

## MANUEL LISA'S ST. LOUIS MISSOURI FUR COMPANY RETURNS TO FORT RAYMOND

Manuel Lisa's Chief Factor Pierre Menard and Andrew Henry with sixty trappers  
set out from Fort Mandan above the Knife River -- January 1810

They traveled up the Missouri River to return to Missouri Fur Company's Fort Raymond  
located at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Bighorn Rivers  
(near today's Three Forks, Montana)

## AMERICAN TRADING SHIP *MERCURY* SAILS INTO CLAYOQUOT SOUND

Captain G.W. Ayers sailed the Boston-based ship *Mercury* from Canton, China to Vancouver Island  
where he entered Clayoquot Sound -- early 1810

American Captain Ayers negotiated a contract with Wickaninnish and took on board  
a dozen or so Tla-o-qui-aht hunters to seek out seals and sea otters off the California coast  
when their hunt was complete these natives were to be returned to Clayoquot Sound

After the successful hunt was completed Captain Ayers broke his contract with the natives  
rather than return them to Clayoquot Sound he marooned them on California's Farallon Islands  
(for the next year the dozen or so Tla-o-qui-aht hunters undertook an epic land and sea journey  
most of the men died of starvation or were killed by other Indians along the way  
finally a few destitute survivors returned to Clayoquot Sound  
where they related their story of misery and death [spring 1811])

## BRITISH TRADING COMPANIES OPERATE UNDER A HANDICAP

Hudson's Bay Company had expanded from the regions around Hudson Bay and James Bay westward  
they expanded into the interior of Canada where they operated a chain of trading posts  
(that later became such cities as Winnipeg, Manitoba, Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta)

most of Hudson's Bay Company's supplies and their furs had to be freighted overland  
from the area around Hudson's Bay to Montreal

Hudson's Bay Company could not ship furs directly to China

as the East India Company maintained an exclusive monopoly on that commerce

North West Company headquartered in Montreal, Quebec was owned by wintering partners  
who ran trap lines in the wilderness and established trading posts among the Indians

North West Company also was excluded from the China Trade  
by the East India Company's monopoly

Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company invaded overlapping regions

they conducted violent and wasteful competition and company war for over forty years

Neither Hudson's Bay Company nor North West Company wanted a long, expensive trade war  
with John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company

## JOHN JACOB ASTOR HAS GRAND IDEAS FOR HIS AMERICAN FUR COMPANY

John Jacob Astor had dreamed of expanding his American Fur Company West of the Rockies when the United States purchased Louisiana it provided him the opportunity

Astor never invaded a territory until others had cleared the way and proved its worth

Manuel Lisa and other American trappers had demonstrated the possibility

of ascending the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean by way of the Columbia River

Astor envisioned a chain of trading posts up the Missouri River over the Rocky Mountains

and down the Columbia River to the mouth -- establish a shipping point there

he intended to exploit the Pacific Northwest Indian trade

but first it would be necessary to establish a trading depot in neutral water

between the Russians in Alaska and the Spanish in California

Columbia River was seen by enterprising merchant John Jacob Astor

as a vital link in international trade to develop commerce with Northern and Southern Europe,

South America, Asia and Hawaii and Astor had the ships necessary to conduct such a trade

Astor intended to do more than gather beaver hides along the Columbia River

and pay for them with his own trade goods

he meant to go compete with all traders West of the Rocky Mountains

and to use his own ships to supply his Western outposts

and he would use his ships to carry pelts to China

to trade for goods to be sold in the United States and in Europe

John Jacob Astor bought out a competing trading outfit known as The Mackinaw Company

which he combined into his expanded operation

## JOHN JACOB ASTOR DEVELOPES PLANS FOR TRADE ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Astor's proposed company was to be active in three areas:

- trap and trade for beaver pelts;
- supply Russian traders in the north;
- establish American beaver trade with China

Astor desired to establish a trading capital at the mouth of the Columbia River

this would be **“...the emporium of an immense commerce, and a colony that would form the germ of a wide civilization, that would, in fact, carry the American population across the Rocky Mountains and spread it along the shores of the Pacific....”**

**“Posts would be established in the interior, and on all the tributary streams of the Columbia, to trade with the Indians; these posts would draw their supplies from the main establishment and bring to it the peltries they collected. Coasting craft would be built and fitted out, also at the mouth of the**

**Columbia, to trade at favorable seasons all along the northwest coast and return with the proceeds of their voyages to this place of deposit. Thus all the Indian trade, both of the interior and the coast, would converge on this point and thence derive its sustenance. A ship was to be sent annually from New York to this main establishment with reinforcements and supplies, and with merchandise suited to the trade. It would take on board the furs collected during the preceding year, carry them to Canton, invest the proceeds in the rich merchandise of China, and return thus freighted to New York.”<sup>1</sup>**

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR DEVELOPS A BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT

There was nothing original about Astor’s scheme -- he borrowed business plans from Hudson’s Bay Company, North West Company and New England traders he merely combined and enlarged their procedures

North West Company stretched across Canada to the Pacific Ocean

Astor proposed a merger with the Canadian company

but he was forced to tip his hand and informed his competitors of his intentions in the Pacific

North West Company took immediate steps to invade the Pacific Northwest

Astor retaliated by abducting North West Company experienced men

with promises of partnerships and big profits

Astor assumed all financial risks for five years

he was able to risk \$500,000, but Astor retained full control of the company

#### ST. LOUIS MISSOURI FUR COMPANY MEN REACH THE THREE FORKS OF THE MISSOURI

Manuel Lisa sent an expedition to trap and trade in the upper Missouri River region

Chief Factor Pierre Menard and Andrew Henry with sixty trappers from Fort Mandan

arrived at Fort Raymond at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Bighorn Rivers

(near today’s Three Forks, Montana) -- February 1810

St. Louis Missouri Fur Company Chief Factor Pierre Menard divided his forces

perhaps thirty-two people and Chief Factor Pierre Menard remained at Fort Raymond

one party of eighteen men led by John Colter went up the Jefferson River

another party led by Andrew Henry traveled down the Missouri River

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR CREATES THE PACIFIC FUR COMPANY

To carry out his scheme to develop trade along the Pacific coast Astor drew up a tentative agreement for a subsidiary of his American Fur Company

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<sup>1</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 58-59.

to be known as the “Pacific Fur Company” -- March 6, 1810

(Astor built a fortune and an empire that is still in existence today)

His great project was to be a two-pronged movement to the Pacific Northwest:

- one by sea aboard the ship,
- the other an expedition overland

profits, if any, were to be prorated among the share-holding partners

one hundred shares of stock were to be distributed:

- Astor retained fifty shares himself;
- thirty-five shares, in five share blocks, were to be divided among his partners;
- fifteen shares were left undistributed -- these were held aside for future use

Astor assumed all financial risks for five years

he was able to risk \$500,000, but Astor retained full control of the company

## JOHN JACOB ASTOR ALTERS THE TRADING SYSTEM

Astor owned a fleet of trading ships

unlike the British Hudson’s Bay Company and Canadian North West Company

Astor had free access to the China Market

Astor planned to send a ship from New York City every (autumn)

loaded with trade goods and supplies for all of his trading posts west of the Rocky Mountains

they would arrive in the Pacific Northwest about (February or March) to be loaded with furs

ships from Northwest Coast would load sea otter pelts worth up to \$100 each at Canton

they would cruise next to Russian-America (Alaska) as far as New Archangel (Sitka)

to supply the Russians food stuffs and manufactured supplies in exchange for their furs

Russians traded with the Indians from the Alaskan coast, interior and islands

they had very poor facilities both for marketing their product and obtaining supplies

they were happy for the opportunity to make an arrangement with Astor

perhaps Astor’s ships would top off their cargo with valuable sandalwood in (Hawaii)

John Jacob Astor expected to make a three-way profit:

- first by trading American goods supplied to Russians and Indians in Russian-America (Alaska);
- second by selling pelts which he delivered to Chinese merchants in Canton, China  
where they would purchase Chinese tea, silk, porcelain and spices for sale in New York City
- third by selling these Chinese goods to Americans in the United States

Astor’s ship would then reload with trinkets, knives, pans, blankets and rum

to be taken around Cape Horn to the Northwest Coast where the trade goods

were then exchanged with the Pacific Northwest Indians for furs

## JOHN JACOB ASTOR SELECTS THREE PACIFIC FUR COMPANY PARTNERS

John Jacob Astor selected the three original Pacific Fur Company partners:

- Chief Factor Duncan McDougall received five shares

of Pacific Fur Company stock -- March 6, 1810

he also held Astor's proxy vote for all decision to be made in Astor's absence

little is known about him before he joined with Astor

although it seems he worked for the North West Company with little success as a trader

McDougall was described by author Washington Irving as **“an active, irritable, fuming, vainglorious little man, and elevated in his own opinion, by being the proxy for Mr. Astor”**<sup>2</sup>

- Donald McKenzie received five shares of Pacific Fur Company stock

McKenzie was appointed as John Jacob Astor's agent

he was over three hundred pounds and was called “Fats” by those who knew him

he was also known as “Perpetual Motion” because of his tireless energy

he was educated for the ministry but as a relative of Sir Alexander Mackenzie

he went to work for the North West Company

he had ten years of experience in the north woods

he was able to manage men regardless of color or race

he was a fearless skilled woodsman both hardy and experienced

who demonstrated both dash and decision and he was an excellent marksman

however, he was perpetually discontent with his position in the North West Company

- Alexander McKay received five shares

McKay was a retired North West Company partner and a successful trader

he had accompanied Alexander Mackenzie on both of his remarkable expeditions

from Fort Chipewyan to the Arctic Ocean and back ([789]

and from Fort Chipewyan to the Pacific coast and back [1793]

McKay also had been Astor's employee in the Wisconsin trade region

he was assigned by Astor to be in charge of trading activities along the Pacific coast

McKay's thirteen-year-old son Thomas accompanied the partners to the West

## MANUEL LISA IN ST. LOUIS ORGANIZES ANOTHER TRAPPING AND TRADING EXPEDITION

Manuel Lisa organized another St. Louis Missouri Fur Company expedition

to go among the Arikara Indians

Lisa began collecting trade goods, supplies and trappers for the adventure

Once again Manuel Lisa set out from St. Louis to travel up the Missouri River

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<sup>2</sup> Washington Irving, *Astoria*. P. 36.

headed for his Fort Mandan located in the Mandan Villages (today's South Dakota) -- March 1810

#### MANUEL LISA HIRES PIERRE DORION FOR FUTURE SERVICE

Manuel Lisa arrived at his Fort Mandan in the Mandan Villages on the Missouri River while there he decided to obtain the services of a Sioux Metis, Pierre Dorion, for a future fur trapping trip

Lisa took advantage of Pierre Dorion's weakness for liquor

Pierre, being unsophisticated, proceeded to empty a free jug of whiskey

as the liquor took hold, Pierre invited all those present to join his expedition at his expense

several hours later Lisa informed Pierre he owed a \$10 bar bill equal to a month's pay

when Pierre later informed his wife Marie of their situation she knew he had been "jobbed"

this was not an uncommon practice on the frontier

#### PIERRE DORION'S WIFE WAS A VERY REMARKABLE WOMAN

Pierre Dorion himself was a Sioux and French-Canadian metis (mixed-blood)

who worked out of St. Louis as a guide and interpreter

Dorion's wife was an Iowa Indian who was known as Marie Aioe Dorion

(later she was referred to as "Madame Dorion")

Marie Dorion was born (about 1786 approximately two years before Sacajawea)

she spent her early days with her Iowa tribe in the Red River country of Arkansas

before she married Pierre Dorion [1804]

they had two sons, Baptiste [born in 1806] and Paul [born in 1808]

Marie Dorion was known as an extraordinary understanding, patient and devout woman

eventually the Dorions moved to a Mandan Village (in today's South Dakota)

where their lives crossed the path of Manuel Lisa

Pierre was a violent, quick-tempered man who during a drunken brawl almost scalped his father

he also was neither a kind nor thoughtful husband

Guides and interpreters were not in steady demand in St. Louis

thus Pierre Dorion was only sporadically employed

#### ANDREW HENRY BUILDS HENRY'S FORT FOR THE MISSOURI FUR COMPANY

Andrew Henry led a party of St. Louis Missouri Fur Company trappers

down the Missouri River from the company headquarters of Fort Raymond

They began building Henry's Fort at the Three Forks of the Missouri River

on a tongue of land at the confluence of the Jefferson and Madison rivers -- April 3, 1810

(near-present day Three Forks, Montana)

Henry, however, failed to seek permission from the Blackfoot Indians  
who, at any rate, did not permit trapping on their land

#### JOHN COLTER LEADS EIGHTEEN ST. LOUIS MISSOURI FUR COMPANY TRAPPERS

In a second St. Louis Missouri Fur Company expedition

John Colter led eighteen men from Fort Raymond

they had traveled only ten miles up the Jefferson River when Blackfoot Indians attacked them  
when the fighting was over two men had been killed and mutilated  
three others were missing

also missing were all of the party's traps, ammunition and horses -- April 12, 1810

John Colter and his thirteen remaining trappers returned to Fort Raymond

to report to Chief Factor Pierre Menard

once before Colter had promised his maker he would leave the wilds

if he survived his race for life with the Blackfoot Indians [1808]

hurling his hat to the ground he emphatically declared **“now if God will only forgive me  
this time and let me off I will leave the country day after to-morrow -- and be damned if I ever come  
into it again.”**<sup>3</sup>

#### JOHN COLTER KEEPS HIS VOW

John Colter lived up to his vow to God never to return to the Rocky Mountains

he had an opportunity to meet with Captain William Clark of Lewis and Clark fame

Colter told Clark all he knew about the Yellowstone River and Bighorn River country

Colter settled into the quiet life of a farmer on the Missouri frontier

he built a cabin, cleared a plot of land, married a woman remembered only as Sally  
together they raised a son

Colter passed his few remaining years as a neighbor of Daniel Boone

(John Colter died of jaundice [in 1813] at the age of thirty-nine)

#### PEIRRE MENARD LEADS HIS MEN OUT OF FORT RAYMOND

When John Colter reported the Blackfoot attack on his trapping party to Chief Factor Pierre Menard

Menard led St. Louis Missouri Fur Company thirty men out of Fort Raymond

to travel to the site of the of the attack

each of the men was provided three traps to use en route with instructions

they were not to separate and half were remain in camp while the other trapped

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<sup>3</sup> Robert M. Utley, *A Life Wild and Perilous*, P. 19.

