed., Ithaca, N. Y., 1840), 146.

practically reached its ultimate dimensions as early as 1834.⁹

The only earlier estimate of the stockade dimensions known to the present writer was that made by Jedediah Smith in 1829. In a letter written during the following year, he stated that a fort "three hundred feet square" had been started during the spring of 1829.¹⁰ It is quite possible that Smith left before the walls had been completed and thus was not able to form a correct opinion as to the size of the enclosure. But a partial confirmation of Smith's description is given in the journal of Nathaniel Wyeth, an American trapper and business man who first reached Fort Vancouver in October, 1832. "The Fort is of wood," he wrote, "and square."¹¹

There may or may not be some significance to the fact that descriptions of the fort up to and including that given by W. H. Gray in 1836 usually give the enclosed area as two acres or less.¹² Descriptions made in 1841 and later, on the other hand, state that the area within the walls was about four acres.¹³ On the surface, this information would appear to indicate that Gray was correct when he stated that the fort was doubled in size about 1835, but, as has been seen, estimates of size given by visitors are so unreliable that the matter must remain in doubt.

From all the information at hand, it is possible that Fort Vancouver, as constructed in 1829, was a square enclosure measuring

⁹ John Kirk Townsend, Narrative of a Journey across the Rocky Mountains, to the Columbia River, and a Visit to the Sandwich Islands, Chili, &c with a Scientific Appendix (Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, XXI, Cleveland, O., 1905), 297.

¹⁰ J. S. Smith, D. E. Jackson, W. L. Sublette to J. H. Eaton, St. Louis, October 29, 1830, in 21 Cong., 2 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 35, pp. 21-23.

¹¹ F. G. Young, ed., The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1831-6 (Sources of the History of Oregon, I, parts 3 to 6, Eugene, Ore., 1899), 176.

¹² Gray, A History of Oregon, 150; Samuel Parker, "Report," in Archer Butler Hulbert and Dorothy Printup Hulbert, eds., Marcus Whitman, Crusader, Part One, 1802 to 1839 (Overland to the Pacific, VI, Denver, 1936), 112; Willard H. Rees, "Donald Manson," in Transactions of the . . . Oregon Pioneer Association for 1879, 59.

¹³ Joel Palmer, Journal of Travels over the Rocky Mountains, to the Mouth of the Columbia River; Made during the Years 1845 and 1846 . . . (Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, XXX, Cleveland, Ohio, 1906), 210; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 326-327.

about 300 feet on a side. It is also possible that sometime about 1835 or 1836 the stockade was enlarged to measure about 610 by 300 feet. There is the further possibility that during the winter of 1844-1845 the enclosed area was again enlarged by pushing back the north and south walls about 10 or 15 feet and the east and west walls somewhat more than 50 feet. From the evidence, one can state with some confidence that the stockade walls remained essentially unchanged in size from the time Lieutenant Vavasour drew his map in 1845 until the fort was destroyed in the 1860's.

In the opinion of the present writer, however, there exists also the possibility that the stockade measured approximately 730 by 325 feet as early as 1834 and that it may have done so from its first construction in 1829. Any final conclusion on this matter must await the results of future archeological studies and the investigation of additional original Hudson's Bay Company records. The Fort Vancouver journals, if they still exist, should contain material which would definitely settle this question.

Construction of the Stockade

The Fort Vancouver stockade was constructed of logs which were ranged vertically to form pickets or pales. Visitors to the establishment described the logs quite indiscriminently as pine, cedar, or fir. In answer to a direct question as to what kind of wood was used for the pickets, an old employee of the Company testified in 1867 that they were "principally pine, probably with some cedar among them."¹⁴ The terms "pine," "cedar," and "fir" were used rather loosely in the Northwest in the 1830's to '60's, however, even by scientists. Samuel Parker, a missionary who visited Fort Vancouver in 1835, was more precise than the usual run of travelers. He noted that there was no pine along the Columbia below the Cascades and that as a consequence the only timber sawed at the Fort Vancouver mills was fir and oak.¹⁵ Since oak was not suitable for use as pickets, it seems inescapable that the only wood available to any extent was fir.

This conclusion is borne out by the remains of the stockade discovered still in the ground in 1947. Parts of three posts were sent for analysis to the Forest Products Laboratory of the United States Forest Service, in Madison, Wisconsin. All three proved to be Douglas fir.¹⁶

¹⁴ Testimony of Dugald MacTavish, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [XI], 71.

¹⁵ Parker, Journal, 182.

¹⁶ Caywood, Exploratory Excavations at Fort Vancouver, 12.

According to an employee who resided for a number of years at Fort Vancouver, only "very choise" logs were used for pickets. When the palisade was constructed in 1829 there was probably a sufficiency of suitable timber within a reasonable distance of the building site; but in later years, particularly, when rotting timbers had to be replaced, it was necessary to go "a great distance from the fort" to obtain satisfactory timber. The logs were cut, dragged by oxen to the Columbia, rafted downstream, and then hauled again by oxen to the depot.¹⁷

Three visitors, who were at Fort Vancouver in 1836, 1841, and 1843, respectively, described the pickets as being about eight or ten inches in diameter.¹⁸ Ends of posts found in the ground during the 1947 excavations measured between five and thirteen inches, roughly confirming the reports of the earlier observers. The excavations revealed that the larger posts were employed at the corners of the stockade, while the smaller ones formed the walls.¹⁹

The length of the posts appears to have varied according to the date at which they were cut. Visitors to the depot prior to the winter of 1844-1845 invariably give the height of the stockade as between 20 and 25 feet. Those describing the post in 1845 and later give figures which range from 12 to 20 feet, with 15 feet as the most frequent estimate.²⁰ It seems clear, therefore, that when the

¹⁷ Testimony of D. MacTavish, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [XI], 71.

¹⁸ Gray, A History of Oregon, 150; Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 265; Testimony of J. W. Nesmith, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 35.

¹⁹ Caywood, Exploratory Excavations at Fort Vancouver, 12.

²⁰ For examples, in order of date, see J. K. Townsend to [?], Washington, January 26, 1843, in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, IV (December, 1903), 339-402; Gray, A History of Oregon, 150; Thomas Jefferson Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, the Anahuac and Rocky Mountains, and in the Oregon Territory (Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 1841), 194; Holmes, Journal, MS, II, 305; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 305; Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 265; George Wilkes, The History of Oregon, Geographical and Political. To Which is Added a Journal of the Events of the Celebrated Emigrating Expedition of 1843 (New York, 1845), 95; John Dunn, History of the Oregon Territory and British North-American Fur Trade. (London, 1844), 143; Palmer, Journal, 209; Joseph Schafer, ed., "Documents Relative to Warre and Vavasour's Military Reconnoissance in Oregon; 1845-6," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, X (March, 1909) 46, 85; Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 176-177; [IX], 119; [XI], 219.

stockade was renewed, or possibly moved and rebuilt, during the winter of 1844-1845, the posts were not cut as long as they had been previously.

In addition to the length of the logs exposed above ground, several feet were buried in the earth. It was the usual custom at Hudson's Bay posts west of the Rockies to plant the pickets about four feet in the ground, and several visitors to Fort Vancouver say this same procedure was followed at that establishment.²¹ But Lieutenant Emmons, in 1841, noted that the posts at Vancouver were buried only two or three feet in the ground.²² Evidently Emmons was a more accurate observer than the other witnesses, for the 1947 excavations confirm his report. The posts were found planted to a depth of between two and three feet from the original ground level.²³

After being cut to size, the logs were prepared for use as pickets by being sharpened to a point on one end.²⁴ If usual Hudson's Bay Company practice was followed, the logs were alternately sharpened on the thin and thick ends so that, when placed side by side in the palisade with the sharpened ends up, they would fit together without large gaps, as would have been the case if all the thin ends had been placed up or down. At many Company posts it was ordinary procedure to square two sides of the log so that the pickets would butt together more evenly.²⁵ Whether or not these practices were followed at Fort Vancouver is not known.

According to the evidence uncovered by the 1947 excavations, the ends of the pickets which were buried in the ground had been saw-cut and were not sharpened. If the Company lawyers were correct in statements made in the 1860's, however, the buried ends were not put into the ground without any preparation. The usual practice, as intimated by their cross-questioning, was to strip the bark from the ends to be planted and to char them thoroughly on the outside. This procedure evidently helped to preserve the posts from rotting.²⁶

²¹ P. N. Compton, *Forts and Fort Life in New Caledonia under Hudson's Bay Company Regime* (MS, in Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley), 6; Gray, *A History of Oregon*, 150; Palmer, *Journal*, 209.

²² Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, XXVI (September, 1925), 265.

²³ Caywood, *Exploratory Excavations at Fort Vancouver*, 13.

²⁴ Testimony of Thomas Nelson, Br. and Am. Joint Comm., *Papers*, [IX], 88.

²⁵ Compton, *Forts and Fort Life in New Caledonia*, MS, 6.

²⁶ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., *Papers*, [IX], 35.

After the posts were raised, it was the usual practice of the Hudson's Bay Company to attach them to cross pieces which ran horizontally around the inside of the wall about four feet from the top. The pickets were fastened to this girth with wooden pegs or by means of an "oblique notch," as illustrated below:

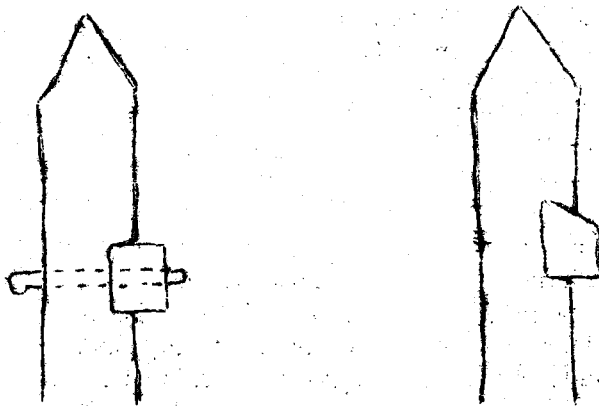


Figure 1

(After Compton, *Forts and Fort Life in New Caledonia*, MS, 6.)

The ends of the cross pieces, which were about fifteen feet long, were mortised into larger pickets called "king posts."²⁷

This same general type of construction was followed at Fort Vancouver, but with certain important variations. For a considerable period, certainly between 1841 and 1845, there were two sets of horizontal girths running around the inside of the Vancouver palisade, one four or five feet above the ground and the other a foot or two below the tops of the pickets. The cross pieces were fitted into notches cut in each log and were mortised into king posts at the ends in the usual manner. Each picket was fastened to the girths by wooden pegs. For additional support, necessary because the posts quickly rotted at the ground level, diagonal bracing timbers ran at intervals from the upper girth to the ground. One of these supports is clearly shown in a sketch of the inner side of a section of the palisade drawn by Lieutenant Emmons in 1841 (see plate II).²⁸

²⁷ Compton, *Forts and Fort Life in New Caledonia*, MS, 6.

²⁸ Descriptions of the construction of the Vancouver stockade as it existed at least until the late fall of 1845 are found in Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 265; Gray, A History of Oregon, 150; and Palmer, Journal, 209. Emmons stated that the girths were placed on either side of the palisade, but in this assertion he was clearly in error. A drawing of Fort Vancouver made at the time of Emmons' visit shows that there were no girths on the exterior face of the stockade (see plate III), nor are such girths shown on any other known picture of Fort Vancouver.

A photograph of the interior of the Vancouver stockade, taken in the spring of 1860, reveals, however, that by that date the construction of the palisade had reverted to the more usual Hudson's Bay type. The picture clearly shows that there was but one set of girths and that this line of horizontal cross pieces was four or five feet below the tops of the pickets (see plate XXIII). This change would indicate that there was a major rebuilding of the stockade between 1846 and 1860, but the exact date is not known.

A stockade post ordinarily lasted for about four or five years. By the end of that period it would be so rotted at the surface of the ground that it would have to be replaced. As a consequence, new pickets were inserted in the walls nearly every year.²⁹ But it appears that occasionally such repairs were neglected for long periods. A visitor in 1841, for instance, noted that nearly all the posts were more or less decayed.³⁰ Such neglect on occasion subjected the Company's officials to considerable embarrassment, for once or twice ten or fifteen-foot sections of the supposedly strong protecting wall were blown down by the wind.³¹

After each of these periods of neglect, the management at Fort Vancouver was forced to make extensive repairs, amounting in some instances to practically the rebuilding of the entire stockade. As has been seen, W. H. Gray noticed that such an operation was under way at the time of his arrival during the fall of 1836. Three years later, during the fall of 1839, 350 yards of the palisade were renewed.³² Another considerable section was replaced during the winter of 1844-1845.³³ It has already been shown that there was at least one additional rebuilding before 1860.

²⁹ Testimony of J. Nesmith, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 35; Testimony of Lloyd Brooke, in ibid., (VIII), 128.

³⁰ Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 265.

³¹ Testimony of L. Brooke, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 128.

³² J. Douglas to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 14, 1839, in H. B. S., VI, 224.

³³ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [XI], 52, 71; J. McLoughlin to G. Simpson, Fort Vancouver, March 20, 1845, in Clark, History of the Willamette Valley, I, 809. It was later stated that between 1850 and 1854 the stockade was "about rotted down." Repairs were made during that period simply by cutting off the same posts and resetting them in the ground. Testimony of L. Love, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 237.

Stockade gates

Knowledge of the gates in the Fort Vancouver stockade extends back only to 1841. The Emmons diagram (see plate II) and the Eld pencil sketch (see plate III), both made during that year, provide the earliest known information concerning the number and location of the gates. According to these sources, there were three gates in the palisade: two in the south, or front wall and one in the north, or rear wall. From the ground plan drawn by Lieutenant Vavasour in 1845 (see plate IV) and from the view sketched by Lieutenant Henry J. Warre at about the same time (see plate VI) it is apparent that the number and relative positions of the gates remained unchanged between at least 1841 and 1845.

Since the Emmons map does not have a scale, it is impossible to determine the exact positions of the gates in 1841. Lieutenant Vavasour's rather rough ground plan is not too accurate as far as the dimensions of the stockade are concerned. According to the scale accompanying his sketch, the area enclosed by the palisade was about 690 by 320 feet. Actually, as has been seen, the area was about 732 by 325 feet. Yet, lacking better evidence, the Vavasour plan must be used if any determination is to be made of the approximate locations of the gates as they existed in 1845.

According to Vavasour's ground plan, the gate in the north wall was approximately 12 to 16 feet wide and was situated about 208 feet west of the northeast corner of the palisade. In the front wall, the east, or main gate appears to have been about ten feet wide and to have been located about 208 feet west of the southeast corner of the stockade. The west front-wall gate was some twelve or fourteen feet wide and was about 190 feet east of the southwest corner. It was this latter gate, seemingly, which was known as the "business gate."³⁴

Exactly how long the gates maintained these positions is not known. In 1854, Lieutenant Colonel B. L. E. Bonneville, commanding the United States Army post at Fort Vancouver, made a survey of the Government military reservation. On his original plan he plotted the stockade and buildings of the Hudson's Bay post with evident care (see plate XV). According to his map, the main or east gate, located in the south wall, had by 1854 been moved somewhat to the west from the position it occupied in 1845. A survey made at the direction of General W. S. Harney in 1859 (see plate XXI) and a ground plan made by a board of Army officers in 1860 (see plate XXIV) indicate that the main gate remained in this new position as long as the fort continued to be occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company. As closely as can be determined from these maps, the new location was about 335 feet west of the southeast stockade corner.

³⁴ John Minto, "Reminiscences of Experiences on the Oregon Trail in 1844--II," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, II (September, 1901), 245.

These same maps also indicate that the position of the other two gates remained essentially unchanged between 1845 and 1860, except that between 1859 and June, 1860, the business gate may have been moved about 100 feet to the west.

Nothing is known concerning the appearance or construction of the gates except that they were not as high as the stockade. They were evidently cut out of the palisade wall, and the pickets continued in an uninterrupted row across the top of each gateway opening (see plates III, VI). But if the gates followed the usual pattern of those of other Hudson's Bay Company posts in the West, they were "massive structures," about six or seven inches thick and heavily studded with large nails. There was usually a small door cut in each gate so that a single person or small party could enter without the necessity of opening the entire gate.³⁵

Fort Vancouver Bastion

It has been stated that when the fort was shifted from the bluff to the plain, bastions or blockhouses were placed at the corners of the new stockade but that they were removed before 1841.³⁶ However, John Kirk Townsend, who visited Fort Vancouver as early as 1834, reported that the establishment had no bastions.³⁷ It seems unlikely that, if there were blockhouses in 1829, they would have disappeared by 1834, particularly since there are no reports of any extensive rebuilding or enlarging of the stockade prior to that date. At the time of his visit in 1841, Lieutenant Charles Wilkes noted that Vancouver differed "from all the other forts in having no bastions, galleries, or loop-holes."³⁸

As has been seen, however, the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company and, in particular, McLoughlin began during the early 1840's to fear that Fort Vancouver might be attacked by the American settlers who were pouring into the Oregon country. It was almost certainly for this reason that the Doctor determined to strengthen the depot's defenses. During the winter of 1844-1845 an extensive building program was carried on: much of the stockade was renewed and a three-story blockhouse was built at the northwest corner of the palisade. The date of this work is fixed with some exactness by a letter which McLoughlin wrote to Governor Simpson

³⁵ Compton, *Forts and Fort Life in New Caledonia*, MS, 7.

³⁶ George Washington Fuller, *A History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York, 1931), 118.

³⁷ J. K. Townsend to [?], Washington, January 26, 1843, in *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, IV (December, 1903) 399-402.

³⁸ Wilkes, *Narrative*, IV, 327.

on March 20, 1845. "In the Month of January last," he said, "some Americans seeing us repair our pickets erect a bastion, our Blacksmiths making small Axes for the Indian Trade spread a report among their Countrymen that we were fortifying the Fort and making Axes to set the Indians against the Americans."³⁹ This blockhouse was completed before Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour visited Vancouver in the fall of 1845, and it continued to stand at least until June, 1860, when the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned the post.

Late in November, 1847, the Cayuse Indians massacred Dr. Marcus Whitman and a number of other residents at the Whitman mission at Waiilatpu on the Walla Walla River. Almost immediately the Oregon Provisional Government raised a force and proceeded against the murderers. The Americans found some difficulty in equipping their troops for the Cayuse War, as the ensuing struggle with the Indians came to be called; and there were rumors that the Provisional Government intended to "levy contributions" upon the Hudson's Bay Company, whose warehouses at Vancouver were believed to be bulging with food, arms, ammunition, clothing, and other necessities for a campaign. Taking cognizance of these reports, Chief Factor James Douglas, temporarily in charge of Fort Vancouver, informed Governor George Abernethy of the Provisional Government that "instant measures" were being taken for the protection of the Company's property. "I trust," he wrote from the post on December 31, 1847, "this explanation will satisfactorily account for any unusual precautions observed in the present arrangements of this establishment."⁴⁰

These words have been taken by certain writers and historians to indicate that one or more additional bastions were erected at Fort Vancouver during the winter of 1847-1848.⁴¹ It is true that Lieutenant M. Vavasour, of the Royal Engineers, who with Lieutenant Henry J. Warre made a military reconnaissance of the Oregon country for the British Government in 1845-1846, had recommended that another small blockhouse should be built at the southeast corner of the stockade, but there is no reliable evidence to show that this action was ever taken.⁴²

³⁹ Clark, History of the Willamette Valley, I, 809. See also S. F. Chadwick, "Address," in Constitution and Quotations from the Register of the Oregon Pioneer Association (Salem, Ore., 1875), 26.

⁴⁰ Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXIV (June, 1923), 193-194.

⁴¹ "Letter by Daniel H. Lownsdale to Samuel R. Thurston," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XIV (September, 1913), 242; Schafer, "Documents Relative to Warre and Vavasour's Military Reconnaissance in Oregon, 1845-6," in ibid., X (March, 1909), 86, note.

⁴² Schafer, op. cit., 86.

In 1849, Major D. H. Vinton, United States Army quartermaster, made a survey of the Company's buildings at Fort Vancouver with a view to determining their cash value. In his inventory of the buildings within the stockade he noted but one blockhouse.⁴³ Even the Hudson's Bay Company, in later claiming damages for the buildings it was practically forced to evacuate in 1860, mentioned only the one bastion in the northwest corner.⁴⁴ A Board of United States Army officers examined and appraised the Company's improvements in June, 1860, and found but one blockhouse, "in a ruinous condition."⁴⁵

Between 1850 and 1860, the military authorities at Vancouver Barracks made a number of maps of the military reservation. Several of these charts (see plates XV, XXI, XXIV) show the buildings of the Hudson's Bay Company with an obvious attempt at accuracy. It is significant that all of them show but the one bastion at the northwest corner. Neither do any of the pictures of the fort reveal evidence of a bastion at any other angle of the stockade. And, finally, no trace of a bastion at the southwest corner was found during the excavations of 1947.⁴⁶

From the above cited evidence, therefore, it would appear that there were no blockhouses or bastions whatever at Fort Vancouver between at least 1834 and the winter of 1844-1845. After January, 1845, there was a bastion at the northwest corner of the stockade, and this was the only bastion or blockhouse at the fort during the remainder of its existence.

It must be admitted, however, that there may have been some additional and lesser defensive structures at Fort Vancouver, particularly after 1847. Reminiscences of visitors to the post prior to that date sometimes mention one or more bastions besides that in the northwest corner, but these statements may safely be dismissed as errors, probably resulting from confusing conditions at other posts with those at Fort Vancouver.⁴⁷ For the period

⁴³ D. H. Vinton to P. F. Smith, Fort Vancouver, October 1, 1849, MS, in Office of the Quartermaster General, War Records Division, the National Archives; also printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 133.

⁴⁴ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 176-177, 202-203.

⁴⁵ Proceedings of a Board of Officers, Fort Vancouver, June 15, 1860, MS, in A. G. O., Oregon Dept., Doc. File 212-S-1860, War Records Division, the National Archives; also printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 75-77.

⁴⁶ Caywood, Exploratory Excavations at Fort Vancouver, 12.

⁴⁷ For examples see Dunn, The Oregon Territory, 143; John Minto, "What I Know of Dr. McLoughlin and How I Know It," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XI (June, 1910), 177-200.

after 1847, however, mentions of two or more "bastions" at the establishment become so numerous and so detailed that they cannot be ignored. On November 27, 1847, for instance, an emigrant named Loren B Hastings arrived at Vancouver, and he remained there overnight. In his diary he mentioned seeing "bastions built at the corners containing cannon."⁴⁸ Describing the fort in 1854, Governor Isaac I. Stevens of Washington Territory said that the post was defended by bastions at the northwest and southeast corners.⁴⁹ No less an authority than General Philip H. Sheridan, who was stationed in Washington Territory during 1855 and 1856, recalled several years later that there had been "blockhouses" inside the stockade at diagonal corners.⁵⁰ Several other witnesses for the United States before the British and American Joint Commission for the Final Settlement of the Claims of the Hudson's Bay and Puget's Sound Agricultural Companies testified that there were at least two bastions at Fort Vancouver, although still others could recall only one.⁵¹ There is a possibility, therefore, that a small gallery or platform was constructed inside at least the southeast corner of the stockade sometime about 1847. Such galleries, built about four or five feet below the tops of the pickets, were almost standard equipment in Hudson's Bay posts west of the Rockies.⁵²

Construction of the bastion

As described by Lieutenant Vavasour in March, 1846, the bastion in the northwest corner was a "block house 20 feet square." The two lower stories were loop-holed, while the upper was "an octagonal cap containing eight 3 lb. iron guns."⁵³ A photograph of Fort Vancouver in 1860 confirms the accuracy of Vavasour's description and reveals the further information that each of the three visible surfaces of the octagonal third story contained one square gun port (see plate XXIII). A drawing of the fort made by George Gibbs in 1851 shows similar openings in three other faces. Available pictures do not prove beyond a doubt that the remaining

⁴⁸ Loren B. Hastings, "Diary," in Transactions of the . . . Oregon Pioneer Association . . . 1923, 25-26.

⁴⁹ I. I. Stevens to W. L. Marcy, Washington, June 21, 1854, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [XI], 219.

⁵⁰ Ibid., [IX], 267.

⁵¹ Ibid., 51, 67, 90, 408.

⁵² Compton, Forts and Fort Life in New Caledonia, MS, 7.

⁵³ Schafer, "Documents Relative to Warre and Vavasour's Military Reconnoissance in Oregon, 1845-6," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, X (March, 1909), 85.

two surfaces likewise each contained one port, but it is reasonable to assume that such was the case, in accord with the usual practice in building this type of bastion on the West Coast (see plate VII, showing a bastion at Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island).

During the excavations of 1947, the foundation timbers of the Fort Vancouver bastion were found still in place. The foundation of each wall consisted of two 8" x 8" sawed timbers placed side by side, the distance between them being from one to five inches. The overall dimensions of the foundation proved to be about twenty feet six inches on each side. But as Mr. Caywood points out, the foundation timbers had "undoubtedly moved outward a few inches from the pressure and perhaps from buckling" during the fire which destroyed the structure during the 1860's. Mr Caywood further states that "a door undoubtedly had existed in the southeast corner of the bastion, but evidence of this was not too conclusive, except for the fact that no great amount of rotted timber showed in that section:"⁵⁴

Photographs and drawings clearly reveal that the type of construction employed for the bastion was that known as "French-Canadian," "Canadian," or "posts in the sill." In this type of construction, a sill of heavy timbers was laid down as a base for the proposed structure. The ends of these timbers were ordinarily fastened together at the corners by interlocking joints (see plate VIII). The sill sometimes rested directly on the ground but more often was elevated by wooden blocks or piles.

At the corners and at convenient intervals along the sill, usually six to ten feet, heavy upright posts were planted by means of mortises. These uprights were grooved, and into the grooves were slid the tenoned ends of horizontally-lying logs or timbers which filled the empty spaces between the uprights and formed the walls.⁵⁵

In 1933 and 1934, at the time of the reconstruction at Tacoma of Fort Nisqually, a Hudson's Bay post originally located on Puget Sound near the mouth of the Nisqually River, a study was made of the Company's methods of building. "Gray haired pioneers" who as children had played around Fort Nisqually were interviewed, and from one of them was received a description of the original bastions at that post. His words, while referring specifically to Fort Nisqually, contain certain information which probably would apply equally as well to the blockhouse at Vancouver. He wrote:

⁵⁴ Caywood, Exploratory Excavations at Fort Vancouver, 12, plates 3 and 13.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of "posts in the sill" construction, with many illustrations, see Marius Barbeau, "The House that Mac Built," in The Beaver, Outfit 276 (December, 1945), 10-13.

Heavy fir logs were adzed to timbers 10 by 14 inches square with tenons on the ends. These tenons were mortised into grooves in heavy upright corner posts and pinned with oak dowels. Oak pegs three feet long were driven down through holes bored in the horizontal timbers, making a very strong construction.⁵⁶

The timbers used on the Fort Vancouver blockhouse were almost certainly sawed rather than adzed. A photograph reveals that in addition to the corner posts, there was one upright in each wall of the two lower stories. The roof was shingled, and at its peak was an upright ornament, or perhaps, a weathercock.

Armament of the bastion

Lieutenants Warre and Vavasour, of the British Army, arrived at Fort Vancouver on August 25, 1845, while on their secret military reconnaissance of the Oregon country. They spent the fall and winter making surveys throughout much of the territory, but their headquarters were at Vancouver, and presumably they made a thorough inspection of that establishment. On October 26, 1845, the two officers made a joint report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in which they stated that the Fort Vancouver blockhouse contained six 3-pound iron guns. In March, 1846, Lieutenant Vavasour reported to the commander of the Royal Engineers in Canada that the same structure contained eight 3-pound iron guns.⁵⁷ To complicate matters still further, Lieutenant William Peel, an officer of the Royal Navy and son of Sir Robert Peel, visited Vancouver during September, 1845, and reported to the captain of H. M. S. America on September 27 that there were seven small 3-pounders in the bastion.⁵⁸ Doctor Henry Atkinson Tuzo, who reached Fort Vancouver in 1853 to take up his duties as post surgeon for the Company, later testified that at the time of his arrival the blockhouse mounted "eight small cannon" in its third story.⁵⁹ There seems to be no way of judging which of the witnesses was most accurate or whether or not the number of guns varied from time to time.

⁵⁶ Alfred L. Gehri, "Fort Nisqually Lives Again," in The Beaver, Outfit 265, No. 2 (September, 1934), 54.

⁵⁷ Schafer, "Documents Relative to Warre and Vavasour's Military Reconnaissance in Oregon, 1845-6," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, X (March, 1909), 46, 85.

⁵⁸ Leslie M. Scott, "Report of Lieutenant Peel on Oregon in 1845-6," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXIX (March, 1928), 60-64.

⁵⁹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 176.

General survey of the buildings within the stockade

The number and locations of the buildings within the Fort Vancouver stockade changed considerably throughout the years of the establishment's existence. Between 1829 and 1846, particularly, new structures were erected at frequent intervals. Sometimes these new buildings were in addition to those already existing, and sometimes they were replacements for older structures which were torn down as they fell into disrepair or were outgrown.⁶⁰ To make the matter of the identification of individual structures more difficult, activities carried on in one building would sometimes be shifted to another, with a consequent change in the names of the buildings. In 1841, for instance, the Indian trading shop was in a large building to the west of the southeast stockade gate; in 1845 the shop was located to the east of the same gate. Since the exact date of the shift is not known, any reference to the Indian store between these two years leaves one in doubt as to which building is meant.

Buildings within the stockade, 1829-1841

The earliest known ground plan of Fort Vancouver is that drawn by Lieutenant Emmons on or about July 25, 1841. Prior to that date the evidence concerning the number and locations of the buildings at the post is unsatisfactory. By piecing together what fragments of information are available, however, a general picture of the fort proper as it existed during its first twelve years can be reconstructed.

As was the case with the old fort, construction^{on} the new establishment proceeded at a slow pace. During 1829 all available men were occupied in the Indian trade on the lower Columbia to prevent the business falling into the hands of American traders who visited the river in two vessels. "In consequence of being so much employed with opposition we have not got on so fast with our buildings as expected," McLoughlin complained in the spring of the next year.⁶¹

Evidently by 1836 conditions were not much improved. It "will appear perhaps extraordinary but nevertheless a fact," the Doctor told the directors in that year, "that we have not been able to finish the house I dwell in along with the other officers of the Establishment." He further stated that it would be impossible to

⁶⁰ Testimony of James Douglas, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers [II], 57.

⁶¹ J. McLoughlin to G. Simpson, Fort Vancouver, March 21, 1830, in John McLoughlin, Letter Book, MS, in possession of Dr. Burt Brown Barker, of Portland, Oregon. For permission to examine parts of this letter book and typed copies of many of the letters, as well as for help in other phases of the research, the writer is deeply indebted to Dr. Barker.

built a dwelling house for the post agriculturalist and his wife as directed by the Committee, without neglecting "other important work."⁶²

In spite of these difficulties, however, substantial advances were made during these early years. Probably some of the very first buildings were simply structures moved from the fort on the hill. These were replaced or supplemented with new buildings as rapidly as conditions permitted. In 1832 there were storehouses and dwellings for McLoughlin and the other gentlemen of his staff within the stockade, and the stone or brick powder magazine had been constructed by that date.⁶³

By 1834, the descriptions of the post become more specific. When John Kirk Townsend reached Fort Vancouver in September of that year he noted that there were ten or twelve buildings — several dwellings, storehouses, workshops, and other structures — "arrayed together in quadrilateral form" within the stockade, "the house occupied by the doctor being in the middle." In front of this last mentioned "governor's mansion," four "great" cannon — two long 18's and two 9-pounders — frowned across the courtyard, which was a "large open space" enclosed "on three sides by the buildings." In the courtyard the Indians assembled to trade their furs, game, and other articles; and there also the furs from the warehouses were taken once a week and beaten to free them from dust and insects.⁶⁴

Samuel Parker, who spent much of the winter of 1835-1836 at Fort Vancouver, has left a description of the post which adds a

⁶²J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, November 15, 1836, in H. B. S., IV, 160-161.

⁶³John Ball, "Across the Continent Seventy Years Ago. Extracts from the Journal of John Ball," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, III (March, 1902), 98; Young, Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 176.

⁶⁴Townsend, Narrative, 297-298; J. K. T[ownsend] to[?], Washington, January 26, 1843, in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, IV (December, 1903), 399-402; Townsend, "Private Journal," in Archer Butler Hulbert, ed., The Call of the Columbia: Iron Men, in Saints take the Oregon Trail (Overland to the Pacific, IV (Denver, 1934), 226. Hall J. Kelley, who reached the fort in October, 1834, also mentioned the "mansion-house, opening from the court." Fred Wilbur Powell, "Hall Jackson Kelly—Prophet of Oregon," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XVIII (June, 1917), 126. It will be noted that, unlike the usual practice at nearly all other western Hudson's Bay posts, Indians did not do their trading at Vancouver through a hole in the stockade but were admitted to the court.

a few details to the picture and which appears to indicate that few major changes occurred between 1834 and 1835. He found that there were eight "substantial" buildings within the enclosure. Among these larger buildings were four storehouses—one for the Indian trade, in which the furs were kept; one for provisions; one for goods opened for the current year's business; and one for the year-in-advance supply of goods. He also noted that the fort contained a bakery and shops for blacksmith, joiners, carpenters, and a tinner. He mentioned a "well-regulated medical department" and a hospital, but failed to make clear whether or not the latter was located within the walls. He was given rooms in a new and well-furnished house which was probably, but not certainly, inside the stockade.⁶⁵

During 1836 there was a veritable swarm of new arrivals and visitors at the depot, but apparently none of them left a detailed account of the buildings at the post. The Reverend Mr. Herbert Beaver, the Company's chaplain who arrived during the year, complained much about the house in which he and his wife were lodged, but his known writings do not throw much light upon its location.

Perhaps the most valuable contribution to a present-day understanding of the fort as it existed in 1836 was made by W. H. Gray, who reached Vancouver with the Whitman party of missionaries in the fall of that year. In front of the "big square hewed-timber house" of Dr. McLoughlin, he recorded, was a "half semi-circle double stairway, leading to the main hall up a flight of some ten steps," and in the center of the semicircle was "one large 24-pound cannon, mounted on a ship's carriage, and on either side was a small cannon, or mortar gun, with balls piled in order about them, all pointing to the main gate entrance." After entering the fort, said Gray, the Whitman party was led up these stairs and into the Doctor's house.⁶⁶

This information is of considerable importance, since it appears to establish the fact that the chief factor's house stood, in September, 1836, in about the same relative position to the main gate as, according to Emmons' ground plan, it did in 1841. If it can be shown that McLoughlin's house of 1841 was actually the same structure as his residence in 1836, then information as to the location of the main gate is pushed back an additional five years, from 1841 to 1836. And, as shall be seen, if the location of the Doctor's home and the main gate in 1836 can be fixed, then some additional light can be thrown upon the problem of the size of the stockade and the arrangement of the buildings at that date.

The description given by Gray of McLoughlin's dwelling, with

⁶⁵ Parker, Journal, 146, 168, 184.

⁶⁶ Gray, A History of Oregon, 149-150.

its semicircular front stair, corresponds exactly with the appearance of the post manager's house as revealed by the photograph of 1860 (see plate XXII). The series of ground plans of Fort Vancouver from 1841 to 1860 clearly shows that the "mansion house" did not change in location or, apparently, in size during those years. Therefore, it is practically certain that the house of 1860 was also that of 1841; and since the house of 1860 appears by description to also have been that of 1836, then the house of 1841 was also the same as that of 1836.

Furthermore, this conclusion is reenforced by other evidence and has additional implications. Since McLoughlin wrote in November, 1836, that it was "extraordinary but nevertheless a fact" that his residence was not yet completed, it is evident that this structure had been in the process of construction for a considerable period of time, probably since 1829; and, being still unfinished, it probably was not in a decayed condition and thus was not torn down and replaced by a new dwelling between 1836 and 1841. It seems very likely, therefore, that the manager's house was built about 1829 and remained standing until at least June, 1860, and this in spite of two definite statements to the contrary.⁶⁷

William A. Slacum, a purser in the United States Navy, visited Fort Vancouver in 1837 and counted thirty-four buildings "of all descriptions" within the stockade. Since he evidently included out-houses and other minor structures, his figures do not necessarily mean that the number of buildings had tripled since Townsend had noted his ten or twelve in 1834. Slacum listed the ordinarily-mentioned dwellings for officers and the workshops for carpenters, blacksmith, wheelwrights, coopers, and tinnerns; and he also noted the brick powder magazine. But on the whole, his writings contribute little to our knowledge of the buildings in the fort proper.⁶⁸

Fortunately, information concerning the improvements made during the next two years is more abundant. On October 18, 1838, Chief Trader James Douglas, in charge of Fort Vancouver during McLoughlin's absence in Europe, informed the Governor and Committee that "besides the ordinary labours of the place, already enumerated, a large building of 153 x 33 feet, intended for a dwelling House, will be completed in the course of 6 weeks."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ James Douglas later testified that all the buildings standing in 1846 had been erected after 1838; and W. H. Gray stated that the stockade was enlarged about 1836 and that a large house for McLoughlin was among the buildings constructed in the new part of the fort. Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 57; [VIII], 184.