## PEIRRE MENARD'S MEN COME UNDER ATTACK BY THE BLACKFOOT INDIANS

Conditions were very discouraging for the members of Manuel Lisa's St. Louis Missouri Fur Company  
Blackfoot Indians who were hostile to their presence were a constant threat and a frequent enemy  
St. Louis Missouri Fur Company Chief Factor Pierre Menard's men were again attacked  
by Blackfoot warriors -- April 23, 1810

## NOR'WESTER DAVID THOMPSON INVESTIGATES THE COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT

David Thompson had wintered at Saleesh House on the Clark Fork River -- [1809]-1810  
trading through the winter had been poor due to severe flooding  
David Thompson ordered Jacques "Jaco" Finlay to build a trading post on the Spokane River  
that would serve the Spokane and Colville Indians

(Jaco Finlay was a company veteran who had worked as clerk, interpreter and scout  
and led the first party of Nor'Westers across the Rocky Mountains)

North West Company geographer Thompson left Saleesh House where he had (wintered)  
he journeyed to Kullyspell House on the eastern shore of Lake Pend O'reille -- April 1810  
where his chief assistant, Finan McDonald, had spent the winter [1809]-1810

David Thompson and McDonald traveled together on the Pend d'Oreille River as far as Box Canyon  
there they separated

Thompson sent Finan McDonald to continue trapping and enhance Indian relations in the area  
McDonald made a series of excursions in the vicinity of Kullyspell House  
and Saleesh House -- spring of 1810

Thompson journeyed up the Clark Fork River and returned to Saleesh House  
to prepare for the annual expedition east to deliver their catch  
to North West Company's depot at Fort Augustus at mouth of White Earth Creek  
to be transshipped to Rainy Lake House

(North West Company's central depot near present International Falls, Minnesota)

## AMERICAN BRIG *LYDIA* RANSOMS CAPTIVES HELD BY MAKAH INDIANS

Brig *Lydia* returned to the Pacific coast this time under Captain James Brown  
she anchored off the coast of the Olympic Peninsula between Cape Flattery and Neah Bay  
near a Makah Indian camp -- May 6, 1810

Russian supercargo of the *Saint Nicholas* Timofei Tarakanov and his Indian master  
went on board the *Lydia* and Tarakanov explained he and twelve others had been held captive  
since their ship had wrecked the mouth of the Quileute River [1808]

Captain Brown set about ransoming all of the European prisoners from the Makah Indians

among these was an Englishman, John Williams, who was ransomed  
for five measures of cloth, a locksmith's saw, two steel knives, a looking glass,  
five packages of powder and five bags of shot  
Indians accepted the same ransom for each of the Russian captives  
except for two Russians for whom a higher ransom was demanded  
when Captain Brown refused the Indians took them away  
Captain Brown then seized a Makah chief who had come aboard and held him hostage  
until the remaining Russian captives were released  
both were delivered to the ship within a few days  
thirteen captives had been successfully ransomed -- seven other slaves had died in captivity  
one Russian named Philip Kotilnikof had been traded away so far that he could not be found  
*Lydia* sailed from Neah Bay -- May 10, 1811  
and arrived at New Archangel (Sitka), Russian-America (Alaska) [June 8, 1811]  
where the Russian sailors were returned

#### DAVID THOMPSON MAKES HIS ANNUAL TREK DELIVERING FURS TO THE EAST

It was time to send what furs he had secured and those provided by Finan McDonald  
to the North West Company's depot at Fort Augustus at mouth of White Earth Creek  
to be transshipped to Rainy Lake House  
(North West Company's central depot near present International Falls, Minnesota)  
although any of his men could have carried out the task of traveling to Fort Augustus  
Thompson decided to go himself as Fort Augustus was used as a safe haven  
for his wife Charlotte and their children  
it was an arduous trip thousands of miles long by canoe and horse  
over country Thompson knew all too well  
meanwhile, despite his new orders, the Columbia River would have to remain unexplored  
Thompson left Saleesh House -- May 10, 1810  
carrying his and Finan McDonald's winter's catch of forty packs of furs  
On his journey, Thompson arrived at Columbia Lake  
at the portage between Columbia Lake and the Kootenai River  
he just missed a band of Piegans Indians who arrived after he had passed through the portage  
Piegans were mightily provoked by Thompson's employees Finan McDonald  
and Michel Bordeaux dealing rifles to their enemy the Kootenais

#### FINAN McDONALD DELIVERS MORE GUNS TO THE INDIANS

Finan McDonald arrived at Saleesh House after David Thompson had departed for Fort Augustus

while at Saleesh House McDonald armed the local Flathead natives  
he instructed them in the use of firearms so they could provide protection  
to North West Company personnel and property

#### SPOKANE HOUSE IS BUILT BY NORTH WEST COMPANY

Jacques “Jaco” Finlay left Saleesh House and followed a trail southwest from Lake Pend Oreille  
until he arrived at a busy salmon-fishing site on the Spokane River  
where the Little Spokane meets the Spokane  
he chose the site where a pleasant yellow pine flat was formed by the “V” where the rivers met

Finlay had several reasons for choosing this site:

- it was the headquarters of the middle branch of the Spokane tribe;
- it was a prime fishing spot for salmon;
- the large flat was suitable for building, farming, and grazing;
- there was a good supply of both timber and game animals nearby;
- most of all, however, the Little Spokane was a great beaver stream

“Lower settlement” (later called Spokane House) was actually a number of buildings  
including a store for trading, an office and home for the chief trader, dormitories for the other men,  
carpenter and blacksmith shops and a well for fresh water  
it may be that the post was enclosed by a stockade

Spokane House, as it came to be known, was located nine miles (from the center of today’s Spokane)  
its name was derived from an Old Chief: “Illim-Spokanee” or “Son of the Sun”  
this was the first trading post in (today’s Washington)  
and the fifth North West Company post in the Columbia Department

Spokane House had a garden that provided fresh produce  
luxuries imported from eastern Canada included cured beef, salt pork, flour, rice, biscuits, tea,  
sugar and rum

this was a very desirable destination for the traders working in the rugged surrounding country<sup>4</sup>  
Jaco Finlay was soon joined by fellow Nor’Wester Finan McDonald

#### PEIRRE MENARD’S ST. LOUIS MISSOURI FUR COMPANY MEN HAD A DIFFICULT TIME

Menard’s party of thirty trappers’ lack of efficiency as they trapped the Jefferson River  
eventually forced the party to divide into groups of four  
two groups to tend camp and two groups to work the traps  
fortunately, during this time they were not harassed by Indians

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<sup>4</sup> Kit Oldham, *HistoryLink.org* Essay 5099, *January 23, 2003*.

Gathering more pelts and observing no signs of Indians all of the trappers grew bolder

George Drouillard began to venture out alone -- others protested, but he refused to listen

he met with success on two of his beaver hunts

on the third morning he set out again along the Jefferson River

followed by two friendly Shoshone deer hunters

main party St. Louis Missouri Fur Company trappers later took to the same trail -- May 1810

soon they overtook the two Shoshone hunters, **“Pierced with arrows, lances and bullets and lying near each other.”**<sup>5</sup>

some 150 yards beyond they found Drouillard and his horse

George Drouillard was **“mangled in a horrible manner; his head was cut off, his entrails torn out and his body hacked to pieces.”**<sup>6</sup>

Chief Factor Pierre Menard and his remaining St. Louis Missouri Fur Company trappers

returned to the Fort Raymond company headquarters on the Big Horn River

in Yellowstone Country to wait until the Indians became less aggressive -- summer 1810

#### AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS BEGINS OPERATIONS

Protestant America experienced a religious revival as expectations regarding return of Jesus

gripped America because of the beginning of a new century

congregations sent ministers out to conduct revival meetings among Christians

these circuit riders came from among the common people

which helped them establish rapport with the frontier families they hoped to convert

the movement became known as the “Second Great Awakening” [1790-1840]

(the First Great Awakening had taken place [1731-1765])

American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (sometimes the “American Board”)

was organized by the Congregational Church which maintained its headquarters in Boston -- 1810

this was an effort to provide religious training to Native Americans

this was the first organized missionary society in the United States

however, lack of organization and money kept the mission field near at hand

#### CAPTAIN WILLIAM CLARK COMPLETES HIS MAP OF THE WEST

After the death of Meriwether Lewis [October 11, 1809] the task of generating a map of the West

fell to William Clark who began drawing -- 1810

Clark incorporated what he had learned from George Drouillard [in 1808]

and what John Colter had told him [1810] and completed his project that same year

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<sup>5</sup> Robert M. Utley, *A Life Wild and Perilous*, P. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Robert M. Utley, *A Life Wild and Perilous*, P. 19.

(Clark's map was published [1814])

#### WINSHIP BROTHERS SELECT A LOCATION FOR THEIR COLONY

Boston-based Homer & Winship had dispatched the *Albatross* under Captain Nathan Winship with instructions to build and provision a fort and trading post after spending the (winter) in the Hawaiian Islands

*Albatross* entered the Columbia River -- May 26, 1810

Captain Winship conducted a careful examination of the southern (Oregon) river bank he decided on a strip of valley land covered with a beautiful grove of Oak trees for his colony he named the place thirty miles up the Columbia "Oak Point"

(this name was later transferred to the north bank -- present-day Oak Point, Washington)

Captain Winship tied the *Albatross* to the south bank -- June 4, 1810

Winship paid the Indians for their land and treated them justly

Winship brothers planned to build a substantial blockhouse to be defended by a single cannon they immediately began construction -- felling trees and raising a large house they also cleared a spot for a garden and sowed grain

Chinook and Chehalis Indians arrived, fired muskets into the settlement and demanded the American leave

Captain Winship saw the wisdom of this suggestion and abandoned America's first effort at a colony

#### PACIFIC FUR COMPANY BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS ARE COMPLETED

Articles of Agreement for John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company to operate along the Pacific coast was signed by Astor and his three partners

Duncan McDougall, Alexander McKay and huge Donald "Fats" McKenzie -- June 23, 1810

Astor's Pacific Fur Company, North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company were all invading the same area

but neither North West Company nor Hudson's Bay Company had no ships

they were excluded from the China Trade by the monopoly of the East India Company

John Jacob Astor had tipped his hand to his competitors regarding his plans for exploiting the West he had informed his competitors of his intentions in the Pacific Northwest

North West Company took immediate steps to invade the Columbia Department itself

Astor retaliated by recruiting experienced North West Company men into his company with promises of partnerships and big profits

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR BRINGS IN MORE PARTNERS TO THE PACIFIC FUR COMPANY

Astor's greatest concern regarding the success of his Pacific Fur Company was the threat

of competition from the rival North West Company also trapping and trading in the Far West  
To his three original partners, Duncan McDougall, Alexander McKay and Donald McKenzie,  
Astor added three more partners who received five shares each in the Pacific Fur Company:

- American Wilson Price Hunt of Trenton, New Jersey was businessman  
who had supplied trading goods to traders working out of St. Louis  
where the chief branch of his business was located  
Hunt was appointed as Astor's co-Agent along with Donald McKenzie  
although he possessed no practical experience in the fur trade  
Hunt brought with him experience, knowledge and scrupulous honesty in business dealings  
he was intelligent, loyal, brave, cheerful, resolute, mild-mannered gentleman and humane  
but he was indecisive by nature -- a trait that would prove detrimental and dangerous  
his ignorance of wilderness life nearly wrecked the expedition  
Hunt traveled to Washington, D.C where he got enthusiastic support for Astor's company  
from President Thomas Jefferson and the president's Cabinet;
- Canadian Ramsay Crooks was formerly in partnership with Robert McClellan out of St. Louis  
together they ran a trading operation above the Arikara villages  
but this venture proved to be unsuccessful  
Crooks and McClellan ended their venture in the upper Missouri River region  
and decided to try their luck in the Council Bluffs region  
this was even less successful  
twenty-three year old Ramsay Crooks, a man of great energy,  
was persuaded to join the Pacific Fur Company by Wilson Price Hunt;
- David Stuart was a former North West Company employee  
David Stuart retained three of his shares in the company and released two shares  
to his twenty-six year old nephew Robert Stuart  
who accompanied the Astorians to the Pacific coast as a partner  
he was a spirited and enterprising man and a respected leader

John Jacob Astor also added two additional partners who received two-and-half shares each:

- Robert McClellan (sometimes McLellan) had been Ramsay Crooks former partner  
in the Missouri fur trade out of St. Louis;
- Joseph Miller had been an employee of John Jacob Astor in the American Fur Company  
he was well educated and well informed  
he had been an officer in the United States Army but had resigned in disgust  
after being refused a furlough -- he then took to trapping beaver and trading  
Miller had an excellent reputation as a trader on the Missouri River

## JOHN JACOB ASTOR SENDS TWO PACIFIC FUR COMPANY EXPEDITIONS TO THE PACIFIC

In an effort to maximize his profits and minimize financial risks

John Jacob Astor sent two expeditions to the Columbia River

one expedition was to travel aboard the ship *Tonquin* -- this became known as the Sea Party

this venture was to build and operate a trading post (Fort Astoria)

and supply Russian trappers in Russian-America in exchange for furs

second expedition was to travel across the continent

they were to follow the approximate route of Lewis and Clark to the Pacific Coast

and man (Fort Astoria) while the *Tonquin* returned to Boston with a fortune in furs

this became known as the Overland Expedition

## ASTOR'S PARTNERS ARE ASSIGNED TO AN EXPEDITION

Five Pacific Fur Company partners were assigned by John Jacob Astor to the Land Expedition

two of the partners served as co-commanders much like Lewis and Clark had done

Donald McKenzie, Astor's principal associate, and Wilson Price Hunt

three additional partners would accompany the Overland Expedition

Ramsay Crooks, Robert McClellan and Joseph Miller

these partners were to be accompanied by several Pacific Fur Company employees

Astor's Sea Party saw four Pacific Fur Company partners participate

Chief Factor Duncan McDougall was placed overall command of the Sea Expedition

and the post that would be constructed on the Columbia River

three other partners accompanied the Sea Party

Alexander McKay was placed in charge of trade along the Pacific coast

he also served as supercargo on board the trading ship

David Stuart and his nephew Robert Stuart were assigned to the Sea Party

## DAVID THOMPSON AGAIN CARRIES OUT A FORTUNE IN FURS

After departing from Saleesh House (in today's Montana [May 1810])

David Thompson continued his annual trek east

he once more crossed over Howse Pass to reach the North West Company's Fort Augustus depot

at mouth of White Earth Creek (Edmonton, Alberta) -- July 24, 1810

he took time to visit with his wife Charlotte and their children at Boggy Hall

which was located near Fort Augustus

Thompson soon continued his journey to deliver his annual catch of pelts

to North West Company headquarters at Rainy Lake House

## JOHN JACOB ASTOR'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION ARRIVES IN MONTREAL, CANADA

Traveling from New York City Astor's Pacific Fur Company Overland Expedition

led by co-agents Donald McKenzie and businessman Wilson Price Hunt

accompanied by Joseph Miller and Robert McClellan arrived at Montreal, Canada -- July 1810

Donald McKenzie used his expertise to hire a brigade of French-Canadian voyageurs in Montreal

but McKenzie and Hunt argued, often rancorously, about hiring more French-Canadians

McKenzie insisted more voyageurs would be valuable

Hunt found the competition for voyageurs drove their wages very high

North West Company successfully impeded these efforts to recruit river men

John Jacob Astor's co-agent Wilson Price Hunt decided to wait to hire American boatmen

in frontier village of Michilimackinac, Michigan

Wilson Price Hunt when given a choice always made the wrong decision

## ST. LOUIS MISSOURI FUR COMPANY HAS LIMITED SUCCESS

Blackfoot Indians had made business along the upper Missouri River impossible

St. Louis Missouri Fur Company Chief Factor Pierre Menard

had suffered the loss of eight of Manuel Lisa's men killed and their traps and pelts stolen

Pierre Menard left Fort Raymond and the Jefferson River -- midsummer 1810

he took his men and the furs that had been accumulated and returned to St. Louis

Meanwhile, Andrew Henry stayed at Henry's Fort at the Three Forks of the Missouri River (Montana)

where he continued to lead a party of St. Louis Missouri Fur Company of trappers

## ANDREW HENRY LEADS HIS PARTY OF TRAPPERS OVER THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

After a yet another fierce battle with the Blackfoot Indians,

Andrew Henry abandoned Henry's Fort at the Three Forks of the Missouri River (Montana)

he and his men journeyed up the Madison River -- July 1810

Henry's party ran into difficulty when Crow Indians stole thirty of their horses

this was a reminder of the dangers they faced in the wilderness

After trekking across the Upper Missouri River Andrew Henry crossed the Rocky Mountains

over a low pass (today's Reynolds' Pass)

They reached Henry's Fork of the Snake River

this river was traced to its source -- a broad lake they named Henry's Lake

here Andrew Henry and his men threw up a log hut as a base camp

they named the post Fort Henry<sup>7</sup> on the Snake River -- July 1810

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<sup>7</sup> Fort Henry at the head of Henry's Fork of the Snake River on Henry's Lake (Idaho) is not to be confused with the abandoned Henry's Fort at the Three Forks of the Missouri River (Montana)

(located about five miles south today's St. Anthony, Idaho)

this was the first American post west of the Continental Divide of the Rockies

Fort Henry on Henry's Fork of the Snake River was so named

after the first Henry's Fort at the Three Forks of the Missouri River had been abandoned

Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor

helped with the construction of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company post

Robinson was a sixty-six year old veteran who was scalped in the Kentucky wars [1782]

he wore a kerchief around his head to conceal his disfigurement

Andrew Henry's party of St. Louis Missouri Fur Company trappers

used Fort Henry on the Snake River (Idaho) as their base of operation west of the Rockies

#### PROBLEMS OF THE BEAVER TRADE WEST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Pacific Northwest and the central plains of Canada differed in terrain from the Great Lakes region

travel in Great Lakes region and on the central plains was relatively easy

using a network of comparatively flat rivers and lakes and level terrain

Pacific Northwest was mountainous and rivers tumbled through numerous waterfalls and rapids

there were tremendously deep coulees and canyons which impeded travel

Natural environment west of the Rocky Mountains produced fewer beaver

and those were of lesser quality than those in the mid-West

Indians' relationship to the traders also differed in the West

in the harsh environment of the mid-West the Indians became willing partners in the fur trade

natives were eager to acquire European goods which made life easier

Pacific Northwest Indians were living in a far more generous environment

thus they were not dependent on European trade goods for survival

this independence placed the Indians in a strategic position to deal with the beaver traders

they did not need to trap animals for the whites but whites needed the Indians' assistance

whites needed the Indians to provide them horses

in areas without bison, the horse was a food supply

where water transportation was difficult the horse was required to replace the canoe

#### DAVID THOMPSON COMPLETES HIS JOURNEY TO THE EAST

After leaving his wife Charlotte and their children at Boggy Hall near Fort Augustus

David Thompson reached North West Company depot at Rainy Lake House -- July 22, 1810

Thompson learned of American John Jacob Astor's intention to dispatch two expeditions

to the mouth of the Columbia River which included defecting Nor'Westers Duncan McDougall,

Alexander McKay, David Stuart and Donald McKenzie

who was busy recruiting voyageurs to cross over land along Lewis and Clark's trail  
To contend with this American effort David Thompson was ordered by North West Company  
to build a chain of trading posts to conduct interior trade  
and to protect the British claim to the Columbia Department  
Thompson also was to trace the Columbia River from source to mouth  
and investigate the feasibility of using the river as a highway  
to transport goods, supplies and pelts to and from the Pacific coast

#### NOR'WESTER DAVID THOMPSON RETURNS TO THE WILDERNESS

Trapper, explorer and geographer David Thompson was placed in charge of the largest contingent  
he had ever led -- twenty-six men, an unknown number of women and twenty-four horses  
each loaded with between 180 and 240 pounds of trade goods, provisions and personal baggage  
also with the annual supply brigade were ten dogs to pull sleds and, in an emergency, for food  
Columbia Brigade set out from North West Company headquarters at Rainy Lake House  
(located at today's International Falls, Minnesota) -- summer 1810  
to transport the annual supply of trade goods and provisions into the wilderness

#### FINAN McDONALD FIGHTS WITH THE FLATHEAD INDIANS AGAINST THE BLACKFEET

Nor'Wester Finan McDonald, David Thompson's chief assistant, accompanied the Flathead Indians  
on a buffalo hunting expedition to the East as far as the plains of the Missouri River  
While on the plains, Nor'Westers encountered a group of Blackfoot Indians -- -- summer 1810  
during the ensuing skirmish, the Nor'Westers fought alongside the Flathead Indians  
this support from the trappers infuriated the Blackfoot Indians

#### HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY LEADER WANTS A COLONY ALONG THE RED RIVER

Hudson's Bay Company held a charter giving ownership of all of the lands  
drained by the waters of that flowed into Hudson Bay  
major Hudson's Bay Company stockholder Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk,  
began to seriously consider securing land in the Canadian interior  
Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk sought a legal opinion  
regarding the validity of the Hudson's Bay Company charter  
and the legal right of the company to sell portions of their land -- 1810  
once the charter and its conditions were declared to be valid by his lawyers  
Lord Selkirk set out to gain control of the Hudson's Bay Company stock  
in order to acquire land he desired near the confluence of the Assiniboine and Red rivers  
(in today's Manitoba)

North West Company became alarmed when they learned of the plans they considered Selkirk's colonizing effort to be a scheme on the part of Hudson's Bay Company to destroy their trade by throwing an agricultural colony across their supply line that ran from Montreal and Fort William into the interior in addition to blocking the Nor'Westers' trade the colony would provide a base for supplies that could service Hudson's Bay Company -- especially in the Rocky Mountains North West Company asserted its own claims that they were the legitimate successors of the old French traders in the West who originally had been granted the charter and that Hudson's Bay Company's charter was an illegal royal grant that created a monopoly they also got legal opinions to the effect that Hudson's Bay Company's charter gave no territory or exclusive trade privileges so far away from Hudson Bay

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR'S PACIFIC FUR COMPANY'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION TAKES SHAPE

Astor's Overland Expedition led by Astor's partners Donald McKenzie and Wilson Price Hunt traveled from Montreal, Canada bound for the American frontier village of Michilimackinac (Michigan) located on an island at West end of Lake Huron here they were joined by another Astor partner, Ramsay Crooks

At Michilimackinac Hunt again experienced difficulty finding employees

as the French-Canadian habit of celebrating each good turn of events caused these canoemen to gather their friends and kinsmen about them, carouse with them, and sing and dance as long as seemed appropriate tomorrow or next week was soon enough to go to work

(Astorian Clerk Alexander Ross who traveled with the sea party later recorded a description of events in Michilimackinac: "**Hunt and M'Kenzie in vain sought recruits, at least such**

**as would suit their purpose; for in the morning they were found drinking, at noon drunk, in the evening dead drunk, and in the night seldom sober. ...Every nook and corner, in the whole island swarmed, at all hours of the day and night, with motly [sic] groups of uproarious tipplers and whiskey-hunters. ... [Michilimackinac] resembled a great bedlam, the frantic inmates running to and fro in wild forgetfulness.**"<sup>8</sup>)

no sooner was a voyageur engaged by Hunt and a sum paid to him in advance than some tavern-keeper or tradesman would appear with a bill against him Hunt must either pay the bill or lose his employee and the money advanced to hold him to his bargain

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<sup>8</sup> Gordon Speck, *Northwest Exploration*, P. 300.

Even with these problems Wilson Price Hunt under the guidance of Donald McKenzie successfully recruited sixty men including Americans, Scotsmen and French-Canadians forty were French-Canadian voyageurs whose duties included rowing, transporting, cooking, and general drudgery however, Wilson Price Hunt and Donald McKenzie found few qualified boatmen among the American hangers-on in Michilimackinac who were capable and willing to take the proposed journey

Finally, seventy-five trail-hardened recruits were finally gathered together five company clerks:

Ross Cox, J. Cook Halsey, John Reid (later spelled Reed), Alfred Seton and William Wallace five hunters:

Jean Baptiste Dubreuil was a French-Canadian boatman who was also called a hunter, Andre Dufresne, Jean Baptiste Gardipie, Jacque Hartera and freeman hunter, and Joseph Gervais a hunter who later became a freeman (without company affiliation)

six skilled workers;

carpenter Louis La Bonte, sawyer Francois Martial, interpreter Ovid Montigny, boatman and blacksmith Francis William Hodgkins (or Hodgens), blacksmith Andre La Chapelle and guide Joseph St. Amant

forty-three trappers:

George Bell, Charles Boucher, Bazile Brousseau, Pierre Brugiere, Michel Carriere, Martin H. Cass, Antoine Clappine, Joseph Delaunay, Pierre Delaunay, Jean Baptiste Delorme, Pierre Detaye, Louis Dinnelle, Francois Duchoquette, Prisque Felix, Francois Fripagnier, Charles Jacquette, Joseph Jerve, Jean Baptiste La Bonte, Louis La Bonte, Louis La Liberte, Francois Landrie, Francois Landry, Joseph Landry, Michel Lanson, Louis La Valle, Francois Michael Laframboise, Francois Le Clerc, Alexis Le Compte, Guillaume Le Roux, Charles Lucier, Etienne Lucier, Francois Martial, William Matthews, Jean Baptiste Ouvre, Antoine Papin, Jean Baptiste Pillon, Antoine Plante, Jean Baptiste Prevost (or Proveau), Francois Robert, Edward Robinson, Joseph Samant, Louis St. Michel and Jean Baptiste Turcotte

To complete their crew, Hunt and Donald McKenzie hired eight American boatmen

William Cannon (or Canning), Alexander Carson, George Cone, Joseph Cote (sometimes Cotte), Benjamin Jones, Joseph Landry, Michel Lanson and Andrew Valle

## TROUBLE BEGINS QUICKLY FOR ASTOR'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION

Astor's partners co-commander Donald McKenzie and Astor's Agent Wilson Price Hunt were ready for the journey from Michilimackinac (Michigan) across Lake Michigan,

across Wisconsin and down the Mississippi River to St. Louis  
Wilson Price Hunt's American recruits were a constant source of trouble  
beginning in Michilimackinac and continuing en route to St. Louis  
some Americans deserted as soon as they received an advance on their wages  
other Americans tried to stir up trouble among themselves and with the French-Canadians  
who were already angry because American employees received sugar  
and were better fed than the French-Canadians

#### ASTOR'S PACIFIC FUR COMPANY OVERLAND LAND EXPEDITION ARRIVES IN ST. LOUIS

Astor's expedition for cross the North American continent arrived in St. Louis  
from Michilimackinac, Michigan -- September 3, 1810  
John Jacob Astor had sent orders that Wilson Price Hunt was to serve as his sole agent  
Astor had been concerned about the loyalty of former North West Company employees  
who had joined the Pacific Fur Company  
this was an effort to assure that an American would be in command of the enterprise  
Donald "Fats" McKenzie was demoted from co-captain as Hunt was given complete authority  
experienced, energetic and ambitious Donald McKenzie had been attracted  
by John Jacob Astor's promises of wealth and advancement  
he had expected to be at least a co-leader of the Pacific Fur Company's Overland Expedition  
this was a bitter moment for the former Nor'Wester  
who possessed knowledge of the wilderness and of the fur trade  
in addition to possessing remarkable leadership qualities  
Donald McKenzie did not forget the insult  
Wilson Price Hunt was instructed by Astor to follow the Lewis and Clark Trail

#### ASTORIANS ARE NOT POPULAR IN ST. LOUIS

In St. Louis Wilson Price Hunt together with Astor's other partners  
Donald McKenzie, Ramsay Crooks, Robert McClellan and Joseph Miller  
proceeded to attempt to engage hunters and additional river boatmen  
Missouri Fur Company's Manuel Lisa occupied himself putting obstacles in Hunt's path  
as he developed a hatred of John Jacob Astor  
American trappers in St. Louis also were not happy with John Jacob Astor  
if he merged his Mississippi and mountain holdings into one huge company  
this combine would threaten all other fur companies and drive out independent trappers

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR HAS THE SHIP *TONQUIN* PREPARED TO SAIL TO THE PACIFIC COAST

In conducting preparations for the Sea Party, John Jacob Astor again chose the wrong leader as he had done with Wilson Price Hunt and the Land Expedition

Astor selected the former the Nor'Wester Duncan McDougall to command the endeavor  
this angry, bad-tempered, arrogant little man was ill-suited to the task

Astor's partner Alexander McKay proved to be a more fortunate choice for leadership  
he served as supercargo (in charge of the *Tonquin's* cargo) and chief trader on the Pacific coast  
McKay was a tall, muscular man with a thin face, black hair, whiskers,  
and restless black eyes set beneath projecting eyebrows  
despite the fact he walked with a limp he displayed great energy and daring  
he was known as one of the best shots in the country  
and he was cool and resolute when dealing with the Indians

*Tonquin* carried and a compliment of twenty-two men:

- seventeen crewmen: Captain Jonathan Thorn, First Mate Ebenezer Fox, Second Mate John Mumford, Boatswain John Anderson, carpenter John Weeks, armorer Stephen Weeks, sailmaker John Coles, sailor-cook John Martin; sailors Edward Aymens, Adam Ficher, Robert Hill, Joseph Johnson, Charles Robert, Peter Vershel, John White and cabin boy Guillaume Perrault
- five skilled workers: rigger and calker Job Aikin (Aitken), ship's carpenter Johann Koasfer, boatbuilder John Little and coopers (barrel makes) George Bell and William Wilson

*Tonquin* carried thirty-three passengers:

- four of the partners -- all former North West Company employees  
Chief Factor Duncan McDougall, supercargo Alexander McKay, David Stuart  
and his nephew Robert Stuart
- eleven clerks three of whom were Americans: Russell Farnham, James Lewis  
and William W. Matthews  
remaining eight clerks were French-Canadians:  
Gabriel Franchere who kept a journal of events, Donald McGillis, Donald McClennan,  
Thomas McKay (thirteen-year old son of partner Alexander McKay), Ovide Montigny,  
Francis Benjamin Pillette, Alexander Ross and William Wallace  
Alexander Ross, a twenty-one year old Scottish schoolteacher, had migrated to Canada,  
he was articulate and possessed culture, wit and wisdom
- thirteen voyageurs: Antioine Belleau, Jean Baptise Belleau, Louis Brule, Paul D. Jeremie,  
Michel Lafamboise, Jacques Lafantaisie, Michel La Ferte, Basil Lapensee, Ignace Lapensee,  
Oliver Lapensee, Joseph La Pierre, Giles Le Clerc, Joseph Nadeau and Benjamine Rousselle
- five craftsmen were also carried on board: blacksmiths Augustin Rousselle and Michel Sanson,  
tailors Egbert Vanderhuff and Richard Milligan and bookbinder Moses Flanagan

## ASTOR'S SEA EXPEDITION WITH THE *TONQUIN* SAILS FROM NEW YORK

John Jacob Astor ordered his ship *Tonquin* to be outfitted to convey trade goods and equipment for founding and defending the proposed capital of an empire for his Pacific Fur Company

Astor's ship was of 290-tons with a crew of twenty-three  
she carried ten cannons although there were portholes for twenty  
to make a formidable appearance "sham" guns were mounted in the extra portholes  
this ploy work on at least one occasion