⁶⁸ William A. Slacum, "Slacum's Report on Oregon, 1836-7," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XIII (June, 1912), 175-224.

⁶⁹ H. B. S., IV, 260.

This building was undoubtedly that designated as number 9 on the Emmons ground plan of 1841 (see plate II) and generally known as the "bachelors' quarters." It continued to stand until at least 1860.

During the late summer and fall of 1839 a new granary, capable of holding about 18,000 bushels of grain, was completed.⁷⁰ This structure is number 19 on the Emmons plan, and apparently it also survived until about 1860. "Other improvements are becoming daily more necessary," Douglas told the directors on October 14, 1839, "in consequence of the age and decaying state of the buildings, to which we will give attentions as means permit."⁷¹

This construction carried out under the orders of James Douglas in 1838 and 1839 marked the beginning of an extensive building program under which most of the structures within the stockade were completely rebuilt between 1838 and 1846. In addition, several entirely new buildings were added during the same period.⁷²

By the fall of 1839 the interior of the stockade had begun to assume the appearance it presented during the period of its highest development, between about 1844 and 1846. Thomas Jefferson Farnham, an American traveler who reached Fort Vancouver in October, 1839, counted thirty-five wooden buildings within the walls in addition to the brick powder magazine. He noted that these structures were grouped to form two courts, in the fashion shown in the Emmons diagram of 1841. Farnham's naming of certain individual structures adds nothing not already known from earlier descriptions, except that he mentioned that one building near the rear gate was occupied as a schoolhouse. This structure was almost certainly that designated as number 4 on the Emmons map, and Farnham's words thus push definite knowledge of this building back to 1839.⁷³

It will be seen that Fort Vancouver in 1839, with its thirty-five buildings arranged in two courts, had progressed considerably since 1834, when Townsend had counted ten or twelve major structures lining three sides of a single quadrangle. This very obvious growth again brings up the question of whether or not the stockade area was doubled in or about 1836. In the opinion of the present writer, the problem is incapable of solution on the basis of the evidence at hand. The difficulties are made apparent by considering the ar-

⁷⁰ J. Douglas to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 14, 1839, in ibid., VI, 224.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Depositions of Thomas Lowe, D. MacTavish, and J. Douglas in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 24, 57; [XI], 52.

⁷³ Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 194.

guments for each of the two sides to the question.

The case in favor of the thesis that the stockade was enlarged is based chiefly upon the testimony of W. H. Gray. "Was not the fort and much of the stockade rebuilt, and the stockade doubled in extent, between 1836 and 1846?" Gray was asked in 1866 by a lawyer representing the Hudson's Bay Company.

"I think the fort was increased to double its original size about the year 1836; that the new quarters for the clerks, blacksmith shop, Indian trading shop, and a large house for the residence of Dr. McLoughlin, parsonage for Rev. Mr. Beaver, and some other small buildings, were in the new part of the fort," replied Gray.⁷⁴

Which section of the fort Gray considered to be the "new part" is clearly shown by the following diagram, based upon Vavasour's ground plan of 1845; the buildings named by Gray are indicated in black:

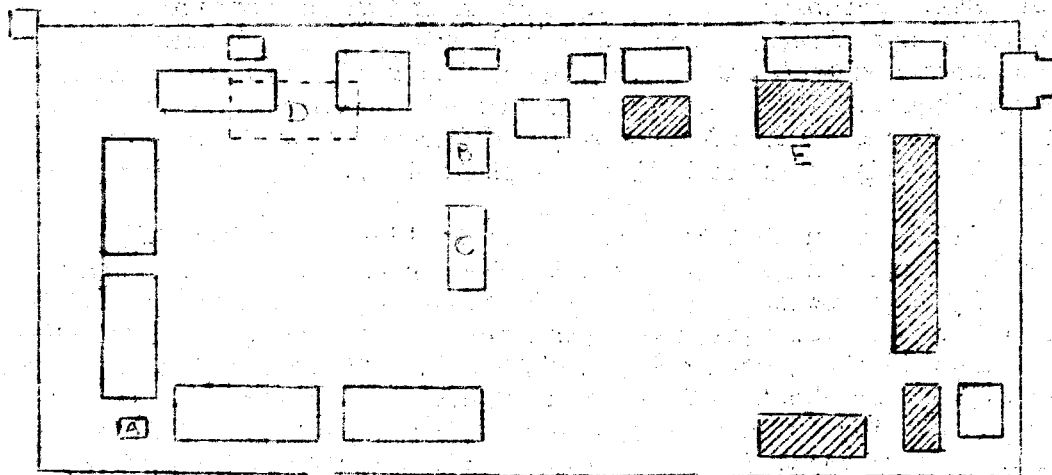


Figure 2

Certainly the western half of the stockaded area was old, undoubtedly dating back to 1829. As has been seen, a stone or brick powder magazine existed as early as 1832, and in all probability it continued to stand in its original position throughout the existence of the fort. This location ("A" in the above diagram) was near the southwest corner. Also, in 1841 the range of buildings ("B" and "C" in the above diagram plus a carpenter

⁷⁴ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (VIII), 184.

shop marked "12" on the Emmons map) which divided the enclosure into two courts was described as being composed of "old" structures.⁷⁵ Thus it is possible that the single quadrangle described by Townsend was made up of the buildings forming the west court in the above diagram. But in order for McLoughlin's house to have been "in the middle" of this quadrangle, it must have stood about in the position marked "D" in the above ground plan. Assuming that the main gate was then at "F," such a position would have accorded very well with the location as given by Gray in 1836, who said that the guns in front of McLoughlin's door pointed to the main gate entrance. After the supposed enlargement of the stockade in or about 1836, another "mansion" could have been built, as stated by Gray. This new manager's house would have been at the location marked "E," where the Doctor's residence stood in 1841. This latter location, it will be noted, was nearly opposite what Gray would have termed the "new" main gate ("G" in the diagram). Thus it too, if built in the "new" part of the stockade before Gray's arrival, would have been located opposite the main gate as described by him.

But although the western half of the enclosure was incontrovertibly old, there are some facts which make it difficult to accept Gray's testimony that it was older than the eastern half. In the first place, it has already been seen that McLoughlin's house as described by Gray in 1836 was probably the same as that shown at position "E" on the maps of 1841 and 1845. And it has also been shown that this house of 1836 had, in all probability, been commenced in 1829. Therefore there is the possibility that the supposedly new half of the stockaded area contained the manager's residence as early as 1829. In the second place, it has been seen that according to Parker's estimate, the stockade probably measured about 610 by 300 feet in 1835, about a year before the supposed enlargement to that size as mentioned by Gray; and if Townsend meant to give his estimate in yards instead of feet, the larger size for the enclosure can be traced back to at least 1834.

There is the possibility, then, that the buildings forming Townsend's quadrangle of 1834 were ranged around the larger courtyard which would be formed if buildings "B" and "C" in the above diagram were not present. Although described as "old" in 1841, so rapid was the process of decay at Vancouver that they could have been constructed after 1834 and still appeared ancient in 1841. Of course the location marked "E" was scarcely "in the middle" of the quadrangle as described by Townsend, but from its dominant position nearly opposite the main gate it may have appeared to the casual observer to have been in the center of the fort.

Probably the answer to this question will be uncovered during future archeological excavations. If investigations reveal the foundation of a large and otherwise unaccounted for building near

⁷⁵ Holmes, Journal, MS, II, 305.

the site marked "D" on the above diagram, or if they uncover the remains of a palisade bisecting the stockade area as it stood in 1841, then we may assume that Gray was correct when he stated that the fort was doubled in area about 1836.

Buildings within the stockade, 1841

Accompanying the Emmons ground plan of 1841 (see plate II) is the first available list of the buildings within the Fort Vancouver palisade. These structures are as follows (the numbers are as given on the Emmons diagram, but the descriptions and names have been somewhat revised in the light of information given by other visitors of 1841):

1. Residence of the post manager: occupied by Dr. McLoughlin and Chief Factor James Douglas.
2. Kitchen and servants' quarters for the manager's residence.
3. Chaplain's residence, also "Governor's temporary residence."
4. Kitchen for chaplain's residence, also used as a school room.
5. Clerks' office.
6. Catholic chapel: apparently also employed occasionally for Protestant Episcopal services.
7. Bakery
8. Wash house
9. Quarters for subordinate officers and their families
10. Blacksmith shop
11. Storehouse, called the "Missionary Store" because it had "been used by the American missionaries to store their property."
12. Carpenter shop
13. Indian trade store, also contained the hospital and dispensary.
14. Storehouse for furs.
15. Powder magazine: the only brick building.
- 16, 17, 18. General storehouses, for provisions, drygoods, hardware, and other goods.
19. Granary.

In addition to the buildings listed above, Emmons plotted four smaller structures, evidently out-houses, in the rear of the subordinate officers' quarters. His ground plan also shows the locations of two large field pieces in front of McLoughlin's residence (no. 20), the bell stand or belfry (no. 21), "a deep well in which the water rises and falls with the tide" (no. 22), and the stockade entrances, "through folding gates" (no. 23).⁷⁶

Additional buildings, 1841-1845

The four years following 1841 saw some extensive changes within the Fort Vancouver stockade. According to the testimony of one old Company employee, the principal storehouses were replaced by better-built structures in 1843 and 1844, although another witness placed the construction of at least two of the new storehouses at a somewhat later date, about 1845 to 1846.⁷⁷ Another witness, however, denied that there was any extensive rebuilding during 1845 and 1846.⁷⁸ As has been seen, it is possible that the stockade area was enlarged during the winter of 1844-1845. If this action was actually taken, it must have been followed by an almost feverish spurt of construction, judging from the number of buildings shown by the Vavasour map to have been, before the end of 1845, in the area possibly annexed by the extended walls.

The extent of the alterations made between 1841 and 1845 is revealed by comparing the Emmons ground plan of the former year with that made by Vavasour in 1845. The following conclusions, drawn from such a comparison, are largely substantiated by the testimony of Dugald Mactavish, a clerk and chief trader at Fort Vancouver at intervals during the 1840's, given before the British and American Joint Commission in 1867.⁷⁹

By the time Vavasour drew his ground plan, several buildings shown on the Emmons map of 1841 had disappeared entirely. These included the wash house (no. 8 on the Emmons map), the carpenter shop (no. 12), a storehouse (no. 17), and possibly another large storehouse (no. 18). In addition, the bakery (no. 7) may have been torn down and replaced by a harness shop built on its site,

⁷⁶ Emmons, Journal, photostat of entry for July 25, 1841, from the original in the Yale University Library. See also Holmes, Journal, MS, II, 305-306; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 326-336; Simpson, An Overland Journey Round the World, 142-143.

⁷⁷ Testimony of T. Lowe, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II] 24; testimony of W. H. Gray, in ibid., [VIII], 164.

⁷⁸ Ibid., [VIII], 214.

⁷⁹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [XI], 52.

or it may simply have been transformed into the harness shop. The blacksmith shop of 1845 may have been the same structure shown on the Emmons map (no. 10), or it may have been another built on approximately the same site. The former chaplain's kitchen and school house (no. 4) had been transformed into a church for the Company's Hawaiian employees; and the "Missionary Store" (no. 11) or a new building on its site, was used as the Indian trade shop.

The structures built between 1841 and 1845 included a new bakery, a storehouse for iron, a new carpenter shop, a new office, and a jail. An additional storehouse for meat, labeled the "beef-store" on the Vavasour map, seems to have been built to replace the general warehouse (no. 18) which stood on about the same general site, but possibly a bit to the north. Also, an additional well was dug near the northeast corner of the stockade. The rebuilding of the main warehouses has already been noted. During the reconstruction the long storehouse marked "16" on the Emmons map appears to have been replaced by two buildings, labeled by Vavasour "store" and "shop and store," respectively. Emmons' warehouse "16," however, may have been two buildings joined by a roof, as was the case with the two structures which appear to have replaced it.

The problem of determining what changes occurred within the stockade between 1841 and 1845 is complicated by the fact that the proportions, and possibly the locations, of some of the buildings seem to be inaccurate on the Emmons map, particularly in the area of the northwest corner of the stockade. It will be noted that Emmons showed the well (no. 22) to be south of a large storehouse (no. 18), about opposite the granary (no. 19), and a considerable distance from the north stockade wall. The Vavasour map shows the well to have been much closer to the north wall in 1845, and to the north of the "beefstore," which may or may not have been the building number 18 of Emmons. If both maps are strictly accurate, the well must have been shifted thirty or forty feet to the northward between 1841 and 1845, but such a change seems rather unlikely. Archeological excavations should help to settle this question, and the results so obtained will permit a determination of the relative merits of the two ground plans.

A comparison of the two maps will also show that Emmons appears to have allowed too little space for a proper representation of the central portion of the enclosure. In particular, the distance between the chaplain's residence (no. 3) and the clerks' office (no. 5) seems much too short. It is more reasonable to assume that Emmons was in error than that there was a wholesale moving of the buildings between 1841 and 1845. But until the question of the accuracy of the Emmons map can be definitely settled, there must remain some doubt as to whether or not certain buildings which appear to have been the same structures on both plans but which are shown in slightly different locations, were actually the same.

Fort Vancouver, 1845

At the time of Vavasour's visit, during the winter of 1845-1846, Vancouver was at the height of its development. As shown by Vavasour's map, the stockade enclosure contained twenty-three named structures, more than at any other period in the history of the post. These buildings, as named by Vavasour, were the bake-house, the iron store, the blacksmith shop, the Indian shop, the dwelling house for subordinate officers, the harness shop, the manager's residence, the kitchen for the manager's residence, the "Owyhee Church," the "Priests' house," the jail, the new office, the old office, the "old" Roman Catholic church, the carpenter shop, the granary, the well house, the "beef store," one "shop and store," three large storehouses, and the powder magazine. In addition, there were a number of out-houses and lesser structures.

Buildings within the stockade, 1846-1847

After 1845 the number of buildings within the Fort Vancouver palisade began to decline. This process had already begun in 1846-1847, when the next detailed account of the fort's structures was made.

Upon hearing of the probable terms of the Oregon Boundary Treaty in the summer of 1846, Sir George Simpson instructed the officers in charge of the Columbia Department to make an inventory of all of the Company's property south of the forty-ninth parallel. The inventory at Fort Vancouver was made during the winter of 1846-1847 under the supervision of Thomas Lowe, accountant at the post, and was forwarded, with those taken at the other establishments, to Norway House in the spring of 1847.⁸⁰ Although this inventory does not clearly separate the buildings within the stockade from those without, the testimony of two Company employees before the British and American Joint Commission helps to make evident the locations of most of the structures.⁸¹

Further light upon the buildings within the stockade is given by a map drawn by R. Covington in 1846 and printed in the third volume of McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters (see plate X). Although this chart shows the fort proper upon a very small scale, it does reveal the general arrangement of the individual structures. Its particular value, however, comes from the fact that on it

⁸⁰ Testimony of T. Lowe, in Br. & Am., Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 19.

⁸¹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 176-178; 202-203. The Fort Vancouver inventory has been printed in ibid., 118-119; and in Elliott, "British Values in Oregon, 1847," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXII (March, 1931), 32-35. The two versions are not in complete agreement on some details.

Covington named many of the buildings outside the stockade. Through the use of these names, many of the buildings listed in the 1846-1847 inventory can be definitely identified as not having been within the palisade.

As revealed by an analysis of the above-mentioned sources, the following structures were enclosed by the stockade at about the end of 1846:

1. One bakehouse, 40 x 20 or 25 feet.
2. One iron store, 40 x 30 feet.
3. One blacksmith shop, 45 x 30 feet.
4. One Indian trade shop, 80 x 30 feet.
5. One dwelling house for subordinate officers, 170 x 30 feet.
6. One harness or saddler's shop, 40 x 25 feet.
7. One residence for the post manager or principal officer, 70 x 40 feet.
8. One kitchen for manager's residence, 60 x 24 feet.
9. One dwelling, used as a school house, evidently the former "Owyhee Church," 50 x 25 feet.
10. One dwelling house, evidently the former "Priests' house," 50 x 30 feet.
11. One jail or prison, 21 x 21 feet.
12. One new office, 36 x 30 feet.
13. One old office, 30 x 30 feet.
14. One carpenter shop, 40 x 20 feet.
15. One granary, 50 x 40 feet.
16. One well house, 24 x 18 feet.
17. One beef store, 75 x 30 feet.
18. One storehouse no. 1, 86 x 40 feet.
19. One storehouse no. 2, 90 x 40 feet.
- 20, 21. Two storehouses, nos. 3 & 4, 100 x 40 feet.
22. One powder magazine, 18 x 18 feet.

The inventory lists in addition one "Receiving store." The location of this building is not known. It was probably outside the stockade.

It will be seen from the above list that all of the buildings shown on the Vavasour map of 1845 were still standing one year later except for the "old" Roman Catholic church, which had been demolished. Although listed in the inventory, the beef store and the old office do not seem to appear on the Covington map. It is possible, therefore, that these buildings were also pulled down about the end of 1846. The Covington map also shows six small structures, evidently out-houses, immediately to the rear and east of the subordinate officers' quarters and an unidentified small structure in the southwest corner near the powder magazine. A small building near the bastion in the northwest corner may have been the well house, drawn slightly out of position.

Buildings within the stockade, 1847-1860

The history of the buildings at Fort Vancouver after 1847 was largely a continuation of the old struggle against decay, with the forces of Nature gradually getting the upper hand as the Company's business fell off through the years and as the staff was, in consequence, progressively decreased in strength. New construction largely ceased after 1846. About the end of the year 1853, Isaac N. Ebey made an official inspection of Fort Vancouver at the request of Governor Stevens of Washington Territory. He reported that only two of the "houses" within the stockade had been erected since 1846.⁸² Brevet Major General Rufus Ingalls, who had served as a quartermaster at Vancouver Barracks at intervals between 1849 and 1860, later testified that all of buildings within the stockade in 1860 had been standing at the time of his first arrival in 1849, and he further stated that no "material additions" had been made since 1846.⁸³ A Company employee who was in charge of construction work at Vancouver recalled, on the other hand, that "as near as I can remember" two buildings—a store and a dwelling—were erected after November, 1849.⁸⁴ As shall be seen, maps and inventories made between 1847 and 1860 indicate that several new buildings were built over the years in question, but they were small and did not equal in numbers those which disappeared.

According to William Frederick Crate, who was in charge of the repair work at Fort Vancouver between 1849 and 1860, a "gang" of about five men was kept constantly employed in the upkeep of the buildings, fences, and other improvements at the post.⁸⁵ It would appear, however, that the crew was not kept occupied as constantly as Crate remembered or else was grossly inadequate for the task at hand, because accounts given by visitors indicate that the old cycles of extensive decay and large-scale repair followed each other with some regularity during the years after 1846.

An old employee at Fort Vancouver testified that the buildings were "in very sound condition" in 1846, having been lately rebuilt.⁸⁶ But so rapid were the ravages of the elements that by the end of 1847 the post impressed one visitor as being "a dilapidated, dirty

⁸² I. N. Ebey to I. I. Stevens, Olympia, January 7, 1854, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers [XI], 230-238.

⁸³ Ibid., [IX], 4.

⁸⁴ Ibid., [II], 107.

⁸⁵ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 107.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 198-199.

place."⁸⁷ A year or two later conditions were so bad that some of the buildings had to be propped up to keep them from collapsing. Even the manager's residence was "rather shaky."⁸⁸

About 1849 one of the periodic reconstruction projects took place, and by November of that year all the buildings were said to have been in "first rate repair."⁸⁹ A visitor of late 1853, on the other hand, found the structures within the palisade so old and so decayed as to be "almost wholly valueless."⁹⁰ A board of United States Army officers who examined the establishment during January of the next year fully concurred in this conclusion.⁹¹ Yet, in November, 1854, the Portland Weekly Oregonian reported that the fort was "in good repair."⁹²

But after 1854, decay appears to have gotten the upper hand, with the Company doing only such work as was essential to keep the structures habitable. In 1855 and 1856, Philip H. Sheridan, later the famous Union cavalry leader, found Fort Vancouver to be composed of six or seven "very large, gloomy-looking" structures, and his unromantic impression was that it "would be a good thing if they would burn down."⁹³ A civilian visitor of 1855-1856 found the fort to be tenable but "gone much to ruin." Many of the blocks supporting the sills had rotted, and some of the buildings had sagged and were out of shape.⁹⁴ By 1860 props were again being used to keep several of the structures in an upright position.⁹⁵

The dates at which new buildings were erected and old ones torn down can only be approximated from the evidence at hand. A visitor of 1848 noted in his diary that the enclosure contained a "meat shop." Perhaps this was the old beef store or some other old building to which the functions of the beef store had been transferred; or perhaps it was a new structure. The traveler did

⁸⁷ J. Q. A. Young, "The Whitman Massacre," in Transactions of the . . . Oregon Pioneer Association for 1896, 119.

⁸⁸ Testimony of W. H. Gray, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 181.

⁸⁹ Testimony of W. F. Crate, in ibid., [II], 107.

⁹⁰ I. N. Ebey to I. I. Stevens, Olympia, January 7, 1854, in ibid., [XI], 230-238.

⁹¹ Report of a board of officers, Fort Vancouver, January 23, 1854, in ibid., [IX], 104-106.

⁹² Weekly Oregonian (Portland), November 11, 1854.

⁹³ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 267-268.

⁹⁴ Testimony of J. W. Nesmith, in ibid., 37.

⁹⁵ Testimony of L. Brooke, in ibid., [VIII], 129.

not say.⁹⁶

If the memory of Lloyd Brooke, United States Army quartermaster's clerk and agent, was accurate in 1866, there was a "little hut" near the main gate in 1849.⁹⁷ This appears to be the first mention of the watchman's house or porter's lodge which is shown on the ground plans of the fort between 1854 and 1860. But since no maps which even pretend to represent the fort buildings accurately are available for the period 1847 to 1853, it is impossible to check the correctness of Brooke's statement.

In 1849, Major D. H. Vinton, United States Army quartermaster, made a survey of the Hudson's Bay Company's buildings at Fort Vancouver. His inventory is rather unsatisfactory, since he named only the more conspicuous buildings and dismissed the minor ones by lumping them all together as unspecified "smaller appendages." He did not mention the beef store or the old office, which almost certainly had disappeared about 1847, but neither did he mention the Indian trade shop or two or three other structures which surely continued to stand in 1849. All the buildings named by him are known from other sources to have been standing until at least 1860. Therefore, Vinton's inventory contributes nothing to a knowledge of which structures were built and which disappeared during the period 1847 to 1849.⁹⁸

In 1865, Dr. H. A. Tuzo described the buildings at Fort Vancouver as they stood at the time of his arrival there in 1853 to take up his duties as medical officer. While his list is not entirely complete, his omission of the beef store and the old office supports the view that those structures had disappeared by that date. Besides the structures already known to have existed since at least 1846, he mentioned an "excellent root house," a "press house," and a "watchman's house." The first two of these structures appear to have been new; they were located, according to Tuzo, on the north side of the enclosure. Significantly, however, they do not appear on any later ground plan of the post (see plates XXI, XXIV). The watchman's house appears to have been that mentioned by Brooke as existing in 1849.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ruth E. Rockwood, ed., "Diary of Rev. George H. Atkinson, D. D., 1847-1858," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XL (June 1939) 181.

⁹⁷ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 128.

⁹⁸ D. H. Vinton to P. F. Smith, Fort Vancouver, October 1, 1849, MS, in Office of the Quartermaster General, War Records Division, the National Archives; also printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 133.

⁹⁹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 176-177.

One year later, in 1854, Lieutenant Colonel Bonneville, commanding Vancouver Barracks, drew a map on which the buildings of the Hudson's Bay post were carefully drawn (see plate XV). And during the same year a board of Army officers examined the improvements on the military reservation and made a fairly complete list of the Company's buildings.¹⁰⁰ From these two sources, a quite satisfactory picture of the fort as it then stood can be pieced together.

The Bonneville map shows that all the buildings listed in the inventory of 1846-1847 were still standing in 1854 except the kitchen for the manager's residence, the old office, the beef store, the well house, and the magazine. Of these, the well house was probably, and the magazine was certainly, still in existence, but they were undoubtedly considered too insignificant to place on the chart. Besides the buildings listed in the 1846-1847 inventory, several new ones were shown. These were: a new kitchen behind the manager's house, an unidentified building near the harness shop and bakery in the northeast corner of the stockade, and the watchman's house.

In general, the inventory of 1854 confirms the picture shown by the map. It was too incomplete to be used as evidence as to which buildings had disappeared since 1846-1847, but it listed two structures which did not appear on the earlier inventory. These were a "washing house" and a butcher shop. Three wells were also mentioned in the inventory of 1854, while earlier accounts give only two.

From later evidence (see plate XXIV), it is known that a butcher shop stood in the northeast corner in 1860; thus the butcher shop of 1854 was probably the unidentified building shown in that location on the Bonneville map. The location of the "washing house" is not known, but it was probably in the same general area. There is no proof that the third well mentioned in the 1854 inventory was within the palisade, but it probably was the one which appears to be shown on the photographs of 1860 as being in the courtyard near the bell tower (see plates XXII, XXIII).

The old kitchen back of the post manager's residence either burned or was pulled down about 1852 or 1853. Bonneville's map proves that by 1854 it had been replaced by a much smaller structure which touched, or nearly touched, the northeast corner of the

¹⁰⁰ Report of a board of officers, Fort Vancouver, January 23, 1854, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, IX, 104-106.

manager's house.¹⁰¹

In 1866, Dugald Mactavish, who had served the Company for many years at Fort Vancouver as a clerk and commissioned officer, listed the buildings which he remembered to have been standing within the stockade in 1858. In making his list he very obviously referred to the inventory of 1846-1847 and merely checked off such structures as he believed were still in existence some nine years later. Unfortunately, his memory appears to have been faulty. For instance, he maintained that the seventy-five by thirty-foot beef store was one of the survivors, whereas, as has been seen, this building certainly had disappeared by 1853 and probably had been torn down about 1847. He also listed the salt store as being within the stockade. In 1846, as shown by the Covington map, the salt store was near the river bank, and it probably never was within the pickets. It does not appear on any other inventory or plan of the fort proper.

But the Mactavish list is interesting in at least three respects. First, it mentions a "Large Root House" as being within the palisade. While the root houses of 1846 were almost certainly outside the stockade, the fact that Dr. Tuzo listed a root house as being in the enclosure in 1853 tends to substantiate Mactavish's contention that one of these buildings existed within the pickets during the 1850's. Second, Mactavish did not list the well house as standing in 1858, indicating that this structure may have disappeared by that date. Third, he definitely stated that the dwelling house measuring 50 x 25 feet—the former "Owyhee Church"—was pulled down before 1858. Since this old building appears on the Bonneville map of 1854, and since it seems to be shown on an unsigned map of 1855 (see plate XX), the date of its destruction may be set as between 1855 and 1858.¹⁰²

Another representation of the area within the stockade is given upon a map of the Vancouver Military Reservation prepared at the order of Brigadier General W. S. Harney in 1859 (see plate XXI). This ground plan does not show the powder magazine, which certainly was standing at that time, but in other respects it appears to have been executed with care. The most interesting feature of this chart is the representation of the area near the northwest corner of the stockade, where two small and unidentified structures are shown. One of these may have been the root house mentioned by

¹⁰¹ One witness said the kitchen burned down in the fall or winter of 1852. Another believed it was pulled down but did not give the exact date. The fact that Tuzo mentioned seeing a two-story kitchen at the time of his arrival in November, 1853, might indicate that the original kitchen was not destroyed until after that date, as the structure which replaced it was evidently quite small. Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 176-177; 202-203; [VIII], 137.

¹⁰² Testimony of D. Mactavish, in ibid., [II], 202-203.

Tuzo and Mactavish, and the other may have been the well house, or perhaps the somewhat shadowy "press house" or the "washing house" mentioned by earlier observers. In the northeast corner, the unidentified structure shown on the Bonneville map is represented as having been still standing in 1859.

As has been seen, the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned Fort Vancouver on June 14, 1860. The next day General Harney ordered a board of Army officers to examine the buildings vacated by the Company with a view to determining their value and to see if any of them could be used in the public service. The board made the required inspection on that same day, and in the report of its proceedings included a list of the chief buildings within the stockade and a ground plan of the fort proper. These two items, supplemented by two photographs of the interior of the stockade taken in the spring of 1860 (see plates XXII, XXIII), provide a very satisfactory picture of the Fort Vancouver buildings as they existed at the end of the establishment's existence as a trading post.

The nineteen structures listed by the board of officers, numbered as they appear on the accompanying ground plan (see plate XXIV), are as follows:

No. 3 "Principal dwelling house inside of pickets, known as Governor's house—sills, flooring and wood work generally, so much decayed as to be uninhabitable & entirely useless for any military purpose." This structure was the manager's residence of the earlier inventories.

No. 4 "Kitchen (Governor's house), entirely out of repair."

No. 5 "Butcher shop &c, in a ruinous condition."

No. 6 "Bakehouse, in a ruinous condition."

No. 7 "Log building, used as quarters for employees, so much out of repair as to be uninhabitable."

No. 8 "Small storehouse, long since abandoned by the Company—in a ruinous condition."

No. 9 "Blacksmith shop, long since abandoned by the Company—in a ruinous condition."

No. 10 "Fur house, long since abandoned by the Company—in a ruinous condition."

No. 11 "Porter's lodge, useless for any military purpose."

Nos. 12, 13, 14 "Three large storehouses, useless for any purpose connected with the public service."

No. 15 "H. B. Company's store, entirely unsuitable for any military purpose."

No. 17 "Granary, entirely unsuited to any purpose of the public service."

No. 18 "Carpenter & wheelwright shop, long since abandoned by the Company—in a ruinous condition."

No. 19 "Company's office, in tolerable repair, might be made use of temporarily."

No. 20 "Guard house, long since abandoned by the company—in a ruinous condition."

No. 21 "Dwelling house, formerly occupied by Mr. Grahame—in a ruinous condition."

No. 22 "Small magazine, useless to the public service."¹⁰³

The two minor structures shown on the 1859 map to have been in the northwest corner of the stockade do not appear on the 1860 ground plan, but they may have been considered too insignificant to merit attention. The 1860 photograph of that section of the enclosure reveals that a small, open shed, with a hip roof—probably one of the structures on the 1859 map—was still standing in May, 1860. Behind the shed and closer to the bastion the photograph shows what appears to be a low structure whose gable roof rose from the ground level. Perhaps this building was the root house. A comparison of the 1859 and 1860 maps shows, further, that one of the structures in the northeast corner of the enclosure probably disappeared during the year.

An examination of the above-indicated evidence will reveal that between 1846-1847 and 1860, the number of major buildings within the palisade was reduced from twenty-two to nineteen or twenty. The structures which disappeared were as follows:

1. The beef store, perhaps pulled down as early as 1847, certainly had disappeared by 1854.
2. The old office, probably pulled down about 1847.
3. The dwelling used as a school house and the "Owyhee Church," pulled down between 1855 and 1858.
4. The kitchen to the manager's residence, burned or pulled down about 1852 or 1853, replaced by a smaller building.
5. The well house; this building does not appear on any list of the fort structures after 1847, but perhaps it continued to stand and was not mentioned in the inventories because of its small size.

¹⁰³ Proceedings of a board of officers, which convened at Fort Vancouver, W. T., June 15th, 1860, MS, in A. G. O., Ore. Dept., Doc. File 212-S-1860, in War Records Division, the National Archives; also printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 74-77.

A saddler's shop is mentioned as existing in 1853, but whether or not it was housed in the same building in that year as it had been in 1846 is not known. From the maps, it would appear that the old saddler's shop of 1845 may have been replaced by two smaller structures before 1854, one of which may have continued to serve as a saddler's shop and the other of which became the butcher shop. Or, only one additional building may have been erected in the northeast corner, in which case either it or the old saddler's shop became the butcher shop.

The new buildings erected between 1846-1847 and 1860 were as follows:

1. The watchman's house, near the main gate; certainly built by 1854 and probably by 1849.
2. A new kitchen for the manager's residence to replace the one destroyed about 1852 or 1853.
3. Either one or two buildings were erected in the northeast corner of the stockade, between the kitchen and the bakery, prior to 1854, as indicated in the paragraph immediately above. If two were erected, one of them replaced the old saddler's shop. One of the two buildings between the kitchen and the bakery disappeared between 1859 and 1860. Therefore, the number of buildings in the northeast corner remained the same in 1860 as it had been in 1846-1847.

In addition, several structures such as the root house, the "press house," and the "washing house" are mentioned over the years. Whether they were new buildings, or older structures renamed, or whether they had been in existence under their proper names before 1847 but had not been mentioned in the maps and inventories, is not known.

Disappearance of the fort, 1860-1866

When Chief Trader James A. Grahame abandoned Fort Vancouver on June 14, 1860, he left the keys to the Company's buildings in the hands of Captain Rufus Ingalls, assistant quartermaster at the military post. Ingalls at once took measures to protect the property which was thus placed in his custody. "Persons no doubt are now trespassing on the premises," he reported on that same day to the headquarters of the Army's Department of Oregon. He suggested that a guard be placed "around or in the old Fort" to prevent vandalism until Brigadier General William S. Harney, the departmental commander, could determine what disposition was to be made of the deserted structures.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ R. Ingalls to A. Pleasanton, Fort Vancouver Depot, June 14, 1860, MS, in A. G. O., Ore. Dept., Doc. File 212-S-1860.

Evidently the advice of Ingalls was followed. Sentinels seem to have been placed at the stockade, but how long they remained is not known. Certainly they were not very effective in preventing neighboring settlers from appropriating such building materials as struck their fancies.¹⁰⁵

General Harney was not dilatory in making a decision regarding the abandoned buildings. On the morning of the next day, June 15, he appointed a board of four officers to examine and appraise all the structures vacated by the Company on the military reservation. That same afternoon, after a brief three-hour survey, the board reported that in its opinion, "none of the buildings within the pickets are worth repairing for any military purpose, and that in consequence of the age, decayed condition and crowded position of the buildings, the sanitary police of the place demands, that they be destroyed by fire, after removing such of the material, as may be found to be of sufficient value."¹⁰⁶

Three days later General Harney approved the findings of the board. He directed Captain Ingalls to "take charge of the buildings in question" and to "dispose of them agreeably to the recommendation of the Board."¹⁰⁷

Captain Ingalls had long felt that the improvements of the Hudson's Bay Company were nuisances which interfered with the full and proper development of the military reservation. He lost no time in taking advantage of the opportunity to "clear the grounds." Soldiers were set to work pulling down several buildings whose materials could be employed in needed construction about the military post. For a few short weeks the work of destruction proceeded merrily. Then it came to a sudden halt.

As has been seen, the Hudson's Bay Company had protested to the British Government during the spring of 1860 that its rights under the Treaty of 1846 were being violated by the military authorities at Fort Vancouver. So vigorously was the matter presented in Washington by Lord Lyons, the British minister, that the

¹⁰⁵ Testimony of J. A. Hardie, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 111.

¹⁰⁶ Proceedings of a board of officers, which convened at Fort Vancouver, W. T., June 15, 1860, MS, in A. G. O., Ore. Dept., Doc. File 212-S-1860; also printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 74-77. See also testimony of C. McKeever, in ibid., 78-79.

¹⁰⁷ Dept. of Oregon, Special Orders No. 71, Fort Vancouver, June 18, 1860, MS, in A. G. O., Ore. Dept., Doc. File 212-S-1860. Excepted from this order was one warehouse, standing outside the palisade, which had been occupied by the Ordnance Department as a storehouse.

United States Secretary of State was forced to express regret for the actions of the Army commander in Oregon, and he offered "cheerfully" to make reasonable compensation to the Company for any losses it might have suffered as a consequence.

Another result of Lyons' protest was an order from the Secretary of War to the commanding officer of the Department of Oregon directing that all actions aimed at terminating the occupation by the Hudson's Bay Company of land and improvements on the Fort Vancouver Military Reservation be suspended until further orders. Dated June 7, 1860, this order was sent by telegraph to St. Joseph, from there by Pony Express to California, and from thence to Fort Vancouver, where it seems to have arrived about the end of the month.¹⁰⁸ Immediately upon its receipt, Colonel George Wright, who had succeeded General Harney as commander of the Department of Oregon, put a halt to the destruction of the Hudson's Bay buildings.¹⁰⁹

By the time Colonel Wright issued his order, however, the area within the stockade presented a decidedly altered appearance from what it had been on June 14. The manager's residence and the quarters for the subordinate officers remained untouched, as apparently were two of the warehouses, the office, the Indian store, and the blacksmith shop; but many of the other structures were in various stages of demolition. The Company store was partly torn down, while one of the large warehouses along the south palisade wall and several other buildings had disappeared entirely.¹¹⁰

Since nothing further could be done in the way of clearing the ground until additional instructions were received from the War Department, the military authorities at Fort Vancouver appear to have decided to make the best of the situation. In July, 1860, rooms in certain unspecified Hudson's Bay Company buildings were fitted up as quarters for the non-commissioned staff, the band, and the laundresses of the Ninth Infantry.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ E. D. Townsend to Commanding Officer, Department of Oregon, Washington, June 7, 1860, in A. G. O., Letters Sent Book No. 32, MS, pp. 424-425, in War Records Division, the National Archives.