*Tonquin* sailed from New York City -- September 8, 1810

John Jacob Astor's partners felt they owned the ship  
they did not accept the concept of the captain's word being law on the high seas

U.S. Navy Department assigned the USS *Constitution* to protect the *Tonquin*  
as it cleared the Atlantic coast lest her sailors be impressed (kidnapped) into the British Navy  
this suggested that while the American government did not take any part in Astor's venture  
its attitude was sympathetic to the venture

## CAPTAIN JONATHAN THORN MASTER OF THE *TONQUIN*

Thorn was an autocratic veteran officer of United States naval operations against the Barbary pirates when President Thomas Jefferson reused to pay high tribute  
to the Barbary States of Tripoli, Algiers and Tunis to protect American shipping [1801-1805]  
he was an able seaman placed on leave from the U.S. Navy to John Jacob Astor  
he expected to exercise the same tight discipline and control as on a military a man-of-war  
time after time he put his chief assistants in irons for opposing his judgment

Unfortunately, Captain Thorn possessed an unstable and explosive temperament  
he was touchy, tactless, domineering, overbearing, obstinate and cruel  
an unpredictable man, he was ill-tempered and possessed a persecution complex  
explosive, he flew into rages at the slightest provocation threatening death to anyone  
stern and irascible, meanness and brutality permeated his character  
he was a believer in iron discipline and was easily moved to wrath  
by the smallest infringement of the hide-bound rules and proprieties of his personal code  
faithful, loyal, but without the least understanding of human nature  
he was too lacking in imagination to have any sympathy or good feelings  
toward persons who were different from himself

## CONFLICT ERRUPTS IMMEDIATELY BETWEEN CAPTAIN THORN AND ASTOR'S PARTNERS

Astor's Partners felt they owned the *Tonquin* in concert with John Jacob Astor

they did not accept the concept of the captain's word being law on the high seas  
Captain Jonathan Thorn took one look at the Astorians and their French-Canadian voyageurs  
and despised them on sight as a shabby, boisterous, swaggering set of braggarts  
Many, partners and ship's officers alike held exaggerated opinions of their own authority  
together they were completely incapable of achieving even the minutest level of cooperation  
there was turmoil every day -- continuous feuds ignited or were rekindled

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND THE COLUMBIA BRIGADE REACHES FORT AUGUSTUS

North West Company's Columbia Brigade's twenty-six employees and a pack train  
arrived at Fort Augustus at mouth of White Earth Creek -- mid-September 1810

(near present-day Edmonton, Alberta)

at Fort Augustus the trade goods and supplies were transferred into four canoes  
Four heavily laden supply canoes of the North West Company's Columbia Brigade  
set out from Fort Augustus and pushed up the North Saskatchewan River  
bound for Rocky Mountain House with the annual supply of trade goods  
while the canoes went ahead David Thompson paused to visit his family at Boggy Hall

#### NOR'WESTER DAVID THOMPSON STAYS AT BOGGY HALL

While the North West Company's Columbia Brigade traveled up the North Saskatchewan River  
David Thompson traveled with the brigade as far as Upper White Mud House  
(located at the mouth of the Pembina River between Edmonton and Rocky Mountain House)

Thompson turned back to Boggy Hall near Fort Augustus

to remain for a time with his wife Charlotte and their children

he planned to later travel by horseback along a shortcut to Rocky Mountain House

where he would rejoin the Columbia Brigade

David Thompson had traveled the route from this North West Company post

across the Rockies through Hawse Pass several times and knew the trail well

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY'S COLUMBIA BRIGADE IS STOPPED BY INDIANS

Columbia Brigade pressed up the North Saskatchewan River toward Rocky Mountain House

North West Company's supply brigade had returned again to the land of the Piegan Indians

who had dedicated themselves to stopping the recently established trans-mountain trade

and the flow of guns to their ancient enemy the Kootenai Indians

Piegan Indians harassed the Columbia Brigade all the way to Rocky Mountain House

#### COLUMBIA BRIGADE REACHES ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE EAST OF THE ROCKIES

Rocky Mountain House (near today's Calgary, Alberta) stood at the eastern foot of the mountains  
this post was managed by Nor'Wester Alexander Henry the Younger  
who was the nephew of pioneering Nor'Wester Alexander Henry the Elder  
there were seven white men and ten guns inside the post

#### COLUMBIA BRIGADE CONTINUES ON FROM ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Piegian Indians had become increasingly opposed to Nor'Westers crossing over the Rockies  
no longer pretending friendship, they were openly warlike  
North West Company's Columbia Brigade left Rocky Mountain House -- late September 1810  
members of the Columbia Brigade learned that Piegiens Indians blocked their route west  
Columbia Brigade had divided into three groups:

- some men camp on the Kootenay Plains and remained with the horses  
as they waited for David Thompson at the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River;
- some men remained with the canoes as they waited for Thompson to arrive  
when these men learned about the plans of the Piegan Indians  
they had turned back to Rocky Mountain House;
- David Thompson had remained at Boggy Hall sixty miles downstream

#### MANUEL LISA TAKES HIS TRAPPERS BACK TO ST. LOUIS

Manuel Lisa had remained at Fort Raymond on the Yellowstone River  
with his St. Louis Missouri Fur Company trappers  
he left and returned to St. Louis with most of his men -- fall 1810  
however, one trapping party under the control of his partner Andrew Henry  
remained at Fort Henry on the Snake River (Idaho)

#### COLUMBIA BRIGADE CANOES RETURN TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Much to the surprise of Rocky Mountain House factor Alexander Henry the Younger  
Columbia Brigade canoes returned to Rocky Mountain House -- October 5, 1810  
they reported their route was blocked by Piegan Indians  
intent on not allowing the Nor'Westers to cross the Rocky Mountains  
equally distressing to Alexander Henry they reported they had last seen David Thompson  
at Upper White Mud House (on September 15)  
Alexander Henry the Younger was fearful the Piegan Indians would attack Rocky Mountain House  
food was in short supply and there was no source of water inside the post

#### ANDREW HENRY'S ST. LOUIS MISSOURI FUR COMPANY MEN CONTINUE THEIR HUNT

Trappers at Fort Henry on the Snake River (Idaho)

including Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor

conducted a fall hunt that gathered a substantial store of beaver skins -- autumn 1810

trappers ranged widely in search of promising beaver streams

they trapped the Snake River and crossed to Jackson Hole (Wyoming)

and probed the Teton Mountains

John Hoback gave his name to a river which had carved a deep canyon

before emptying into the Snake River -- Hoback River was rich in beaver

#### ALEXANDER HENRY THE YOUNGER CONFIRMS THE PIEGAN INDIANS' PLAN

Suddenly a band of forty Piegan warriors led by Piegan Chief Black Bear

arrived at Rocky Mountain House -- about sunset October 7, 1810

they settled down outside the post and prepared for a siege

Henry determined they were part of the Indians

who were waiting up the North Saskatchewan River

Alexander Henry the Younger learned this chief was the person responsible

for stopping the Columbia Brigade canoes

he also learned that about 300 more Piegans were waiting farther upriver

in case any more canoes tried to slip past

he was shocked it see these Indians has one of David Thompson's horses

as well as a pair of blue leggings that belonged to his cousin William Henry

Henry believed David Thompson must be somewhere up the river

During the night the Nor'Westers lowered two kettles on cords down into the river

and pulled them up when full -- now they could afford to wait at least for a little while

#### COLUMBIA BRIGADE MANAGES TO ESCAPE FROM ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Alexander Henry the Younger opened a keg of wine and sent it to the Indians -- October 11, 1810

when they had become intoxicated he sent the Columbia canoes upriver under cover of darkness

to rendezvous with David Thompson

#### ALEXANDER HENRY THE YOUNGER LEARNS HE HAS BEEN IN ERROR

Henry's cousin William Henry arrived at Rocky Mountain House -- October 12, 1810

he said he had come from down the North Saskatchewan River and had left David Thompson

waiting for the Columbia Brigade at Upper White Mud House (near today's Pembina River)

he said Thompson had traveled from Boggy Hall by horseback through thick forest

following the old route along the north side of the North Saskatchewan River

David Thompson and William Henry traveled together up the river  
when they neared the ridge of mountains they came across horses  
belonging to the Piegans waiting to intercept the Columbia Brigade  
Thompson ordered Williams to go the members of the brigade waiting on the Kootenay Plain  
and lead them back downriver to Boggy Hall where Thompson would be waiting  
Alexander Henry the Younger realized he had to stop the canoes he sent upriver earlier  
that night he dispatched a man to intercept the brigade and have them wait for further orders

#### ALEXANDER HENRY THE YOUNGER GOES IN SEARCH OF DAVID THOMPSON

As indicated to Alexander Henry the Younger by his cousin William Henry  
David Thompson was found hungry and distressed on a high hill  
waiting for his brigade to come to him -- October 13, 1810  
David Thompson, a very courageous man, seemingly lost his nerve  
he delayed reacting to the situation  
it was only with the help of Alexander Henry the Younger  
that the Columbia Brigade was pieced together again  
Alexander Henry the Younger rushed back to Rocky Mountain House

#### ALEXANDER HENRY THE YOUNGER RETURNS TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Alexander Henry set about to correct his error in sending the Columbia Brigade  
up the North Saskatchewan River in search of David Thompson who was, in fact, downriver  
he sent his cousin William Henry to bring back the brigade  
without alerting the Piegans -- October 15, 1810  
North West Company's Columbia Brigade reached Rocky Mountain House about midnight  
Alexander Henry sent them downriver to David Thompson -- October 16  
With all of the canoes gone Alexander Henry now focused on the welfare of Rocky Mountain House

#### ASTORIANS COMPLETE THEIR PREPARATIONS IN ST. LOUIS

By the time Wilson Price Hunt had manned and outfitted his expedition in St. Louis  
it was too late in the season to set out to cross North America  
as the upper waters of the Missouri River would be under ice  
before the boats could traverse more than five hundred miles of the river  
Not willing to leave his sixty men within reach of the temptations of civilization,  
Hunt and Astor's other partners Donald McKenzie, Ramsay Crooks, Joseph Miller  
and Robert McClellan left St. Louis in three boats and pushed his crew  
up the Missouri River -- October 21, 1810

two days later the first blast of winter closed the river above them overnight  
still they continued up the Missouri River

#### A PLAN IS DEVELOPED TO DECEIVE THE PIEGAN INDIANS

Alexander Henry the Younger with the help of David Thompson's longtime Indian friend  
Kootanae Apee developed a ruse -- October 27, 1810  
while visiting Rocky Mountain House the Kootenai war chief  
saw a white raven skin and a red peace pipe in the Nor'Wester's room  
Kootanae Apee asked to be given these things and a pound of tobacco  
(these he later put to good use)

#### KOOTANAE APEE DECEIVES THE PIEGAN INDIANS

Kootanae Appe rode to the main camp of the Piegan Indians south of Rocky Mountain House  
he gathered a council of Piegans together the next morning -- October 28, 1810  
Kootanae Appe told the council he had had a dream in which he saw the spirit of a white man  
put the skin of a white raven across the road with a red peace pipe and tobacco  
by a stream about three miles away

Kootanae Appe said to let two old men go and see if the dream was true  
and bring the white raven, red pipe and tobacco to the council  
To the astonishment of the council the objects were found exactly where it had been foretold  
Kootanae Appe said that before the white men came the Indians were weak  
now they had guns, powder and shot and their arrowheads were made of iron instead of stone  
Kootanae Appe said he had always been a friend of the white men and they had been kind to him  
what use to the Indians were the skins of beavers, wolves and foxes  
but now the Indians could get guns, axes and useful tools and ornaments for them  
he told the Piegans to return to their own lands

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND THE COLUMBIA BRIGADE TRY A NEW ROUTE

David Thompson and the men of the Columbia Brigade sat down to discuss their plight  
Thompson was unaware to the ruse played on the Piegan Indians  
Howse Pass completely blocked off by Piegan Indians  
weather grew increasingly formidable-- hunters came back with little or no game  
David Thompson had had enough of the North Saskatchewan River  
he decided to head to the Pembina River near Boggy Hall  
and strike westward through heavily timbered country  
perhaps he could reach an unguarded mountain pass to the Columbia River

that Nipissing (Ojibway) and Iroquois Indian trappers had recently discovered  
(as later reported the journal of Rocky Mountain House's Alexander Henry the Younger  
David Thompson planned to open a new road from the North Saskatchewan River  
past Buffalo Dung [Chip] Lake to the Athabasca River [Alberta]  
then follow the Athabasca River into the Rocky Mountains  
where plains-bred Indians, like the Piegans, rarely ventured)  
David Thompson led the twenty-six members of the Columbia Brigade and their horses  
up the Pembina River along the bank -- October 29, 1810  
travel became increasingly difficult as they journeyed west and entered the Rocky Mountains  
for a month the Columbia Brigade wearily trudged through old burns, windfalls and tangled scrub  
they arrived at 52° 25' north latitude (in Jasper National Park)

#### FINAN McDONALD ARMS THE ENEMIES OF THE BLACKFEET INDIANS

Finan McDonald provided weapons to the Spokanes, Coeur d'Alenes, Palouses, Pend Oreilles,  
Kootenais and Flatheads in defiance of the Blackfoot -- fall 1810  
Fear of retribution by the Blackfoot prompted Finan McDonald to move from Kootanae House  
west to Spokane country where Jaco Finlay and a crew of voyageurs were constructing  
a new trading post at the junction of the Spokane and Little Spokane rivers

#### ASTORIAN WILSON PRICE HUNT ESTABLISHES WINTER HEADQUARTERS

It was so late in the season that Wilson Price Hunt was forced to make winter camp, Nodaway Camp,  
on the Missouri River at the mouth of the Nodaway River three hundred miles from St. Louis  
(near present-day St. Joseph, Missouri) -- November 13, 1810  
here new recruit John Day joined the Overland Expedition  
as the leader of the twelve American hunters and trappers  
John Day had previously worked for Astor's partner Ramsay Crooks  
Preparations continued for the Pacific Fur Company's Overland Expedition

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR'S SHIP *TONQUIN* REACHES FALKLAND ISLANDS

John Jacob Astor's Sea Party reached the Falkland Islands near the tip of South America  
this was a logical stop for fresh water  
Captain Jonathan Thorn sent a landing party went ashore  
including Astor's partners Chief Factor Duncan McDougall (who held Astor's proxy) a  
and David Stuart who were accompanied by Astorians Gabriel Franchere and Alexander Ross  
and five members of the crew of the *Tonquin*  
several members of the shore party stumbled upon two old graves

whose headboards were in need of repair -- nine men set about the work  
Water casks were filled and returned to the ship by crew members sent by Captain Thorn  
as soon as the water casks were on board Captain Thorn fired a gun to bring the others to the ship  
half an hour was lost as the remaining members of the shore party made repairs to the cemetery  
As the shore party did not return at once, Thorn hoisted the canvas and sailed away  
leaving nine men behind on the island  
they knew Thorn probably would not turn back and pick them up  
It was growing dark when the shore party started after the ship  
men pulled mightily at their oars for three and a half hours  
hoping to overtake the ship as they, in fact, steadily lost distance  
they gave up and were debating going back to the island  
Suddenly the *Tonquin* hauled about, sailed back and picked them up  
but only because Astor's partner Robert Stuart had seized a pistol  
pointed it at Thorn's head and stated if he refused to go back  
he was **"a dead man this instant"**<sup>9</sup>  
eight men return to ship as one sailor had drowned in the effort to overtake the ship  
Thorn's deliberate and vicious cruelty increased the hatred of the men toward him  
Astorian and crewmen alike

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND THE COLUMBIA BRIGADE REACH THE ATHABASCA RIVER

David Thompson led the twenty-six members of the Columbia Brigade up the frozen Pembina River  
(to near present day Jasper, Alberta)  
after traveling south fifty miles from the source of the Pembina River  
they reached the Athabasca River -- November 29, 1810  
Thompson and his companions struggled up the Athabasca River for four exhausting days  
supplies were low, morale was lower and the men were surly  
their failure to cross the mountains sharpened the men's perception of impending catastrophe  
When snow eventually fell, the Columbia Brigade's efforts became ever increasingly difficult  
dogs wallowed through the snow on the frozen Athabasca riverbed  
while hunters scoured the barren land ahead for absent game  
Columbia Brigade switched from horses to dogsleds -- December 3, 1810

#### NOR'WESTER DAVID THOMPSON MADE CAMP ON THE ATHABASCA RIVER

David Thompson and his twenty-six men built two log huts on the east side of the Rocky Mountains

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon Speck, *Northwest Explorations*, P. 281.

probably at the south end of Brule Lake (Alberta) to provide protection from the cold weather  
for themselves and for their provisions -- December 5, 1810  
each man was daily eating eight pounds of pemmican  
composed of dried buffalo meat mixed with fat and berries  
Thompson settled down (in Alberta) for what seemed to be a leisurely month  
deep snows and want of food took their toll on men and beasts  
returning from reconnoitering one day, David Thompson found the voyageurs  
trying to learn the depth of the snow by probing with a twenty-foot pole  
sarcastically he asked them what good the knowledge would do them  
he said they would be better off resting  
Some of David Thompson's Columbia Brigade voyageurs, it appears, deserted him and turned back  
this left him with an insufficient number of crew members to move his full stock of goods  
across the Rocky Mountains to Kootanae House on the Columbia River as he had intended  
Thompson, Alexander Henry the Younger and the Nor'Westers sat down to discuss their plight  
hunters came back with little or no game -- weather grew increasingly formidable  
Thompson decided to leave the horses to try to find a new pass through the Rocky Mountains  
Thompson and the men of the Columbia Brigade spent nineteen days searching for a route to the west,  
preparing the dogs, building snowshoes and constructing a few small sleds  
to carry supplies and trade goods

#### DAVID THOMPSON REMAINED IN COMMUNICATION WITH HIS WIFE

Thompson always wrote to his wife when he was away from home  
in a chatty letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> December 1810 he wrote: **“My dear Charlotte, In a few days I will be sending six or seven of my men to Rocky Mountain House to get pemmican and other supplies and they will carry this and my other letters with them. I am hoping they will return with a letter from you, for I am anxious to know how you are faring. I hope you and the children are well. ....we have a log hut to shelter our goods, provisions and ourselves. We are making sleds and snowshoes for the rest of the journey over the mountains, as well as obtaining dogs to replace the horses....**

**“Mr. William Henry will be staying here with the horses and a large store of provisions for our future use. It is very cold, the temperature being minus 32 degrees which is 64 degrees below the freezing point. ...I wonder if this will reach you by Christmas? I wish you and the children every blessing; I long for news of you. As ever, David”**

#### DAVID THOMPSON CONTINUES PREPARATIONS FOR A PUSH OVER THE ROCKIES

Although the men of the Columbia Brigade were starving  
David Thompson was obliged to divide his forces:

- six men were sent with Nor'Wester William Henry to Rocky Mountain House to acquire supplies;
- David Thompson hand-picked ten men to make a dash over the mountains at daybreak guided by an Iroquois Indian named Thomas in an attempt to find a way of skirting Piegan territory though a yet to be discovered mountain pass in the dead of winter with no trail, limited supplies and the threat of being caught by hostile Indians fortified by what seems foolhardy confidence they would try to locate a pass to the west Thompson would leave ten men at the camp to care for the horses and baggage

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND HIS MEN SET OUT TO CROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

With ten men on snowshoes and eight dogsleds David Thompson set out following the Whirlpool River toward its source -- December 23, 1810

David Thompson passed below (what is now Mount Edith Cavell) firewood, including the noted twenty-foot-pole was piled on the sleds and carried with them, but this proved to be insufficient as the ten Nor'Westers shivered forlornly under a brilliant, unclouded sky

Six days of brutal toil following the Whirlpool River through rugged mountain terrain brought the small party to the timber line -- ahead lay the Continental Divide pinched between a green-tinted glacier and an ice-encrusted peak and the ever-present, desolate, glittering snow

#### DAVID THOMPSON REACHES THE SUMMIT OF ATHABASCA PASS

As the summit of Athabasca Pass was approached the ten Nor'Westers of the Columbia Brigade insisted with dismay that they could not possibly cross in a single day ignoring the pleadings of the men, Thompson ordered them to pile firewood on the sleds

David Thompson and his companions made a head-long dash over the Canadian Rockies at daybreak -- December 29, 1810

not until the arrival of early winter dusk did they stop for the night deep snows blotted out the trappers' trail from unfriendly Piegan eyes but want of food took its toll on men and beasts

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND HIS MEN CROSS ATHABASCA PASS

Athabasca Pass was opened at least scientifically and geographically<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> It is confusing that Athabasca Pass lies at the headwaters of the Whirlpool River and not at the headwaters of the Athabasca River. This is because early travelers considered what we now refer to as the Whirlpool to be the main branch of the Athabasca. Athabasca Pass became so significant historically the original name remained in use.

David Thompson had found what Alexander Mackenzie and others had failed to find  
a safe, navigable route across the Rocky Mountains

(Athabasca Pass proved to be even better than Howse Pass as it would carry  
the bulk of the continent's fur trade until the opening of the Trans-Canada railroad)

David Thompson later wrote of the pass: “[It] was to me a most exhilarating sight, but ...the scene of desolation before us was dreadful, and I knew it. A heavy gale of wind, much more a mountain storm, would have buried us beneath it.... My men were not at their ease, yet when night came they admired the brilliancy of the stars, and as one of them said, he thought he could almost touch them with his hand.”<sup>11</sup>

#### ANDREW HENRY AND HIS TRAPPERS SPEND A HARSH WINTER ON THE SNAKE RIVER

Andrew Henry and his St. Louis Missouri Fur Company men spent an uncommonly severe winter  
at Fort Henry on the Snake River (Idaho) -- winter 1810-1811

Several rude log huts served as shelters and the men ventured out only to get meat  
as it was far too cold to tend to the traps

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND HIS MEN REACH THE WEST SIDE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Thompson and his men reached the Wood River on the west side of the Rocky Mountains  
which they followed downstream

after a great deal of hunger and hardship they reached the mouth of the Wood River  
where its waters joined the Columbia River -- January 18, 1811

David Thompson had only five men with him which was an insufficient number of men  
to transport goods to Saleesh House as he had intended

instead he detoured toward the established posts of Spokane House and Kullyspell House  
on the Columbia's tributaries to recruit more men

Thompson's five remaining men refused to go on and this brief attempt was abandoned

Nor'Westers returned to where the Wood and Canoe rivers join the Columbia River  
by the hairpin turn the Columbia makes around the head of the (Selkirk) Mountains  
(north of today's city of Revelstoke, British Columbia)

(this site today is beneath the waters of Kinbasket Lake Reservoir)

there Thompson was forced to wait out the winter

#### DAVID THOMPSON CONSTRUCTS A WINTER CAMP

David Thompson and his five remaining voyageurs constructed a twelve-foot hut of cedar shakes

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<sup>11</sup> *National Geographic*. May, 1996. Priit J. Vesilind. P. 131.

he was determined to make another attempt to reach his established posts  
in the Columbia River's tributaries to find additional recruits to accompany him  
they spent two weeks searching for suitable birch bark to build a large canoe -- and failed  
unable to build a canoe out of birch bark Thompson and his men spent five weeks  
splitting cedar laths for building a twenty-five foot long boat made of overlapped lath  
sewn together with strips of pine root  
this task was made more difficult because none of the men were skilled in this work  
which required a great deal of trial-and-error

Thompson named the site "Boat Encampment" after this experience in boat-building  
(Boat Encampment later became a rendezvous point for travel over Athabasca Pass)  
David Thompson was obliged to go up the Canoe River looking for game  
he was fortunate to meet a party of Sanpoil Indians on a hunting expedition  
he added two of these men to his party of Nor'Westers

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT RETURNS TO ST. LOUIS FOR MORE RECRUITS

Wilson Price Hunt at his Nodaway Camp received instructions from John Jacob Astor  
that he was to follow the route of Lewis and Clark in the cross-country quest  
to reach the Columbia River -- January 1811  
Hunt returned three hundred miles down the Missouri River to St. Louis  
as he was anxious to hire additional expert hunters  
who also were also capable of protecting the company from hostile natives  
and he must find an interpreter familiar with the language of the Sioux  
because he may well expect serious trouble from those people  
to make matters even worse for Hunt, five of his own hunters suddenly appeared in St. Louis  
they had left Nodaway Camp after an argument with the partners in charge  
Hunt could persuade only two of them to return  
Hunt was greatly assisted in the effort to recruit by Astor's partner Joseph Miller

#### BOTH HUNT AND LISA WERE RUSHING PREPARATIONS FOR THEIR EXPEDITIONS

Hunt's task was made more difficult as Manuel Lisa was also equipping an expedition  
Wilson Price Hunt knew Manuel Lisa was preparing to find Andrew Henry at Henry's Fort  
along the Three Forks of the Missouri River (Montana) where Lisa's Missouri Fur Company  
enjoyed vigorous trade along the upper Missouri River  
Competition between Hunt and Lisa for experienced crew members became intense in St. Louis  
this was made especially so since both parties would have to travel over much of the same route

Manuel Lisa took the initiative -- he did not want Hunt to get into Arikara Country first  
but since Hunt could not be stopped entirely, Lisa set out to delay him for as long as possible

#### PIERRE DORION TRAVELS TO ST. LOUIS WITH HIS FAMILY

Pierre Dorion's Iowa Indian wife, Marie Dorion, learned that Wilson Price Hunt  
needed experienced men who spoke Sioux Indian for an expedition to the Northwest coast  
After traveling to St. Louis, she prodded her husband to seek employment with the Astorians  
Pierre Dorion was more than a little reluctant because he had once been employed by Manuel Lisa  
he had had a falling out with the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company owner over a whiskey bill  
Pierre considered it an unforgivable wrong that Lisa had charged him \$10 a quart for whiskey  
but Lisa had need of Pierre Dorion as his expedition also must pass through Sioux country

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT AGREES TO HIRE PIERRE DORION

Pierre Dorion was offered a substantial raise in salary above the price offered by Manuel Lisa  
Hunt felt fortunate to have the services of Dorion who had the proper qualifications  
Dorion was a Sioux Metis whose father had served Lewis and Clark as interpreter to the Sioux  
Pierre knew the Sioux language and was a good interpreter,  
also, he was proficient as a prairie hunter and guide  
Hunt, shrewd businessman that he was, realized the danger of having Manuel Lisa as an enemy  
thus although Pierre Dorion was hired at once,  
Hunt waited several weeks before signing the appropriate papers with him  
Pierre Dorion proved to be a fateful choice as he was still indebted to Manuel Lisa

#### MANUEL LISA ATTEMPTS TO DETAIN PIERRE DORION

Manuel Lisa, hearing Pierre Dorion had been hired away by the Astorians,  
served notice on both Wilson Price Hunt and Pierre Dorion  
that the interpreter was still in Lisa's service -- accusations and harsh words followed  
Dorion reminded Lisa of the devious manner used to obtain his service  
Lisa tactlessly invited Pierre to have a drink and talk about the situation  
Pierre, after clearly stating his position, broke off relations with Lisa  
and proceeded to tell Hunt he was, indeed, available for duty

#### TONQUIN ARRIVES AT THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company ship *Tonquin* anchored in Karakakooa Bay  
on the big island of Hawaii (this was the same bay visited by British Captain James Cook [1778])  
Captain Jonathan often displayed sudden outbursts of temper

he had beaten a late-returning sailor almost senseless and then had thrown the man overboard  
Astor's partners distributed firearms to the crewmen while the ship was in the Hawaiian Islands  
so that no possible act of treachery by the natives should catch them unprotected  
as Captain Jonathan Thorn always suspected the natives of plotting to seize his ship

#### *TONQUIN SAILS TO THE ISLAND OF OAHU*

Captain Jonathan Thorn sailed on to the island of Owhyee (Oahu Hawaii) -- February 12, 1811  
while sailing into (Pearl Harbor) cabin boy, Guillaume Perrault, climbed the rigging  
to get a better view of the beautiful harbor -- but lost his hold

he fell overboard and would have drowned **“but for a wide pair of canvas overalls full of  
tar and grease, which operated like a life preserver”**<sup>12</sup>

Captain Thorn seemed annoyed the boy's life had been spared  
During the two week stopover at Owhyee half of the crew of the *Tonquin* deserted  
rather than serve any longer under such a captain as Jonathan Thorn

Twenty-four Hawaiians were recruited as laborers

(Hawaiians were known as “Kanakas” or “Sandwich Islanders”)

(Hawaiian) King Kamehameha (I) appointed Chief Naukane to join the group  
to look after the interests of Kanaka laborers

because of his resemblance to one of Astor's clerks, Naukane was dubbed “John Coxe”

(he retained this name, and complicated identification,

throughout his colorful career as Hawaii's first “soldier of fortune”)

#### *TONQUIN SAILS OUT OF OWYHEE IN THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS*

*Tonquin* set sail with twenty-four Kanaka (Hawaiian) recruits

one shipboard observer wrote: **“...for the services of the Establishment [i.e. the fort] we engaged  
twelve Islanders, the terms of their contract being three years, during which time we undertook to  
feed and clothe them and at the expiration of their contract, to give them goods to the value of one  
hundred piastres [Middle Eastern currency]. The Captain took on twelve others for the work of the  
ship. These people make reasonably good sailors, seemed eager to enter our service and we could  
have engaged more of them.”**<sup>13</sup>

#### *TONQUIN CROSSES THE PACIFIC OCEAN*

As the ship sailed from Hawaii toward the Columbia River

fresh quarrels arose between Captain Jonathan Thorn and John Jacob Astor's partners

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<sup>12</sup> Gordon Speck, *Northwest Exploration*, P. 281.