¹⁰⁹ G. Wright to S. Cooper, Fort Vancouver, July 8, 1860, MS, in A. G. O., Ore. Dept., Doc. File 212-3-1860.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.; Affidavit of W. E. Place, Washington, February 27, 1873, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31, in Division of Interior Department Records, the National Archives; Testimony of W. F. Crate, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 107, 112; Testimony of R. Ingalls, in ibid., [IX], 3-4.

¹¹¹ R. Ingalls to J. A. Hardie, Vancouver Depot, July 24, 1860, MS, in A. G. O., Records of U. S. Army Commands, Dept. of Columbia, Letters Received, C4-P34, 1860, Box No. 4, in War Records Division the National Archives.

But by September, the authorities had again become restive. "The buildings lately vacated by the Hudson Bay Company still encumber the Reserve at this place," Colonel Wright reminded the Adjutant General. Since it was hoped to build a new departmental headquarters upon the site occupied by these old structures, the Colonel continued, he "earnestly recommended" that the rights of the Company be adjusted without delay and "the encumbrances in question removed."¹¹²

Year after year passed, however, without any instructions on the subject being issued from Washington.¹¹³ Meanwhile, the ravages of time, aided by the plunderings of settlers in search of building materials and of soldiers looking for accessible firewood, gradually reduced the old fort to a tumbled ruin. In 1863 a part of the stockade and some of the buildings remained standing "in the semi-demolished condition in which they were left by General Harney."¹¹⁴ But two years later a witness reported that the palisade and the structures within it "had nearly all rotted away and fallen down."¹¹⁵

Evidence uncovered at the time of the excavations in 1947 shows unmistakably that the decayed ruins were finally swept away by fire. In fact there is still alive at least one person who claims to remember having seen the conflagration which put an end to the physical remains of Fort Vancouver.¹¹⁶ But whether the structures were fired by order of the military authorities, by accident, or by deliberate incendiarism is not known.

The fire evidently occurred in 1865 or 1866, for by summer of the latter year practically all evidence of the fort had disappeared. A "Board of Experts," appointed to inspect the posts and former posts of the Hudson's Bay Company south of the forty-ninth parallel in connection with the settlement of the firm's

¹¹² G. Wright to L. Thomas, Fort Vancouver, September 20, 1860, MS, in A. G. O., Ore. Dept., Doc. File 212-S-1860.

¹¹³ B. Alvord to J. P. Usher, Fort Vancouver, August 28, 1863, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31

¹¹⁴ Ibid., see also Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 112.

¹¹⁵ Testimony of J. W. Nesmith, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 24-25.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Howard J. Burnham, Vancouver, Washington, December, 1947. Mr. Burnham, prominent member of the Vancouver Historical Society, has talked with the pioneer who saw the fort burn.

claims against the United States, found "only a few ruins of no appreciable value" at Fort Vancouver.¹¹⁷ Another visitor of 1866 found even less. The fort, he later testified, "had disappeared almost altogether; no houses or sheds remained." Only one "little rick of rotten hay and straw, partially covered by a portion of a fallen roof" marked the site.¹¹⁸

Construction of buildings within the stockade

Sills and foundations:

For the most part the buildings inside the Fort Vancouver palisade were constructed in the same "Canadian" style employed in erecting the bastion. The sills had no permanent underpinning but rested on wooden blocks. In some cases, the sills were placed very close to the ground, a circumstance which made the proper repair of the structures very difficult. The supporting blocks under the outer sills could be replaced as they rotted, but those holding up the inner joists were difficult of access and could be reached only through much effort.¹¹⁹

Walls:

The grooved uprights standing on the sills were placed from six to ten feet apart. The horizontal timbers which fitted into the grooves and which formed the walls are generally described as having been about six inches thick. Testimony is about equally divided as to whether they were sawed or hewn.¹²⁰ Other witnesses, however, have stated that the walls were constructed of sawed planks, two or three inches thick.¹²¹ The weight of evidence appears to favor those who reported the use of six-inch sawed timbers. Down to at least 1841, no iron or nails were employed to join the timbers.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 269-270.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., [IX], 526.

¹¹⁹ Testimony of J. W. Nesmith, in ibid., 23, 34, 36.

¹²⁰ Gray, A History of Oregon, 150; Testimony of U. S. Grant, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 20; Testimony of T. Lowe, in ibid., [II], 33.

¹²¹ Testimony of D. Mactavish, in ibid., [XI], 74; Testimony of R. McFeely, [IX], 119.

¹²² Testimony of T. R. Peale, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 345.

Roofs:

Plates were placed upon the tops of the uprights and upon them rafters were raised "in the usual way."¹²³ Down to about the early 1840's, all the roofs at Fort Vancouver were covered with sawed boards, one foot wide and one inch thick. These boards were grooved on the edges and were placed "up and down" to shed water. Since the planks frequently contained knot holes and cracks, this system of roofing proved "a leaky concern."¹²⁴ During the 1840's these boards were generally replaced by shingles. One frequent visitor to Fort Vancouver later testified that he believed that by 1846 all the buildings within the stockade possessed shingled roofs.¹²⁵ Prior to this change, all the roofs appear to have been simple gables, but afterwards the principal buildings had hip roofs.

Exterior finish:

For the most part, the structures at Vancouver had no exterior finish except the bare uprights and timbers of which they were constructed. But some of the more important buildings, such as the manager's residence, the office, the Company store, and the granary were covered with weather boards on the outside.

At least the front wall of the Manager's dwelling was kept painted white, and the other walls may have been painted at less frequent intervals. The office may also have been given an occasional coat of paint. But with these two exceptions, the buildings were left unpainted.¹²⁶

Interior finish:

The interiors of the buildings at Fort Vancouver were described by one visitor as "unpretending."¹²⁷ This description was particularly apt during the early years of the fort's existence. Dr. William Fraser Tolmie arrived at Fort Vancouver in May, 1833. In his journal he described the interior of the "Apothecary's Hall" as follows:

¹²³ Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 194.

¹²⁴ Gray, A History of Oregon, 150.

¹²⁵ Testimony of J. W. Nesmith, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 37.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 23, 34.

¹²⁷ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 331.

Our apartment is 13 paces long by 7 broad and extends in E. and W. direction, the roof about 20 feet from floor supported by two rafters and 2 transverse beams. In front is the door and a pretty large window—posteriorly—a window and back door one on each side and in the middle a large fire place, without any grate, built of stone and lime. The walls are formed of rough, strong horizontal [deals?] attached at their extremities to perpendicular ones. Against the northern wall are placed our bedsteads, between them a large chest and in front a small medicine shelf. Strong shelves of unplanned deal occupy two posterior thirds of south wall and contain the greater part of medicines. Anteriorly there is a small heater and a painted shelf. . . . The deals composing floor are in some places two and three inches distant from each other, thus leaving wide apertures. This is also true of the deals in the walls and the chinks are numerous; by those to N. can look into school room. . . . Shall close all apertures with brown paper pasted, or leather.¹²⁸

A visitor of 1836 reported that the interior partitions in the buildings were "upright boards planed, and the cracks battened."¹²⁹ Five years later, Lieutenant Wilkes found the interiors "simply finished with pine board panels, without any paint."¹³⁰

Apparently the manager's residence was the only building in which any elegance was attempted. Between 1849 and 1860, and probably for a good many years before that period, the interior of the "mansion" was papered and painted.¹³¹

Most of the dwellings and some of the most important of the other buildings were ceiled with "tongued and grooved dressed boards."¹³² Floors were generally made of rough boards, but those in the office and the manager's residence were planed. The floors in the storehouses seemingly were formed of three-inch planks.¹³³

¹²⁸ William Fraser Tolmie, "Journal of William Fraser Tolmie—1833," in Washington Historical Quarterly, III (July, 1912), 236.

¹²⁹ Gray, A History of Oregon, 150.

¹³⁰ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 331.

¹³¹ Testimony of L. Brooke, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 138.

¹³² Testimony of T. Lowe, in ibid., [II], 33.

¹³³ Gray, A History of Oregon, 150; Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 345.

Miscellaneous details:

The windows were small-paned. The frames were made at Vancouver and were used not only locally but were shipped to other Company posts as well.¹³⁴ The doors were hung with metal hinges.¹³⁵

The chimneys at Fort Vancouver were chiefly of brick (see plate XXII), but stone appears to have been used also, particularly during the early years of the fort's existence.¹³⁶ The lime employed in making the mortar for the chimneys was made from coral brought from the Hawaiian Islands.¹³⁷

Smaller buildings:

There were several minor buildings within the stockade which were not built in the usual Canadian style. These smaller structures are generally described as having been of frame construction, but one observer of 1841 said they were built of puncheons (split logs or heavy slabs) set in a frame.¹³⁸ The kitchen was among the buildings which were not made in the prevailing post-in-the-sill fashion.¹³⁹

Courtyard:

All of the area within the stockade not actually covered with buildings was sodded.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ George B. Roberts, *Recollections*, MS, 81, in the Bancroft Library.

¹³⁵ Testimony of T. R. Peale, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 345.

¹³⁶ Tolmie, "Journal," in Washington Historical Quarterly, III (July, 1912), 236; Gray, A History of Oregon, 150.

¹³⁷ Schafer, "Documents Relative to Warre and Vavasour's Military Reconnoissance in Oregon, 1845-6," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, X (March, 1909), 86; D. H. Vinto to T. S. Jesup, Washington, March 29, 1850, in 31 Cong., 2 Sess., House of Representatives, Ex. Doc. No. 1, Part 2, p. 251.

¹³⁸ Testimony of T. R. Peale, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 345.

¹³⁹ Testimony of D. Mactavish, in ibid., [XI], 74.

¹⁴⁰ A. J. Allen, Ten Years in Oregon: Travels . . . of Dr. E. White and Lady, West of the Rocky Mountains (Ithaca, N. Y., 1850), 66.

Descriptions of individual buildings

Some additional details, not mentioned in the general accounts of the fort buildings given above, are available concerning certain of the individual structures within the stockade. These buildings are described in the following paragraphs.

The Bachelors' Quarters

As has been seen, this building was erected in the fall of 1838. It was variously known as the "subordinate officers' residence," "the clerks' quarters," "the Bachelors' Range," etc. It is known to have been standing in the fall of 1860, and it probably remained in existence until the conflagration which finally destroyed the fort in about 1865 or 1866.¹⁴¹

At the time this structure was built, James Douglas gave its dimensions as 153 x 33 feet,¹⁴² In the 1846-1847 inventory it was listed as being 170 x 30 feet, and in 1849, Major D. H. Vinton judged it to be 150 x 30 feet.¹⁴³

In reality, the bachelors' residence was a range of small, one-story cottages joined under a single roof. In fact, the term "houses" was often used to describe it.¹⁴⁴ The front entrances faced the west and opened onto the central courtyard. As shown by the Emmons ground plan, there were four of these main doors in 1841 (see plate II); in 1860 there were five (see plate XXII). Each of the doors evidently opened into a separate dwelling unit in the range. Apparently there was a rear door in each unit, and these doors gave access to a corresponding number of out-houses placed along the east palisade wall.

In 1849 the "Bachelors' Range" contained seventeen rooms.¹⁴⁵ The structure was lined and ceiled on the inside.¹⁴⁶ The exterior

¹⁴¹ Affidavit of W. E. Place, Washington, February 27, 1873, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

¹⁴² J. Douglas to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 18, 1838, in H. B. S., IV, 260.

¹⁴³ D. H. Vinton to P. F. Smith, Fort Vancouver, October 1, 1849, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 133.

¹⁴⁴ See Holmes, Journal, MS, II, 306; and Vavasour's map, plate IV.

¹⁴⁵ D. H. Vinton to P. F. Smith, Fort Vancouver, October 1, 1849, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 133.

¹⁴⁶ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 118-119.

was not weather-boarded; and the building was unpainted inside and out, except for the exterior door and window trim. The roof appears to have been a plain gable in 1845, but in 1860 it was hipped, with four brick chimneys breaking the ridge line (see plates VI, XXII). The windows were described by a visitor of 1841 as "French" in style, but in 1860 they seem to have been double-hung.¹⁴⁷ The floors were simply rough boards.¹⁴⁸

The furniture in the clerk's quarters was of the crudest type. Each of the sleeping rooms generally contained a small table of "coarse pine," a few stools, benches, or wooden-bottomed chairs, and one or more bunks built of boards. The beds were described by one visitor as "infested with insects" and covered with two woolen blankets.¹⁴⁹ In spite of the plainness of the furnishings, another visitor of 1841 found the quarters to be "exceedingly comfortable."¹⁵⁰

The building was intended to house the subordinate officers of the post and their families. Since some of the younger clerks were unmarried, the structure was most generally known as the "bachelors' quarters." Much to the disgust of the clerks, however, prominent visitors, and sometimes even emigrants and missionaries, were frequently lodged in the building during their stays at Fort Vancouver. On such occasions some of the clerks were turned out of their quarters and forced to "double up" with their fellows, a practice which gave rise to a good deal of grumbling.¹⁵¹

Evidently Lieutenant Charles Wilkes and other officers of the United States Exploring Expedition were housed in this building during their sojourn at the fort in 1841.¹⁵² The Rev. George

¹⁴⁷ Charles Wilkes, Diary of Wilkes in the Northwest, edited by Edmond S. Meany (Seattle, 1926), 40. It is not certain that Wilkes' description of the windows and furniture applied specifically to the clerks' quarters, but such was very probably the case.

¹⁴⁸ Testimony of L. Brooke, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 129.

¹⁴⁹ Nellie Bowden Pipes, "Translation of Extract from Exploration of Oregon Territory. . . by Eugene Duflot de Mofras," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXVI (June, 1925), 155.

¹⁵⁰ Wilkes, Diary, 40.

¹⁵¹ George T. Allan, "Reminiscences of Fort Vancouver on Columbia River, Oregon, As it Stood in 1832," in Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association; for 1881, 80.

¹⁵² Wilkes, Diary, 40; Holmes, Journal, MS, II, 306.

H. Atkinson and his wife, missionaries sent to Oregon by the American Home Missionary Society, were given rooms in the "Bachelors' Range" during a brief visit in June, 1848.¹⁵³ Evidence as to the exact lodging places of the bulk of the other visitors is not so clear, but undoubtedly most of them were assigned to the same quarters.

During the 1840's, at least, a room at or near the north end of the bachelors' quarters was known as the "strangers' room." It was here, evidently, that such visitors as were not invited to the manager's table were served their meals.¹⁵⁴ This room was seemingly maintained for the general convenience and accommodation of passing travelers. In 1844, for instance, some young American emigrants were offered an opportunity to send letters home by the Company's annual supply ship. Dr. McLoughlin furnished them with paper and pens and sent them to the "strangers' room" to do their writing.¹⁵⁵

One of the most difficult problems in connection with the history of the Fort Vancouver buildings concerns the location of the sitting room known as the "Bachelors' Hall." Referring to conditions as they were in 1836, William H. Gray later stated quite definitely that this social hall was "a room in the clerk's quarters."¹⁵⁶ Of course in 1836 the building under discussion in the present paragraphs had not yet been constructed, and whether or not provision was made for the "Bachelors' Hall" in the structure erected in 1838 is not definitely stated.

When visitors after 1838 referred to the sitting room they generally did so in the same breath with the manager's residence and the dining hall, not making clear the location of each. Some of the accounts seem to imply that the "Bachelors' Hall" was located in the manager's dwelling itself.¹⁵⁷

However, in 1866 the famous old pioneer Joseph L. Meek described the buildings within the stockade as they were between 1840 and 1846. Listing them roughly in clockwise fashion, he

¹⁵³ Rockwood, "Diary of Rev. George H. Atkinson," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XI (June, 1939), 180-181.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. For certain prominent women guests, however, a special table was, on occasion, set up in the manager's personal sitting room.

¹⁵⁵ Minto, "Reminiscences," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, II (September, 1901), 235.

¹⁵⁶ Gray, A History of Oregon, 150-151.

¹⁵⁷ For example, see Dunn, History of Oregon Territory, 144.

named the manager's residence; "then bachelors' hall, and a row of buildings, with six or seven doors, separate tenements, under one roof; then the Indian store," and so forth. If the punctuation of the stenographic record truly indicates the sense of Meek's words, then the bachelors' hall was clearly in a separate building from the manager's dwelling. The row of buildings under one roof described by Meek was certainly the clerks' quarters. It is a bit more difficult to determine whether Meek meant to state that the bachelors' hall was a separate building standing by itself or whether he intended to say that it was attached to the row of "tenements," but seemingly he meant the latter.¹⁵⁸ No separate building labelled "Bachelors' Hall" appears on any of the known ground plans of the fort.

Although, with the meager information at hand, it would be rash to state definitely that the "Bachelors' Hall" was not in the manager's house, the weight of evidence appears to favor the view that this public sitting room was a separate section of the clerks' quarters and was located at or near the north end of that structure.¹⁵⁹

This social hall played an important rôle in the life of the inhabitants of Fort Vancouver. Here, after the heavy mid-day meal—always referred to as "dinner"—the gentlemen officers and clerks would gather for a "stiff pipe of tobacco" and a bit of conversation until the one o'clock bell called them back to their business tasks. And again in the evenings, after the rather frugal "tea" and after the nine o'clock bell ended the day's work, the "smoking room" was again filled with the "gentlemen" and their guests for a session of story-telling, smoking, and reading. At times, when the annual brigades from the interior had arrived, when the supply ships were in port, or when the fall migration of settlers and missionaries descended on the post, there was much company at the chief factor's table, and there were "gala times" in the bachelors' hall. Joking, singing, and story-telling sometimes lasted far into the night, but always, we are assured, "under the strictest discipline, and regulated by the strictest propriety."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 86.

¹⁵⁹ John Minto, a pioneer of 1844, appears to intimate that the "stranger's room" and the "bachelors' hall" were one and the same, or at least were near each other. Minto, "Reminiscences," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, II (September, 1901).

¹⁶⁰ Concerning the festivities in the smoking room, see Dunn, History of the Oregon Territory, 144-145; Gray, A History of Oregon, 150-151.

The bachelors' hall impressed visitors as being a cross between an armory and a museum. On display were "all sorts of weapons, and dresses, and curiosities of civilised and savage life, and of the various implements for the prosecution of the trade."¹⁶¹

Manager's residence

The history of this structure has already been discussed. Probably started about 1829, it was not completed until after 1836. Like the bachelors' quarters, it seemingly remained standing until the fire which finally obliterated the fort buildings.

Although the chief factor or other officer in charge of Fort Vancouver was never properly authorized to employ the title of "governor," he was frequently referred to by that title as a matter of custom and courtesy. Thus his residence was usually called the "governor's house" or "governor's mansion," even as late as 1860.¹⁶² The "common hall," the "big house," and "Ty-ee house" (after an Indian word for "chief") were other names applied to the structure.¹⁶³ Sometimes the residence was referred to by the name of the man who lived in it, as "McLoughlin's house," the "Doctor's house," "Mr. Ogden's residence," and so forth.

For its time and place the governor's house was quite an imposing structure. Anna Maria Pittman, who first saw it in May, 1837, described it as "very handsome."¹⁶⁴ In 1853, Dr. H. A. Tuzo found it to be "commodious and elegant."¹⁶⁵

According to the inventory of 1846-1847, the mansion measured 70 x 40 feet. In 1849, Major D. H. Vinton listed it as a "very comfortable dwelling-house," 80 x 40 feet, and containing ten rooms.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Dunn, History of the Oregon Territory, 145.

¹⁶² Testimony of J. A. Hardie, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 111.

¹⁶³ Testimony of J. L. Meek, in ibid., [VIII], 86; Tolmie, "Journal," in Washington Historical Quarterly, III (July, 1912), 234.

¹⁶⁴ Theresa Gay, Life and Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee, First Wife of Rev. Jason Lee of the Oregon Mission (Portland, Ore., 1936), 152-153.

¹⁶⁵ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 177.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 118; [IX], 133.

Travelers often described the manager's residence as a two-story building.¹⁶⁷ Actually it was only one story in height, but the floor was elevated five or six feet above the ground. The space under the floor was utilized as a basement or cellar for the storage of wines and spirits.¹⁶⁸ To what degree this "extensive" cellar was excavated is not known.

The "mansion" was built in the usual Canadian style, and probably the heavy timbers were left exposed as late as 1836.¹⁶⁹ By 1841, however, the exterior was covered with horizontal weatherboards. Lieutenant Wilkes, who saw the building during that year, reported that it was painted white.¹⁷⁰ It is known that after 1849 only the front of the governor's house was painted, but whether or not this economy was in vogue as early as 1841 is a matter of conjecture.¹⁷¹ During its later years, at least, the structure boasted a shingled hip roof. Evidently there was but a single brick chimney.

The most impressive feature of the exterior was the "piazza" or "portico" which extended across the entire front, or south, face of the residence. From the center of this long covered porch a double, curved stairway led down some ten steps to the ground.¹⁷²

In 1833, Dr. William Fraser Tolmie and several men from England reached Vancouver at three o'clock on the morning of May 4. In his diary Tolmie recorded that Dr. McLoughlin appeared "in shirt and trousers on the staircase of the common hall and welcomed us with a cordial shake of the hand."¹⁷³ The newcomers evidently went into the building and entered the dining hall for refreshments. It is practically certain from the circumstances that Tolmie's "common hall" was McLoughlin's own residence, and the journal entry therefore indicates that the curved stairway

¹⁶⁷ For examples, see Dunn, History of the Oregon Territory, 144; testimony of A. McKinlay, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 91.

¹⁶⁸ Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in ibid., 177; testimony of L. Brooke, in ibid., [VIII], 128.

¹⁶⁹ Gray, A History of Oregon, 149-150.

¹⁷⁰ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 326-327.

¹⁷¹ Testimony of L. Brooke, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 138; (see also plate XXII)

¹⁷² Gay, Life and Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee, 152-153; Gray, A History of Oregon, 150.

¹⁷³ Tolmie, "Journal," in Washington Historical Quarterly, III (July, 1912), 234.

probably existed as early as 1833. But Gray, in 1836, was the first definitely to describe the "half semicircle double stairway."¹⁷⁴

By at least 1841 there were flower beds in front of the "mansion," and "grape and other vines" were growing up the pillars of the porch.¹⁷⁵ The flower beds evidently were maintained until 1860, for the photograph taken in that year shows a low white fence surrounding a small yard on each side of the stairway (see plate XXII). The grapevines likewise had a long life; they probably continued to flourish as long as the building endured. They caught the eyes of visitors to the fort and were among the best-known features of the establishment. In 1851, for instance, a newly arrived emigrant noticed the "fine grape vines loaded with fruit" which screened the porch and evidently audibly admired them, for the "pussy old Eng. aristocrat," Chief Factor Ogden, promised to send him some cuttings when the season for pruning arrived.¹⁷⁶ Probably cuttings from the same vines found their way to many new farms in the Oregon country.

In the courtyard immediately in front of the governor's house, and between the two arms of the stairway, were some cannon which pointed southward toward the river. In 1834 John Kirk Townsend reported that there were four of these guns, two "long 18's" and two nine-pounders, all of them unfit for service.¹⁷⁷ Wyeth, in 1832, had written that the fort contained 24-pound guns, but most later visitors agree that the heavy guns were 18-pounders.¹⁷⁸ A traveler of 1837 found the four cannon still mounted before McLoughlin's door.¹⁷⁹ By 1841, however, there appear to have been only the two 18-pounders, with a few piled shot, at the

¹⁷⁴ Gray, A History of Oregon, 149-150.

¹⁷⁵ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 326-27.

¹⁷⁶ John S. Zeiber, "Diary of John S. Zeiber, 1851," in Transactions of the . . . Oregon Pioneer Association, . . . 1920, 325.

¹⁷⁷ J. K. T[ownsend] to [?], Washington, January 26, 1843, in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, IV (December, 1903) 399-402.

¹⁷⁸ Hulbert, The Call of the Columbia, 152-153.

¹⁷⁹ Gay, Life and Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee, 152-153. In 1836, W. H. Gray noted one large 24-pound cannon, mounted on a ship's carriage, in front of the governor's house; he said this gun was flanked on each side by a "small cannon, or mortar gun, with balls piled in order about them." It is difficult to believe that one of the 18-pounders was temporarily removed between 1834 and 1837, but such may have been the case. Gray, A History of Oregon, 150.

bottom of the stairs. The guns were mounted on sea carriages, but they had been spiked and were quite useless.¹⁸⁰ The two "long 18's" continued to be noted by travelers through the 1840's and were still in place as late as May, 1860.¹⁸¹ A visitor of 1845 recorded that two "swivels" were also in front of the governor's house at the time of his arrival, but no evidence of these smaller guns appears in the 1860 photograph.¹⁸²

Very little is known about the interior of the manager's residence. It was lined and ceiled, had floors of planed boards, and between at least 1849 and 1860 was painted and papered.

Beyond the fact that there were ten rooms, no information is available concerning the interior arrangements. Evidently the front door gave entry to a central hall. Off of this hall, to the right, was a room used by Dr. McLoughlin as his private office and sitting room.¹⁸³ This chamber was comfortably, even elegantly, furnished, at least during the period of McLoughlin's chief factorship. As early as 1836 it contained that greatest of frontier rarities, a sofa.¹⁸⁴ A secretary which probably graced this office may be seen today in the McLoughlin House in Oregon City.¹⁸⁵ There were also pictures on the walls. In 1841 these included a representation of a tree, upon which Protestants were depicted as the withered ends of the several branches of the Roman Catholic Church and as "falling off down into infernal society and flames."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 265; Pipes, "Translation of Extract from. . . Duflot de Mofras," in ibid., XXVI (June, 1925), 153; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 326-327.

¹⁸¹ See Dunn, History of the Oregon Territory, 143; Palmer, Journal, 210.

¹⁸² Hines, Life on the Plains of the Pacific, 388; see also plate XXII.

¹⁸³ Gray, A History of Oregon, 148-151; N. Whitman to S. Parker, Vancouver, October 25, 1836, in Hulbert, Marcus Whitman, 240-242.

¹⁸⁴ Quotation from journal of Narcissa Whitman, in T. C. Elliott, "The Coming of the White Women," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXVII (September, 1936), 179.

¹⁸⁵ For a photograph of this beautiful piece of furniture, see Alice Greve, "Dr. McLoughlin's House," in The Beaver, Outfit 272 (September, 1941), 33.

¹⁸⁶ N. Whitman to her parents, "Wieletpoo," October 6, 1841, in Transactions of the . . . Oregon Pioneer Association for 1891, 150.

Another room mentioned by many visitors to Fort Vancouver was the dining hall, where the "gentlemen" employees and their guests gathered three times a day for meals. As is the case with the bachelor's hall, it is difficult to locate the dining room with any exactness from the accounts left by travelers. But Thomas Jefferson Farnham, who enjoyed McLoughlin's hospitality in 1839, gave a clue in the narrative of his travels which appears to indicate that the dining room definitely was in the manager's residence. The dining hall, he said, was "a spacious room on the second floor."¹⁸⁷ Barring the storehouses, bastion, granary, and the kitchen, any one of which would scarcely have contained the dining hall, the only building to which the term "second floor" would have been applicable was the chief factor's house. As has been seen, the latter structure was generally described as having two stories because its one floor was high off the ground. It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that the common dining hall was located in the governor's mansion.

Farnham stated that the dining room was "ceiled with pine above and at the sides" and that it contained a "large close stove" in its southwest corner.¹⁸⁸ Beyond these meager details, nothing is known concerning the appearance of the hall.

The magnificent set of table and chairs which, according to reliable tradition, was used in the Fort Vancouver dining room may be seen today in the McLoughlin House, in Oregon City.¹⁸⁹ A visitor of 1839 found the table set with "elegant queen's ware, burnished with glittering glasses and decanters of various-colored Italian wines."¹⁹⁰

All of the Fort Vancouver managers, with their families, appear to have lived in the governor's house except, perhaps, Chief Trader James Allan Grahame, who was in charge of the post from about June, 1858, until the Company left in 1860. Grahame, who had served as a clerk at the fort for many years, was living in the old "priests' house" in January, 1854, and he probably continued to occupy that structure even after he succeeded to the

¹⁸⁷ Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 195.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ For a picture of this set, see Greve, "Dr. McLoughlin's House," in The Beaver, Outfit 272 (September, 1941), 35.

¹⁹⁰ Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 195. Some of the McLoughlin family tableware and silver, said to have been used at the fort, may also be seen at the McLoughlin House.

manager's position.¹⁹¹ Perhaps by 1858 the "big house" was already showing signs of the decay which by 1860 made it uninhabitable. As early as 1849 the portico was in need of repair, and the foundations had sagged sufficiently to create openings in the outer walls and to cause the doors and windows to drag.¹⁹² By the time the Company left, the building was so dilapidated that the ground could be seen through a "large decayed spot in the floor."¹⁹³

In addition to the post manager, some of the other chief officers and their families also resided in the "mansion." Prominent guests who could not be accommodated in the bachelors' quarters or in the "priests' house" were likewise housed in the manager's residence. The scientists Thomas Nuttall and John Kirk Townsend, and the missionary Samuel Parker were among those who found shelter within the hospitable walls of the "Ty-ee House."¹⁹⁴

Kitchen to governor's residence

According to the inventory of 1846-1847, the kitchen located directly north of the governor's house measured 60 x 24 feet. It was generally described as a frame building.¹⁹⁵ A person who arrived at Fort Vancouver in 1853 later remembered the kitchen as having then been a two-story structure.¹⁹⁶ Probably this was the same building as that described in the inventory of 1846-1847. As has been seen, this kitchen burned or was pulled down about 1852 or 1853 and was replaced by a much smaller structure. From the Emmons ground plan of 1841, it would appear that the kitchen was joined to the governor's house by a passageway, or possibly, a bridge (see plate II).

¹⁹¹ Report of a board of officers, Fort Vancouver, January 23, 1854, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 104-106; proceedings of a board of officers, Fort Vancouver, June 15, 1860; in ibid., 75-77. Many years later Lloyd Brooke testified that a building between the office and the governor's house—evidently the priests' house—was vacated two or three years after 1849 because it was considered unsafe. As shown by the reports of the two boards cited above, however, he must have been in error. Perhaps he was thinking of the old school house, directly behind the priests' house, which was pulled down in the 1850's.

¹⁹² Testimony of L. Brooke, in ibid., [VIII], 128, 138.

¹⁹³ Testimony of J. A. Hardie, in ibid., [IX], 111.

¹⁹⁴ Hulbert, The Call of the Columbia, 186; Parker, Journal, 145, 168.

¹⁹⁵ Testimony of D. Mactavish, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [XI], 74.

¹⁹⁶ Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in ibid., [II], 176-177.

The "old" Roman Catholic church

As early as 1680 the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company did "strictly enjoyn" its officers in Rupert's Land "to have public prayers and reading of the Scriptures or other religious Books wheresoever you shall be resident, at least upon the Lord's days." The Council for the Northern Department passed a resolution in 1823 requiring that "Every Sunday when circumstances permit, divine Service be publickly read with becoming solemnity, either once or twice a day, to be regulated by the number of people and other circumstances, at which every man woman and child resident must attend, together with such of the Indians who may be at hand, as it may be found proper to admit." In 1828 this resolution was made a part of the department's Standing Rules and Regulations, the Company agreeing to furnish "appropriate Religious Books" for the services.¹⁹⁷

Dr. McLoughlin faithfully followed the injunction of the Council at Fort Vancouver. On Sundays and "on other days prescribed by the Church of England" he, or some employee delegated by him, conducted religious observances. There were generally at least two services, one for the "gentlemen" and the British-born employees, who were mostly Scotch Presbyterians, and the other for the French-Canadians, who were practically all Roman Catholics. In spite of some conjectures to the contrary, the services for the English-speaking inhabitants appear to have been conducted according to the Episcopal ritual.¹⁹⁸ The Catholic services were read in French, and they frequently consisted of a sermon of McLoughlin's own composition or one "he had translated from some English book of homilies." Both services were ordinarily conducted in the dining hall.

In September, 1834, the Rev. Jason Lee and a small party of Methodist missionaries reached Fort Vancouver after an overland journey. Upon the invitation of McLoughlin, Lee on September 28 preached two sermons to mixed congregations consisting of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Scots, Irishmen, Americans, half-breeds, Japanese, and perhaps listeners of still other races. According to one of those present, these were "the two first sermons ever preached in this region" by a regularly ordained minister of the Gospel.¹⁹⁹ Thereafter it became a regular practice to invite visiting miss-

¹⁹⁷ H. B. S., III, 60-61, 230-231.

¹⁹⁸ Young, The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 178; Tolmie, "Journal," in Washington Historical Quarterly, III (July, 1912), 235.

¹⁹⁹ C. Sheperd to "Brother," Fort Vancouver, January 10, 1835, in Archer Butler Hulbert and Dorothy Printup Hulbert, The Oregon Crusade (Overland to the Pacific, V, (Denver), 1935), 185-191.

ionaries to preach at Fort Vancouver. Not only did these travelers conduct services, but from time to time over the years they aided in teaching the secular and religious schools, and performed baptisms, marriages, and burials.

As early as Governor Simpson's visit to the Columbia in 1824-1825, proposals to appoint a regular chaplain to serve in the territory west of the Rockies had been considered by the Company. Simpson had admitted that a mission would be beneficial, but he feared that such a project would prove impracticable. With prophetic vision he foresaw that friction would very likely develop between the chaplain and the resident chief factor. In 1830 the Governor and Committee announced their intention to send a missionary to the Columbia Department, but the actual appointment was delayed. Perhaps it was the arrival of the first American missionaries under Lee which at last moved the Company to start looking for a chaplain.

At first the Committee experienced difficulty in finding a man who would accept the post. Two were chosen, but each declined because his wife refused to face the long ocean voyage around the Horn. But in 1835 Governor Simpson visited England, and he personally selected the Rev. Herbert Beaver, an ordained priest of the Church of England. With his wife, Jane, Beaver sailed for the Columbia in the Company's barque Nereide on February 13, 1836.

Ahead of Beaver, on the annual supply ship Columbia, which reached Fort Vancouver in May, 1836, the Governor and Committee sent out all the necessary articles for the equipping of a church. These included "a church bell, a pulpit, Bibles, prayer book, register, a surplice, an altar cloth, and a silver communion service." The register and the handsome communion service, consisting of a flagon, two patens, and a chalice—all engraved with the coat of arms of the Hudson's Bay Company—are still to be seen in Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria, British Columbia.²⁰⁰

It is evident that the Governor and Committee expected that McLoughlin would erect a church building at Vancouver for the use of Beaver. But as has already been indicated, there was little labor to spare for construction purposes at Vancouver during 1836, and thus not even a start on the church had been made when the chaplain reached the post on September 6, 1836. As a consequence, Beaver was forced to continue the former practice of holding services in the dining hall.

²⁰⁰ For a picture of a page of the marriage register and the communion service, see British Columbia Historical Quarterly, VI. (January, 1942), between pp. 22 and 23; and The Beaver, Outfit 271 (December, 1940), 11-12. A Bible which Dr. Burt Brown Barker thinks may have been one used by Beaver at Fort Vancouver is in the McLoughlin House, Oregon City.

Every Sunday morning at ten o'clock the chaplain performed a "full service," which was attended by about eighty to one hundred persons. Another service was held in the same room at three o'clock on Sunday afternoons, with about half as many people forming the congregation. Much to Beaver's annoyance, three services, separate from his own, were held each Sabbath for the Catholic residents of the post. One of these services, generally conducted by Dr. McLoughlin in French, was also held in the dining hall.

Beaver complained much about the place of worship. He found it "exceedingly inconvenient," because of interruptions arising from the occupancy of part of the same building by several families "who do not attend me." He also felt that the mess hall was an "indecent" place, in which he could not, with propriety, administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Neither was the room large enough to permit the attendance of all the school children.²⁰¹

Unfortunately for Beaver's hopes of obtaining a separate church building, he and Dr. McLoughlin began to quarrel almost at once upon the chaplain's arrival at Fort Vancouver. The details of this bitter feud need not be discussed here. Suffice it to say that among the points of difference were the matters of the religious instruction to be given to the children in the post and the "fur trade" marriages of many of the gentlemen and servants at Vancouver, including McLoughlin himself. The Chief Factor and the chaplain soon ceased to speak to each other, and McLoughlin and most of the other officers of the post stopped attending the services held by Beaver.

When the Doctor left Fort Vancouver in the spring of 1838 to begin his furlough in Europe, conditions temporarily improved for the Rev. Beaver. Under the less prejudiced rule of Chief Trader James Douglas, who was in charge at Vancouver during McLoughlin's absence, the chaplain was permitted to officiate in French every Sunday afternoon and was able to establish a Sunday school. But by the fall of 1838 the chaplain had managed to alienate the good feelings of Douglas, and relations between the two men became strained.²⁰² Hearing that McLoughlin was about to return, Beaver

²⁰¹ Beaver to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, November 10, 1836, in The Beaver, Outfit 272 (September, 1941), 10-13; R. C. Clark, "Experiences of a Chaplain at Fort Vancouver, 1836-1838," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXIX (March, 1938), 29.

²⁰² Except where otherwise indicated, the above account of early religious services at Fort Vancouver and of the story of the Rev. Beaver is based upon Thomas E. Jessett, "Origins of the Episcopal Church in Western Washington," in Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXVII (October, 1946), 303-312; and G. Hollis Slater, "New Light on Herbert Beaver," in British Columbia Historical Quarterly, VI (January, 1942), 13-29.

decided to return to England. He sailed on the Columbia in November, 1838. Needless to say, the church which the directors had expected would be constructed at Fort Vancouver was not erected during Beaver's incumbency.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church was becoming interested in the Oregon country. Most of the discharged Company servants who had settled in the Willamette Valley after about 1829, and who made up the larger part of the population of that region, were French-Canadians and Catholics. Economically, these people were almost entirely dependent upon the good will of the Hudson's Bay Company; and, in addition, John McLoughlin kept a sharp eye on their moral conduct and was greatly interested in their spiritual welfare. For years the Doctor had been conducting Catholic services at Vancouver and, perhaps for this reason or perhaps because of family influences in his youth, he was drawn toward the Catholic religion and was anxious to have priests of the Church reside on the Columbia. He took the initiative, therefore, in pointing out to the settlers on the Willamette the disadvantages under which they were living without priests to administer the sacraments of the Church to themselves and their growing families of unbaptized children. And it was almost certainly at McLoughlin's instigation that a number of "free families" in the Willamette Valley signed two petitions, dated July 3, 1834, and February 23, 1835, requesting the Bishop of Juliopolis, at Red River, to send them missionaries.

The Bishop, Joseph Provencher, was deeply touched by this appeal, but he was forced to reply that no priests were available for labors beyond the Rocky Mountains. He promised, however, to attempt to find men and also the resources with which to support them during a visit he intended to make to eastern Canada and Europe.²⁰³

The Bishop was as good as his word, but once he had on hand two men and had in prospect the requisite funds, he met another obstacle. The only practicable way to get the missionaries from Canada to the Willamette was in the canoes of the Hudson's Bay Company's annual express. But when the Bishop approached the Honorable Company with a request for transportation, he met a decided rebuff. The firm considered that the area south of the Columbia would eventually fall to the United States and it had no intention of strengthening settlements in that region, to say nothing of establishing priests there whose presence might attract still more of the French-Canadian servants from the north side of the river.

In the summer of 1837, however, Governor Simpson suggested to the Bishop that if a Catholic mission would be established on the

²⁰³ Claim of the Mission of St. James, Vancouver, Washington Territory, to 640 Acres of Land (Washington (?), 1863), 6-7.

Cowlitz River, where the Company was anxious to build up a strong British settlement; and if the Bishop would further "give his assurance that the missionaries would not locate themselves on the south side of the Columbia River, but would form their establishment where the Company's Representative might point out as the most eligible situation on the north side," he, in turn would recommend to the Governor and Committee that a passage for the priests be afforded as well as "such facilities towards the successful accomplishment of the object in view as would not involve any great inconvenience or expense to the Company's service."

On October 13, 1837, Bishop Provencher agreed to these terms. Simpson received the Bishop's letter of compliance in London, and he at once laid the matter before the directors. Within a day the Governor and Committee agreed not only to furnish the passage requested but to instruct their chief factor at Fort Vancouver "to facilitate the establishing of the Mission."²⁰⁴

Francois Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers were the priests selected for the Oregon Mission. On April 17, 1838, their instructions were issued by the Bishop of Quebec, who had jurisdiction over the new field west of the Rocky Mountains. They were told that the "first object of their mission" was "to draw from barbarity" the Indians of Oregon. Their principal residence was to be on the Cowlitz River, but they were to follow the advice of the Hudson's Bay Company's representative at Fort Vancouver in this matter and were to remain "constantly in good intelligence" with the employees of the Company.²⁰⁵

After a tedious overland journey, the two priests reached Vancouver on November 24, 1838. Made welcome by Chief Trader Douglas, they were assigned the quarters which had so recently been vacated by the Rev. Beaver. The next day they improvised an altar in the school house and conducted the first Catholic mass ever said at Fort Vancouver and in "lower Oregon."²⁰⁶

Upon their arrival at Vancouver, Fathers Demers and Blanchet commenced almost immediately their labors among the fort's Catholic employees. Preaching, religious instruction, and the performance

²⁰⁴ G. Simpson to [Bishop of Quebec], London, February 17, 1838, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

²⁰⁵ [A. G. Henry], Report and Decision of the Surveyor General of Washington Territory on the Catholic Mission Claim, at Vancouver (Olympia, 1862), 5-6; see also M. Leona Nichols, The Mantle of Elias (Portland, 1941), 43-47.

²⁰⁶ Clarence B. Bagley, ed., Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon (2 vols., Seattle, 1932), I, 53, 55.

of baptisms, burials, and marriages went ahead diligently. Missionary work was done among the Indians near the post, but this phase of their task was not stressed at the departmental depot. Evidence indicates that at Vancouver the main effort was directed at satisfying the religious needs of the employees and their families.

In the spring of 1839, the priests left Vancouver to establish missions in the Willamette Valley, on the Cowlitz, and at Nisqually. In this manner was commenced a pattern of operations which was followed for a number of years. The priests considered Vancouver their headquarters and chief place of residence, but they lived there for only a few weeks or months in any one year. The balance of the time they spent ministering at their missions and at the Company posts scattered over much of the vast Columbia Department. During the periodic absences of the missionaries, Catholic services continued to be conducted by Dr. McLoughlin. After the arrival of two additional priests in the fall of 1842, however, there was generally a missionary in more or less constant residence at Vancouver. On November 9, 1842, Father Blanchet opened a separate register for the "Mission of the Holy Name of Marie" at the fort.²⁰⁷

Although the Catholic priests were given a church and a residence within the pickets at Fort Vancouver, although they ministered to the Catholic servants of the Company, and although they were sometimes referred to as "chaplains," they were not employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were not regularly appointed chaplains in the sense that the Rev. Beaver had been. They were fed and housed by the Company while at the firm's posts, but their chief financial support came from the Association for the Propagation of the Faith in Canada and in Europe and from the contributions from abroad and from the settlers of Oregon. At the recommendation of Governor Simpson, the Council for the Northern Department in 1842 voted that an allowance of \$100 be made to the "Catholic Mission" on the Columbia, and this appropriation was made annually for a number of years thereafter.²⁰⁸ But the priests were not required to render any specific service in return, and they were free to preach to the Indians or to the Company's servants as they saw fit.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Affidavit of the Most Reverend Francis Norbert Blanchet, [Vancouver], 1855, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31; Nichols, The Mantle of Elias, 275. The original register of this mission still exists among the records of St. James Parish, Vancouver, Washington.

²⁰⁸ Oliver, The Canadian North-West, II, 847.

²⁰⁹ Affidavit of the Most Reverend Francis Norbert Blanchet, [Vancouver], 1855, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31. After the visit of McLoughlin to Europe in 1838-1839, the restriction limiting the residence of the priests to the north side of the Columbia was removed.

The schoolhouse at Fort Vancouver, in which the first Catholic Mass was said, proved to be too small to accommodate all who wished to attend the services, and perhaps the priests had much the same aversion to holding their worship in the mess hall as had been expressed by Beaver. At any rate, they soon obtained what the Anglican minister had been unable to procure, a separate chapel.

In 1838 or 1839—witnesses fail to agree—the priests were permitted to take over for use as a chapel the "old store" within the pickets. This structure was the one near the center of the fort enclosure and labeled the "chapel" by Emmons and the "old Roman Catholic Church" on Vavasour's ground plan.²¹⁰

According to Father Blanchet, this chapel was never used for any other purpose than for Catholic religious services and missionary labors after it was assigned to the priests.²¹¹ But according to Lieutenant Emmons, who was at the fort in 1841, the structure was used both for Catholic and "Episcopal" services.²¹² This latter observation was confirmed by Governor Simpson, who in the same year noted that divine service was performed regularly every Sunday at the post, in English to the Protestants and in French to the Catholics. "The same chapel, a building by the by, unworthy of the establishment, served both purposes at the time of our arrival," he wrote, "but separate places of worship were about to be erected for the two denominations."²¹³

In general, however, Protestant services continued to be held in the dining room in McLoughlin's house. By 1841 the Doctor was quite generally regarded as a "professed" Catholic, although he did not formally return to the Catholic Church until near the end of the next year. For this reason, evidently, James Douglas or one of the other officers or employees usually read the Sunday service from the English Book of Common Prayer. But McLoughlin on occasion conducted the Protestant observances, even after 1842.²¹⁴ Upon McLoughlin's

²¹⁰ Affidavit of Joseph Petrain, October 25, 1873, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165) Box No. 31; deposition of F. N. Blanchet, in Claim of the Mission of St. James, 24.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Emmons, Journal, photostat of entry for July 25, 1841.

²¹³ Simpson, An Overland Journey Round the World, 142-143.

²¹⁴ Bagley, Early Catholic Missions, I, 60; Jessett, "Origin of the Episcopal Church in Western Washington," in Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXVII (October, 1946), 308; Pipes, "Translation of Extract from Exploration of Oregon Territory. . . by Eugene Duflot de Mofras," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXVI (June, 1925) 155; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 331.

retirement, early in 1846, the duties of conducting the services in English fell entirely to Chief Factors Douglas and Ogden. As late as 1849 the dining hall, then known as "Vancouver Hall," was still being used for this purpose. Sermons were frequently preached by visiting ministers and missionaries.²¹⁵

The Catholics at Vancouver, like Governor Simpson, had soon come to the conclusion that the building assigned to them as a chapel was "unworthy of the establishment," and they began to plan the construction of a church of their own. They attempted to buy land for this purpose, but the Company refused to sell. About 1844, however, the officers at Fort Vancouver gave Father Blanchet the use of a sizeable tract of land north and west of the stockade. This land began at or near the old mill (see plate X) and extended westward. Actual construction of the new church upon the tract apparently did not begin until 1845 or early 1846. The structure was dedicated on May 31, 1846.²¹⁶ Shortly thereafter the "old" Catholic church within the stockade was demolished. It had disappeared before the inventory of 1846-1847 was taken.

The parsonage or priests' house

Although Dr. McLoughlin had known months in advance that a chaplain was to be sent out from England to reside at Fort Vancouver, and although word of the immediate approach of the Rev. Beaver and his wife had reached the post several days before their actual arrival, no preparations appear to have been made to house the chaplain. When they landed from the Nereide on September 6, 1836, the Beavers were assigned living quarters in a dwelling part of which was already inhabited by the family of one of the employees. Only a thin partition separated the chaplain and his wife from the "noisy" occupants of the other rooms. To make matters worse, the attic of the structure was reserved for the use of the Company, and workmen frequently demanded access to it "regardless of Mrs. Beaver's convenience." The clergyman chose to interpret the coarse furniture and the lack of carpets in his apartments as a part of a deliberate campaign of "personal insult and domestic annoyance" waged against

²¹⁵ Rockwood, "Diary of Rev. George H. Atkinson," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XL (June, 1939), 181, 184-185; XLI (March, 1940), 14.

²¹⁶ The date of dedication is given as May 30, 1846, in Nichols, The Mantle of Elias, 280. Other evidence, however, shows that the ceremony actually took place on the thirty-first. See Copy, Act of Dedication of Church of St. James at Vancouver, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31; and Oregon Spectator (Oregon City), June 25, 1846.

him by McLoughlin.²¹⁷

McLoughlin, on the other hand, announced that it was his intention to make the Beavers "as comfortable as the Circumstances of the Country will Admit." He maintained that the chaplain's house "was the best in the Fort," and in November, 1836, he recommended that the Committee turn a deaf ear to Beaver's requests for more elaborate furnishings. "If he is Allowed carpets and imported furniture--has not every Gentleman in the place a Right to the same Indulgence," the Chief Factor asked.²¹⁸

Evidently McLoughlin did fulfill his promise to make the Beavers more comfortable. Before many months had passed they appear to have been assigned to a house of their own. This parsonage, said W. H. Gray, was "what might be called of the balloon order." It was roofed with boards and had a large mud and stone chimney in the center. It contained but two rooms, one used as the dining room and kitchen, and the other as the bedroom and parlor. The partitions and floors were nothing but rough boards. The only carpets were the "common flag mats of the Indians, which Mrs. Beaver considered "too filthy to step upon, or be about the house."²¹⁹

How long this small structure served as the parsonage is not known. If the Beavers continued to occupy it until their departure for England early in November, 1838, then this same building also served to house the Catholic Fathers Blanchet and Demers, who arrived at Vancouver later in that same month.

The only definite fact known about the fate of this small parsonage is that by 1841 it had been replaced by the larger structure called by Emmons the "Chaplain's or Governor's temporary residence" and by Vavasour in 1845, the "priests house." According to the inventory of 1846-1847, this later dwelling measured 50 x 30 feet and was lined and ceiled. It had two exterior doors, one in the center of the south wall and the other in the middle of the north wall (see plate II). As shown by the photograph of 1860, it was constructed in French-Canadian fashion, weatherboarded in front and covered with a shingled, hip roof. The same source shows

²¹⁷ See Clark, "Experiences of a Chaplain at Fort Vancouver, 1836-1838," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXIX (March, 1938), 26; and sources cited in Jessett, "Origins of the Episcopal Church in Western Washington," in Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXVII (October, 1946), 303-312. As late as October, 1836, the Beavers occupied a part of "Mr. Findenson's house." N. Whitman to S. Parker, Vancouver, October 25, 1836, in Hulbert, Marcus Whitman, 240-242.

²¹⁸ J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, November 16, 1836, in H. B. S., IV, 175-176.

²¹⁹ Gray, A History of Oregon, 150, 163.

a chimney, seemingly of stone, on the west wall of the structure. The windows were of the casement or "French" type.

This new priests' house continued to shelter the Catholic missionaries at Fort Vancouver for a number of years. In 1846 a small vestry was constructed near the new Catholic Church outside the pickets, but for one reason or another the priests occupied it but rarely, if at all, down to about 1851. But after this vestry was constructed, the missionaries appear to have occupied the "priests' house" within the stockade only intermittently. They sometimes lived in a small house they had purchased for missionary purposes in the nearby village, occasionally they accepted hospitality in the homes of their parishioners, or, most often, they occupied rooms in the governor's mansion.²²⁰

By 1849 the priests' house appears to have been used mainly as a residence for subordinate employees.²²¹ As has been seen, James Allan Grahame, a clerk who was appointed a chief trader in 1854, lived in the structure during the 1850's, and he may have continued to do so up to the date upon which the Company moved out of the fort.

"Owyhee Church"

In 1839, Thomas Jefferson Farnham noted that a building near the rear gate was occupied as a schoolhouse.²²² Undoubtedly this structure was the same as that shown on the Emmons ground plan of 1841 as the chaplain's kitchen, with the added information that it was also "used as a school room."²²³ On the Vavasour map of 1845 this structure was designated as the "Owyhee" or "Owyhee" Church.

Natives of the Hawaiian Islands had been employed on the Columbia by both the Astorians and the Northwest Company, and the practice was continued by the Hudson's Bay Company after 1821. When Governor Simpson visited the Columbia Department in 1824, he noted that there were about thirty-five Sandwich Islanders west

²²⁰ Affidavit of T. J. Eckerson, August 18, 1863, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31; affidavit of Joseph Petrain, October 25, 1873, MS, in *ibid.*; deposition of F. N. Blanchet, in Claim of the Mission of St. James, 25, 28; (J. D. Cameron), Fort Vancouver Military Reservation [n. p., n. d.], 2-3; Rockwood, "Diary of Rev. George H. Atkinson," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XL (June, 1939), 181.

²²¹ D. H. Vinton to P. F. Smith, Fort Vancouver, October 1, 1849, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 133.

²²² Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 194.

²²³ Emmons, Journal, photostat of entry for July 25, 1841.

of the Rocky Mountains.²²⁴ On the whole, the "Owyhees," or "Kanakas," as they were termed, were docile and useful workmen, but they lacked religious instruction and needed the guiding hand of a native leader to keep them from occasional excesses, chiefly drinking sprees.

On July 1, 1844, McLoughlin wrote to the Company's agents in Honolulu, requesting them "to search out a trusty educated Hawaiian of good character to read the scriptures and assemble his people for public worship." The man was to be sent to Fort Vancouver to serve as a teacher, religious instructor, and interpreter, at a salary of ten pounds per year.

Evidently in response to this appeal, and evidently before the end of 1844, a Hawaiian named "William," or "Kanaka William," arrived at Vancouver and assumed the role of religious instructor to his fellow countrymen. He was not an ordained minister, but he was a man of good reputation. Seemingly referring to William, James Douglas wrote to the Honolulu agents on January 9, 1845, that the native teacher was satisfied with his situation and, except for his ignorance of English, was well qualified and seemed to exercise a "salutary influence" on the minds of his countrymen.²²⁵

As shown by the name of the building on Vavasour's map, the schoolhouse had been assigned to William's use by 1845. He continued to occupy this structure as late as June, 1848, at which time between twenty and forty Hawaiians attended his sermons each Sunday.²²⁶ Kanaka William's use of the former schoolhouse was perhaps limited to religious observances, however, since as early as 1846 he actually lived in a house in the village (see plate X). He continued to occupy this latter home until about March 20, 1860, on which date the structure was burned by order of the military authorities.²²⁷

²²⁴ Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 91. For a discussion of the Hawaiians in the Columbia Department, see Robert Carlton Clark, "Hawaiians in Early Oregon," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXV (March, 1934), 22-31.

²²⁵ Rockwood, "Diary of Rev. George H. Atkinson," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XL (June, 1939), p. 181, note 43; based on information obtained by Dr. R. C. Clark from the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. See also Deposition of Joseph Petrain, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

²²⁶ Rockwood, "Diary of Rev. George H. Atkinson," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XL (June, 1939), 181.

²²⁷ Testimony of J. M. Work, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 189-193.

According to the inventory of 1846-1847, the "Owyhee Church" or schoolhouse—for the building evidently continued to be used for purposes of instruction on week days—measured 50 x 25 feet and was lined and ceiled. Shortly after this time—certainly by 1849—the school was transferred to a structure outside the stockade.²²⁸ About 1851 or 1852 the old "Owyhee Church" was probably vacated, being so dilapidated as to be considered unsafe. It was finally pulled down between 1855 and 1858.²²⁹

Powder magazine

A powder magazine, described as being built of stone, existed at Fort Vancouver as early as 1832. During subsequent years, down to 1860, various visitors and boards of inspectors noted the presence of this structure, which was somewhat loosely pictured as being of brick, stone, or brick and stone.²³⁰ According to archeological evidence, the observers who reported both brick and stone were correct.²³¹

The stone foundation of the powder magazine, still partially intact, was uncovered during the excavations at Fort Vancouver in 1947. The foundation walls were two feet thick and formed a square, each side of which measured about 19 1/2 feet, exterior measurement, and about 15 1/4 feet, interior measurement.²³² These figures agree quite well with the measurement of 18 x 18 feet given for the structure in the inventory of 1846-1847.

²²⁸ Osborne Cross, The March of the Mounted Riflemen (Glendale, California, 1940), 266.

²²⁹ See above, p. 147; testimony of L. Brooke, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 128. Brooke's description of the house which was vacated most closely fits the priests' house, but, as has been seen, it is known that the latter structure continued to stand and was occupied until at least 1860. Therefore it is almost certain that Brooke meant to say that it was the old schoolhouse which was vacated about 1851 or 1852.

²³⁰ Young, Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 176; Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 194; Pipes, "Translation of Extract from Exploration of Oregon Territory . . . by Eugene Duflot de Mofras," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (June, 1925), 153; Schafer, "Documents Relative to Warre and Vavasour's Military Reconnaissance in Oregon, 1845-6," in ibid., X (March, 1909), 85; Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 176-177; [IX], 90; [XI], 74.

²³¹ Caywood, Exploratory Excavations at Fort Vancouver, plate 4.

²³² Ibid.

Intended to be fireproof, the powder magazine had an arched roof of brick and stone. The door, located in the north wall, was of copper, or was at least copper-covered.²³³

Warehouses and Company trading shop

According to the inventory of 1846-1847, there were four main storehouses within the stockade: Store No. 1, measuring 86 x 40 feet; Store No. 2, measuring 90 x 40 feet; and Stores Nos. 3 and 4, each of which was 100 x 40 feet. If the buildings shown on the Vavasour map were drawn in correct scale, as appears to have been the case, the storehouses may be identified as follows: Store No. 1 was the structure labeled "Shop & Store" on the Vavasour map and located near the center of the west palisade wall; Store No. 2 was located immediately to the south of Store No. 1; Stores Nos. 3 and 4 were the two large buildings along the south wall labeled "Stores" on the Vavasour map (see plate IV).

As has been seen, these warehouses were all erected during the period of from about 1843 to 1845 to replace earlier and cruder structures which stood on about the same sites; or at least the earlier storehouses were so largely rebuilt that they may be said to have been replaced by new buildings.

The storehouses were most generally described as having been two stories high.²³⁴ Closer observers, however, more accurately reported that the structures had one full story and "another part story under the roof."²³⁵ They were built of heavy timbers in the usual French-Canadian style. One frequent visitor during the 1830's and 1840's stated years later that he thought the upright posts of the warehouses were sixteen feet high.²³⁶ The roofs of the warehouses as they stood in 1836 and 1841 were simple gables made of boards, but the newer structures by 1845 had shingled, hip roofs (see plate VI). Apparently the trading shop (Store No. 1) was the only one of the warehouses to have weatherboarding on the outside. The others impressed visitors as being of "rough" construction; and the least settling of the foundations caused openings to appear in the walls.²³⁷ All were unpainted, except that in 1860, at least, the door and window trim of the trade shop was painted (see plate XXIII).

²³³ Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 176-177; testimony of D. Mactavish, in *ibid.*, (XI), 74.

²³⁴ Vavasour map; and Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 91, 137, 176-177; (IX), 119; (XI) 219.

²³⁵ Testimony of W. H. Gray, in *ibid.*, (VIII), 164, 183-184.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 183-184.

²³⁷ Testimony of L. Brooke, in *ibid.*, 128.

The interiors were equally crude. The floors were evidently made of three-inch planks, rough and loosely laid.²³⁸ Although the windows of the trade shop were described as "very small," this building impressed visitors as being "a little more cheerful" than the other warehouses. Evidently the lower floor was ceiled. The upstairs, however, was merely an "extensive garret" used for storage. In the words of one witness, there "was no covering above the upstairs room but the roof."²³⁹

The more easterly of the two warehouses along the south wall was rented by the United States Army as a quartermaster and commissary store for several years during the 1850's. It is difficult to ascertain from the military records exactly which buildings were rented by the military authorities at any particular date, but if the testimony of Captain Rufus Ingalls, quartermaster at Fort Vancouver, was accurate, the storehouse was at least partially occupied by the Army as early as 1849.²⁴⁰ Persons arriving at the fort in 1853 and 1857 reported that the building was still being used as a quartermaster and commissary store during those years.²⁴¹ The story of the destruction of this warehouse in late June or early July, 1860, has already been presented.

Early in 1846 the House of Representatives of the Provisional Government of Oregon Territory passed an act providing for the collection of revenues. Among other and more usual forms of legal tender acceptable for the payment of taxes was "good merchantable wheat." Residents of "Vancouver County" who paid their taxes in wheat were required to deliver it to the Hudson's Bay Company's warehouses at Cowlitz or Fort Vancouver.²⁴² Probably the building to which the wheat was to be brought at Fort Vancouver was the granary, but it could have been one of the other stores. For some time after the occupation of the country south of the forty-ninth parallel by the United States, there was no bonded warehouse for customs purposes in the territory, and the Company's stores at Vancouver for a time served as "constructive bonded warehouses."²⁴³

²³⁸ Testimony of L. Brooke, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (VIII), 128; see also ibid., 216.

²³⁹ Ibid., 149; testimony of P. H. Sheridan, in ibid., (IX), 267.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., (IX), 16.

²⁴¹ Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in ibid., (II), 176-177; testimony of C. B. Wagner, in ibid., (IX), 59, 64. Identification of the building rented is made certain by the map in Joseph K.F. Mansfield, Report of Joseph K.F. Mansfield, Inspector General, to Brevet Lieut. Gen. Winfield Scott, Commanding the Army of the United States, March 1, 1855, MS, 103, in A. G. O., Misc. File 282, in War Records Division, the National Archives (see plate XVII). In 1854 the building was used to store commissary supplies at a rental of \$75 per month. Ibid., 69.

²⁴² Oregon Spectator (Oregon City), March 4 (5), 1846.

²⁴³ Roberts, Recollections, MS, 96-97.

Bakery

The bakehouse shown on the Vavasour diagram of 1845 appears to have been a new structure, quite different from the bakery shown on the Emmons ground plan of 1841 (see plates II, IV). As described by the inventory of 1846-1847 and by a witness who first saw it in 1853, the bakehouse was a two-story building, measuring between 40 and 50 feet in one direction and 20 to 30 feet in the other.²⁴⁴

The bakery contained two "superior" fire brick ovens, capable of baking for between 200 and 300 men.²⁴⁵ As early as 1835, two or three men were constantly employed at the Fort Vancouver bakery, not only making bread for the daily use of the establishment, but also biscuit for the Company's shipping and for the forts in the interior and on the northwest coast.²⁴⁶

Blacksmith shop

The age of the blacksmith shop which appears on the Vavasour ground plan is not known. As has already been discussed, it may have been the same structure as that shown on the Emmons plan of 1841, or it may have been a new one.

According to the 1846-1847 inventory, the blacksmith shop measured 45 x 30 feet. It was a one-story building and contained two "ordinary" forges and two "very large" ones for ship work and similar tasks.²⁴⁷

In 1841 there was another smithy at the Company sawmill, where, in addition to the work of the mill, all the axes and hatchets used by the trappers and traders were made.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ The version of the inventory printed by T. C. Elliott in the Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXII, 34, gives the dimensions as 40 x 20 feet; that printed in the Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 118-119, gives them as 40 x 25. H. A. Tuzo later stated that the long walls were 40 to 50 feet in length and the short walls, 20 to 30 feet. Ibid., 176-177, 183.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 188.

²⁴⁶ Parker, Journal, 184.

²⁴⁷ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 183.

²⁴⁸ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 336.

Granary

In the fall of 1839 a granary capable of holding 18,000 bushels of grain was completed at Fort Vancouver,²⁴⁹ Evidently this was the same structure which appears within the stockade on both the Emmons and Vavasour ground plans.²⁵⁰

In 1841, Lieutenant Wilkes described the granary as a "frame building of two stories."²⁵¹ He went on to say that the granary was the only frame building in the fort, a statement difficult to reconcile with accounts of other visitors, albeit of somewhat later date, who said that the kitchen was also a frame structure. An arrival at the fort in 1853 found the granary to be "large and well fitted up" and still two stories in height. The same witness also testified that the building measured 60 or 70 feet by 30 or 40 feet.²⁵² The inventory of 1846-1847 was more conservative, giving the dimensions as 50 x 40 feet, while Major D. H. Vinton, in 1849, judged it to be 50 x 50 feet.²⁵³

A photograph taken in 1860 shows the granary to have been sheathed with vertically laid boards and covered with a shingled hip roof.²⁵⁴

The "old" office

The building described as "clerks' office" on the Emmons map of 1841 was evidently one of the oldest structures within the stockade at that time. It is mentioned in Dr. Tolmie's journal of 1833, and in 1836, W. H. Gray found it to have planed floors.²⁵⁵ During the visit of the United States Exploring Expedition in 1841,

²⁴⁹ J. Douglas to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 14, 1839, in H. B. S., VI, 224.

²⁵⁰ It is not absolutely certain, however, that the granary shown on the Emmons plan was the same structure as Vavasour's "wheat store" since the locations and sizes of the buildings as shown on the two maps do not agree. As has been seen, certain evident inaccuracies in the Emmons plan make it difficult to ascertain which buildings were rebuilt or moved between 1841 and 1845.

²⁵¹ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 332-333.

²⁵² Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 176-177, 184.

²⁵³ D. H. Vinton to P. F. Smith, Fort Vancouver, October 1, 1849, in ibid., (IX), 133.

²⁵⁴ See plate XXIII, which also shows interesting door and window details.

²⁵⁵ Washington Historical Quarterly, III, 237; see Gray, A History of Oregon, 150.

meteorological observations were made at the office.²⁵⁶

The old office was still standing when the inventory of 1846-1847 was made, at which time its dimensions were given as 30 x 30 feet. Since no trace of the building is to be found on any later ground plans or in any later inventories, it probably disappeared about 1847.

The "new" office

The "new" office, or the "counting room" as it was occasionally called, was constructed between 1841 and 1845. In the inventory of 1846-1847 its dimensions are given as 36 x 30 feet. This building was weatherboarded on the outside and ceiled on the inside.²⁵⁷ Apparently it was painted.²⁵⁸

Harness shop

As has already been discussed, it seems impossible to determine when the harness or saddler's shop was constructed or when it disappeared. According to the inventory of 1846-1847 it measured 40 x 25 feet and was lined and sided.

²⁵⁶ Emons, Journal, photostat of entry for July 25, 1841.

²⁵⁷ Testimony of L. Brooke, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [VIII], 128.

²⁵⁸ Testimony of J. W. Nesmith, in ibid., [IX], 23, 34.

Chapter VI

BUILDINGS OUTSIDE THE STOCKADE

General view, 1846

From the inventory of 1846-1847 and from other sources, a fairly adequate list may be compiled of the mills, barns, dwelling houses, and other structures which the Hudson's Bay Company erected on its extensive holdings at Vancouver.¹ As they stood about the end of 1846, the structures owned by the Company in addition to those comprising the fort proper, included the following:

At the Mill Plain:

The Mill Plain was located about six miles upstream from the fort and about a mile back from the river (see plate XXV). At this place the Company had the following buildings:

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| One dwelling house | 26 x 21 feet |
| One store | 40 x 20 feet |
| One stable | 50 x 20 feet |
| One barn no. 1 | 108 x 32 feet |
| One barn no. 2 | 150 x 19 feet |
| One barn no. 3 | 130 x 18 feet |
| One barn no. 4 | 117 x 21 feet |
| One barn no. 5 | 114 or 144 x 18 feet |
| One barn no. 6 | 150 x 21 feet |
| One barn no. 7 | 141 x 21 feet |
| Two shepherds' huts | |

There were 962 1/2 acres of enclosed land on the Mill Plain in addition to an extensive area which was farmed but left unfenced. There was a total of 16,918 yards of fencing at Mill Plain, classified as follows:

- Two side fences, each 3626 yards
- Eight cross fences, each 952 yards
- Two side fences of stable field, each 294 yards
- Two end fences of stable field, each 46 yards
- Seven barn fences, each 135 yards
- Five sheep packs, each 85 yards

¹ The inventory has been printed in Elliott, "British Values in Oregon, 1847," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXII (March, 1931), 27-45; and, in slightly different form, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 118-121. The other sources include testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in ibid., 177-178; Vayasour's map of 1845 (see plate V); and Covington's map of 1846 (see plate X).

At the sawmills:

The sawmills were located on a small stream and almost immediately upon the north bank of the Columbia River, about seven miles above the fort. The Company's buildings there included the following:

- One "substantially built sawmill, 91 x 30 feet, and capable of working a gang of 11 saws, with an overshot wheel of 16 feet diameter."
- One "new single sawmill, 60 x 19 1/2 ft., cistern 16 feet long, 8 feet square."²
- One new dwelling house, lined and ceiled, 33 x 27 feet
- One new lumber shed, 45 x 23 1/2 feet
- One new ox byre, 34 x 29 feet
- One new store, 30 x 18 feet
- One new stable, 30 x 18 feet
- Men's houses, forge, etc.

At the flour mills:

The flour or grist mills were located on the present Mill Creek, about five or six miles above Fort Vancouver. Like the sawmills, the grist mills were close to the north bank of the Columbia.³ The following structures were located on Mill Creek:

- One "flour mill, 40 x 20 feet, 3 floors, with 2 pairs of stones; a wire machine for dressing flour, with every other convenience."
- One new flour mill, 60 x 40 feet
- Several years later there were, in addition, a dwelling for the miller and a storehouse, both built of logs with shingle roofs. In all probability, these or similar buildings were at the mills in 1846.⁴

² The copy of the inventory published by Elliott lists still another mill, described as a "New Eingle Saw Mill 60 x 19 1/2 ft.," but this additional notation is evidently an error, since witnesses stated there were but two sawmills at about this period.

³ Leonard Wiley, "Mill Creek Site of Grist Mill of Hudson's Bay Company," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XLIII (September, 1942), 282-285.

⁴ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [XI], 220.

On the Fort Plain, Dairy Plain, and other agricultural lands in the immediate vicinity of Fort Vancouver:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| One barn | 120 x 30 feet |
| Two barns | 100 x 30 feet |
| One stable | 105 x 20 feet |
| One ox byre | 40 x 25 feet |
| One "piggery," shingle roof | 40 x 20 feet |
| Three root houses | 60 x 20 feet |
| One corn kill | 18 x 18 feet ⁵ |

There were 457 acres of fenced land in the vicinity of the fort, enclosed by 11,621 yards of fencing, as follows:

Fencing adjoining the fort, 8362 yards
 Fencing on Dairy Plain, 2169 yards
 Fencing of potato fields, below the dairy, 1090 yards

Immediately east of the southeast corner of the stockade:

One Cooper's shed, perhaps 70 x 30 feet⁶
 Two small dwellings⁷

On the rising ground north of the fort, from east to west:

"Dundas Folly" or "Dundas Castle," located on the bluff overlooking the eastern end of Fort Plain
 "Mosquito Grotto," located on the bluff near the site of the old fort, possibly the same building as "Dundas Folly."
 Two new schoolhouses, 50 x 40 feet
 One stable (possibly already listed under farm buildings)
 One dwelling
 "Old" grist mill
 One dwelling adjoining Catholic church, ceiled, 30 x 21 feet
 "New" Catholic church

⁵ There were probably, in addition, several other farm buildings near the fort, including two pig sheds and one or two more stables, but it is difficult to correlate buildings shown on the available maps with those listed in the inventory. A number of the buildings listed above as farm structures were located near the wharf and pond (see plate X).

⁶ According to the Covington map, there were two buildings set aside for the use of the coopers in 1846, a cooper's shed and a cooper's shop, the latter being near the pond (see plate X). Which of the two was meant by the "cooper's shop, 70 x 30 feet," listed on the 1846-47 inventory is not known. Probably the "cooper's shop" of the inventory was the "cooper's shed" of the Covington map, since it was oblong in shape, while Covington's "cooper's shop" is represented as a square structure. Also, in 1853, Dr. Tuzo testified that there was a "large" cooper's "shop" immediately east of the fort.

⁷ Certainly by 1860, and probably by 1853, another dwelling had been added to the two noted above, which are shown on the Warre sketch of 1845 (plate VI) and the Covington map (plate X).

Three dwellings⁸Near the wharf and pond, southwest of the fort:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| One hospital | 32 x 22 feet |
| One cooper's shop | |
| One salt store | 27 x 12 feet |
| One salmon store | 100 x 40 feet |
| One building or boat shed | 90 x 30 feet |
| One boat shed | 100 x 24 feet |
| One distillery | 132 x 18 feet |
| Several dwellings and some farm structures, the latter probably already listed under farm buildings | |

In the village, west and southwest of the fort:

De Roche's dwelling, lined and ceiled, 30 x 20 feet
 Between about twenty to forty additional dwellings, sheds, out-houses, etc.

Location unknown:

Scarth's dwelling, lined and ceiled, 40 or 50 x 20 feet
 One dwelling, lined and ceiled, 40 or 50 x 20 feet
 One dwelling, lined and ceiled, 30 x 20 feet
 One receiving store, 32 x 24 feet

On Lower Plain:

The Lower Plain extended for about five miles downstream from the fort. On it were the following structures:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Three houses, each | 20 x 18 feet |
| One dairy | 20 x 18 feet |
| One barn | 100 x 20 feet |
| One "piggery" | 60 x 18 feet |

On Sauvie Island:

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Two dwelling houses | 30 x 20 feet |
| Two dwelling houses | 18 x 18 feet |
| Two dairies | 30 x 20 feet |

⁸ Tuzo testified that in 1853 there was also an ice house north of the fort.