<sup>13</sup> Gordon Speck, *Northwest Exploration*, P. 281.

over who had ultimate control of the trade supplies

Thorn whom Astor had placed in charge of bartering along the Pacific coast  
or Chief Factor Duncan McDougall whom Astor placed in charge of land operations

#### ASTORIAN RECRUITS JOURNEY TO NODAWAY CAMP

Wilson Price Hunt with his additional recruits set out in their keelboats on their journey  
three hundred miles up the Missouri River from St. Louis to Nodaway Camp -- March 12, 1811

At the moment of departure from St. Louis

Pierre Dorion gave Wilson Price Hunt an unwelcome surprise

he arrived on the river bank with his Iowa Indian wife Marie Dorion

along with their two small sons: Baptiste then age four and Paul about two years old

Pierre refused to embark without them

Wilson Price Hunt reluctantly agreed to take them along

Marie Dorion became the second woman (after Sacajawea) to cross the plains to Oregon

Also traveling with Hunt to Nodaway Camp were:

two British scientists, John Bradbury and Thomas Nuttall, were recruited for the journey

they were the first two professional naturalists to explore any part of the Louisiana Purchase

Bradbury was an elderly British botanist and mineralogist who had been sent out

by the Linnean Society of Liverpool to make a collection of American plants and animals

he was the first plant hunter to try to bring back specimens from the central plains to propagate  
because he never published a book about what he had undertaken

his work remained primarily unknown by his contemporaries

Nuttall, a younger man, was a mild sportsman after the manner of English country gentlemen

but he was much more interested in his microscope and trowel

he concentrated on gathering and classifying the plants of the central plains

and gave them scientific names

unlike Bradbury he also took credit for his discoveries

he published the results of his work and became far better known

#### MANUEL LISA PLOTS TO SLOW DOWN WILSON PRICE HUNT'S ASTORIANS

Missouri Fur Company owner Manuel Lisa, mad at Wilson Price Hunt for hiring away Pierre Dorion,  
quietly had an official court order drawn up against the interpreter

this order would require the interpreter to return to St. Louis

for prosecution over the whiskey debt

this was to be served when Dorion passed through the village of St. Charles, Missouri

on his way up the Missouri River to Nodaway Camp

Pierre Dorion was warned by the scientists John Bradbury and Thomas Nuttall  
who somehow learned that Manuel Lisa was taking steps to have him detained  
Pierre designed a scheme of his own

#### PIERRE DORION'S SCHEME IS FOILED BY MARIE

Pierre Dorion planned to avoid being served the legal papers in St. Charles, Missouri by jumping ship  
he promised Wilson Price Hunt he would meet the keelboats a short distance above St. Charles  
but Dorion, in reality, planned to double cross both Hunt and Manuel Lisa  
Pierre told his wife, Marie, that they would return to St. Louis  
after Manuel Lisa and the Astorians both had gone  
Pierre would find another job after he had spent the two hundred dollars  
he had received from Hunt in advance paid (two-thirds of a year's salary)

Marie would not hear of this treachery and insisted Pierre would join Hunt as agreed  
during the ensuing quarrel, the drunk Pierre struck Marie -- as he frequently did  
she retaliated with a well-aimed blow to his head with a club  
she then walked out into the night with her two children and a bundle of belongings  
Marie Dorion and her children remained hidden along the Missouri River that night and the next  
as she waited for the Astorians to finish preparations in St. Louis  
Pierre was beside himself with grief over the loss of his wife, children and his possessions  
After Marie spent two nights in hiding the Astorians passed where she was hiding in their keelboats  
Marie called out to the Astorians and Hunt sent a canoe across the river to retrieve her  
Marie, the children and her possessions were all reunited with the greatly relieved Pierre

#### TONQUIN ARRIVES AT THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER

When John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company ship *Tonquin* arrive off the coast -- March 21, 1811  
the weather was stormy and the sea was running high as the winds blew in heavy rain squalls  
surf pounded and roared and leaped on the hidden sand bars  
stretching almost all of the way across the entrance to the river  
Astor's partners were demanding -- Captain Jonathan Thorn was unbearable  
nerves of the crew members became more and more chafed as they grew increasingly sullen

#### CAPTAIN THORN ATTEMPTS TO ENTER THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Crossing the Columbia River sandbar required expert seamanship and respect for the obvious dangers  
most captains waited for favorable conditions to make an attempt  
although Astor's partners protested that the raging storm made the crossing impossible  
Captain Jonathan Thorn was unwilling to wait any longer

Captain Thorn ordered First Mate Ebenezer Fox to take the whaleboat into the frothing sea to sound the channel over the Columbia River sandbar -- March 22, 1811

Thorn assigned one sailor, John Martin, and three voyagers

to accompany Fox in the suicide mission

voyageurs were skilled in their work as canoemen

but they had no knowledge of the dangers they now faced

out-flowing ebb tide and fearful breaking seas made the assignment scarcely short of murder

Ebenezer Fox begged for sailors to man the whaleboat with him

but Thorn insisted they could not be spared from their tasks on the ship

in desperation Fox appealed to Astor's partners who, in turn, argued with Thorn

that the dangers were apparent -- the whaleboat was a small ramshackle vessel

not fit to dare such a sea as then raced over the bar

Thorn simply stiffened his resolve because Astor's partners were the men

who had held him up while they repaired cemetery headstones in the Falkland Islands,

they had constantly baited him in their Gaelic (Irish and Scottish) language

and had mocked his dignity with far too much singing

Ebenezer Fox bid farewell to his crew mates: **“My uncle was drowned here not many years ago, and now I am going to lay my bones with his.”**<sup>14</sup>

Fox and his crew left the *Tonquin* in the whaleboat -- 1:00 P.M.

those on deck watched until the whaleboat was hidden by cataracts of surf

clerk Gabriel Franchere recorded the scene in his journal: **“The wind was blowing in heavy squalls, and the sea ran very high; in spite of that, the captain caused a boat to be lowered, and Ebenezer Fox, sailor John Martin, voyageurs Basile Lapensee, Ignace Lapensee, Joseph Nadeau, got into her, taking some provisions and firearms, with orders to sound the channel and report themselves on board as soon as possible. The boat was not even supplied with a good sail, or a mast, but one of the partners gave Mr. Fox a pair of bed sheets to serve for the former....**

**“The boat's crew pulled away from the ship; alas! we were never to see her again; and we already had a foreboding of her fate.”**<sup>15</sup>

All afternoon the *Tonquin's* crewmen and the Astorians waited for the whaleboat's return

*Tonquin* pulled out to sea as night came on and they continued to wait

neither the whaleboat nor its crew were seen again

## TONQUIN MAKES OTHER ATTEMPTS TO ENTER THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Morning dawned clear as the *Tonquin* lay anchored in a calm area

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<sup>14</sup> George W. Fuller, *A History of the Pacific Northwest*, P. 97.

<sup>15</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels 1750-1920*, Volume 6, P. 230.

north of Cape Disappointment -- March 23, 1811

Astor's partners Alexander McKay and David Stuart and a number of clerks

volunteered to attempt to reach shore and search for First Mate Ebenezer Fox and his crew

Second Mate William Mumford set forth in the ship's pinnace accompanied by the Astorians

they encountered a line of breakers that overpowered the whaleboat

with a fearful suction that drew in the pinnace

Indians observing from Cape Disappointment motioned for the pinnace to row around the Cape rather than trying to reach shore directly

but seeing the waves breaking on the reef Mumford decided to return to the ship

he ordered all hands to pull for their lives -- terrified oarsmen struggled for twelve minutes

before they managed to clear the breakers and reach the *Tonquin*

It was not long before a breeze sprung up and Captain Thorn decided to again attempt an entry

according to his charts the deepest and most reliable channel lay close in to Cape Disappointment

along the north edge of the perilous shifting sandbars

this channel was narrow, intricate and constantly changing

after weighing anchor Captain Thorn became so alarmed he stopped the effort

he order Second Mate Mumford to again take the pinnace and sound for the channel

Mumford succeeded in locating five fathoms of water

but with the surf breaking all around he retreated to the ship

Thorn was angry with Mumford's attempt so he instructed rigger and calker Job Aitken,

to take the jolly boat (smallest boat available) and sound for the channel close to the north shore

if he found more than three fathoms of water he was to hoist a flag as a signal

Aitkin was accompanied by sailmaker John Coles, armorer Stephen Weeks

and two Kanakas known as Harry and Peter

as the jollyboat moved ahead the flag was hoisted

Thorn again weighed anchor and sailed into the channel

but soon the *Tonquin* began a rapid drift toward the southern shore and the sandbar

Aitken's jolly boat returned toward the ship in calm water about half a mile beyond the breakers

but Captain Thorn and the *Tonquin* passed them by

according to clerk Alexander Ross: **"Everyone now called out, 'The boat, the boat!' The partners, in astonishment, entreated the captain to take the boat on board, but he coolly replied, 'I can give them no assistance'."**<sup>16</sup>

those on board the *Tonquin* could hear the cries for help that rose

as the waves suddenly swirled the jollyboat about and capsized her

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<sup>16</sup> Alexander Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River, 1810-1813*. P. 81.

the jollyboat was last seen drifting rapidly downstream before it was lost from view  
(Job Aitkin and John Coles were swept away  
but Stephen Weeks and the Kanakas Harry and Peter managed to right the jollyboat)  
Thorn had left them to their fate despite loud protests by Astor's partners  
in defense of Captain Thorn the situation facing the *Tonquin* was dire

#### PLIGHT OF THE *TONQUIN* REMAINS IN DOUBT

Suddenly the wind died and the *Tonquin* was at the mercy of the surf  
she was in danger of being dashed against the rocks at the foot of Cape Disappointment  
Thorn threw out two anchors to counter the pull of the tide  
but as night deepened the terror of their predicament heightened  
When the tide eventually turned -- just before midnight  
*Tonquin* was still intact and an ocean breeze sprang up  
Captain Thorn used a rising wind to attempt another entry on the rising flood tide that night  
*Tonquin* was near the rocks when the crewmen weighted the anchors  
she frequently struck bottom in the narrow channel as the crew fought to save the ship  
at the critical moment the wind failed  
*Tonquin* struck the sand with a violent blow and breakers washed over her  
*Tonquin*'s pilot boat was lowered with three men aboard to sound a passage across the bar  
and a line was run back to the *Tonquin* as the ship scraped across the bar  
then the pilot boat was lost in the crossing  
in a terrifying swirl of currents, wind and tides the *Tonquin* was actually lifted  
and thrust just across the bar -- just after midnight March 25-26, 1811  
leaving deserted the men in the pilot boat to fight against wind, tide and terror  
by a stroke of good fortune none were lost  
For several hours the *Tonquin* lay just inside the bar  
everything depended on the anchors holding during the out-flowing ebb tide  
when the tide changed to flood, Baker's Bay was gained  
Morning light showed the arrival of Indians who made known their desire to trade for furs  
Captain Jonathan Thorn set a course toward the north (Washington) shore

#### THORN BEGINS A SEARCH FOR THE MISSING CREW MEMBERS

Kanaka Peter had died in the water during the night  
but Stephen Weeks and Kanaka Harry managed to struggle ashore in the morning  
Stephen Weeks discovered an Indian trail the next day -- March 26, 1811  
but Harry died of exhaustion in the woods

Stephen Weeks was found wandering on the shore stark naked suffering intensely from the cold after following the trail several hours he had come in sight of the *Tonquin*

*Tonquin*'s search party found the exhausted armorer -- they revived and rescued him

Weeks later reported how the Kanakas Harry and Peter had saved his life: **“I kept tossing about at the mercy of the waves. While in this state I saw the two Sandwich Islanders struggling through the surf to get hold of the boat, and being expert swimmers they succeeded. After long struggles they got her turned upon her keel, bailed out some of the water, and recovered one of the oars. I made several attempts to get near them, but the weight of my clothes and the rough sea had almost exhausted me. I could scarcely keep myself above water.... when the two islanders saw me, now supporting myself by a floating oar, and made for me. The poor fellows tried to haul me into the boat, but their strength failed them. At last, taking hold of my clothes in their teeth, they fortunately succeeded. We then stood out to sea as night set in, and a darker one I never saw. The Owyhees, [Hawaiians] overcome with wet and cold, began to lose hope, and their fortitude forsook them.”**<sup>17</sup>

**“The dead [Hawaiian] man was buried by six Kanaka according to their tribal customs. Each before leaving the ship had taken an offering of biscuit, pork, or tobacco. They put the biscuit under the arm of the deceased, the pork under the chin and the tobacco under the testicles or genital organs. Then they put the body in the grave and after covering it with sand and gravel they formed a double line, with their faces turned eastwards. One officiating as a priest went to fetch water in his hat and having sprinkled the two rows of Islanders, began a prayer to which the others responded. Then they rose and departed and made their way towards the ship without looking back.”**<sup>18</sup>

Nine men had been lost crossing the bar of the Columbia River

#### *TONQUIN* DELIVERS THE ASTORIANS TO SHORE

Captain Thorn was for rigging a shelter on the north (Washington) side of the Columbia River

there he could deposit the stores and goods for the trading post at once

and then be off up the coast searching for sea otter pelts to be acquired

Astorians discovered the north shore was exposed to storms

and possible attack by ship or canoe from the Pacific Ocean

Astor's Chief Factor gloomy arrogant Duncan McDougall was in command of “Astoria”

he and the other partners objected to the location selected by Captain Thorn

they noted the location of Astor's trading post on the Columbia River

was critical to the success of the operation

they insisted on seeking a site further up the river

where the location would offer some natural defense

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<sup>17</sup> Alexander Ross. *Adventures of the First Settlers On the Oregon and Columbia River*, P. 69-70.

<sup>18</sup> Gabriel Franchere, *The Journal of Gabriel Franchere*, ed. W. Kaye Lamb. P. 75.

although he strenuously objected Captain Jonathan Thorn landed a portion of the Astorians  
on the south (Oregon) side further up the Columbia River  
Captain Thorn moved the *Tonquin* to the north bank of the Columbia and tied her off  
Thorn now considered his responsibility to his passengers finished  
McDougall organized a search for a good site for John Jacob Astor's trading post on the Columbia  
several of Astor's partners searched the south bank to find a good location for a building site

#### SITE FOR THE POST ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE COLUMBIA IS SELECTED

Chief Factor Duncan McDougall chose a place on the south shore  
about twelve miles upriver from mouth of the Columbia River  
(Lieutenant William Broughton with the George Vancouver expedition  
had named the location Point George [1792]) -- Astorians named to location Tongue Point)  
here was a sheltered harbor where small vessels could anchor within fifty yards of the beach  
Location the post resulted in a series of squabbles between Thorn and the partners  
Captain Thorn refused to move the *Tonquin* to the south shore or to ferry supplies across the river  
three small boats were lost ferrying goods across the Columbia River  
Chinook Indians saved several partners and clerks from drowning in the process  
Captain Thorn finally relented and ferried supplies to the southern shore with the *Tonquin*

#### CLEARING A SITE FOR THE PACIFIC FUR COMPANY POST TOOK TWO MONTHS

John Jacob Astor as the financier of the Pacific Fur Company was intent on profits  
*Tonquin* expedition was equipped only to trap and trade  
thirty-three factors, clerks, voyageurs and skilled workers had been sent by ship  
oddly, Astor brought out one carpenter, John Weeks, and no woodsmen  
although these were essential to any large building program  
Astor also failed to provide for the safety of his Pacific Fur Company employees  
no physician or medical man was provided for the expedition

Clearing an acre of land of huge trees took two months

Pacific Fur Company clerk Alexander Ross wrote in his Journal: **“The place selected for the emporium of the West was studded with gigantic trees of almost incredible size, many measured fifty feet in girth.....**

**“After viewing the height and breadth of the tree to be cut down, the party, with some labor, would erect a scaffold round it; this done, four men -- for that was the number appointed to each of those huge trees -- would then mount the scaffold, and commence cutting.... Sometimes it required two days or more to fall one tree.**

**“There is an art in falling a tree but unfortunately none of us had learned the art, and hours together would be spent in conjectures and discussions; one calling out that it would fall here, another, there ... and at last , when all hands were assembled to witness the fall, how often were we disappointed! The tree would still stand erect, bidding defiance to our efforts, while every now and then some of the most impatient or foolhardy would venture to jump on the scaffold and give a blow or two more. Much time was spent in this manner before the mighty tree gave way, but it seldom came to the ground. So thick was the forest, and so close the trees together, that in its fall it would often rest its ponderous top on some other friendly tree: and when we finally did succeed in falling a tree both stump and tree had to be blown to pieces by gunpowder before either could be removed.**

**“Nearly two months of this laborious and incessant toil passed, and we had scarcely yet an acre of ground cleared. In the meantime two of our men were wounded by the falling of trees, and one had his hand blown off by gunpowder and three were killed by natives.”<sup>19</sup>**

#### **TONQUIN REMAINS TIED TO THE NORTH BANK OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER**

*Tonquin* rode at anchor across the Columbia River from Tongue Point as the Captain Thorn fumed days and weeks flitted by while the partners directed the clearing of the land and building of the post with its living quarters, storehouse and powder magazine or they knocked off work to hold council with inquisitive swarms of Indians led by their old, one-eyed Chinook Indian Chief Comcomly

During this time Captain Jonathan Thorn remained aboard his ship while Chief Factor Duncan McDougall resided on shore thus assuring they could no longer exchange epithets and invectives rather they made themselves content with caustic written attacks ferried back and forth across the breadth of the Columbia River

#### **WILSON PRICE HUNT CONTINUES UP THE MISSOURI RIVER TO NODAWAY CAMP**

Early in the morning, the Pacific Fur Company’s Overland Expedition saw a small bark canoe with a single occupant skimming down the Missouri River returning to civilization

John Colter had completed one of his lonely trapping forays in the Yellowstone River region Colter provided a great deal of information to Wilson Price Hunt regarding the Blackfoot Indians although he was strongly tempted to join their great adventure, life with his bride who awaited him somewhere down the river held an even greater appeal than the lure of the wilderness

Wilson Price Hunt also encountered Daniel Boone on the way to Nodaway Camp

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<sup>19</sup> Rick Steber, *Loggers, Tales of the Wild West Volume 7*, P. 18.

Boone demonstrated a strong interest in joining the expedition  
but due to his age (he was then eighty-five) he was forced to curb his enthusiasm

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S ASTORIANS REACH THE COUNTRY OF THE OSAGE INDIANS

Passing through the territory of the Osages on their way up the Missouri River to Nodaway Camp

Hunt's Astorians learned there was a war raging throughout the greater part of Indian country

Sioux Indians had been out on raids during the preceding (summer)

and could be expected to take to the warpath in full force

as soon as (spring) had cleared the prairies of snow

Hunt heard, too, that Sioux natives were determined to stop white traders

from selling arms to other tribes with whom they were at war

While they were halted at Fort Osage Hunt saw proof of the rumors of Indian unrest

when a war party of Osage Indians returned from an attack on an Iowa village

Osages held a high ceremony to celebrate the taking of seven scalps

this celebration so excited Pierre Dorion's Indian wife, Marie,

that when it was time to continue up the Missouri River she declined to go on

she preferred to remain forever where such pleasant things were happening

Pierre, as was his too usual custom, used a birch stick

to convince her of the inappropriateness of her decision

#### CONSTRUCTION OF PACIFIC FUR COMPANY POST BEGINS

After nearly two months of cutting and blasting trees and stumps

Astorians had cleared scarcely an acre of ground

(located at the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> and Exchange in today's downtown Astoria)

Pacific Fur Company clerk Alexander Ross wrote: **"In the meantime three of our men were killed by the natives, two more wounded by the falling of trees, and one had his hand blown off by gunpowder.... The people suffered greatly from the humidity of the climate. The Sandwich Islanders, used to a dry, pure atmosphere, sank under its influence; damp fogs, and sleet were frequent...and all this time we were without tents or shelter. Add to this the bad quality of our food...so that one-half of the party, on the average, were constantly on the sick list."**<sup>20</sup>

After the long project of clearing an acre of land had been opened

twelve miles upriver from mouth of Columbia River -- April 12, 1811

construction was begun on a warehouse that measured sixty by twenty feet

to find sufficient small logs for constructing the building the men went deep into the forest

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<sup>20</sup> Alexander Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers On the Oregon and Columbia River*, P. 80-81.

then harnessed themselves in teams of eight and like oxen and dragged the timbers to the site

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT AND HIS PARTY REACH NODAWAY CAMP

Hunt's new recruits joined their traveling companions at Nodaway Camp

at the mouth of the Nodaway River three hundred miles above St. Louis -- middle of April 1811

Final preparations were completed

Pacific Fur Company Land Expedition waited only for the weather

#### DAVID THOMPSON LEAVES BOAT ENCAMPMENT

Spring brought its own hardships as Thompson set out south up the Columbia River -- April 17, 1811

accompanied by five voyageurs, two Iroquois and two Sanpoil interpreters; only one dog was left for fifteen days they toiled through three feet of wet snow that remained on the ground

one of the men was afflicted with snow blindness and heavy rains soaked them

spring runoff dangerously swelled the rivers

sometimes they were forced to wade beside their boat in nearly freezing water

and sometimes wearing snowshoes they towed the canoe from the bank

ice threatened to break as they dragged their heavy boat and gear across thinly frozen lakes

they were always hungry and generally they camped on snow

Thompson reached the site of his first post, Kootanae House at the source of the Columbia River

which had been abandoned when he had traveled east the year before ([810]

he did not have enough men or trade goods to re-establish the trading post

or to pacify any hostile Indians they might encounter

Indians with whom Thompson had worked earlier remained friendly

they greeted Thompson warmly as he passed through their respective lands

While exploring, he learned from the Indians the river flowing from Lake Windemere

turned south before flowing to the Pacific Ocean

they informed him the journey to the ocean was the "voyage of a summer moon"

he believed this must be the Columbia River

Nor'Wester David Thompson and his nine traveling companions left Kootanae House

they traveled by canoe down the Kootenai River toward Saleesh House

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND HIS COMPANIONS FOLLOW THE KOOTENAI RIVER

Kootenai River was traveled downstream about 240 miles (to a point near present Libby, Montana)

their battered canoe was abandoned (near Libby, Montana)

in favor of horses acquired from the local Indians

Now on horseback they followed the familiar trail to Saleesh House

the North West Company post built by David Thompson on the Clark Fork River [1809]  
horses presented their own difficulties  
as men and animals floundered through swamps and fresh-water springs  
along the way Thompson added two more Indians to his party

#### ANDREW HENRY AND HIS TRAPPERS LEAVE FORT HENRY ON THE SNAKE RIVER

After a cold, miserable winter in the furthest American outpost in the West  
and with the prospect of receiving fresh supplies from St. Louis fading

Andrew Henry and his trappers abandoned Fort Henry (Idaho) -- spring 1811

Andrew Henry divided his St. Louis Missouri Fur Company trappers into three groups:

- some would stay in the mountains to trap and trade with the natives,
- Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reznor decided to go home to Kentucky,
- Henry and a third contingent took forty packs of beaver pelts to the Yellowstone River  
(and eventually boated to a meeting with company owner Manuel Lisa)

#### MANUEL LISA ORGANIZES A NEW FUR COMPANY

Not having heard from Major Andrew Henry whom he had left on the upper Missouri River  
Manuel Lisa decided to go to his aide -- spring 1811

Lisa planned an expedition among the Arikara Indians to build another fort  
in what is now (northern South Dakota)

St. Louis Missouri Fur Company was reorganized into a new firm

known simply as the "Missouri Fur Company" with Manuel Lisa was the proprietor

Lisa began collecting trade goods and personnel in St. Louis for the new venture  
he hired Charbonneau and Sacajawea to serve as guides for his expedition

Lisa also anticipated the services of Pierre and Marie Dorion as had been arranged previously  
although Pierre was currently employed by Wilson Price Hunt

Lisa had no way of knowing that Andrew Henry and his men had abandoned their post  
along the Snake River (in Idaho)

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S EXPEDITION PREPARES TO DEPART FOR THE WEST

In the party which Hunt was to lead were four experienced frontiersmen and Astor partners:

- Donald McKenzie, one-time Nor'Wester, was a "winterer" in the wilderness  
who had joined Astor with the understanding that he was to share command with Hunt  
but at the last minute Astor had reduced him to a subordinate position;
- Ramsay Crooks, a Scot, had traded and trapped on the plains;
- Robert McClellan, an old border fighter famed for his exploits and his marksmanship,

had been a trapping partner with Ramsay Crooks;

- Joseph Miller had fought as a lieutenant in the Revolution under “Mad” Anthony Wayne and had been an employee of John Jacob Astor’s American Fur Company

Any one of these men would have served the expedition more ably than did Astor’s choice of Wilson Price Hunt

Also recruited for the Pacific Fur Company Overland Expedition were:

experienced trappers William Cannon (or Canning), Alexander Carson and hunter John Day

Various recruits and desertions placed the members of Hunt’s expedition at about sixty-seven

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT’S LAND EXPEDITION LEAVES NODAWAY CAMP

After a delay of several days due to the weather Wilson Price Hunt’s Overland Expedition including Pierre Dorion, Marie Dorion their two children

made their start on their long journey toward the Columbia River -- April 22, 1811

but first they would stop at the Arikara Indian villages (in today’s northern South Dakota)

As proposed by John Jacob Astor, Wilson Price Hunt led his Astorians up the Missouri River this route had been previously been explored by Lewis and Clark

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT’S OVERLAND EXPEDITION SEES SIGNS OF INDIAN TROUBLE

Hunt’s expedition camped along the Missouri River at the mouth of the Platte River -- April 28, 1811

here they saw signs of the Indian war they had heard about from the Osage Indians on the bank lay the frame of a bull boat

it had been used not long before to convey a raiding party across the river rolling smoke on the horizon during the day and a red glare in the sky at night told of grass fires lighted by a fleeing band to cut off their pursuers

Concerned about hostile Indians Hunt posted guards each night

a few nights later as the party slept eleven Sioux warriors rushed the camp yelling and brandishing tomahawks

when the attackers were seized and overpowered by the guards the natives protested that their visit was friendly

Pierre Dorion, who was familiar with Sioux customs, said that since the Indians were naked it showed they were members of a band defeated in war

who had cast off their clothes and adornments and vowed to recover their honor by performing an act of blood

Wilson Price Hunt sent them across the Missouri River under the watchful eye of his riflemen

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT HAS MORE DIFFICULTY WITH HIS EXPEDITION

Apparently Hunt did not know how to resolve grievances or how to enforce his will  
two more of his hunters deserted  
if his men continued to desert just as the need of them became greater  
the situation promised to become even more serious  
two British scientists, John Bradbury and Thomas Nuttall, were traveling with the expedition  
every time the Land Expedition stopped, regardless of possible Indian danger,  
both scientists would wander off over the prairie in different directions  
each absorbed in his own special pursuit  
they would range further and further afield  
until they were recaptured by members of the expedition

#### OREGON ASTORIANS MEET THE GRANDSON OF AN OLD SPANISH SHIPWRECK SURVIVOR

John Jacob Astor's partners Alexander McKay and Robert Stuart and clerk Gabriel Franchere  
set out from the *Tonquin* on an expedition into the Cascade Mountains -- May 1811  
Franchere wrote in his journal of meeting an eighty year old Spanish half-breed  
who was living near the Cascade Mountain  
he called himself Soto and claimed to be the grandson of a Spaniard also named Soto  
who had been wrecked at Clatsop beach at the mouth of Columbia River  
(this could, in fact, have been the legendary Konapee of Clatsop fame  
who survived a shipwreck [1693 or 1705])  
according to Soto part of crew made it ashore but all but four were killed by Clatsops  
these four survivors all married Indian women -- one of whom was Soto's mother  
while he was a child, Soto's father and the other three Spaniards left the Clatsop village  
to find Spanish settlements along the southern coast  
none of the four were ever heard from again  
(Franchere later published his reminiscences first in French then translated it was into English  
under the title *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America* [1854])

#### MANUEL LISA LEAVES ST. LOUIS FOR THE UPPER MISSOURI RIVER REGION

Manuel Lisa hurried up the Missouri River with fresh supplies  
bound for Henry's Fort at the Three Forks of the Missouri River (Montana) -- May 13, 1811  
he had in his employ twenty-five men including Charbonneau and Sacajawea who served as guides  
Lisa was three weeks and two hundred forty miles of turbulent river behind Wilson Price Hunt  
Lisa became irate when he learned his court writ could not be served at St. Charles  
because Pierre Dorion had gone up the Missouri River with his wife and children  
now the chase was on -- it would continue for over a thousand miles

Lisa was very intent on catching Wilson Price Hunt and overtaking him at the Arikara Villages  
his party of twenty-four employees plus the leader and a young sightseer, Henry Brackenridge  
had one large pirogue propelled by twenty paddlers with a mounted swivel gun on the bow  
Manuel Lisa knew he was far behind in the race to the Arikara Villages  
but he was so angered by the thought of falling farther behind Wilson Price Hunt's Astorians  
that he redoubled his efforts to catch his rival

#### MANUEL LISA REACHES THE OMAHA VILLAGES

Lisa eventually reached the region of the Omaha villages -- May 19, 1811  
he believed himself beaten in the race with Wilson Price Hunt  
he sent a message up the Missouri River to Hunt asking Hunt to wait for him  
so their combined parties could offer mutual protection through hostile Indian country

#### SCIENTISTS WITH WILSON PRICE HUNT ALMOST COME TO GRIEF

Thomas Nuttall armed only with his trowel was quite often seen happily venturing over the prairie  
to dig for roots that were not for the cooking pot  
this activity drew the amused contempt of the voyageurs who called him "the fool"

On one occasion the as boats approached a bend in the Missouri River -- May 20, 1811  
old John Bradbury decided to walk across a stretch of prairie which lay in front of them  
in his endless quest for biological specimens

Astorians were passing through the country of the fierce Teton Sioux

Hunt had just learned Indians were gathering in force to block the Astorians' progress  
and to steal their trade goods and weapons

Bradbury set off carrying under his arm the huge portfolio he used to press flowers  
bearing his camp kettle on his back and his rifle slung over his shoulder  
on this occasion, after emptying his rifle completely but ineffectively at some prairie dogs,  
he stood near the river's bank around a bend ahead of the Astorians  
he was bent peering at a mineral specimen through his microscope  
when he felt ungentle hands on his shoulders for several moments  
three or four hostile Indians threatened him with a leveled crossbow  
and tried to drag him away to their main camp

Bradbury showed them the charms of his pocket compass

which kept the savages amused for a short time

next he produced his microscope with the same result

these natives remained fascinated until the boats came around the bend and they fled

### THREE KENTUCKIANS TRAVEL TOWARD HOME

Wilson Price Hunt the leader of John Jacob Astor's Land Expedition  
was deploring the loss of two more deserters -- morning May 26, 1811  
when two dugout canoes bearing white men came in sight  
and nosed into the Missouri shore at the mouth of the Niobrara River  
these canoes contained trappers Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor  
who had been with Manuel Lisa's partner Andrew Henry  
at the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company's Fort Henry on the Snake River (Idaho)  
they were making their way back home to Kentucky  
these three Kentuckians were of the character of the great frontiersmen  
who opened the American frontier