Two dairies
One granary

18 x 18 feet
30 x 20 feet⁹

Descriptions of individual buildings

Specific descriptions and histories are available concerning only a few of the many buildings listed in the above summary. Those structures regarding which more is known than appears in the inventory of 1846-1847 are discussed in the following paragraphs:

The sawmills

It has already been seen that by 1828 the Company had a "good" sawmill in operation on a small stream about seven miles east of the fort. When erected, this mill contained only one saw, but it was capable of producing 300,000 board feet per year.¹⁰ Long afterwards McLoughlin said that in 1828 he had realized that the falls of the Willamette would have been a more satisfactory location for the sawmill but "the hostile state of the Indian population would not allow of the men being sent away such a Distance from the Fort," and, besides, the Fort Vancouver mill "sawed sufficient Lumber for our wants."¹¹

According to tradition, William Cannon, who had come to the Columbia with the Astorians and who was employed by the Company as a blacksmith, built the first sawmill, with an overshot water wheel, at Vancouver for Dr. McLoughlin.¹² The tradition appears well founded, since in 1832 Cannon was in charge of the mill.¹³

On September 15, 1834, Jason Lee passed the Company sawmill and noticed that a new mill was under construction. "The work-

⁹ The copy of the inventory published by Elliott lists also a dwelling house, 50 x 40 feet, and another granary, 50 x 40 feet, as being on Sauvie's Island, but the copy printed in the Br. & Am. Joint Comm. Papers lists these buildings as forming a part of the post of Coweeman, at the mouth of the Cowlitz River.

¹⁰ See above, sources cited on pp. 50, 63.

¹¹ J. McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Oregon City, July 1, 1846, in H. B. S., VII, 157.

¹² Clarke, Pioneer Days of Oregon History, I, 185; Snowden, History of Washington, I, 477.

¹³ Ball, "Across the Continent," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, III (March, 1902), 98; Wyeth, "Journal," in Hulbert, The Call of the Columbia, 152-153. From the Wyeth journal it appears that the Company had two sawmills at Vancouver in 1832, but the exact meaning of Wyeth's words is not too clear.

manship," he wrote in his journal, "does honour to the master."¹⁴ By March of the next year this new mill was in operation. When all went well, it worked twelve saws and could cut about 3500 feet of boards every twenty-four hours.¹⁵ Samuel Parker, who visited the mill in October, 1835, described it as "very large," with "several" saws. Piles of lumber surrounded the mill, and there were several cottages in the vicinity. But in spite of this evidence of large-scale lumbering operations, Parker noticed that the Company mill with its multiple saws did not turn out more lumber than a "common mill," with one saw, ordinarily produced in the United States.¹⁶

This inefficiency was admitted by James Douglas in a letter to Governor Simpson on March 18, 1838. By that date, he said, the mill worked only from six to ten saws, and even when in repair it could cut but 1500 square feet of one and two-inch boards a week. Due principally to the inexperienced help, machinery breakdowns were frequent, however, and even this moderate production figure was sometimes not met.¹⁷

At about this period the sawmill employed between twenty-five and thirty men, the figure varying from time to time. The men were chiefly Sandwich Islanders, with a scattering of Scots and other Europeans. They were classed as hewers, carters, fodderers, rafters, and sawyers, with one overseer.¹⁸ About ten or twelve yoke of oxen were employed to haul logs to the mill and finished lumber to the banks of the Columbia, where the boards were made into rafts to be floated down to the fort or were loaded directly onto ships for export. The mills did not operate on Sundays or holidays, and were frequently shut down for one reason or another; but when running, they were kept going day and night, with the

¹⁴ Jason Lee, "Diary of Rev. Jason Lee," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XVII (September, 1916), 261-262.

¹⁵ James Douglas, Private Papers, First Series, MS, 7 in the Bancroft Library.

¹⁶ Parker, Journal, 144, 183.

¹⁷ H. B. S., IV, 285. There is a possibility that Douglas meant to say that the production was 1500 feet per day, rather than per week. As late as 1837, William Slacum found the output to be about 2000-2500 feet per day. William A. Slacum, "Slacum's Report on Oregon, 1836-1837," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XIII (June, 1912), 185.

¹⁸ The fodderers evidently were the men who were sent nearly every day in the winter to obtain "goose grass" for the oxen from the large island in the river opposite the mill. Testimony of W. F. Crate, Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 106, 114.

employees working in regular shifts.¹⁹

At the suggestion of McLoughlin, the sawmill was "almost entirely rebuilt" during the spring of 1838 on "a new construction." Given "a double gearing, lighter frames, diminished cranks, with a greatly accelerated stroke," it was able to do "more work, in better style." These improvements were begun in February and completed about the middle of April. But James Douglas, in charge of Fort Vancouver during McLoughlin's furlough in Europe, was not satisfied with the results. "It is still, however, an imperfect structure," he complained, "subjected to continued accidents, which give rise to a thousand vexatious interruptions." But despite several long stoppages, the mill produced 90,000 feet of inch boards during four months of operations before October, 1838.²⁰

It was evidently this reconstructed sawmill which was described by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes in 1841. He found it to be "remarkably well built," with several runs of saws. "In few buildings, indeed," he wrote, "can such materials be seen as are here used." At the mill he also noted a "large smith's shop," which, "besides doing the work of the mill, makes all the axes and hatchets for the trappers." The blacksmith could manufacture fifty axe heads in a single day, and twenty-five were considered an ordinary day's work.²¹

Lieutenant Wilkes noticed one serious defect which plagued the Fort Vancouver sawmill. The structure was located on a never-failing stream, one fall of which alone produced sixty horse power, but it was placed so low and so close to the Columbia that during floods the back water from the river hindered the operation of the machinery and made shutdowns necessary. This difficulty is known to have existed as early as 1838, immediately after the mill was rebuilt, and probably it had hampered the operation of the mill of 1834 and possibly even that of 1828.

¹⁹ H. B. S., IV, 259-260, 285; testimony of D. Mactavish, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [IX], 82-83; Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 194; Slacum, "Slacum's Report," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XIII (June, 1912), 185.

²⁰ J. Douglas to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 18, 1838, in H. B. S., IV, 259-260.

²¹ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 335-336; Wilkes, Diary, 51. Lieut. Wilkes also remarked that as late as 1841 all hardwood planks needed at the post were "yet cut by hand." Lieut. Emmons, who also visited the mill in 1841, found nine saws in operation, producing about 2500 feet of boards per day. Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 268.

The same trouble continued as long as the Company continued to run the mills.²²

About the beginning of 1839 a young London millwright named William Frederick Crate, who had been in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company for several years, was engaged to construct water mills and to mill flour at Fort Vancouver.²³ For a year or two his attentions were chiefly devoted to the building and operating of a new grist mill for the establishment, but some time before 1843 he appears to have erected a new sawmill.²⁴

According to Crate's testimony before the British and American Joint Commission, this new mill was located partly on the site of the former mill, "a little lower down the stream." This was the structure described in the inventory of 1846-1847 as measuring 91 x 30 feet. It was a "gang" mill, with nine saws driven by an overshot wheel, sixteen feet in diameter and eight or ten feet wide. Crate stated that the mill was "substantial," well-built, and "very expensive," since most of the iron work was wrought and came from England. "It was a very powerful built mill," he said, "with a great amount of iron work in it."²⁵

This gang mill continued in operation for a number of years, but by 1849 it had practically been abandoned. Probably its operation required the use of a larger crew than could be employed with profit during the California gold excitement. At any rate, Crate could not remember that it was used at all after 1849.²⁶ The remains of the gang mill could still be seen in 1853, but the building was "very rotten" and had fallen down.²⁷

²² H. B. S., IV, 259-260; testimony of W. F. Crate, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 105.

²³ H. B. S., VI, 23.

²⁴ Testifying before the Br. & Am. Joint Comm. in 1865, Crate said he first came to the Columbia for the Company in 1832 and remained until 1843. If true, he could have built the new mill in 1834. Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 104-105. However, according to records of the Hudson's Bay Company, his original contract with the firm was made in 1834, and he spent the winter of 1834-1835 at Red River. Thus apparently he could not have built the new mill of 1834-1835 at Vancouver, and the mill he claimed to have built must have been at a later date. H. B. S., VI, 23. Crate himself merely stated that he built the mill before 1843.

²⁵ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 195-106.

²⁶ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 114.

²⁷ Testimony of L. Douthet, in ibid., [VIII], 245.

About 1846 the Company constructed another mill alongside that built by Crate. The dimensions of this new mill were 60 by 19 1/2 feet. It contained a single saw and was driven by a flutter wheel in a cistern which measured 16 x 8 feet. Crate later described it as a "strong substantial frame," built "on the American plan." It was the only sawmill in operation at Vancouver in 1849.²⁸

In December of the latter year Chief Factor Ogden rented the Company sawmill and all the buildings within a half mile of it to Captain Rufus Ingalls, Army quartermaster. Ingalls evidently rented the mill as a private venture in company with a man named James B. Leach. The business appears not to have been profitable, for the Hudson's Bay Company was again in possession of the mill in 1850.²⁹

In 1851 and 1852 Crate constructed still another sawmill for the Company. It was located on the same stream as the others but on the opposite side and lower down. It measured 60 x 20 feet and had one sash saw, driven by an overshot wheel. It took a crew of eight to twelve men four months to build this mill. Later Crate changed it from a single motion mill to a "double motion geared up mill," an operation which took approximately three additional months. This new mill could cut three or four thousand feet of timber in twelve hours "without any driving."³⁰ Soon after this mill was constructed, the old single-saw mill appears to have been abandoned.

After 1850 the price of lumber, which had been high during the early California gold rush period, began to decline. In the spring of 1853 Ogden told one employee that the newest mill was not meeting its expenses and ordered it shut down.³¹ At about the same time settlers came in and took up claims in the land formerly occupied by the Company and put a stop to the free cutting of timber.³² For these reasons, evidently, the firm discontinued its lumbering operations, although it appears to have kept a caretaker at the mills and to have sawed some lumber until about 1856.³³

²⁸ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 106, 113; (VIII), 132-133.

²⁹ Ibid., (II) 321-323; (VIII), 132-133, 136.

³⁰ Ibid., (II), 106, 114.

³¹ Testimony of L. Douthet, ibid., (VIII), 244-245.

³² Testimony of D. Mactavish, in ibid., (XI), 84.

³³ Testimony of W. F. Crate, in ibid., (II), 113.

Meanwhile, about 1853, a settler named J. E. Taylor and his wife laid claim to a half section of land which included the sawmill. About 1856, when Crate, then acting as the Company's caretaker, was absent, Taylor took possession of the mill and set it running "without sawing," thereby ruining some of the machinery. Then followed a long period of squabbling and litigation between Taylor and the officers of the Company, but Taylor maintained possession. He considered that the firm had abandoned the mill, as the building was open and "exposed to the ingress and egress of cattle."³⁴ He repaired the mill and operated it for a period. About 1862 he sold out to Lewis Love, who was in possession when mention of the Company's mill appears to fade from the records.³⁵

The grist mills

According to tradition, the first flour "mill" in the present State of Washington was a very primitive contrivance indeed. At about the time of the construction of the first Fort Vancouver, the blacksmith and millwright William Cannon is said to have fashioned a large mortar by hollowing out the top of a great fir stump. In this depression, wheat, peas, and other crops were pounded with a heavy wooden pestle attached to a spring pole.³⁶

In or about 1828, however, Cannon constructed a more advanced type of mill on the rising ground north and west of the new fort (see plate X). The machinery for this mill appears to have been imported from England, but persistent tradition maintains that Cannon fashioned the burrs from some "gigantic" boulders obtained locally.³⁷ The new mill was generally operated by horse power, although oxen also appear to have been used for this purpose.³⁸

In September, 1836, the Whitmans were taken on several tours of inspection about the fort and its farms by Dr. McLoughlin. "On visiting the mill we did not find it in a high state of improvement," Mrs. Whitman noted in her journal. "It goes by horse

³⁴ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (XI), 185-186.

³⁵ Ibid., (II), 109-111, 116, 229; (VIII), 238.

³⁶ Clarke, Pioneer Days of Oregon History, I, 185; Snowden, History of Washington, I, 477.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Dunn, History of the Oregon Territory, 152; Parker, Journal, 183; Townsend, Narrative, 298. See also authorities cited in Leonard Wiley, "Mill Creek Site of Grist Mill of Hudson's Bay Company," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XLIII (September, 1942), p. 282, note 1.

power and has a wire bolt. This seemed a hard way of getting bread, but better so than no bread, or to grind by hand."³⁹ A visitor of the preceding year had been more favorably impressed. He noted that the mill was kept in "constant operation" and produced flour "of excellent quality."⁴⁰

After about 1839, when a new water-power mill was placed in operation, the old mill back of the fort appears to have been abandoned. By 1849 it was in ruins, and apparently it was pulled down during 1850.⁴¹

There is a possibility that as early as 1828 or 1829 the Company selected a site for a grist mill upon Mill Creek, about five miles above the fort, and there constructed another "primitive preliminary mill." Then Jedediah Smith noticed that the firm possessed a "good saw mill on the bank of the river five miles above, a grist mill worked by hand, but intended to work by water."⁴² This somewhat ambiguous statement gives little indication of the location of the grist mill described, but it seems unlikely that the phrase "intended to work by water" would have been applied to the mill behind the fort, where there was no prospect of obtaining sufficient water to run a mill.

The theory that a small mill was located on Mill Creek at an early date is given support by two items written in 1832. In a letter purporting to have been composed during that year, a resident at the fort stated that the establishment possessed a threshing mill, a flouring mill, and a sawmill, the "two last" of which were about six miles above the post.⁴³ In October, 1832, Nathaniel Wyeth noted in his journal that there were two grist mills at Fort Vancouver.⁴⁴ It must be admitted, however, that the above-mentioned scraps of evidence are not conclusive, and the solution of this problem must await further research. But it can be stated

³⁹ Whitman, "A Journey Across the Plains in 1836," in Transactions of the . . . Oregon Pioneer Association for 1891, 65.

⁴⁰ Parker, Journal, 183.

⁴¹ Affidavit of William E. Place, Washington, February 27, 1873, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

⁴² J. S. Smith, D. E. Jackson, W. L. Sublette to J. H. Eaton, St. Louis, October 29, 1830, in 21 Cong., 2 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 39, pp. 21-23.

⁴³ (Allan), "Reminiscences," in Transactions of the . . . Oregon Pioneer Association, for 1881, 76.

⁴⁴ Hulbert, The Call of the Columbia, 152-153.

quite definitely that there was no water-power grist mill at Fort Vancouver before about 1839.

By 1838 the primitive mill or mills in operation were no longer adequate to meet the expanded needs of the Columbia Department, and steps were taken to obtain more production capacity. "We have also constructed the machinery and prepared materials for the dam & building, of a water power Grist Mill, adapted for two run of 54 inch stones," Chief Factor Douglas wrote to the Governor and Committee on October 18th of that year.⁴⁵

The site selected for this new structure was on the present Mill Creek, about two or three hundred yards from the bank of the Columbia. This stream had four falls within a short distance of one another, and each fall could produce between twenty-one and twenty-four horse power. All of the falls were situated within a half mile stretch of the stream and were so placed that a mill could be put along them "every fifty yards," or they could all be employed to operate one mill.⁴⁶

William Frederick Crate, the miller from London, was in charge of the construction, and evidently he was assisted by John Stanger, also a miller at the fort. Between eight and twenty men were employed at the task, which occupied them "off and on" for about twelve months. According to Stanger family tradition, the timber was cut at the site and hewed to shape with the broadaxe. The timbers were joined together with wooden pins, and the result, according to Lieutenant Wilkes, was a "well-built edifice."⁴⁷

The building measured 40 by 20 feet and was three and a half stories high. It contained two pairs of stones and a wire bolting machine, "with every other convenience." The driving power came from an overshot wheel.⁴⁸

By at least 1841 there was a house for the miller "annexed"

⁴⁵ H. B. S., IV, 260.

⁴⁶ Testimony of W. F. Crate, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 105, 118.

⁴⁷ Ibid.; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 335; Wiley, "Mill Creek Site of Grist Mill of Hudson's Bay Company," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XLIII (September, 1942), 283-284.

⁴⁸ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 105, 121; Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 268.

to the mill. In 1854 the miller's dwelling and a nearby storehouse were both described as having been built of logs with shingle roofs.⁴⁹

Evidently the new mill was in operation by the fall of 1839. Thomas Jefferson Farnham saw the structure at that time and almost certainly was referring to it when he wrote: "The grist mill is not idle. It must furnish bread stuff for the posts, and the Russian market in the northwest. And its deep music is heard daily and nightly half the year."⁵⁰ Crate could later remember only that the mill had been finished "in 1839 or 1840."⁵¹

As late as 1841 the mill evidently operated only one pair of stones.⁵² But it was capable of grinding about 20,000 bushels of grain a year, which, according to Governor Simpson, was all that was required at the time.⁵³

About the end of 1846 or the beginning of 1847 the Company erected another flour mill on the same stream as the first, but further down. The new mill was larger, measuring about 60 x 40 feet. It was four stories high and was intended for eight or ten run of stones.

But this new mill was never completed. It was described as having been about half finished in 1849; some three years later a newly-arrived mill employee noted that the building was "up and covered"; and in 1854 Governor Stevens wrote that the new mill "frame" erected in 1847 was still not completed.⁵⁴ Crate later said that when he last saw it, in the early 1860's, the new mill was still in good condition. He believed that at its highest stage of development it was "about half prepared for the machinery."⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 335; I. I. Stevens to W. L. Marcy, Washington, June 21, 1854, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (XI), 209-228.

⁵⁰ Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 194-195.

⁵¹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 105.

⁵² Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 335.

⁵³ G. Simpson to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, November 25, 1841, as cited in H. B. S., VI, pp. 160-161, note 2.

⁵⁴ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 105; (VIII), 258; (XI), 209-228.

⁵⁵ Ibid., (II), 113.

As early as 1849, Crate and his wife had filed notice of a donation claim to a square mile of land near Fort Vancouver. The grist mills were included within the boundaries of their claim. As Crate later stated concerning the tract, "If I had not taken it, some one else would have jumped it."

Unlike some of the other settlers, however, Crate recognized that the improvements erected by the Company upon his claim did not belong to him. He acknowledged that the grist mills were the property of the Hudson's Bay Company, and he continued to operate them as a miller until June, 1860. When the Company decided to abandon Fort Vancouver, Crate was ordered to send the machinery from the mills to the post for shipment to Victoria. He did send a large amount but did not bother to remove "such machinery as had been fixed in the mill." After the Company left, he removed the remaining ironwork and sold it, putting the money in his own pocket.⁵⁶

By 1860 the 1839 mill was somewhat decayed, particularly in the sills, and by 1866 one witness testified that it had rotted away entirely.⁵⁷ How long the 1847 mill continued to stand is not known. It was still in good condition in 1860.⁵⁸

Dundas Folly

After a preliminary brief visit at Fort Vancouver during the summer of 1844, H. M. S. Modeste, an 18-gun sloop, returned to the Columbia in November, 1845. Taking up a station off the post, she remained until May, 1847, showing the British flag and protecting British interests in the Oregon country. During the vessel's long stay at Vancouver, the officers and crew spent much time ashore, principally in search of recreation of various sorts.

For the shelter and convenience of the officers, particularly,

⁵⁶ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 104, 109, 113.

⁵⁷ Testimony of L. Douthet, in ibid., [VIII], 245.

⁵⁸ There is a possibility that some of the machinery, including the burrs, was taken out of the old mill by Crate and installed in the new one. Ibid., 250, 258. Crate admitted that he did not send any of the burrs to Vancouver. Ibid., [II], 113. Some persons believe that some old millstones preserved in the Esther Short Park in Vancouver may have come from the Hudson's Bay mill.

In U. S. War Dept., Reports of Explorations and Surveys. . . . for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean (12 Vols., Washington, 1855-1860), XII, part 1, opp. p. 146, is a drawing entitled "Hudson Bay Mill." Apparently no indication is given as to the location or type of the mill. The drawing may represent the Company's mill at Fort Colville, or it may picture one of those near Fort Vancouver.

a number of structures were erected in the area east of the fort. These buildings included a stable—which may have been an older structure belonging to the Company—near the bank of the river and almost directly south of the southeast corner of the stockade (see plate X), and several residences and summerhouses. While most of these edifices did not, strictly speaking, belong to the Hudson's Bay Company, they were located on land claimed by the firm and were prominent landmarks in the local scene.

The most frequently mentioned of these structures was the one known as "Dundas Folly," or "Dundas Castle." Named after Adam D. Dundas, an officer of the Modeste, it was built on the bluff, about a mile back from the river and overlooking the upper end of the Fort Plain. It was a small, octagonal log house, with a "pointed roof covered with canvass, around an enclosure with shrubs planted."⁵⁹

The building continued to stand for many years, seemingly at least until 1859 and possibly until 1865. After the departure of the Modeste, Dundas Folly may have been used by the Company for agricultural purposes. At any rate, it seems to have been considered a Company building.⁶⁰

Mosquito Grotto

Another of the structures built by the officers of the Modeste was that known as the "Mosquito Grotto." Located "on a picturesque and shady spot adjoining the old fort hill," this "elegant rectangular arbor, or summer retreat," was erected in April or early May, 1846. It was intended, wrote a local newspaper correspondent, "as a sweet retirement from the fatigues of arduous duties, and from the heat prevalent during the 'dog-days.'"

The structure was dedicated, evidently in May, by a "select party" who formed in procession and "with all due solemnity" performed the "ceremonies usually practiced upon such occasions." At the conclusion of the festivities, the arbor was "appropriately" named "Mosquito Grotto."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Theodore Talbot, The Journals of Theodore Talbot, 1843 and 1849-52, edited by Charles H. Carey (Portland, Ore., 1931), 91-92.

⁶⁰ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 81, 91, 96; [XI], 120; H. B. S., VII, xxvii, liii-liv; H. K. Craig to W. Welcker, Washington, September 15, 1859, MS, in Records of U. S. Army Commands, Dept. of Columbia, Letters Received. . 1859-1860, Box 3.

⁶¹ Oregon Spectator (Oregon City), May 28, 1846; Alice Henson Ernst, "Stage Annals of Early Oregon from 1846 to 1875," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XLII (June, 1941), 152. There is a slight possibility that Dundas Castle and Mosquito Grotto were one and the same structure.

The new Catholic Church

The reasons which motivated the Catholic priests at Fort Vancouver to seek a church of their own outside the stockade have already been discussed.⁶² As has been seen, the Company offered the Catholic missionaries the use of a tract of land north and east of the fort for this purpose before 1844. The site is said to have been selected by Dr. McLoughlin and James Douglas.⁶³ The priests desired to purchase the ground, but the Company's officers refused to sell. It was agreed, however, that the missionaries could fence the land, an act they were not able to accomplish due to a lack of funds.

One witness later said that work on the new church was started two or three years before it was dedicated. Since the consecration took place in 1846, this statement would seem to indicate that the building was commenced about the time the site was selected. The fact that the church is shown on the Vavasour map of late 1845 lends weight to this view (see plate V).

On the other hand, the church records and the testimony of witnesses agree that James Douglas was the founder and builder of the new place of worship. It seems unlikely, however, that John McLoughlin would not have taken a very active part in the founding of the church had he been in charge of the fort at the time. The fact that McLoughlin's name is not mentioned as a founder of the church leads to the presumption that he was not at the fort or at least was not in exclusive command when the work began. Notice that McLoughlin was to be succeeded in the management of the Columbia Department by a board of three members reached Fort Vancouver in the fall of 1845, and the Doctor ceased active participation in the direction of affairs and moved to Oregon City in January, 1846. It is possible, therefore, that actual construction did not begin until at least the fall of 1845.⁶⁴

⁶² It has been said that when James Douglas, a "zealous Church of England man," became a member of the board of management in 1845, he moved the Catholic congregation outside the fort. Thomas M. Anderson, "The Vancouver Reservation Case, A Legal Romance," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, VIII (September, 1907), 223. But Anderson was speaking only from hearsay. As has been seen, steps toward founding a church outside the pickets had been begun long before 1845, and the fact that Douglas was a sponsor of the new church at its dedication indicates that there was no hostility between him and the Catholic clergy.

⁶³ Deposition of Joseph Petrain, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

⁶⁴ Ibid.; H. B. S., VII, lxi.

The larger timbers for the church are said to have been cut within a quarter of a mile of the building site. The lumber came from the Company mills. All the materials and labor were donated by the Hudson's Bay Company.⁶⁵

The church was opened and blessed by Father DeVos, S.J., on May 31, 1846. After delivering a "most impressive and solemn discourse" to a congregation of about 150 persons, Father DeVos dedicated the structure "under auspices of the Holy Name of Mary and the patronage of the Apostle, St. James the Greater." In making the dedication, the priest specifically stated that the church had been "founded and built by Mister James Douglas."⁶⁶

The non-Catholic officers of the Company, most of whom attended the dedication ceremonies, treated the naming of the church somewhat as a joke. When one of them was asked, some years later, why the chapel was called "St. James the Greater," he replied, "pshaw don't you know, why after James Douglas of course who built it."⁶⁷

The new church was 81 or 83 feet long, 36 feet wide, and 20 feet high. Inside, a gallery, 12 feet wide, extended across the width of the building. According to a newspaper account of the time, accommodations were provided for about 500 persons. The roof was shingled.⁶⁸

Although the priests were permitted to use the structure without charge, the Hudson's Bay Company considered that it owned both the church building and the adjoining dwelling intended as a residence for the missionary fathers. The two structures were listed in the inventory of Company property made in 1846-1847. And, for a time during 1850, when the priests seem to have been

⁶⁵ Affidavit of Joseph Petrain, October 25, 1873, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31; Deposition of Daniel Harvey, April [23 or 24], 1860, MS, in ibid.

⁶⁶ Copy, Act of Dedication of Church of St. James at Vancouver, MS, in ibid.; Oregon Spectator (Oregon City), June 25, 1846. See also Nichols, The Mantle of Elias, 280. The translation of the act of dedication printed in the latter work, however, appears not to be entirely accurate.

⁶⁷ H. A. Goldsborough to J. M. Edmunds, Washington, June 30, 1862, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

⁶⁸ Affidavit of Joseph Petrain, October 25, 1873, MS, in ibid.; Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 118-119; Oregon Spectator (Oregon City), June 25, 1846.

on one of their periodic absences from Vancouver; the firm's officers appear to have rented a part of the church to the Quartermaster's Department of the United States Army.⁶⁹ Certain witnesses later testified, on the contrary; that the church was never used for anything but religious services.⁷⁰

If the military authorities did occupy the building, their tenure was short, for on October 27, 1850, the Rev. A. M. A. Blanchet, Bishop of Nesqually, took up his residence at Fort Vancouver.⁷¹ The little church thus became a cathedral, an honor it held for many years.

Apparently as late as 1853 the Hudson's Bay Company continued to rent out to the Army the rectory or another dwelling connected with the church.⁷² But after this date assertion of ownership by the Company became less and less effective.

In May, 1853, the Bishop of Nesqually filed a claim for 640 acres of land surrounding the church. This claim was based on the Oregon Organic Act of 1848, which provided that title to the land, not exceeding 640 acres, occupied as missionary stations among the Indians of Oregon Territory on the date of the passage of the act, was to be confirmed to the "several religious societies to which said missionary stations respectively belong." Peter Skene Ogden, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, protested against this claim on the grounds that the buildings and land occupied by the Catholics at Fort Vancouver were the property of the Company, and that, in actuality, no mission among the Indians existed.⁷³

The United States Surveyor General's office refused to take action on the Bishop's claim, since it was within the area covered

⁶⁹ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 354-359; (Cameron), Fort Vancouver Military Reservation, 3, 5-6; T. Morris to S. Cooper, Fort Vancouver, January 20, 1859, in A. G. O., Fort Vancouver, Letters Sent Book, 1857-1865, MS, 70-74, in War Records Division, the National Archives.

⁷⁰ Deposition of Forbes Barclay, April 24, 1860, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31. It was later claimed by some Army officers that there were no priests present at Vancouver when the military forces first arrived in 1849. These statements were in error, as shown by indisputable contemporary evidence. See Talbot, Journals, 90-93.

⁷¹ Edwin V. O'Hara, Pioneer Catholic History of Oregon, (Portland, Oregon, 1911), 158.

⁷² Affidavit of T. J. Eckerson, August 18, 1863, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box 31.

⁷³ P. S. Ogden to J. B. Preston, Fort Vancouver, May 23, 1853, MS, in ibid.

by the Hudson's Bay Company's "possessory rights" under the treaty of 1846. But it was generally believed, both in the Pacific Northwest and in the national capital, that these rights would expire in 1859, when the Company's license of exclusive British trade was due to terminate. This notion made it virtually impossible for the Company to assert its ownership to the lands surrounding Fort Vancouver against those who coveted them. By the late 1850's the activities of the Company were virtually restricted to the area within the stockade and to the mills.

Meanwhile, the position of the Church at Vancouver had been greatly strengthened. From September 21, 1852, to May 20, 1855, the military post at Fort Vancouver was under the command of the famous frontiersman, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin L. E. Bonneville, a Frenchman by birth who was confirmed in the Catholic faith at Vancouver on March 30, 1854.⁷⁴ A great friendship grew up between Colonel Bonneville and Father J. B. A. Brouillet, the "snuffy, cheery, good-hearted little padre" resident at the St. James Cathedral. Under Bonneville's protection and with his encouragement, the improvements of the church were greatly extended. About five acres of land were enclosed, an orchard was planted, and a house was built for the Bishop. It was even rumored that it was Bonneville who suggested to the priests that they file a mission claim under the act of 1848.

In subsequent years, with the approval of the military authorities, additional buildings were erected. These included a large two-story frame structure for the College of the Holy Angels, other school buildings, and a hospital for the indigent and sick.⁷⁵

After 1859, the Bishop of Nesqually began to press vigorously for confirmation of the St. James Mission claim to 640 acres of land at Vancouver. The long and involved history of this case cannot be considered in this paper. Suffice it to say that the legal struggle was carried on in the courts and in Congress for about half a century.

A decision of the Commissioner of the General Land Office in 1883 awarded the Catholic Church the ground—somewhat less than half an acre—upon which the St. James Church actually stood. But the Catholic Church refused to accept this decision and continued

⁷⁴ Nichols, The Mantle of Elias, 286.

⁷⁵ Thomas M. Anderson, "Vancouver Barracks—Past and Present," in Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States, XXXV (September-October, 1904), 275; Anderson, "The Vancouver Reservation Case," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, VIII (September, 1907), 219-230; J. H. Gustin to the Quartermaster General, Vancouver Barracks, January 27, 1890, MS, in Office of the Quartermaster General, in War Records Division, the National Archives.

to occupy the more extensive area covered by its improvements. Finally, in 1887, the military authorities determined to force a judicial decision upon the matter. In as friendly and courteous a manner as was possible under the circumstances, they made a show of requiring the staff of the mission and the College of the Holy Angels to remove themselves from within the limits of the military reservation, and they took possession of the school buildings and even of "Heaven's half-acre itself." In the legal battle which followed, the Supreme Court decided adversely to the mission, but it was not until 1905 that the Catholic Church finally relinquished all its claims to land within the Vancouver Barracks Military Reservation.⁷⁶

During these long years of debate, the church built for the missionaries by the Hudson's Bay Company continued to serve as the place of Catholic worship for the growing City of Vancouver and the surrounding area. In about 1852 or 1853 the building underwent extensive repairs. At that time or later it appears to

⁷⁶ The complete story of the St. James Mission case has never been written. It is one of the most fascinating incidents in the history of the Pacific Northwest. The best published account is Howard J. Burnham, "Government Grants and Patents in Vancouver, Washington," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XLVIII (June, 1947), 7-44. See also Thomas M. Anderson, "The Vancouver Reservation Case, A Legal Romance," in ibid., VIII (September, 1907), 219-230.

For the most part, however, the facts still remain locked in voluminous files of manuscripts to be found in the records of the General Land Office, the various courts involved, numerous Congressional committees, and the United States Army. The archives of the Church have not been investigated by the present writer, but they should contain much illuminating material. Various newspaper accounts and a number of printed legal briefs, listed in the bibliography appended to this report, contain material of value.

For specific references to support facts stated in the above paragraphs, see, particularly, the above-mentioned articles by Mr. Burnham and General Anderson; and R. Ingalls to T. J. Jessup, Fort Vancouver, January 15, 1859, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, [II], 354-359; T. Morris to S. Cooper, Fort Vancouver, January 20, 1859, in A. G. O., Fort Vancouver, Letter Sent Book, 1857-1865, MS, 70-74; T. M. Anderson to S. Holabird, Vancouver Barracks, February 13, 1888, MS, in Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, Box 1177, in War Records Division, the National Archives; Plan No. 100, "Vancouver Barracks, Wash.," in Office of Chief of Engineers, RG 77, Army Map Service, Set of Plans of Army Posts, United States, S17-4-QM-V, in Division of Cartographic Records, the National Archives.

have been somewhat enlarged.⁷⁷

In 1884-1885, a new Catholic church was built in the City of Vancouver, and upon its completion the old structure on the military reservation was vacated.⁷⁸ But even after the Army occupied most of the mission improvements in 1887, the church and some of the other structures apparently continued in the hands of the Catholic clergy.⁷⁹ Finally, in 1889, the old St. James Church was destroyed by fire.⁸⁰ As far as is known, it was the last to disappear of all the buildings constructed by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver.

New priests' house or rectory

Along with the new Catholic Church, the Hudson's Bay Company constructed the frame of a small house for the missionaries. This structure, consisting of a single room, measured 30 x 21 feet, and it adjoined the church on the east side. As late as 1854 the parsonage was attached to the church building, but later it appears to have been moved, probably a short distance to the north.⁸¹

Although the inventory of 1846-1847 listed the rectory as being ceiled, it evidently was not completed for a considerable period after 1846. For this reason, it was later said, the priests continued to live within the stockade during their stays at Fort Vancouver.⁸²

⁷⁷ Deposition of Joseph Petrain, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

⁷⁸ Information from the archives of the Providence Academy, Vancouver, as supplied through the kindness of Mr. Howard J. Burnham, of the Vancouver Historical Society. H. J. Burnham to J. A. Hussey, Vancouver, February 19, 1948, MS, in possession of the writer.

⁷⁹ 58 Cong., 3 Sess., House, Report No. 3766, "Mission of St. James in the State of Washington," MS, in House Documents, Nos. 3, 764-3, 915, in Division of Legislative Records, the National Archives.

⁸⁰ Writers' Program, Washington, Washington, a Guide to the Evergreen State (Portland, Oregon, 1941), 286; H. J. Burnham to J. A. Hussey, Vancouver, February 19, 1948, MS.

⁸¹ Deposition of Joseph Petrain, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31; deposition of Forbes Barclay, April 24, 1860, MS, in ibid.; Report of a board of officers, Fort Vancouver, January 23, 1854, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (IX), 104-106; see also plate XXI.

⁸² Deposition of F. N. Blanchet, in Claim of the Mission of St. James, 28.

Undoubtedly the convenience of being located near the fort kitchen and the congeniality of the "gentlemen" employees also had something to do with the choice of residence.

Shortly after the United States troops arrived at Fort Vancouver in 1849, the quartermaster rented the rectory from the Hudson's Bay Company and used it as a residence for officers.⁸³ About 1850 the building was returned to the priests, and it appears to have been used by them fairly regularly from that time forward. While repairs were being made on the main church structure in 1852 or 1853, it seems that Mass was held in the smaller rectory "at least once." The building was still standing in 1860, but its later history is unknown. By at least 1872 it had been incorporated in or replaced by a convent which occupied its site.⁸⁴

New schoolhouses

The first school in the Oregon country was begun late in 1832 at the instigation of Dr. McLoughlin. He placed his son and some of the boys about Fort Vancouver under the tutelage of John Ball, who came with the Wyeth party. The history of the Fort Vancouver school is known in considerable detail and is of extreme interest, but it cannot be considered in this limited study.

By 1836 there were about sixty scholars in the school, a third of them girls.⁸⁵ Instruction was partly on the "manuel labor system." The boys spent about half of the day in the class room and the remainder in the fields under the watchful eye of their instructor. The girls were taught sewing and other domestic arts.⁸⁶

⁸² Anderson, "Vancouver Barracks--Past and Present," in Journal of the Military Service Institution, XXXV (September-October, 1904), 267; deposition of F. Barclay, April 24, 1860, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

⁸⁴ G. Gibbs to J. E. Edmunds, Washington, June 22, 1862, MS, in ibid.; deposition of F. Barclay, April 24, 1860, MS, in ibid.; Diagram of Survey of St. James Mission Claim, Vancouver, Washington Territory, Surveyed July 10th, A. D. 1872, Levi Farnsworth, U. S. Deputy Surveyor, MS map, in ibid.

⁸⁵ H. Beaver to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, November 10, 1836, in The Beaver, outfit 272 (September, 1941), 10-11.

⁸⁶ Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 332.

The children who had no families were fed and housed at the fort.

The location of the schoolroom or rooms appears to have changed considerably over the years. As has been seen, between 1839 and about 1847 it seems quite definitely to have been in the "Owyhee Church" building, near the rear gate. According to one visitor of 1841, by that year the Catholic Church was also used for school purposes, but whether the sessions were held there for secular as well as religious instruction is not clear.⁸⁷

Evidently by 1844 the school had outgrown its quarters within the stockade, for about that year the construction of two new schoolhouses was commenced on the sloping ground back of the fort (see plates V, X, XXVII). It has been stated that James Douglas was responsible for the new structures, although it is possible that they were first projected by McLoughlin, who was the person who took the greatest interest in the Fort Vancouver school.⁸⁸

According to the inventory of 1846-1847, the new schoolhouses each measured 50 x 40 feet. Although the frames may have been up as early as 1844--since the structures appear on the map drawn late in that year--it was a long time before the buildings were completed. In June, 1848, the structures were used for shearing sheep, and the next year they still stood unfinished, being without floors.⁸⁹

The Company had great plans for its "academies" or "high schools," as its officers liked to describe the big barns back of the fort. A visitor of June, 1848, was told that two teachers, a man and wife, were to be sent out from England during the next spring. They were to have the use of the buildings without charge and were to receive, in addition, their firewood and a salary of \$1500 a year. It was expected that some of the scholars would board at the school.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Pipes, "Translation of Extract from Exploration of Oregon Territory. . . by Eugene Duflot de Mofras," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (June, 1925), 153, 156.

⁸⁸ Deposition of F. Barclay, April 24, 1860, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31; see also G. Gibbs to J. M. Edmunds, Washington, June 22, 1862, MS, ibid.

⁸⁹ Rockwood, "Diary of Rev. George H. Atkinson," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XL (June, 1939), 184-185; testimony of L. Brooke, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (VIII), 129.

⁹⁰ Rockwood, "Diary of Rev. George H. Atkinson," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XL (June, 1939), 184-185. Atkinson was told that the male teacher, who was to be a member of the "High Church of England," was also to act as Protestant chaplain at the fort.

Perhaps some of these plans were realized, since Major Osborne Cross, who reached Fort Vancouver with the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen in October, 1849, noted that on one of the plains about Vancouver there was an "excellent seminary" where the children from the fort and neighborhood were educated. This school, it is generally thought, was located a short distance north of the fort and was conducted by Mrs. Richard Covington.⁹¹ But George Gibbs, who also reached the Columbia with the Riflemen, stated that little interest was shown in education at Fort Vancouver after McLoughlin retired and that the school had "sunk into disuse."⁹²

It must be admitted that there is evidence which makes it appear that Gibbs may have been correct. When Major Hatheway and his detachment of United States troops arrived at Vancouver in May, 1849, they found two large, unfinished buildings located "just in the rear of the fort," between it and the camp which Major Hatheway soon established on the bluff. On June first Captain Rufus Ingalls, Army quartermaster, entered into an agreement with Peter Skene Ogden to rent these two structures for a period of six months, with the possibility of an extension of the lease. The rental for these buildings, one of which appears to have contained ten rooms and the other two, was seventy dollars per month. The ten-room structure was converted into barracks for Company L, 1st Artillery; and the other was used as a storehouse for quartermaster and commissary supplies.⁹³

Although it is nowhere specifically so stated, it seems more than likely that these rented buildings were the two schoolhouses. In a somewhat sketchy inventory which he made of the Hudson's Bay Company buildings at Vancouver in the fall of 1849, Major D. H. Vinton, of the Quartermaster Department, did not mention the schoolhouses, which were so conspicuous they could scarcely have been overlooked. He did list, however, "two buildings occupied by the Company of Artillery & Subsistence Dept.

⁹¹ Cross, The March of the Mounted Riflemen, 266 and same page, note 271.

⁹² G. Gibbs to J. M. Edmunds, Washington, June 22, 1862, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31

⁹³ Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 320-321; R. Ingalls to D. H. Vinton, Fort Vancouver, October 17, 1849, in 31 Cong., 1 Sess., House, Ex. Doc. No. 1, part 2, pp. 284-289; D. H. Vinton to T. S. Jesup, Washington, March 29, 1850, in ibid.; 245-266; D. H. Vinton to T. S. Jesup, Fort Vancouver, October 5, 1849, MS, in Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, Box 1176.

at this post."⁹⁴ No buildings labelled "schoolhouses" are to be found on any known maps later than the Covington plan of 1846. But what were apparently the same buildings are depicted without title on a map of the military reservation drawn by Brevet Captain James Stuart in August, 1850 (see plate XI). Thereafter, maps show only one structure in this location. This building belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company and it probably was not new, as the firm was doing little building at that time. But whether one of the schoolhouses was destroyed, or whether the two structures were combined, is not known.

As shown by several later maps, this single structure was rented by the Army as an ordnance storehouse or hospital during all or most of the 1850's. In 1853 it was described as a large two-story warehouse, rented by the Ordnance Department.⁹⁵ During the next year various reports show it to have been a "very inferior" building used both as an ordnance store and a hospital, the rental being forty dollars per month.⁹⁶ In 1858 the Army built a hospital of its own at Vancouver, but the old Hudson's Bay building behind the fort apparently was still being rented for use of the Ordnance Department as late as June, 1860.⁹⁷

The village

The lesser employees at Fort Vancouver—the tradesmen, artisans, boatmen, laborers, and so forth—for the most part had their homes in what was known as "the village," on the plain west and southwest of the stockade. Immediately west and north of the fort was a large cultivated field. Bounding this field on the west, and some six or seven hundred feet from the west stockade wall, was a road which led from the area of the wharf and lagoon to the site of the new Catholic church (see plates V, X). Along the west side of this road were lined a number of the village houses, giving the appearance of a street. Another road branched

⁹⁴ D. H. Vinton to P. F. Smith, Fort Vancouver, October 1, 1849, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (IX), 133.

⁹⁵ Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in ibid., (II), 177-178.

⁹⁶ Report of a board of officers, Fort Vancouver, January 23, 1854, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (IX), 104-106; Mansfield, Report. . . March 1, 1855, MS, 68-69; T. L. Brent, Estimate of Funds and Supplies, for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1855, MS, in Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, Box 1178.

⁹⁷ War Department, Surgeon-General's Office, A Report On Barracks and Hospitals, 422; proceedings of a board of officers, Fort Vancouver, June 15, 1860, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (IX), 75-77.

from this one about opposite the northwest corner of the palisade and ran in a westerly direction over the plain. Along this second road, also, about a half dozen houses were ranged with some semblance of regularity. But with these two exceptions it is somewhat difficult to identify the neat "rows" of huts mentioned by certain visitors to the fort.

From the placement of the houses as they are shown on existing maps, one is inclined to believe that most of the employees lived not in an ordered village but in dwellings described by one witness as being dotted "all over the plain, for a mile."⁹⁸ Undoubtedly, however, there were a number of lanes which were not shown on the maps, and the town probably appeared much more orderly in fact than it now looks upon the charts.

The village was in existence at least as early as 1832, and it probably was laid out in 1829 or at an even earlier date.⁹⁹ In 1834 John Kirk Townsend found the Canadian and other servants of the establishment living in thirty or forty "log huts," placed "in rows, with broad lanes or streets between them," the whole forming a "neat and beautiful village." He was at first impressed with the "fastidious cleanliness" observed in the town. He saw the women sweeping the streets and scrubbing the doorsills as regularly as in his own "proverbially cleanly" Philadelphia. Upon closer acquaintance, however, he changed his mind and admitted that his first estimate concerning the cleanliness of the village had been "too high."¹⁰⁰

Hall J. Kelley, who also reached the fort in the fall of 1834, likewise had something to say about the sanitary conditions in the dwellings of the employees. For several reasons, Kelley was not a welcome guest at Vancouver. Although in ill health, he was not given lodging within the stockade but was assigned a place in a cabin in the village.

"The house had one room, with a shed adjoining," Kelley later remembered. "The latter having been long occupied for dressing fish and wild game, was extremely filthy. The black mud about the door was abundantly mixed with animal putrescence. It was not a place that would conduce much to the recovery of health. It was, however, the habitation of a Canadian, a respectable and intelligent man, a tinner by trade."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Testimony of W. F. Crat , in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 107-108.

⁹⁹ Ball, "Across the Continent Seventy Years Ago," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, III (March, 1902), 98.

¹⁰⁰ Townsend, Narrative, 299.

¹⁰¹ Powell, "Hall Jackson Kelley—Prophet of Oregon," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XVIII (June, 1917), 126-127.

Five years later, in 1839, Thomas Jefferson Farnham found the village to consist of fifty-three wooden houses, generally constructed in the post-on-the-sill style.¹⁰² Members of the United States Exploring Expedition in 1841 variously estimated the number of dwellings in the town to have been between about thirty and fifty, ranged in "regular order on each side of the road" and "swarming with children, whites, half-breeds, and pure Indians." These "comfortable" homes, the explorers noted, were generally built of hewn logs, in the Canadian fashion.¹⁰³

An American traveler who reached Fort Vancouver in December, 1845, looked upon the village with a more critical eye. It was, wrote Joel Palmer, inhabited by a "mongrel race," and the buildings were "as various in form" as were the "characteristics of their inmates."¹⁰⁴

According to one long-time resident at Vancouver, the village had grown by 1848 to number between sixty and seventy-five buildings.¹⁰⁵ This estimate must have included every last shed and out-house, since maps of 1846 and 1850 show only some twenty-odd structures in the town area (see plates X, XI). It was said that in 1849 Indians and half-breeds made up two-thirds of the population of the village, that whites formed one-third of the balance, and that the remainder consisted of Hawaiians.¹⁰⁶

A good description of the town and its buildings as they stood about the end of the 1840's was given many years later by William F. Crate, the millwright. The village in 1849, he said, was in as good condition as it had been in 1843, "and in my opinion better." There were separate streets for French-Canadians, for Kanakas, and for Englishmen and Americans, although most of the employees of the latter two nationalities lived "scattered around," above and below the fort. Some of the dwellings were built in Canadian style, of two or four-inch planks; some were built in "American cottage fashion," framed and weatherboarded; some were of squared timbers; a "very few" were of logs; and a number were of edged slabs from the Company's sawmill, the slabs applied with

¹⁰² Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 170, 194.

¹⁰³ Emmons, "Extracts from the Emmons Journal," in Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, XXVI (September, 1925), 266; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 326.

¹⁰⁴ Palmer, Journal, 210.

¹⁰⁵ Affidavit of Joseph Petrain, October 25, 1873, MS, in General Land Office Records, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), Box No. 31.

¹⁰⁶ Affidavit of W. E. Place, February 27, 1873, MS, in ibid.

the flat side out.

The houses were generally one story high, but some had one and a half stories. A number were ceiled on the inside, and some were even papered. More were plastered with clay. They generally contained two or three rooms, although many had but a single room.¹⁰⁷

With the decline of the Company's business at Vancouver during the 1850's, the staff of employees was cut, and the number of houses in the village was proportionately diminished. Beginning in 1849, some of the better structures were rented to the Army, chiefly for use as quarters and offices for the Quartermaster Department.¹⁰⁸ By the early 1860's, the village had degenerated into a collection of "old slab buildings," generally described collectively as "Kanaka Town."¹⁰⁹

In 1854, Governor Stevens estimated that there were about twenty "cabins" left in the village, occupied by servants, Kanakas, and Indians. He found that the structures were, with few exceptions, built of slabs and that they were mostly untenanted and left to decay.¹¹⁰

During the latter half of the 1850's, the military authorities gradually cleared away most of the village buildings. In 1857, for instance, one of the "Johnson Houses" (see plate X) was pulled down.¹¹¹ The hardy teamsters of the Quartermaster Department hastened the general destruction by a rough game they were fond of playing. They would brush against the corners of the decaying buildings with the hubs of their great wagons and attempt to push them over. Others of the houses fell prey to soldiers and settlers in search of firewood and building materials. A witness later testified that by 1859 most of the dwellings either had been destroyed or moved.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Testimony of W. F. Crate, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 107-108, 115, 137; testimony of J. F. Noble, in ibid., (IX), 408.

¹⁰⁸ 31 Cong., 2 Sess., House, Ex. Doc. No. 1, part 2, pp. 263, 285, 289.

¹⁰⁹ Testimony of J. Steinberger, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (IX), 51; Fred Lockley, History of the Columbia River Valley (Chicago, 1928), 352.

¹¹⁰ I. I. Stevens to W. L. Marcy, Washington, June 21, 1854, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (XI), 218-219.

¹¹¹ Testimony of R. Ingalls, in ibid., (IX), 537.

¹¹² Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in ibid., (II), 178-179.

Finally, in February, 1860, the military authorities decided to clear the land west and southwest of the fort, embracing a tract of land lying in front of the Quartermaster's office and depot, and stretching from the western boundary of the reservation to a line of stakes commencing at a point about eighty yards east of the Catholic church, and running from thence in a southerly direction to the river. On March 1, a board of Army officers examined the area and found nine buildings "claimed" by the Hudson's Bay Company, "mere shells," rapidly going to decay and most of them propped up to keep them from falling down. It was decided that three of these structures—the Salmon House, the "Johnson House" and the "Field House"—were of "some little value" and should not be destroyed, but the remaining six had to go. Some of the condemned structures were not in the village, a fact which indicates that by March, 1860, the former town had been almost completely obliterated, at least within the boundaries of the military reservation.

The final destruction was not long delayed. On March 12, Government employees removed all the fences from the Company's fields in the area designated to be cleared. Four days later they burned down a house in which hay had been stored, and on March 20, after the windows had been removed, Kanaka William's house was burned to the ground. The remaining structures destroyed at this time appear to have been in the vicinity of the wharf and pond, but an additional house and shed or two remaining from the old village may have been demolished also.

Evidently later in the same year the "Johnson House" was moved to the west line of the military reservation, near the river. The "Field House" was left in place, being occupied by a Mrs. Stubbs; and it continued to stand for a number of years. Thus, with these exceptions, all traces of the village within the boundaries of the military reservation had disappeared by the end of 1860.¹¹³

The hospital

Beginning in 1830, malaria, or intermittent fever as it was called at the time, became a serious problem at Fort Vancouver. For a long period thereafter a goodly percentage of the working force of the establishment was incapacitated each year during the season when the fever was at its height. In addition, venereal diseases and other ailments, as well as accidents, constantly kept a sizable number of persons on the sick list. To accommodate these invalids, Dr. McLoughlin erected a hospital. The exact date of construction and the location of the earliest structure dedicated to the care of the sick at Vancouver is unknown. It is thought to have been built about 1833, when Dr. Meredith

¹¹³ The documents and testimony upon which this account of the final destruction of the village is based will be found in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 189-193; (IX), 78-85, 537-538.

Gairdner was acting as post surgeon. The work of McLoughlin and Gairdner in getting this building in operation has been termed the "first attempt at permanent hospitalization in the Pacific Northwest."¹¹⁴

It is known that by 1839 the hospital was located not far from the village, on the river bank; and probably it had been in that situation since its first construction.¹¹⁵ The inventory of 1846-1847 gives the measurements of this building as 32 x 22 feet. According to the Covington map, the structure was still near the river in 1846, located between the salt house and the boat sheds; and there, as far as is known, it remained as long as the Company had any use for a hospital at Vancouver. It—and perhaps two other buildings—was so employed as late as 1853, and it was afterwards rented to the "quartermaster of volunteers," evidently during the Indian wars of 1855-1856.¹¹⁶ The building was finally removed by the military authorities on March 19, 1860, as part of the program to clean up the area west and southwest of the stockade.¹¹⁷

The cooper's shop

The cooper's shop shown on the Covington map of 1846 as having been situated near the river and a short distance north of the hospital, was little more than a shed. In 1845, Joel Palmer and a party of Americans lodged there and found that the structure offered very little shelter from the wind and rain. They attempted to sleep on a pile of staves but were disturbed during the night by noises they believed to be made by foraging pigs. In the morning the weary travelers discovered that the pigs had in reality been Indians, who had imitated the sounds of the domestic animals in order to hide the fact that they were making away with the food and utensils belonging to the voyagers.¹¹⁸

The salmon house

The salmon house, or "fish house" as it was sometimes called,

¹¹⁴ A. G. Harvey, "Meredith Gairdner: Doctor of Medicine," in British Columbia Historical Quarterly, IX (April, 1945), 98. This article also contains a fine survey of the early medical history of Fort Vancouver.

¹¹⁵ Farnham, Travels in the Great Western Prairies, 194.

¹¹⁶ Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers (II), 177-178, 184.

¹¹⁷ Deposition of J. M. Wark, September 28, 1865, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 191.

¹¹⁸ Palmer, Journal, 207-209.

was located at the head of the Company wharf near the bank of the Columbia. It was a large building, measuring 100 x 40 feet, and as might be assumed from its name, was used principally for storing cured salmon. The date of its construction is not known, but in 1849 it was considered an old building. Its roof was then in good condition, but otherwise it was much dilapidated.¹¹⁹

During the 1850's the building was occupied on occasion, in whole or in part, by the Army quartermaster as a temporary storehouse. But Captain Rufus Ingalls, the quartermaster during most of this period, had no liking for the structure. He considered it inadequate and an impediment to the adequate use of the military reservation by the Army. During June and July, 1857, Captain Ingalls applied to Chief Factor Dugal Mactavish, then in charge of the Hudson's Bay Post, for permission to erect a Government wharf and storehouse "at or near" the site of the salmon store. On August 3 he went a step further by formally requesting permission to remove the salmon house in order to clear the ground for the new storehouse. The Company's officers at Victoria, to whom Mactavish referred the application, most emphatically declined to relinquish the site without compensation. They offered to sell the ground for \$30,000 or to rent the building and ground for \$1500 per year.¹²⁰

When this proposal was communicated to Ingalls, he became highly indignant. He denied that the Hudson's Bay Company had any ownership of the soil at Vancouver, but he did not press the point. Rather, he told Mactavish that his plans had changed and that he had decided to do nothing which could "possibly interfere with any use or disposition you may see fit to make of the old 'Salmon House.'" Indeed, he said, even had the permission been granted, he would not have moved or touched the building.¹²¹

But Ingalls did not give up his plan to get rid of the salmon house. As late as March 5, 1860, when the Army was clearing the ground west and southwest of the stockade, he told John M. Wark, in temporary charge of the fort, that the military authorities would not disturb the salmon house and certain other buildings,

¹¹⁹ Lockley, History of the Columbia River Valley, 352; testimony of L. Brooke, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (VIII), 129-130; testimony of J. F. Noble, in ibid., (IX), 408.

¹²⁰ J. Douglas and J. Work to D. Mactavish, Victoria, August 20, 1857, in A. G. O., Fort Vancouver, Letters Sent Book, 1857-1865, MS, 3-5.

¹²¹ R. Ingalls to D. Mactavish, Fort Vancouver, September 23, 1857, in ibid., 7-17. This and other letters referring to the controversy over the salmon house have been printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 335-346.

since they appeared to be "of some little value."¹²² A few weeks later, however, he advised Captain Alfred Pleasonton, departmental adjutant, that the salmon store, which "has, up this time, been occupied conjointly by the Depot and Hudson's Bay Company for storage purposes," was "old and unfit for further use." He understood that the building would be required during the ensuing summer for the accommodation of the British North West Boundary Commission, but he recommended that when it should be no longer wanted for that purpose, it should "be removed" to make way for a new storehouse which the "increased wants of the Service" made "indispensably necessary."¹²³

The British Boundary Commission was at Vancouver in the early summer of 1860, but whether or not they used the salmon house is not known. Soon after the Company abandoned Fort Vancouver in June, 1860, the recommendation of Ingalls was carried into effect. Before the middle of August the military authorities had pulled down and burned the salmon store.¹²⁴

The wharf

The date of the construction of the Company's wharf at Fort Vancouver is unknown, but it probably was built at about the same time as was the stockade itself. In the summer of 1857 the military authorities desired to remove the old "jetty" and to build one of their own in its place. They found the pier to be insecure, incapable of sustaining much weight, and usable only at high water.¹²⁵ On June 25, 1857, Captain Rufus Ingalls, Army Quartermaster, requested permission to take this step. Dugald Mactavish, the Company's representative at Vancouver, referred the matter to his superiors at Victoria; but before receiving a reply he told Ingalls on July 28 that upon "mature reflection" he had come to the conclusion that the idea of erecting a Government wharf, or any other, upon land claimed by the Company, could not be entertained.¹²⁶

¹²² Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 190-191.

¹²³ R. Ingalls to A. Pleasonton, Fort Vancouver Depot, April 2, 1860, MS, in Records of U.S. Army Commands, Department of the Columbia, Letters Received, 04-P34, 1860, Box No. 4, in War Records Division, the National Archives.

¹²⁴ T. Fraser to Lord J. Russell, (London), August 22, 1860, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 416-417.

¹²⁵ Testimony of H. A. Tuzo in ibid., 180-181; testimony of D. Mactavish, in ibid., 215; testimony of Lt. Brooke, in ibid., (VIII), 156.

¹²⁶ J. A. Grahame to R. Ingalls, Fort Vancouver, July 28, 1857, in ibid., (II), 335.

Unswerved by this very direct refusal and by charges that he was trespassing, Ingalls proceeded to construct a new Government wharf in the vicinity of the salmon house. Although the contemporary documents do not show that the old Company wharf was actually torn down, two witnesses later claimed that such was the case.¹²⁷

The new landing evidently was completed, or nearly so, by the end of September, 1857, for on the twenty-third of that month Captain Ingalls told Chief Trader Mactavish that the Company was at liberty "to enjoy the free use" of the public wharf.¹²⁸

The new pier was termed "a splendid structure," capable of being used at every stage of the river. Its erection, said Ingalls, had enhanced the value of the old salmon store "at least 200 per cent," and he did not see how the Company could possibly complain that its interests had been damaged.¹²⁹

The boat sheds

It has already been seen that shipbuilding was one of the earliest industries to be commenced at Fort Vancouver. The story of the shipyard at the post is both important and interesting, but it cannot be treated in this abbreviated study. In addition to the construction of barges and larger vessels for use on the Columbia, and in addition to the several attempts to build ocean-going craft, the Fort Vancouver shipyard was evidently used to turn out at least some of the "York boats" which were generally used for transportation on the lower river.

It was probably for the building and storage of these boats that the Company erected two large boat sheds almost immediately on the bank of the river and directly east of the pond (see plate

¹²⁷ Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 180; testimony of L. Brooke, in ibid., (VIII), 154.

¹²⁸ R. Ingalls to D. Mactavish, Fort Vancouver, September 23, 1857, in A. G. O., Fort Vancouver, Letters Sent Book, 1857-1865, MS, 7-17. This same letter, dated September 24, 1857, is printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 340-346. For other letters dealing with this matter, see ibid., 334-340.

According to J. Neilson Barry, the piling of the old Company wharf could still be seen as late as 1939. See his "The Murals in the State Capitol," in Oregon Historical Quarterly, XL (June, 1939), 158.

¹²⁹ Testimony of L. Brooke in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (VIII), 156; ibid., (II), 344.

X).¹³⁰ In the inventory of 1846-1847, they were listed as a "building shed," 90 x 30 feet, and a "boat shed," 100 x 24 feet.¹³¹

According to L. Brooke, who saw them first in 1849, the boat houses were merely "fir posts stuck in the ground, with slab roofs." They "did not amount to anything," he later testified.¹³² The houses were still standing in 1853, when a witness said he believed boats were still kept in them. But evidently the buildings had disappeared by 1860, since they were not named among the structures which the Army destroyed when clearing the ground in the area west and southwest of the fort.¹³³

¹³⁰ Although only one large shed is shown on the Covington map of 1846, H. A. Tuzo testified that there were two boat houses near the landing jetty as late as 1853. Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 177-178.

¹³¹ Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXII, 34; in the version of the inventory printed in Br. & Am. Joint Comm., Papers, (II), 118-119, both are termed "boat sheds."

¹³² Ibid., (VIII), 129-130.

¹³³ Testimony of H. A. Tuzo, in ibid., (II), 185.

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- I. Bibliographical aids
- II. Manuscript materials
 1. Collections of correspondence, official documents, reminiscences, etc.
 2. Unpublished theses
- III. Printed materials
 1. Books, pamphlets, documents, etc.
 2. Periodical literature
 3. Newspapers and newspaper articles

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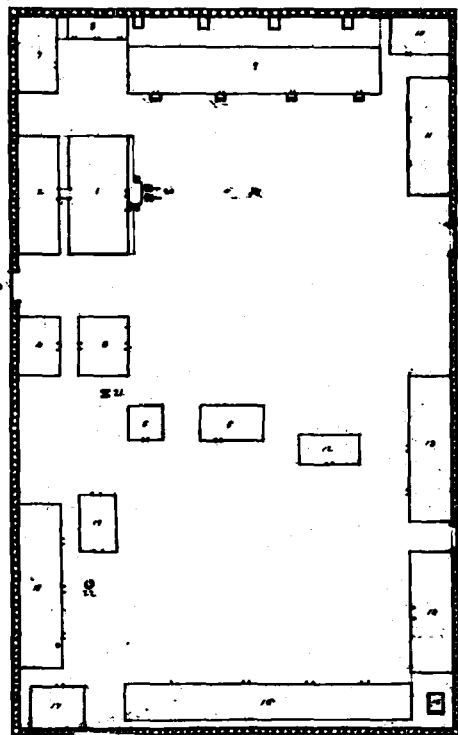
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July 25th 1841. Land

Sketches of the Co. will now add a few facts in connection with a Diagram which will convey some idea of its plan & importance - although I do not touch for its being correct in every particular.



Expedition

Referenced

July 25th 1841.

- 1 The Commander's residence - Dr. McLaughlin & Mr. Douglas.
- 2 do. Kitchen and servants quarters
- 3 Chaplain or Surgeon's temporary residence
- 4 do. Kitchen & used as a school room
- 5 Clerks office - Meteorological office &c
- 6 Chapel for Catholic & Episcopal services
- 7 Bakery - where soft bread & dea biscuits are baked.
- 8 Wash House &c.
- 9 Quarters for subordinate officers & their families
- 10 Blacksmiths shop - & farrier.
- 11 Store House (called Missionary Store having been used by the American Missionaries to store their property)
- 12 Carpenters shop.
- 13 Indian Trade store - Hospital Dispensary &c
- 14 Building for furs &c.
- 15 Magazine - the only brick building.
- 16 General store House - provisions, dry goods, Hardware &c
- 17 do do do
- 18 do do do
- 19 Granary
- 20 Two large field pieces mounted on carriages the latter defunct
- 21 Bell stand or belfry
- 22 A deep well in which the water rises & falls with the tide
- 23 Entrances through folding gates.

The whole enclosure about 700 feet by 400.

The posts forming the stockade being of pine - from 8 to 11 inches in diameter - about 20 feet long 2 or 3 feet apart. It is buried in the earth to about their upright. & as an additional support the pieces of scantlings are pinned together on either side near the top & bottom running the whole length. A few the upper row of them in occasional places led to the ground forming a lateral support like B.



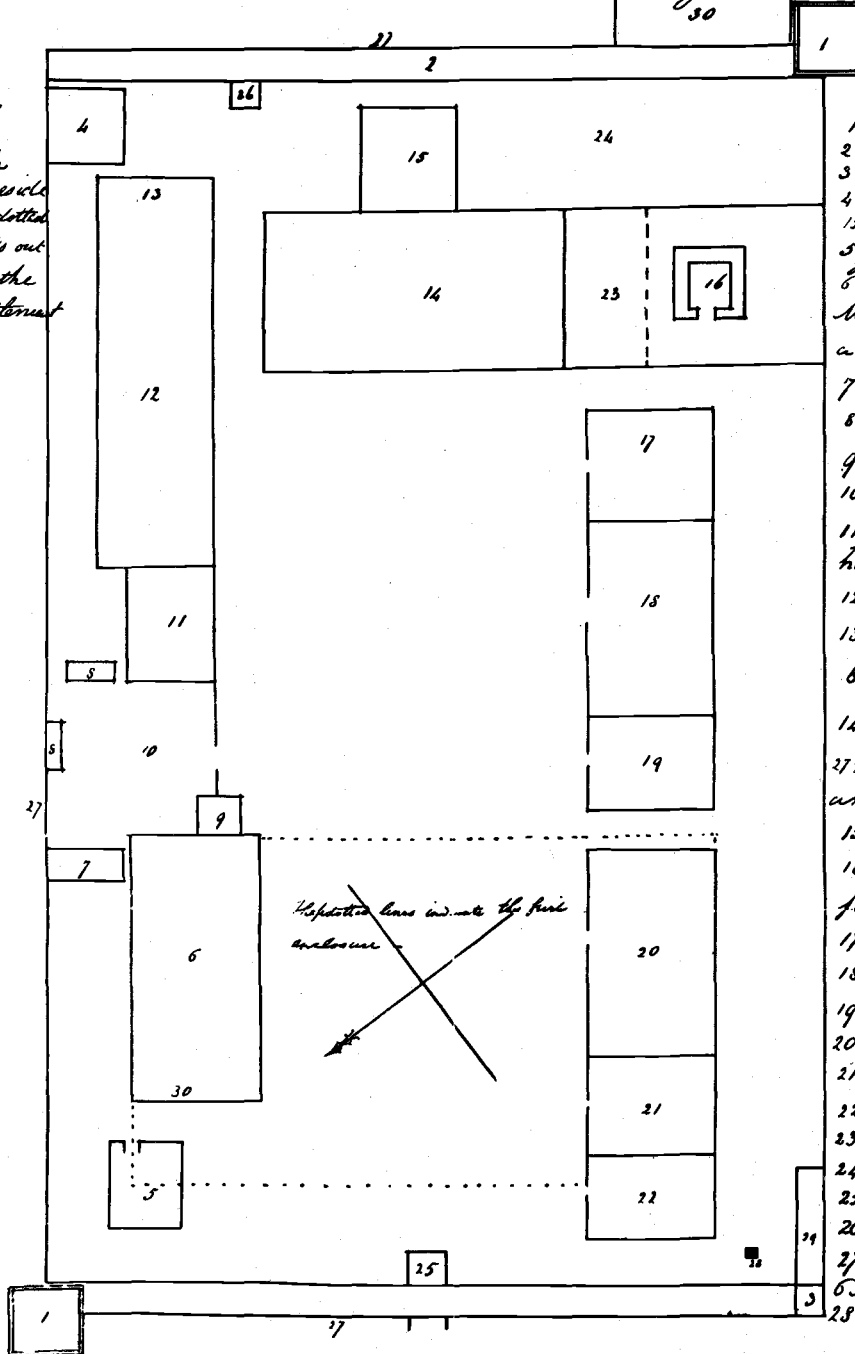
Nearly all the posts are more or less damaged at the surges of the water, and will soon require replacing by others.

Independent of this there is a Hospital near the River bank also stockaded. A Copper Shop. Boat House and several other out buildings about the premises besides small village of about 100 buildings occupied by them.

Plate II. Caption: Ground Plan of Fort Vancouver and Sketch of Palisade, 1841, from Diary of George Foster Emmons.

This Plan of the settlement of Fort George, Cornwall, never was used in connection
by Lieut. Haumann. H.B.M.S. Bliffr

30 Enclosure
where the
sandwich
Islanders reside
Note the dotted
line marks out
limits of the
former attention
in.



References

- 1 Block Houses 15 feet square
- 2 Galleries 151 feet by 7.
- 3 Look out house 7 feet square
- 4 Dwelling house and Hospital 15 feet square
- 5 Grain Store 17 by 15.
- 6 Residence of the principal Merchant 56 by 26 including a Writing Office.
- 7 Bakers shop 15 by 7.
- 8
- 9 a hall not finished
- 10 Court Yard 30 by 35
- 11 Gentlemans dwelling house 23-18
- 12 Mens Mess Room 70 by 25
- 13 Blacksmiths shop 8 by 25
- 14 House not finished
- 15 for the resident Merchant and Gentlemen 60 by 30
- 16 Kitchen 19 by 21
- 17 Powder Magazine 15 feet square
- 18 Indian Store 22 by 26
- 19 Balung Store 38 by 26
- 20 Squab store 20 by 26
- 21 Provision Store 42 by 26
- 22 Dayly Ration Store 20 by 26
- 23 Receiving Store 18 by 26
- 24 Waste Ground
- 25 Poultry Yard
- 26 Mount Entrance
- 27 Back do
- 28 Piles of fir 12 feet by 6 inches in diameter
- 29 flag Staff. 29 Coopers shed

Plate I. Caption: Ground Plan of Fort George, 1818.

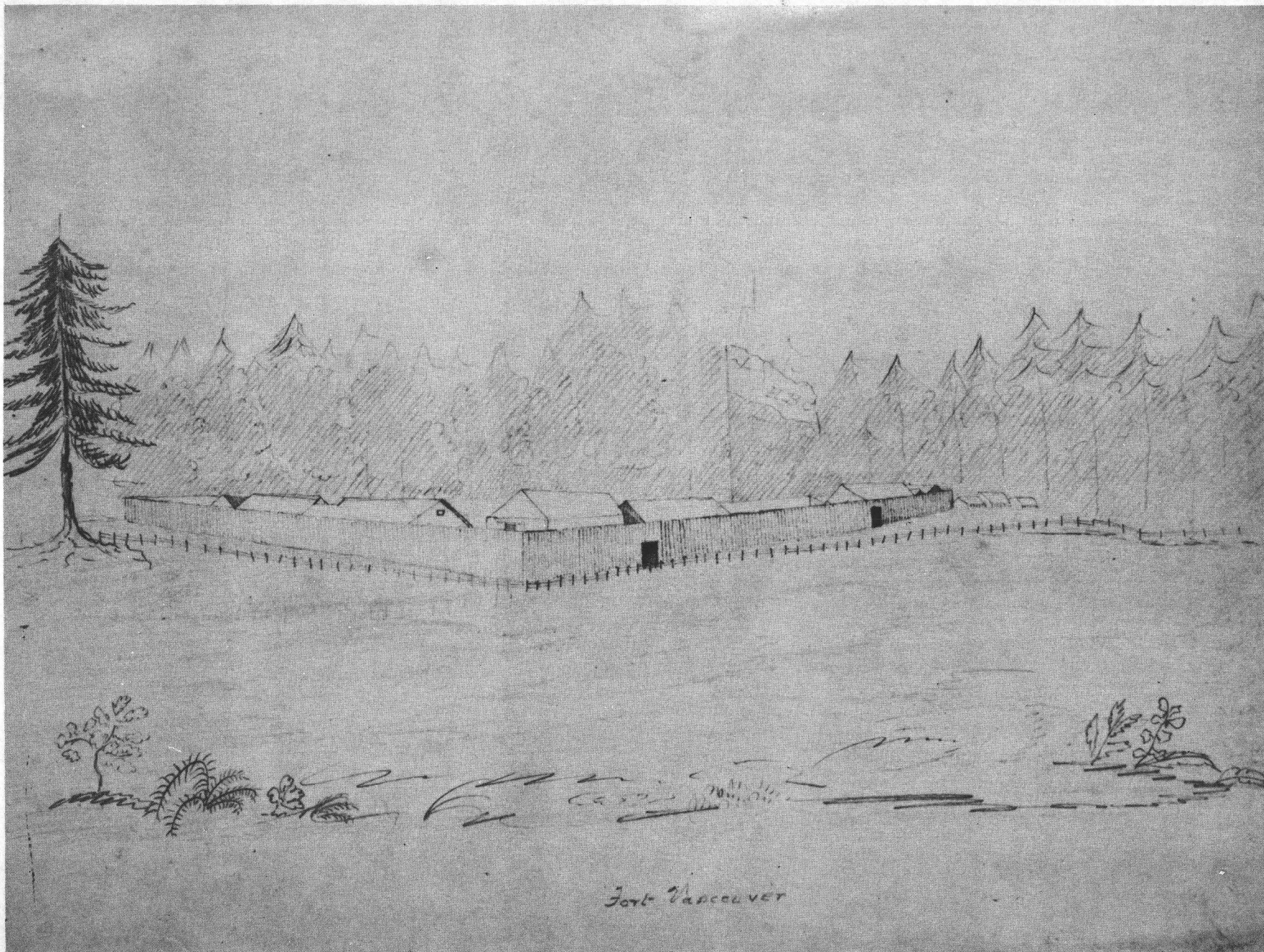
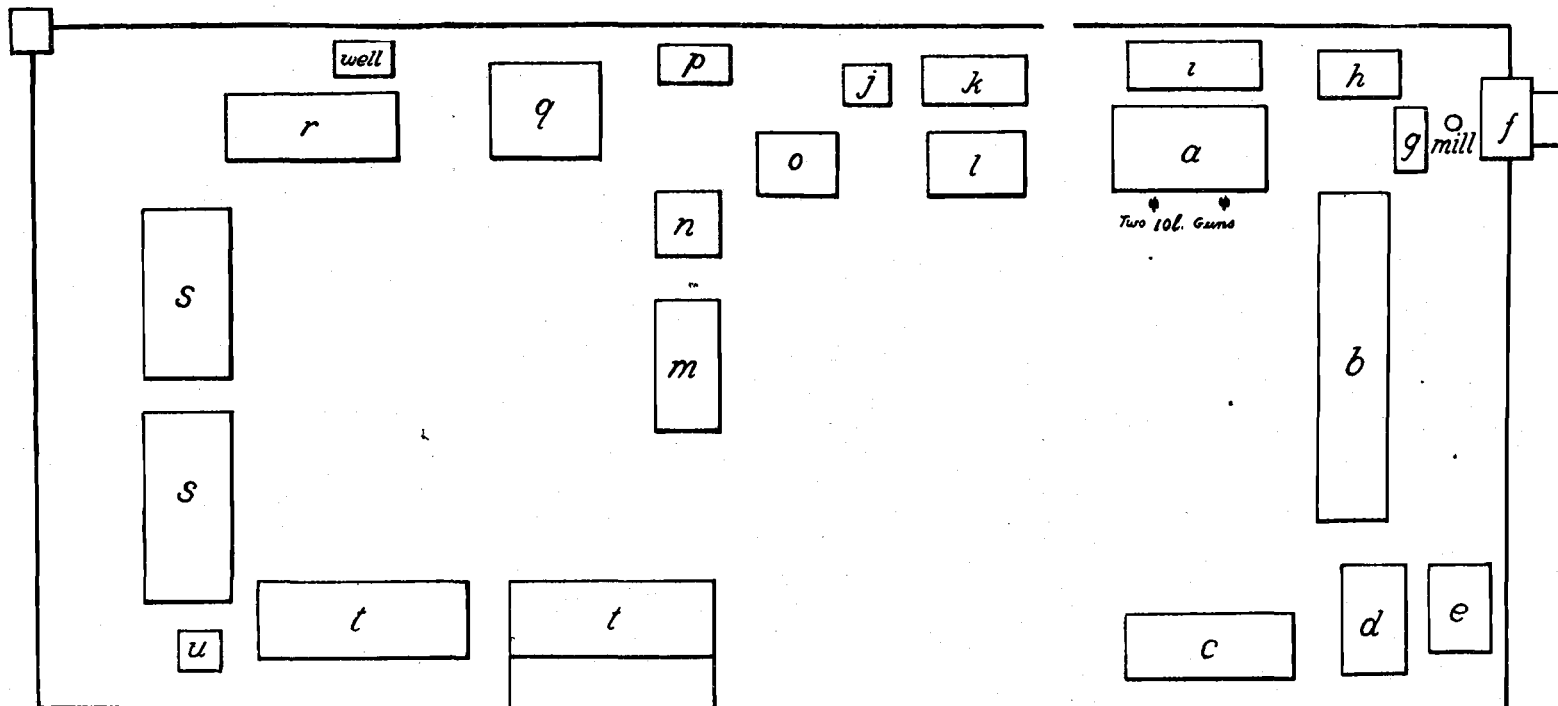


Plate III. Caption: View of Fort Vancouver from the Southwest, 1841,
Drawn by Henry Eld.

PLAN OF FORT VANCOUVER, COLUMBIA RIVER.

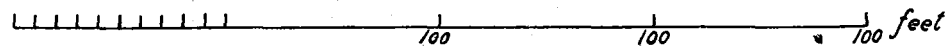


a—Chief Factor's House.
b—Dwelling Houses.
c—Indian Trading Store.
d—Smith's Shop.
e—Iron Store.
f—Bakery.
g—Warehouse.
h—Harness Shop.
i—Kitchen.
j—Jail.
k—Owyhee Church.

l—Priest's House.
m—Old R. C. Church.
n—D. Office.
o—Office.
p—Carpenter's Shop.
q—Wheat Store.
r—Beef do.
ss—Stores and Shops.
tt—Stores.
u—Powder Mag'n.

Bastion 20 feet square with octagonal top containing 8 3-pd. iron guns.
Built of squared timbers. Pickets 15 feet high.

Scale 100 feet to an inch



M. Vavasour
Lt. Royal Eng.
1845

Lt. Vavasour accompanied Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Co., on overland trip beginning at Montreal, May 5, 1845, and ending at Montreal in July, 1846.

(From Records of the Oregon Historical Society, Public Auditorium, 253 Market Street, Portland, Oregon)

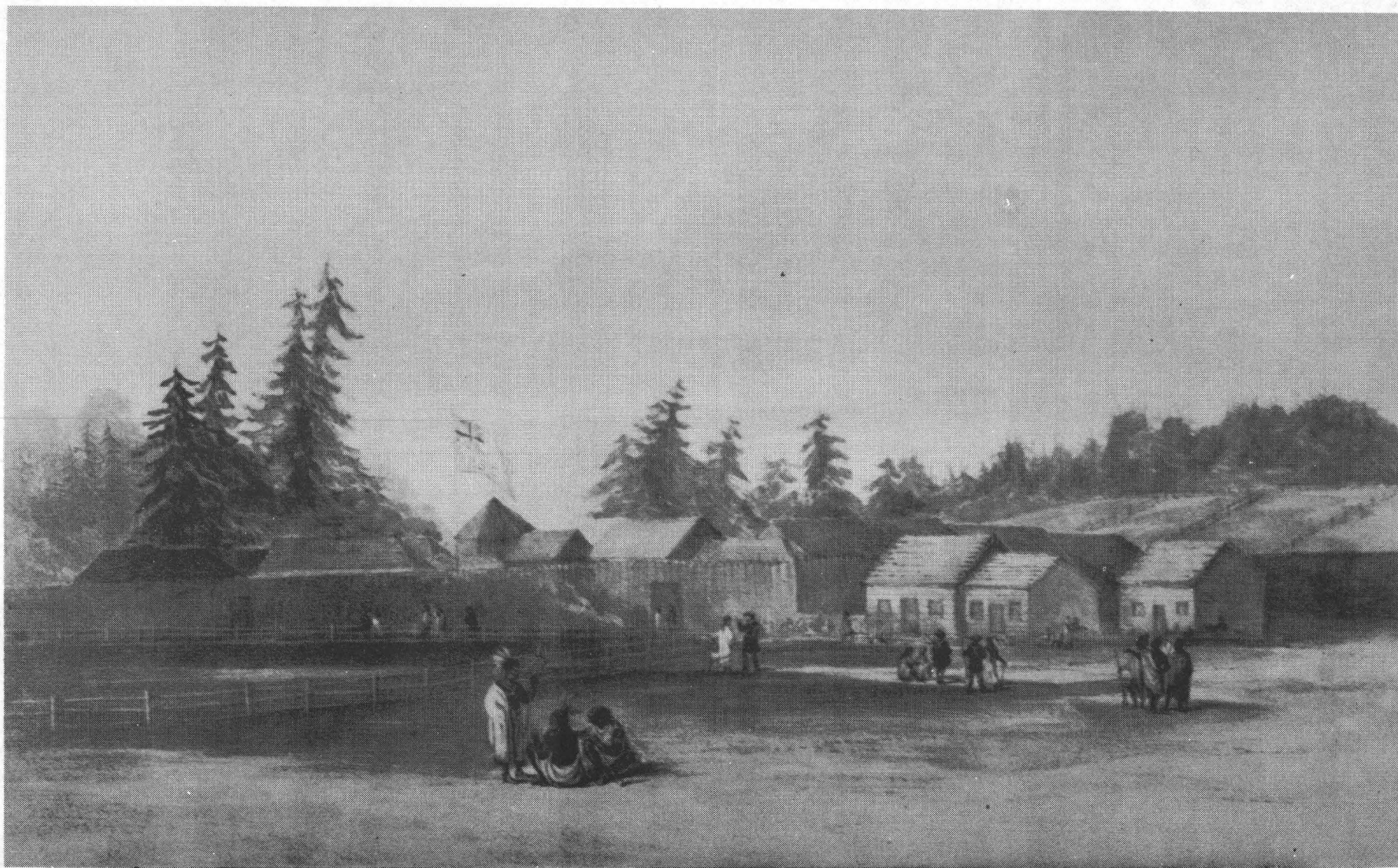


Plate VI. Caption: Fort Vancouver from the Southeast, 1845, Drawn by Henry J. Warre.



Plate VII. Caption: Bastian at Fort Victoria, Vancouver Island, Showing Typical Construction of Octagonal Cap and Gun Ports.

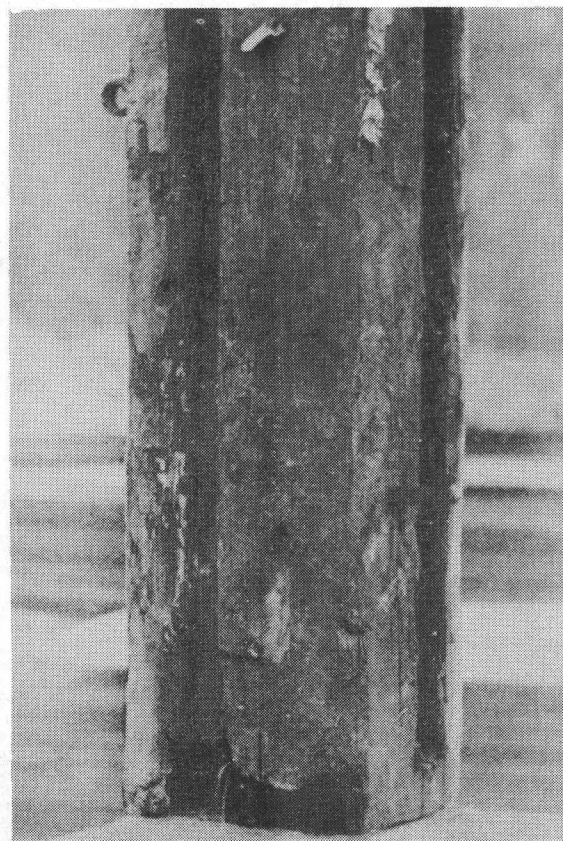
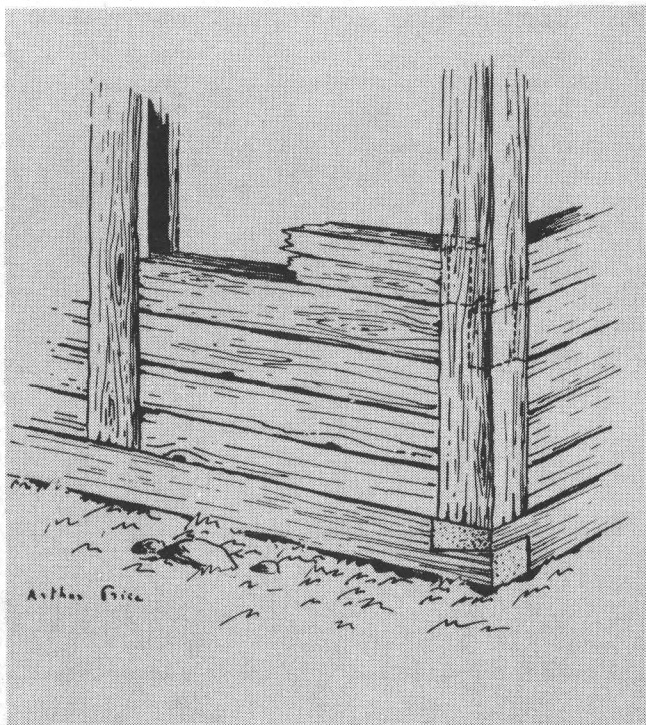


PLATE VIII. Caption: Figure 1: Diagram of Typical "Posts in the Sill"
Construction.

Figure 2: Corner Post, Fort Nisqually, Showing
Grooved Upright.



PLATE IX. Caption: Granary, Fort Nisqually, Showing Typical H.B.C.
"Posts in the Sill" Construction.

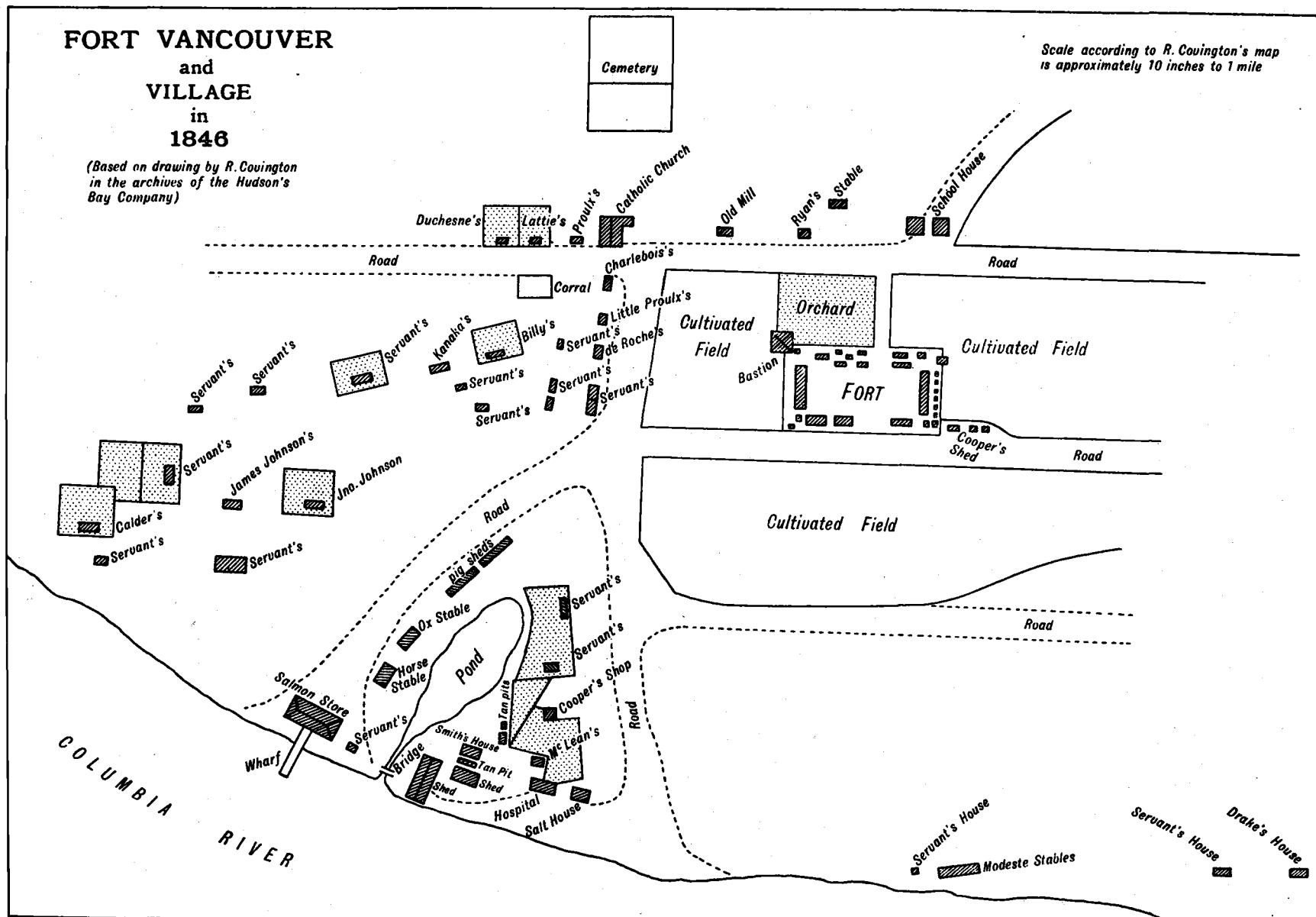
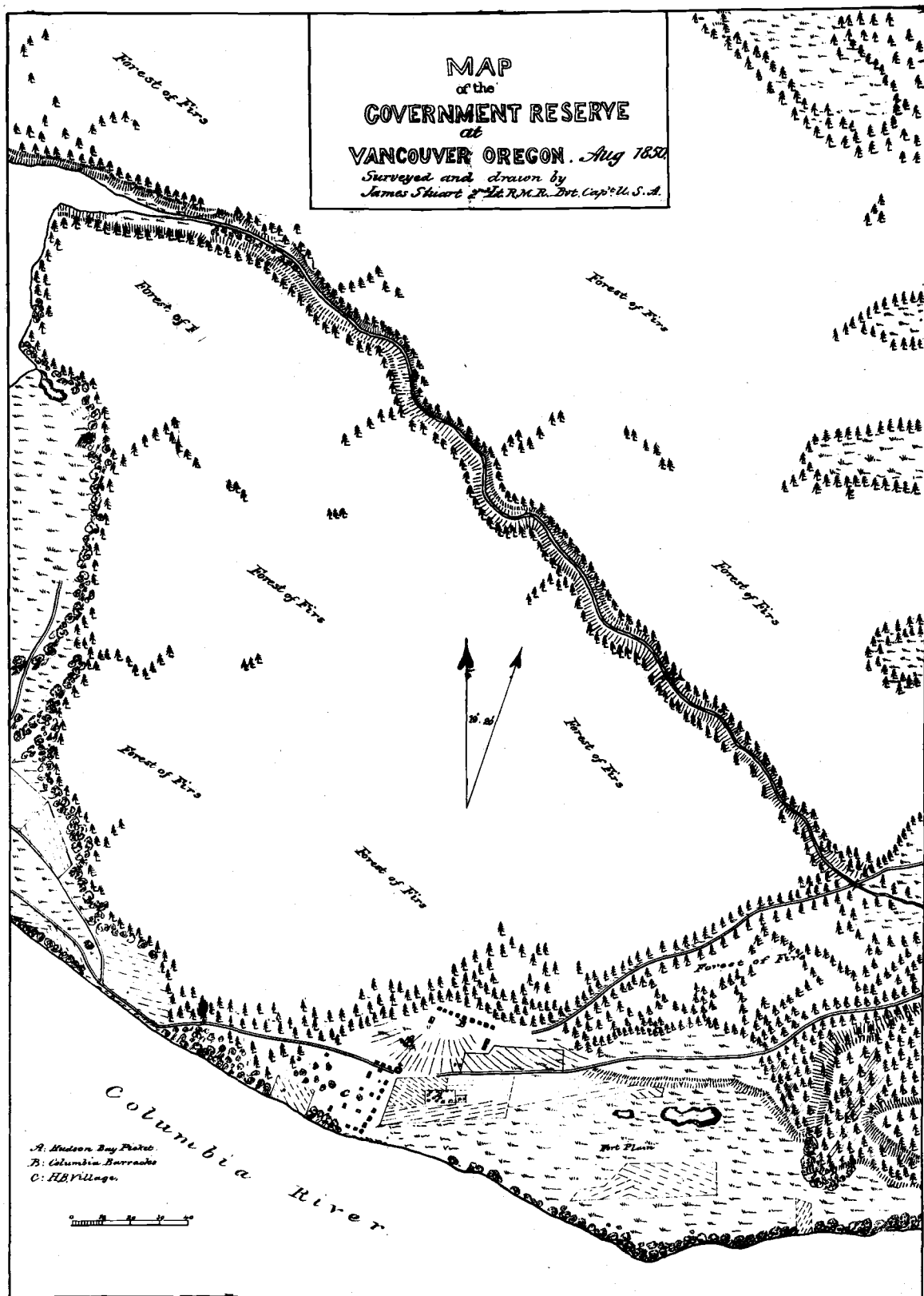


Plate X. Caption: Map of Fort Vancouver and Village in 1846,
Based on Drawing by R. Covington.



56127

The above is a correct Copy
(Signed) R. S. Williams
Lieut. U. S. F.

Plate XI. Caption: Map of the Government Reserve at Vancouver, Oregon, August, 1850, by Brevet Capt. James Stuart.

General view of Hudson's Bay Company's Post
at Fort Vancouver, Oregon, with the "Kanaka
Village" July 1851.

No. 1.

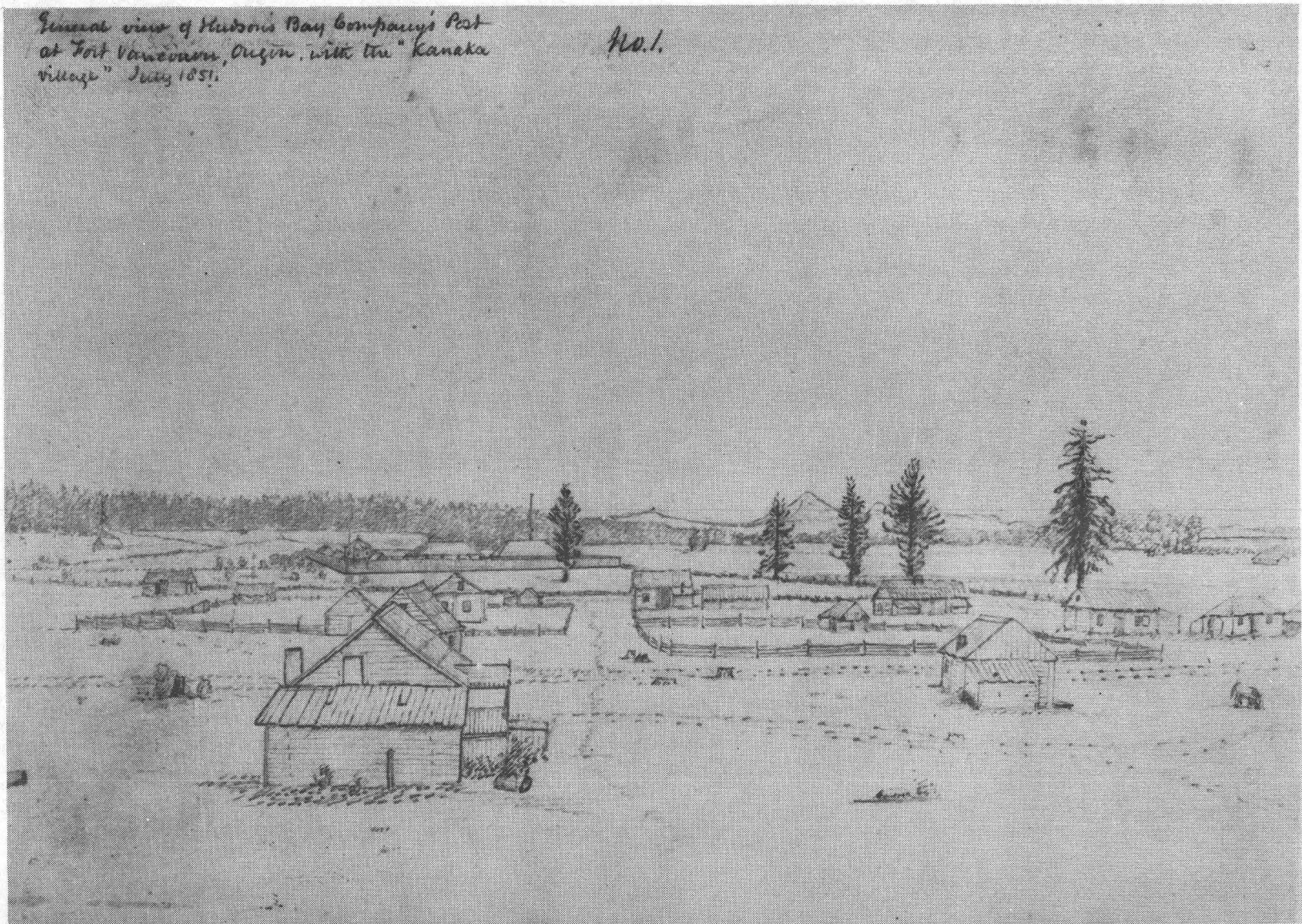


Plate XII. Caption: Fort Vancouver and the Village from the Northwest,
July, 1851, Drawn by George Gibbs.

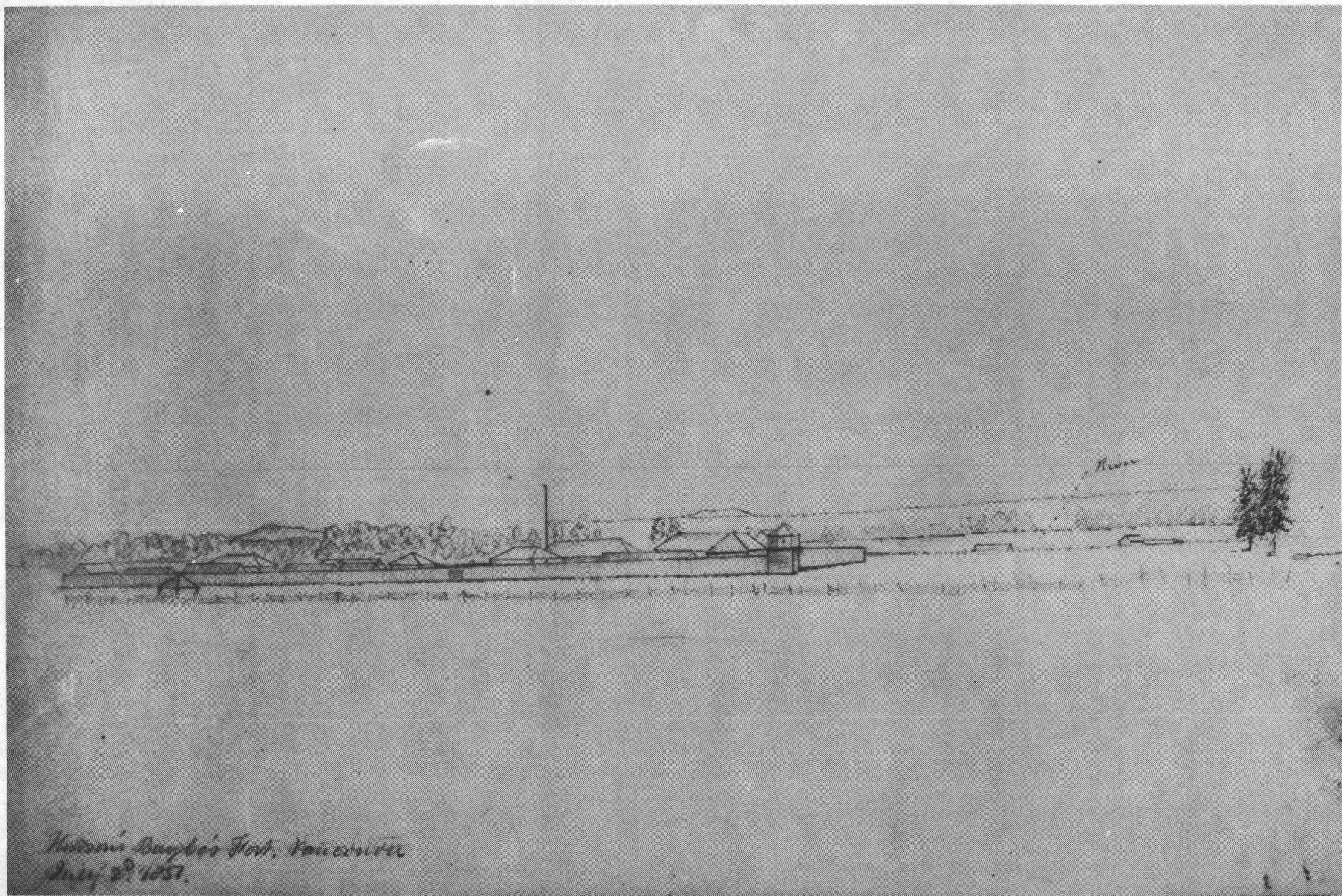


Plate XIII. Caption: Fort Vancouver from the North, July 2, 1851,
Drawn by George Gibbs.

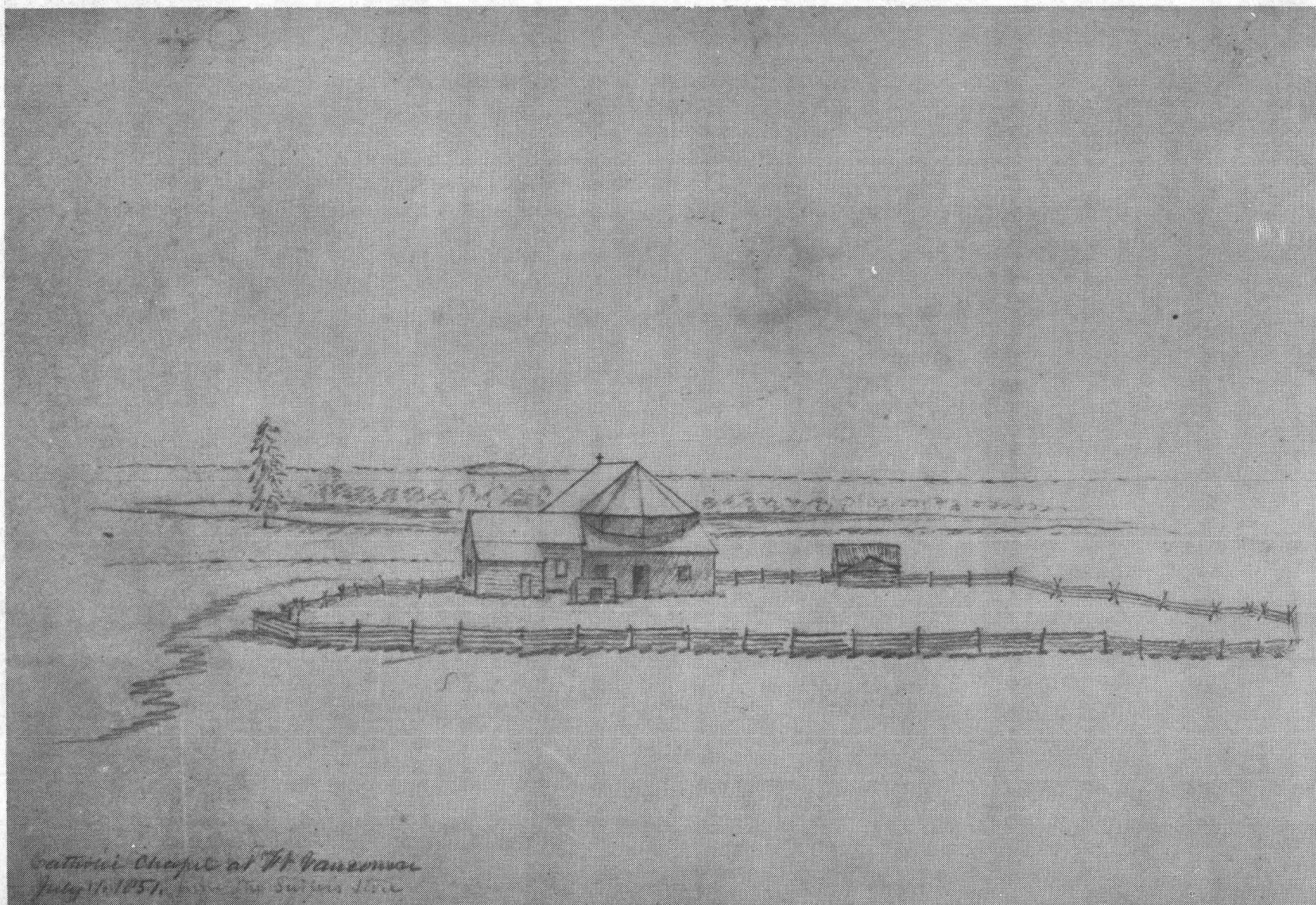


Plate XIV. Caption: Catholic Chapel at Fort Vancouver, July 1, 1851,
Drawn by George Gibbs.

G. P. 11754.4 - 1/2 mile + 295404

References

- A. Flag Staff, 1st Station
 B. Cedar Post, standing five feet
 out of the ground - hewed
 square and branded
 on each face with U. S.
 C. Cedar Post like the 1st 1854
 limits from S. H. corner
 d. a Tree Balm to lead in

feet in circumference.
 15 feet from Cedar Post.
 e. South West Corner of Mil. Y.
 beyond
 Reservation survey to
 mark.

e. h. m. Southern Boundary
 eastwardly up the river
 with offset to 9 of 590 links
 beyond
 m. South East Corner A very
 low water mark.

n. A Tree Balm of 16 feet
 round on East Boundary
 150 links from S. E. corner
 D. A Cedar Post like 1854.

standing on the E. Boundary
 line 177 links from S. E. corner

E. F. & O. Cedar Post like 1854
 marking the boundary of G.
 and N. E. & N. W. corners at
 F & G

A. B. N 73° W 26.90

B. C. d. e. S 21° 30' W 50.50

e. h. S 54° 4' 27.09

h. m. S 80° 25' E. 27.09

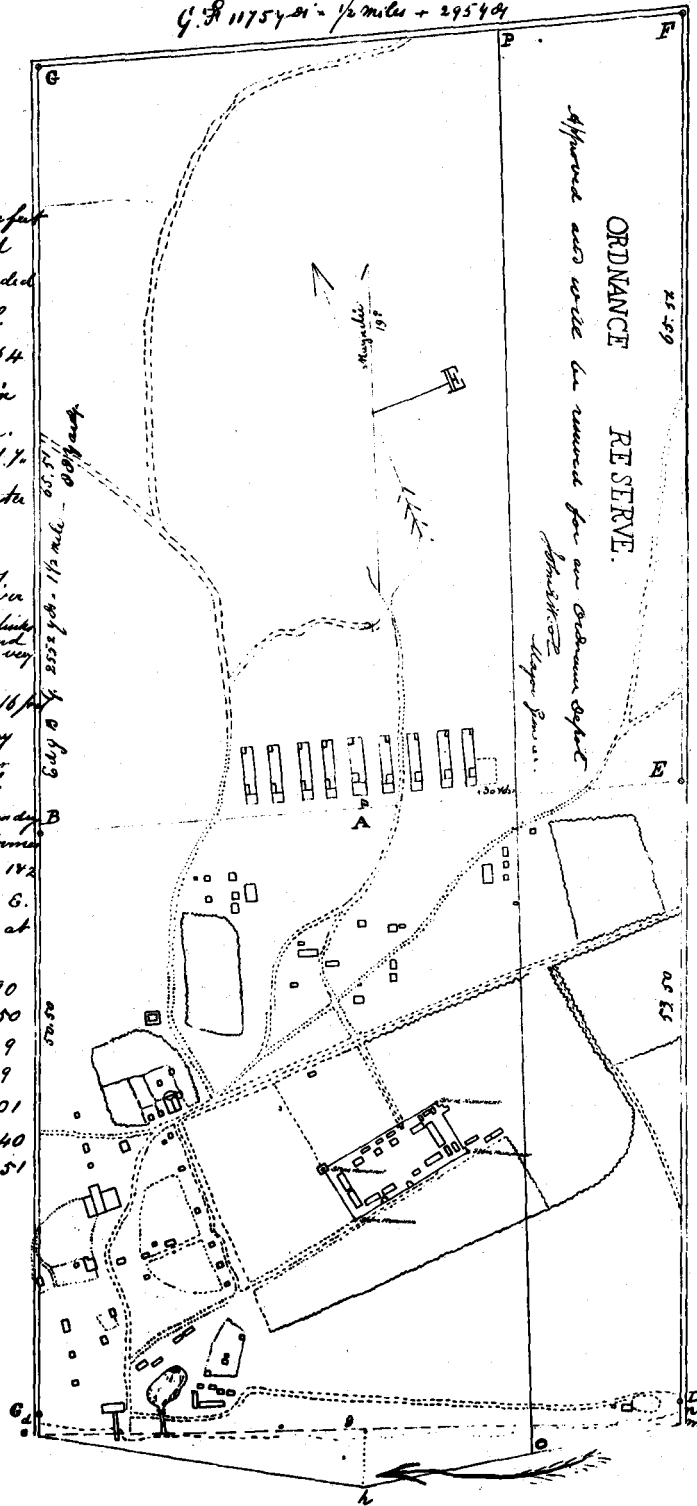
m. n. D. B. F. N 31° 30' 119.01

F & G. N 73° W 53.40

G. B. S 21° 30' W 65.51

Scale 2000 links Gunter's Chain

0-440 Yards.



This is the original plan and notes
 made by Lieut. Colonel B. L. E.
 Bonneville, 4th Regt. after the
 survey of the Military
 Reservation of Fort Vancouver,
 in 1854. The notes in
 the left hand margin are
 in his handwriting.
 Thomas J. Johnson
 U.S. Geologist, 1890.
 The change of
 Vancouver Island.

Scale 2000 links Gunter's Chain
 0-440 Yards.

Plate XV. Caption: Original Plan of Survey of Fort Vancouver Military
 Reservation, Made in 1854 by Lieut. Col. B. L. E. Bonneville.

Plate XVI.. Caption: Map of the Government Reserve at Fort Vancouver
Drawn by Brevet Capt. T. R. McConnell in 1854
from the Survey Made by Lieut. Col. B. L. E.
Bonnevillle.

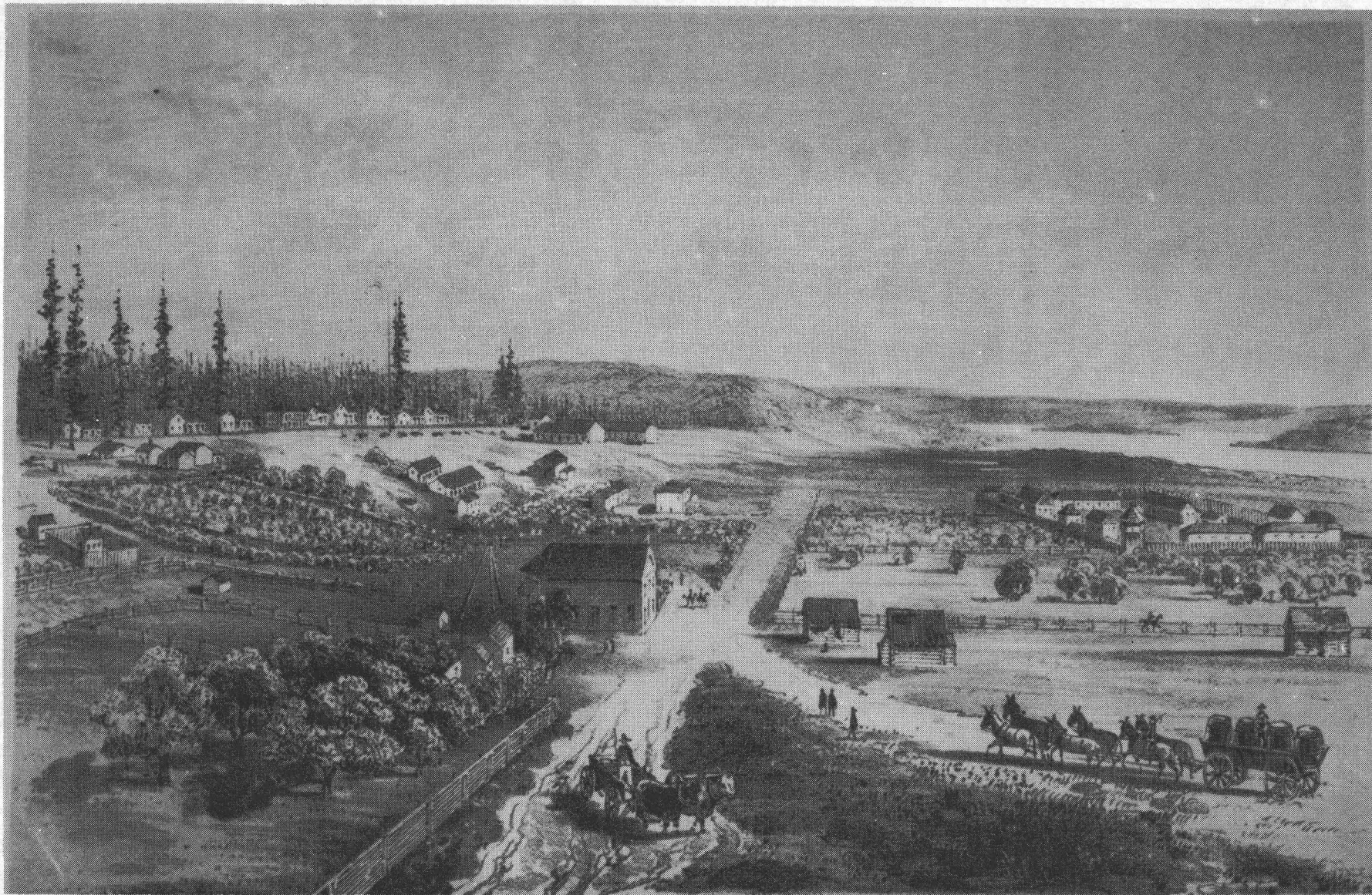


Plate XVIII. Caption: Fort Vancouver from the Northwest, about 1855,
Drawn by Gustavus Schon.

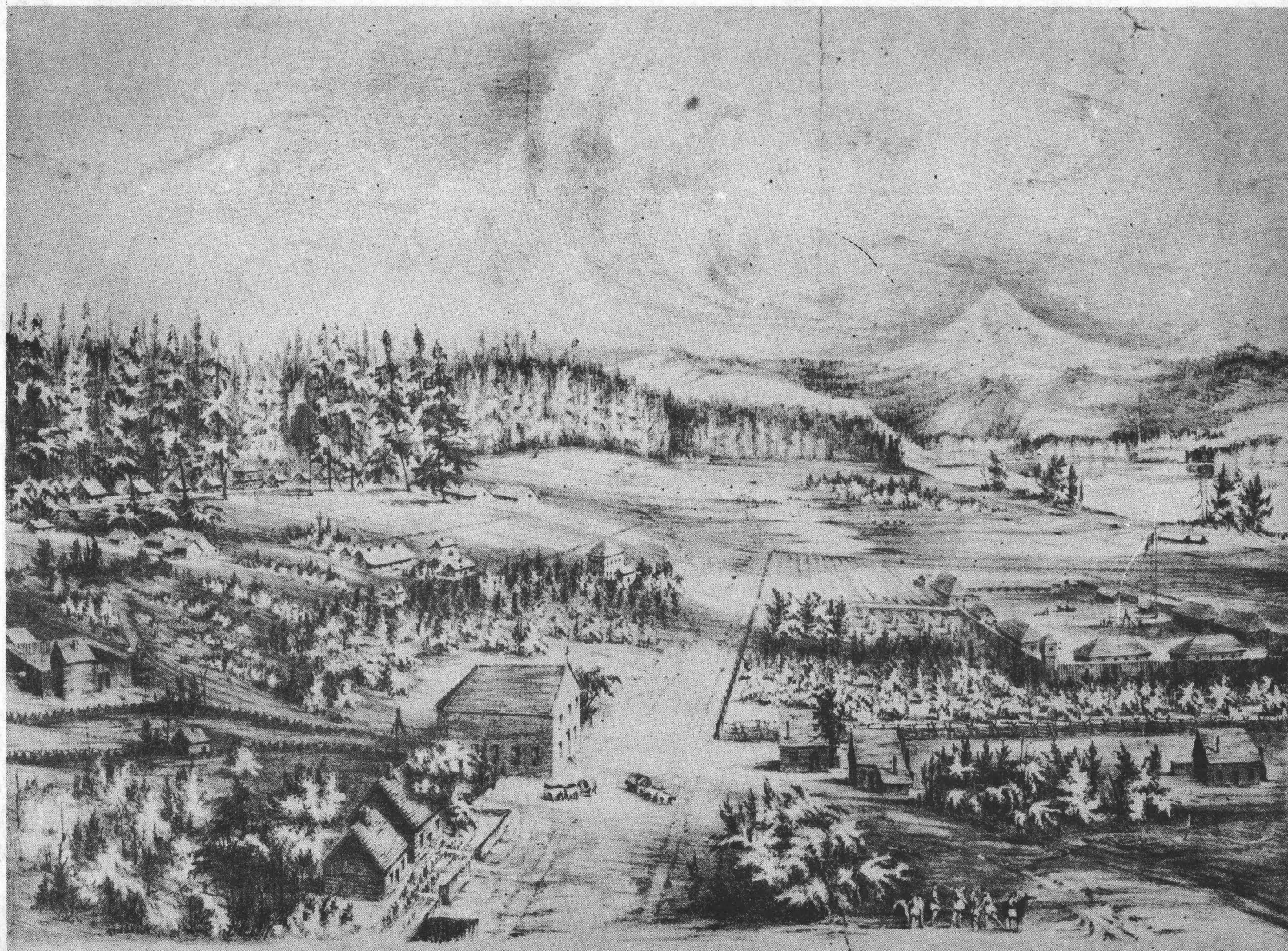


Plate XIX. Caption: View of Fort Vancouver from the Northwest, 1855,
Drawn by R. Covinton.

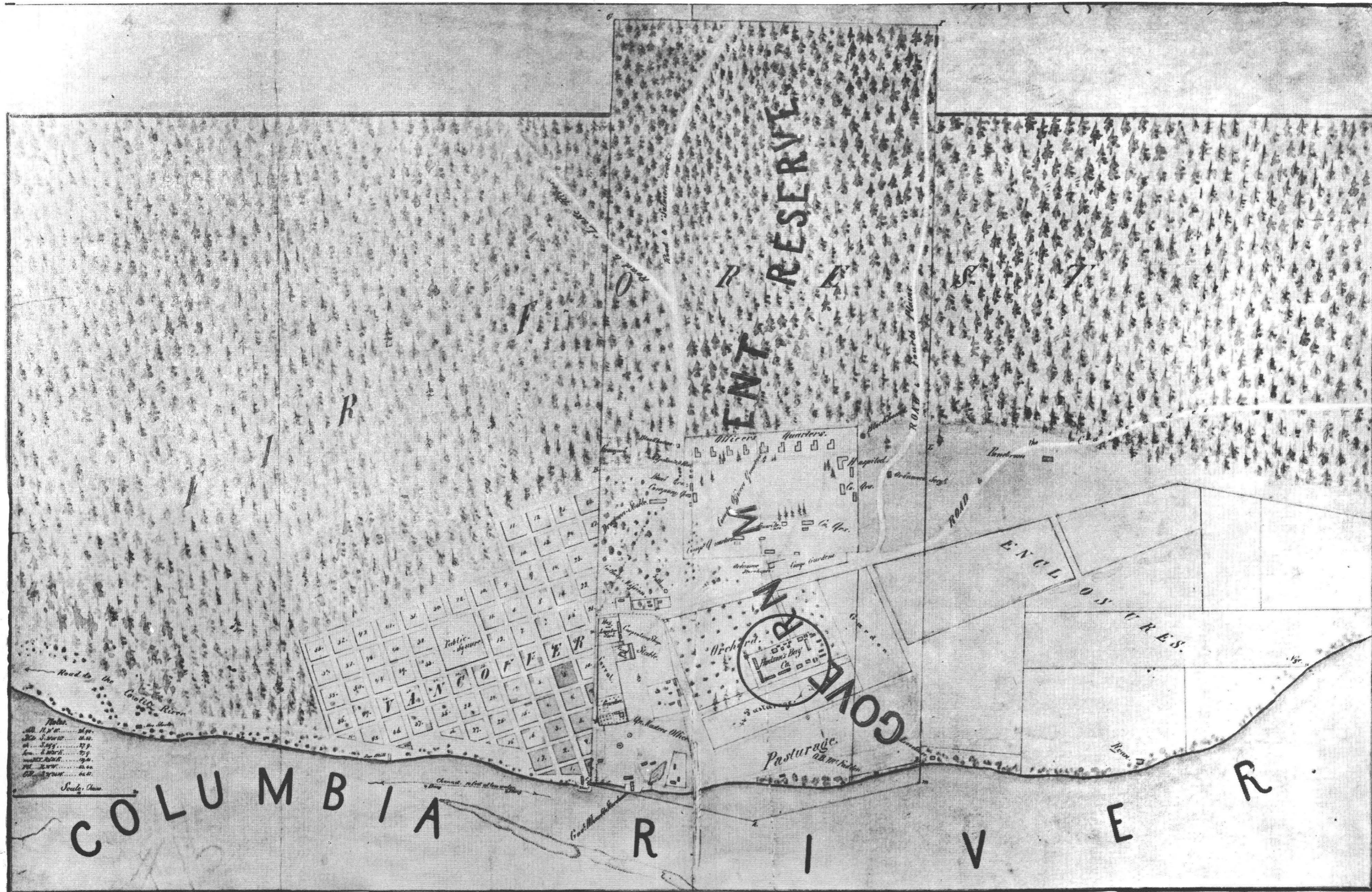


Plate XX. Caption: Topographical Sketch of Fort Vancouver and Environs, 1855.

N 14 54 48 6

MAP
of the
MILITARY RESERVATION
AT FORT VANCOUVER, V.T.
Surveyed under the direction of

Capt. GEO. THOM, Topographical Engineer,
by
Lieuts. J. B. Wheeler & J. Dixon, Corps Top. Engrs.

By Order of
BRIG. GEN. W. S. HARNEY.
1859.

Scale of 16 Inches to 1 Mile.

A B N 27 22 E 7650'
B C S 12 38 E 3525'
C D S 27 22 W 7852'
D A N 68 45 W 3494'
E F N 27 22 E 7748'
F C S 72 45 E 987'

Military Reservation 638 Acres

Ordnance Reserve 166 A.

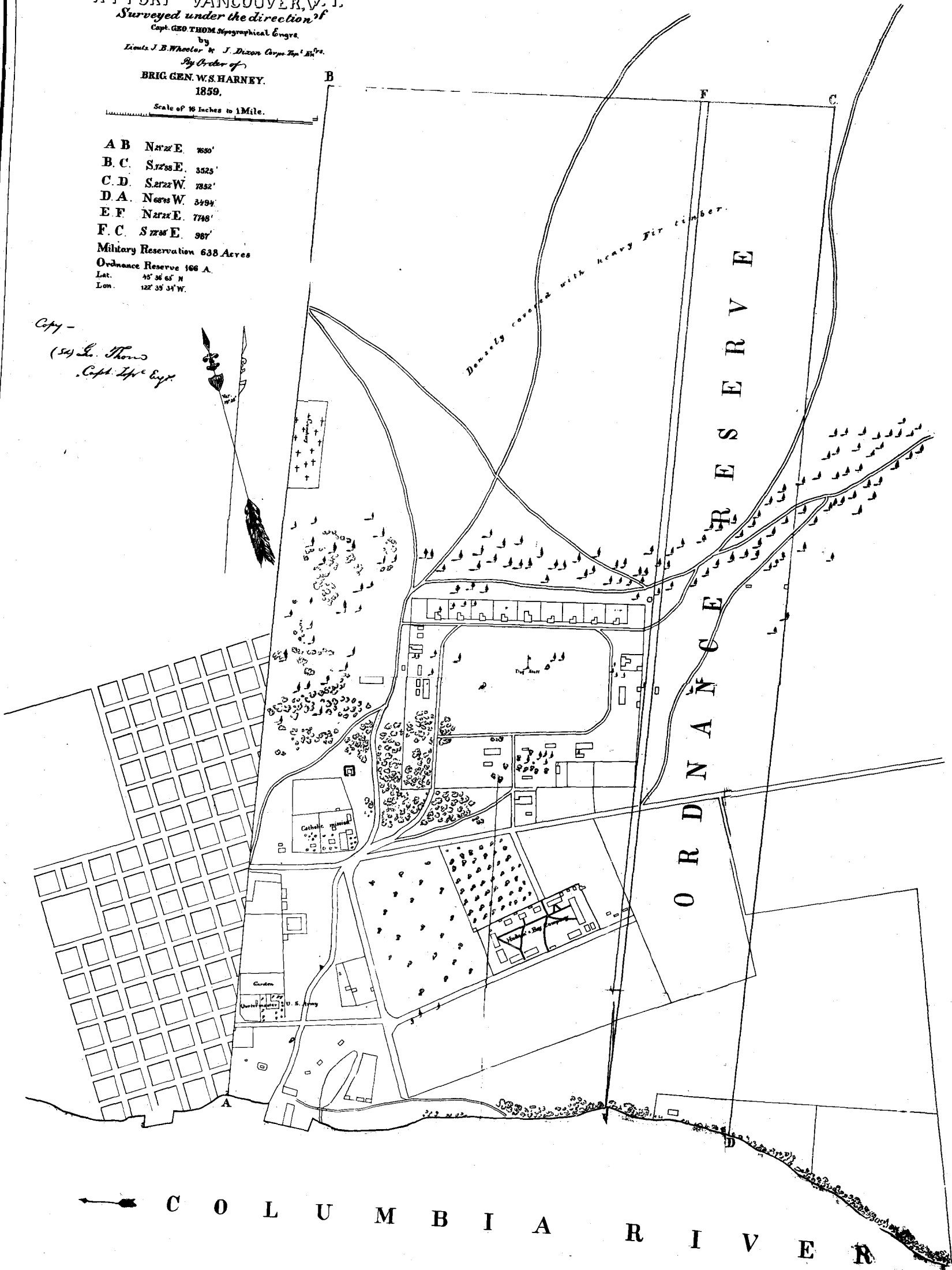
Lat. 45° 36' 55" N
Lon. 122° 35' 34" W.

Note: This reservation is situated on the
right bank of the Columbia River
8 miles north of Portland Or. and
was ordered by the Secy of War
Oct. 29 1853. Contains about 600 acres

Copy -

(54) L. Thomas

Capt. Top. Engr.



C O L U M B I A R I V E R

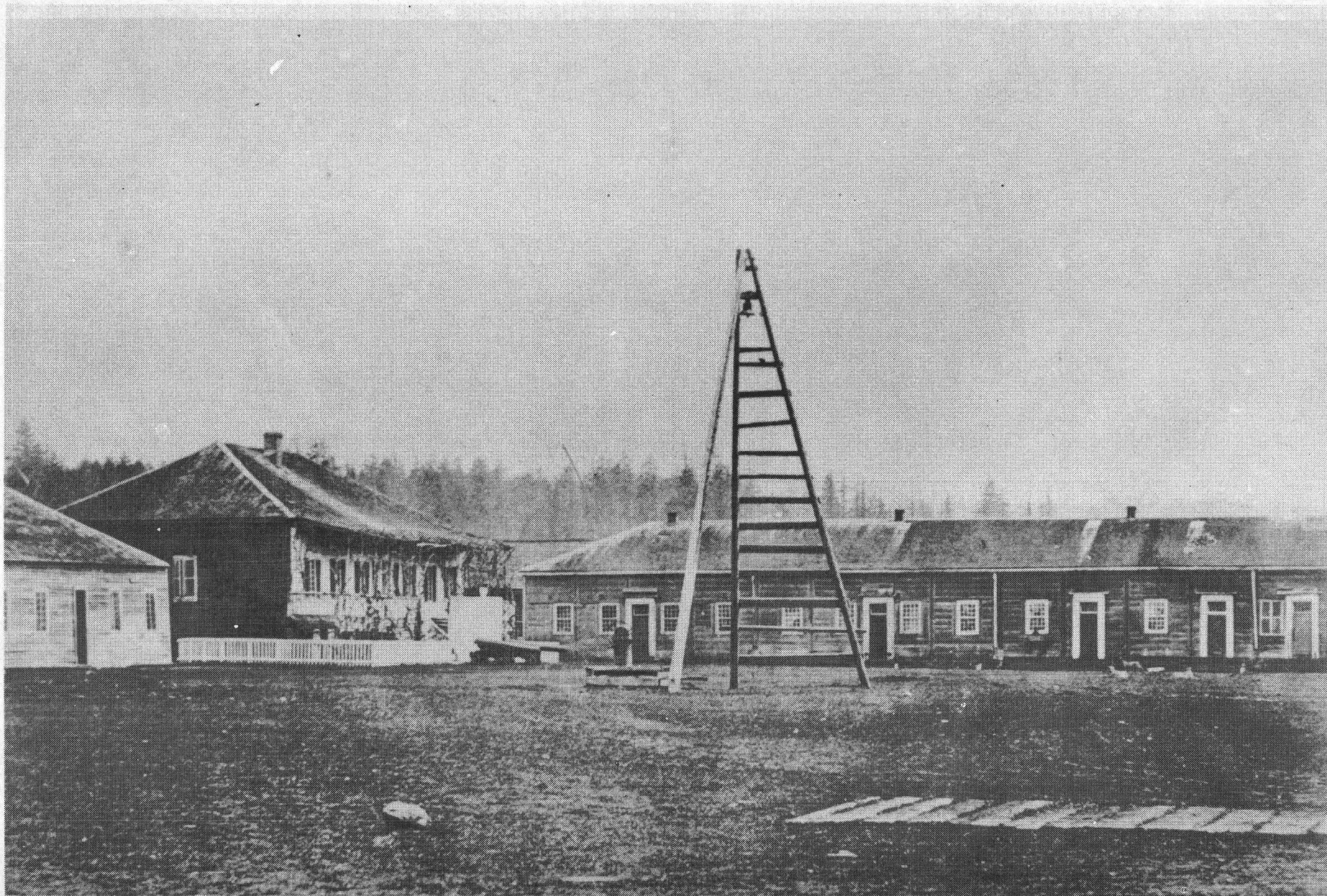


Plate XXII. Caption: Northeast Corner of Courtyard, Fort Vancouver, 1860,
Showing the "Priests' House," the Manager's Residence,
and the Bachelors' Quarters.



Plate XXIII. Caption: Northwest Stockade Corner, Fort Vancouver, May, 1860,
Showing Storehouse No. 2, the Trading Shop, the
Blockhouse, the Granary, and the Office.

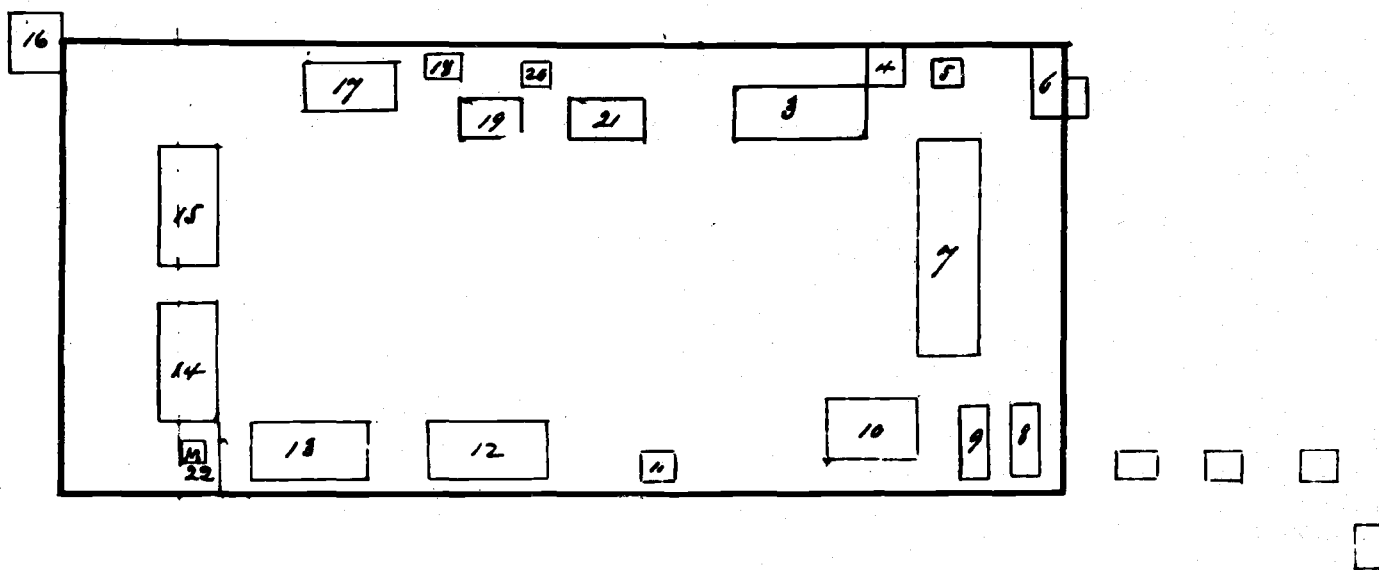


Plate XXIV. Caption: Ground Plan of Fort Vancouver, June 15, 1860.

DIAGRAM of SURVEY of ST. JAMES MISSION CLAIM, Vancouver, Wash. Ter.

Surveyed July 10th A.D. 1872

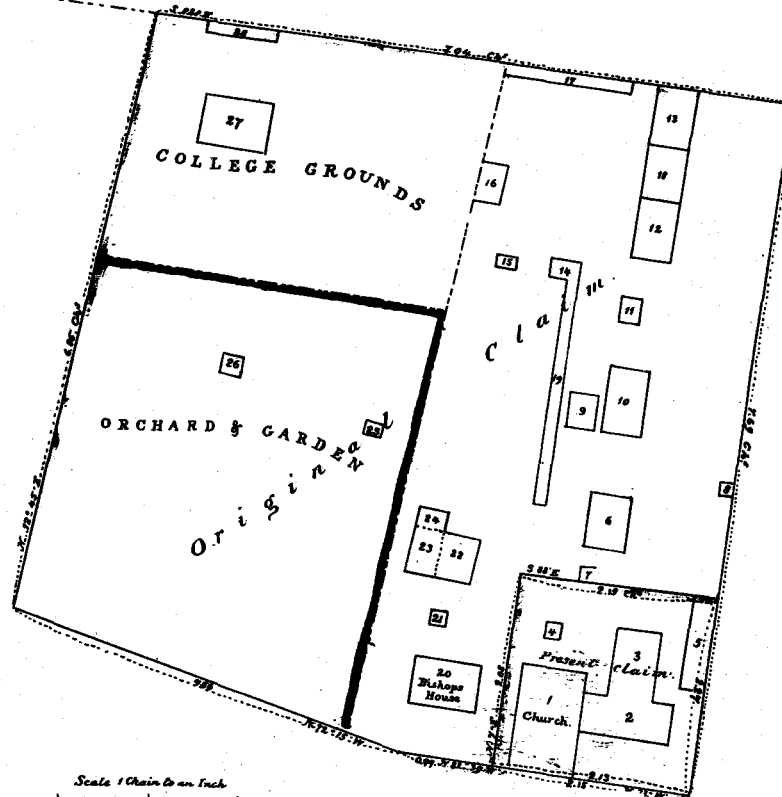
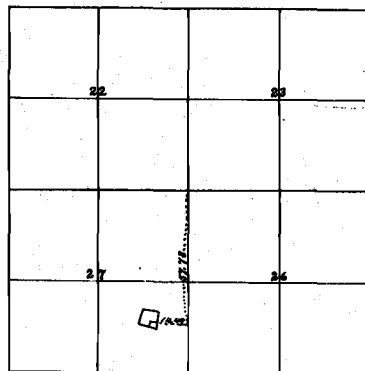
Levi Farnsworth

U. S. Deputy Surveyor.

U. S. Military Reserve Line N 22° 15' East

| | | |
|----|----------------------|--------|
| 1 | Church | 70x40 |
| 2 | Convent | 70x16 |
| 3 | Kitchen | 40x18 |
| 4 | Water Works | 10x10 |
| 5 | Factories | 81x11 |
| 6 | Old Ladies Asylum | 30x20 |
| 7 | Shoemakers Shop | 16x12 |
| 8 | Store House | 9x9 |
| 9 | Laundering | 20x26 |
| 10 | Female Orphan Asylum | 40x20 |
| 11 | Store House | 20x16 |
| 12 | Male Orphan Asylum | 40x20 |
| 13 | Asylum & Bakery | 30x20 |
| 14 | Stables | 40x11 |
| 15 | Rig Fly | 24x10 |
| 16 | Cow Stable | 100x12 |
| 17 | Gallery | 36x24 |
| 18 | Wood Shed | 125x12 |
| 19 | Bishops House | 30x24 |
| 20 | Bath House | 10x10 |
| 21 | Priests Residence | 36x20 |
| 22 | Public Library | 36x20 |
| 23 | Carpenter Shop | 26x10 |
| 24 | Smoke House | 9x9 |
| 25 | Oratory | 12x12 |
| 26 | College | 50x30 |
| 27 | Wood Shed | 50x12 |

DIAGRAM Sec. 2223.26327 Township No. 2 N. R. 1 E. Will. Mer.



Scale 1 Chain to an Inch

Official

N. Key-Rood

Assistant Adjutant General.

The above Diagram showing the lines of Survey and notations of the St. James Catholic Mission Claim situated in section 27 Township No. 2, North of Range No. 1, East of the Willamette Meridian in the Territory of Washington is strictly conformable to the field notes of the Survey thereof on file in this office which have been examined and approved.

Surveyor General's Office at Olympia W. T. July 29th 1872

(Signed) *J. P. Beach*
Surv. Genl. of W. T.

Traced by J. J. Bliss Not used as Dept. Commission.

APPENDIX

Due to a miscarriage of the mails, the following three maps (plates XXVII, XXVIII, and XXVIX) were received after the cutting of the stencils for the mimeographing of this report had already commenced. It has not been possible, therefore, to make all the changes in the text which are indicated by the important information contained on these charts.

The map representing the line of the fire of 1844 is particularly valuable for the purposes of this report since, if it accurately represents the structures within the stockade, it permits the dates of the destruction and erection of certain buildings to be placed within more precise limits.

It would appear, for instance, that the new office and the iron store were built between September, 1844, and the latter part of 1845.

The bakery, new carpenter shop, and the jail seem all to have been built between 1841 and September, 1844.

On the other hand, the wash house (no. 8 on the Emmons map) probably survived as late as September, 1844, and was destroyed between that date and the time of Vavasour's visit in 1845. Also, a structure near the northwest stockade corner, which may have been no. 17 of the Emmons map, appears to have been standing in September, 1844, and to have disappeared by the end of the next year.

Sketch of Fort Vancouver and Plain

Representing the Line of Fire in September 1844.
The dotted red lines show the line of Fire, all to the
North of which has been burnt.
The Blue dotted line shows high water mark.

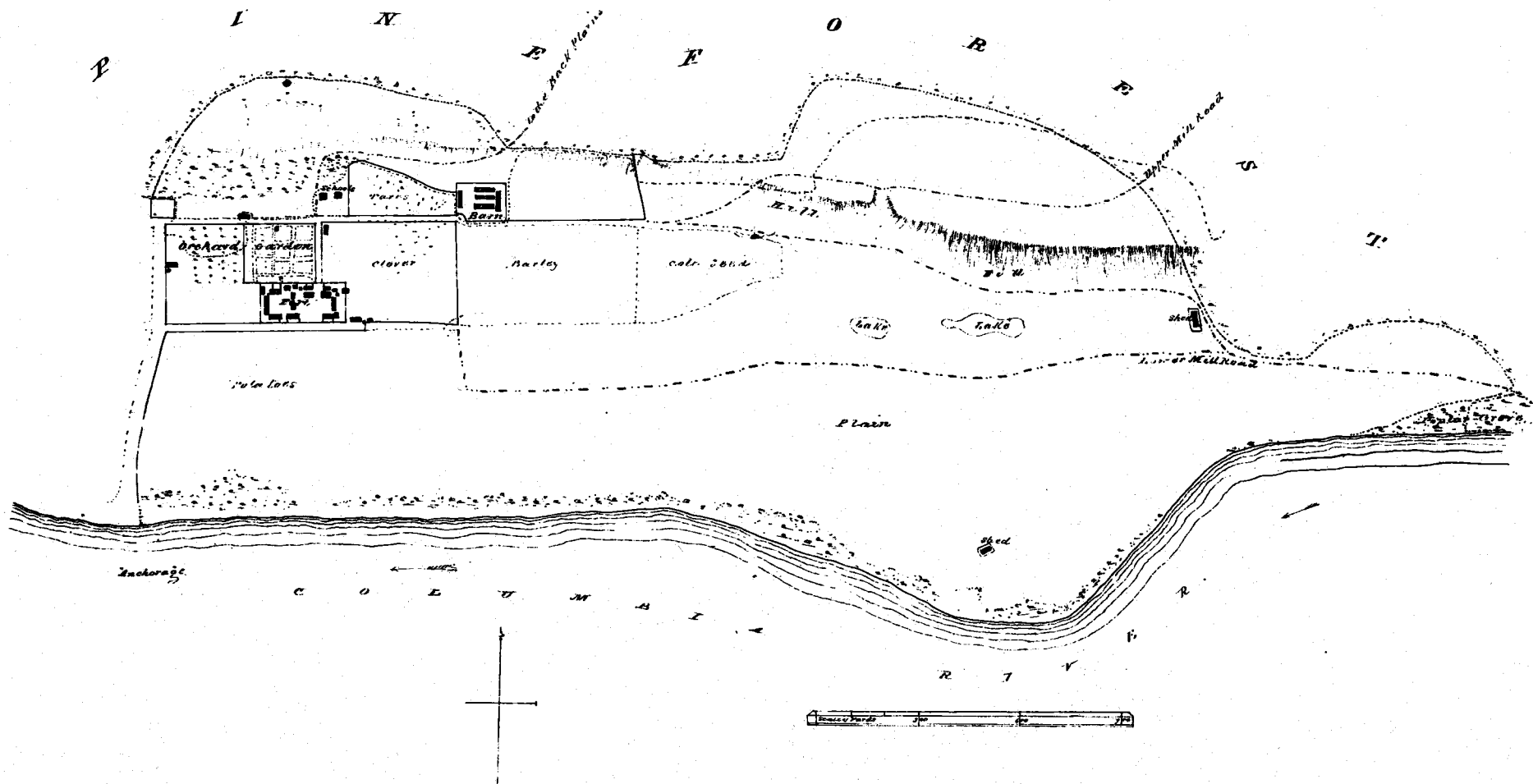


Plate XXVII. Caption: Sketch of Fort Vancouver and Plain, Representing the Line of Fire in September, 1844.

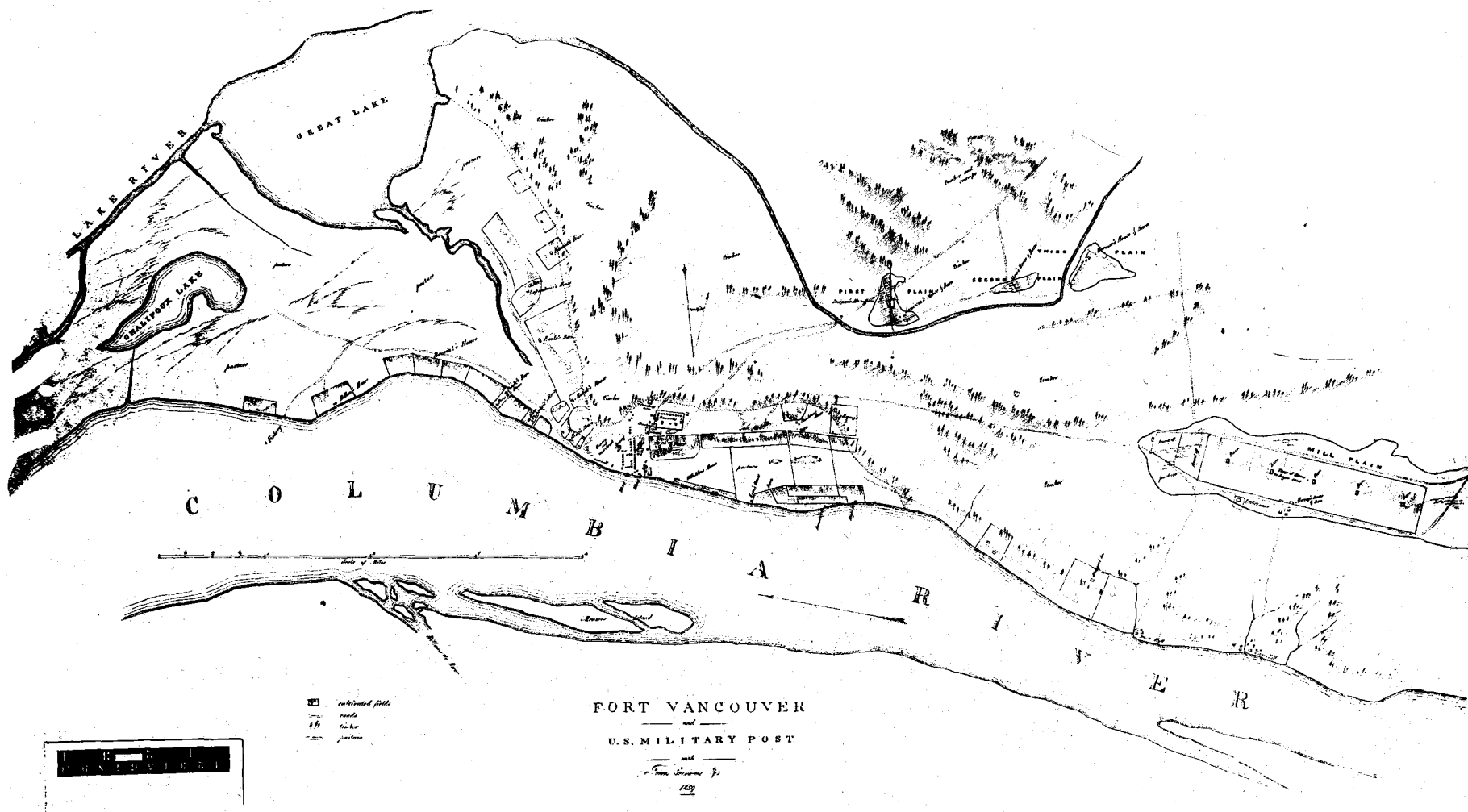


Plate XXIX. Caption: Map of Fort Vancouver and U. S. Military Post ... 1859,
 Drawn by R. Covington.