Robinson, Hoback, and Reznor took breakfast with the Astorians  
Astor's Land Expedition leader Wilson Price Hunt convinced the three frontiersmen  
to join the Overland Expedition with an offer of a full trapping outfit and ammunition  
in return for half of their take in beaver pelts  
they were designated guides to lead the expedition to Andrew Henry's abandoned post  
on Henry's Fork on the Snake River (Idaho)

Three Kentuckians turned their canoes adrift on the Missouri River  
and threw in their lot with the Astorians

### WILSON PRICE HUNT RECEIVES A NOTE FROM MANUEL LISA

While Wilson Price Hunt was in camp at the mouth of the Niobrara River (northern Nebraska)  
Indians entered the camp with a white man bearing a note from Manuel Lisa  
asking Hunt to wait for him so the combined parties could safely travel together  
through hostile Sioux country

Hunt did not consider this offer favorably

he sent Manuel Lisa an ambiguous, though friendly, response and hurried on from the Niobrara  
leaving Lisa to do the best he could for himself through hostile country

### WILSON PRICE HUNT MAKES A DRASTIC CHANGE OF PLANS

John Jacob Astor's orders had been clear

Hunt's expedition was to follow the route of Lewis and Clark to the Columbia River  
But stories of hostile Blackfoot Indians told by Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor  
led Wilson Price Hunt to make a change of plans

Hunt decided not to journey on as a water expedition up the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers\  
to the Columbia River as Lewis and Clark had done

rather he would travel to the Arikara villages (in today's North and South Dakota) instead and there trade with the Arikara for horses for an overland expedition  
this course according to the three Kentuckians offered several advantages:

- it avoided the Blackfoot menace,
- this route was shorter,
- it avoided a difficult mountain crossing,
- it lay through a country of plentiful game

#### HUNT'S NEW ROUTE CHANGED THE NATURE OF THE OVERLAND EXPEDITION

Wilson Price Hunt's new route had been traced from the Snake River country by Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reznor when they traveled east from Fort Henry on the Snake River (Idaho)

Hired as guides the three Kentuckians suggested the Overland Expedition travel from the Arikara villages to the south and west through the country of the Crow Indians and cross the Rocky Mountains over the Big Horn Mountains Range  
this, Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reznor assured Wilson Price Hunt, would allow them to avoid the Blackfoot Indians

Astor's Land Expedition would journey to Henry's Fort on the Snake River (Idaho)

However, this new route required the Astorians shift earlier than had been anticipated from a water expedition to a land expedition

If Wilson Price Hunt had had any knowledge of the wilds or of Indians, he would surely have realized that sixty armed men in canoes would have a good chance of fending off an attack by the Blackfoot but that seventy men with their mounts and pack horses would be courting disaster also, that riding into the unknown where lack of game and water and fodder for their horses was an even greater danger than Blackfoot Indians  
indeed, they might even lose their horses  
as the Crows were well-known for successfully stealing horses

#### ASTORIANS TRAVELING WITH WILSON PRICE HUNT ENCOUNTER SIoux INDIANS

A few days after leaving the Niobrara River the Overland Expedition encountered a Sioux war party about six hundred strong gathered on the Missouri River's bank

Astorians hastily loaded swivel guns and small arms and made ready to fight their way through Sioux seeing their preparations spread their buffalo robes on the ground and invited Hunt to a council  
Wilson Price Hunt, accompanied by Astor's other partners and the interpreter, stepped ashore they were followed by the elderly scientist Joseph Bradbury  
who was always eager to collect information about the aborigines

once seated on the ground the pipe was passed around the circle  
presents of tobacco and dried corn were brought from the keelboats  
demeanor of the white men was friendly  
and the gifts stacked beside Hunt waiting to be distributed were appealing  
warriors could see the hunters with their rifles remaining on board the boats  
while the swivel guns pointed shoreward in a menacing manner  
Sioux chiefs declared that they had meant to interfere with the white man's boats  
only because they believed they were carrying ammunition to the Arikaras, Minnetarees  
and Mandans with whom the Sioux were currently at war  
since the white men were merely on their way to join their friends beyond the mountains  
the Sioux had nothing but kind feelings toward them

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S EXPEDITION HAS A SECOND INDIAN ENCOUNTER

Two days had barely passed after their first meeting with Sioux Indians  
when another large Indian band was sighted coming down to the river  
they appeared to be preparing to seize the keelboats in the channel ahead  
which was narrowed by a sand bar

Astor's partner Joseph Miller felt a tug on his arm

British scientist Thomas Nuttall had risen to his feet and was peering at the threatening warriors

**"Sir," Miller heard the scientist ask with much animation, "don't you think these Indians  
much fatter and more robust than those of yesterday?"**<sup>21</sup>

these fatter Indians proved to be Arikaras and their allies seeking a skirmish with the Sioux  
they jumped into the water and held out their hands in a white man's greeting  
after the friendly greeting was exchanged, the natives hastened away to their village upriver  
to prepare their people for a visit from the white traders  
with the hope of acquiring a supply of arms and ammunition

#### HUNT'S ASTORIANS LEARN THE MISSOURI FUR COMPANY IS CLOSE BY

About two miles below the Arikara village two Indians came up in haste to inform Wilson Price Hunt  
that another large trading boat was ascending the river  
this was Manuel Lisa straining to overtake Hunt

Approximately sixty-eight Astorians were traveling in four boats

Hunt thought it best to stop and wait for the Spaniard  
much of the time during this rest was spent calming the fiery Robert McClellan

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<sup>21</sup> Constance Lindsay Skinner, *Adventurers of Oregon: A Chronicle of the Fur Trade*, P. 158.

who envisioned the coming of a great opportunity to shoot Lisa on sight  
(McClellan had lost several lawsuits to Lisa regarding failure to deliver merchandise)  
Pierre Dorion also sank into a sullen rage at the prospect of Lisa's arrival

#### TONQUIN ATTEMPTS TO SAIL NORTH TO TRADE

Captain Jonathan Thorn was anxious to get away from Astoria as quickly as possible  
he rushed ashore an insufficient supply of goods to stock the post  
Thorn sailed away from Astoria to trade around Vancouver Island -- June 1, 1811  
he took Astor's partner Alexander McKay with him as supercargo  
However, a strong wind kept the *Tonquin* within the Baker's Bay for four days

#### ASTORIANS AND MISSOURI FUR COMPANY TRAVELED TOGETHER

Manuel Lisa overtook Wilson Price and his Astorians just at the edge of Sioux country -- June 2, 1811  
among the occupants of Lisa's boat was a woman and her child  
Sacajawea, the "Bird Woman" of Lewis and Clark fame,  
and the boy, now six years old, who had entered the world on that expedition  
Sacajawea and Marie Dorion were thus traveling companions for a brief time  
Lisa planned to continue on the Missouri River until he reached Henry's Fort (Montana)  
on the Missouri River at Three Forks

Wilson Price Hunt, perhaps in a ploy of trickery, agreed to join forces with Manuel Lisa  
he suggested their collective strength would be valuable in the face of potential Indian problems  
whether Hunt lied or changed his mind later is uncertain

Astor's partners Robert McClellan and Ramsay Crooks helped convince Hunt  
that Lisa would deliver them to the hostile Indians by trickery  
no evidence of this exists, but such were the tactics of fur traders

For two days the rival traders traveled together in apparent good will  
Manuel Lisa, indeed, was so smooth-tongued and gracious  
that Pierre Dorion forgot the wrongs earlier done to him

#### OLD HOSTILE FEELINGS REKINDLE

Wilson Price Hunt and Manuel Lisa's competing parties traveled together  
on the way to the Arikara Villages (just above today's Mobridge, South Dakota)

Lisa still needed a Sioux interpreter

Pierre Dorion accepted an invitation to visit the Spaniard's boat -- June 4, 1811

Lisa plied the weak-willed man generously with whiskey and sought to win him from Hunt  
but Dorion had his own sense of honor

not for bribes, nor even for liquor that he too dearly loved,  
would he consent to break his agreement with Wilson Price Hunt  
Lisa threatened to retain Dorion forcibly if necessary  
to work out his old whiskey debt of ten dollars a quart  
Dorion flew into a rage, left the boat, and went to Hunt at once with his story

#### BOTH HUNT AND LISA EXPEDITIONS FACE NEAR DISASTER

Manuel Lisa followed Pierre Dorion to Wilson Price Hunt's camp  
but not in time to prevent a recital of events by Pierre Dorion -- if that was his intent  
There was a violent scene as Dorion hit Lisa  
noise of the brawl attracted lovers of excitement to the spot  
Lisa had a knife, but Dorion seized a pair of pistols and kept his foe at a distance  
Robert McClellan arrived with a rifle with the intention of carrying out his threat to kill Lisa  
indeed, Wilson Price Hunt had great difficulty in preventing him from doing so  
meanwhile the scientific John Bradbury and the literary Thomas Nuttall  
were doing their best to aid Hunt in soothing the combatants  
Lisa, next hurled an insult at Wilson Price Hunt  
Hunt, himself enraged, challenged Lisa to a pistol duel  
Both expeditions could have ended that night  
but Bradbury and Nuttall succeeded in preventing the duel from taking place  
it was Lisa who yielded -- perhaps realizing that if he bested Hunt  
he would then face the prospect of fighting, in some sequence, McClellan and Dorion  
While violence was narrowly avoided hatred flourished unabated  
both expeditions continued to share company during the following days  
but there was no further exchange of courtesies

#### CONSTRUCTION OF PACIFIC FUR COMPANY POST IS COMPLETED

John Jacob Astor's trading post was enclosed in a stockade of logs built of bark-covered logs  
mounted guns were put in place after the model of northern fur-trading forts  
this main trading post or factory was located on the south (Oregon) side of the Columbia River  
First permanent American settlement in Pacific Northwest was named "Astoria"  
in honor of John Jacob Astor President of the Pacific Fur Company -- June 4, 1811  
Astor's partner Chief Factor Duncan McDougall was in command of Astoria  
McDougall's authority as the representative of John Jacob Astor was unquestioned  
but he quickly showed himself to be an angry irritable little man of second-rate ability

## TONQUIN SAILS FROM THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Captain Jonathan Thorn was anxious to get away from Baker's Bay  
when the wind changed to favorable Captain Thorn crossed the bar of the Columbia River  
he sailed north to supply Russians-American Company  
in New Archangel (Sitka) Russian-America (Alaska) -- June 5, 1811  
(Astor had previously sent an agent to St. Petersburg, Russia  
who had made arrangements to supply Russian trading posts)

*Tonquin* carried most of the trade goods supplied by John Jacob Astor  
leaving Astoria with a short supply of trading stock and supplies

Captain Thorn had with him twenty-three men aboard the *Tonquin*  
Alexander McKay, one of Astor's partners, went on board acting as supercargo and chief trader  
he also represented the interests of Astor's partners  
clerk James Lewis also accompanied the ship to record trading activities

*Tonquin* stopped along the Pacific coast to pick up a Chehalis Indian translator  
known by various spellings of his name: Lamazee (author Washington Irving);  
(Lamaza as identified by clerk Alexander Ross or Lamanse by historian Hubert Bancroft)

Next the *Tonquin* stopped to trade at Clayoquot Sound on Vancouver Island

## DAVID THOMPSON REACHES SALEESH HOUSE

Traveling by horseback from Kootanae House David Thompson accompanied by nine companions  
arrived at Saleesh House on the Clark Fork River -- June 5, 1811

There Thompson anticipated finding supplies, equipment and his clerk Finan McDonald  
to his dismay he found Saleesh House abandoned  
because of the Piegan threat Finan McDonald had joined Jacques Finlay at Spokane House  
Thompson left notes warning Astor's land expedition this was North West Company property  
in case the Americans passed by the post

## DAVID THOMPSON ENTERS THE KOOTENAI RIVER

Thompson and his nine traveling companions set out down the Kootenai River by canoe  
they crossed to Lake Pend O'reille and on to the Pend O'reille River which they paddled down  
(to a point near the present town of Cusick, Washington)  
next the party portaged south across country about fifteen miles to the Little Spokane River  
and down that stream to its confluence with the Spokane River  
David Thompson met Finan McDonald and Jacques Finlay at Spokane House  
(about nine miles northwest of present Spokane -- this site later became  
one of the major fur trading locations for both British and American fur traders)

Thompson approved the post's location where multitudes of Indians came to catch and dry fish  
Thompson stated in his notes while at Spokane House that the purpose of his voyage was: **“to explore this river in order to open a passage for the interior trade with the Pacific ocean [sic]”**<sup>22</sup>

#### ASTORIA IS VISITED BY TWO KOOTENAI INDIANS FROM THE UPPER COLUMBIA RIVER

Astorians at the post were greeted by two Indians purported to be husband and wife  
they were dressed in long robes of deerskin with leggings and moccasins -- June 8, 1811  
they looked more like Rocky Mountain natives than locals  
they could not understand any speech until a French-Canadian addressed them in Cree language  
with which they seemed partially familiar

In fact, they were two female Kootenai Indians who carried a letter  
sent by North West Company clerk Finan McDonald at a fort  
that he had just constructed on the Spokane River  
this letter was addressed to Nor'Wester John Stuart stationed somewhere in the interior

These messengers said they had descended the (Spokane River)  
when the couple reached the Columbia River they heard of white men at the river's mouth  
thus the messengers journeyed downriver instead of upriver and arrived at Astoria  
they indicated that the North West Company was ready to contest the Pacific Fur Company  
for possession of the Columbia River drainage area

Astorians decided to send an expedition into the interior to investigate  
David Stuart began to make preparations for the journey into the interior

#### ASTORIANS EXPLORE TO THE SOUTH OF THEIR TRADING POST

Clerks William Henry and Alfred Seton journeyed from Fort Astoria by bateau  
some one hundred miles up the Columbia River  
they entered the Willamette River and continued upriver as far as the waterfall on the Willamette  
where they portaged around the east side  
they continued to a place where the banks flattened out on both sides of the river  
Calapooya Indians (a group of Native American tribes who shared a common language)  
had long made this area their home hunting and fishing in the plentiful valley  
this region later became known as Champoeg (pronounced: sham-POO-ee)  
the name Champoeg is something of a puzzle  
some early settlers claimed Calapooya Indians used the name  
which meant “Prairie of the Blue Flowers”

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<sup>22</sup> George W. Fuller, *A History of the Pacific Northwest*, P. 82.

others said it was a corruption of the French “Campment du Sable” (“sand camp”)  
still others indicated the name was a double corruption  
a combination of the French word “champ” (field)  
and the Calapooyan word “pooitch” (an edible root)  
(today Champoeg survives only as a name for a few specific places:  
a park, an historic district and a cemetery in the northern tip of Marion County)

#### CALAPOOYA INDIANS CALLED CHAMPOEG IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY HOME

Calapooya Indians were the earliest known inhabitants of these prairies

Champoeg, a prehistoric lake bed located along the south and east bank of the Willamette River,  
was composed of an open, sandy peninsula on the south side of the Willamette River

located a few miles above the falls on the Willamette River  
its soil is deep and rich and free of rocks

there were few places to cross the Willamette River but one crossing existed  
where the river was narrow during the summertime

there a wide gravel bench stretched across

Indian village of Champoock was located south of the waterfall

on the east bank of the Willamette River (near today’s Salem, Oregon)

For centuries Calapooya Indians kept Champoeg as open range

by annually burning off the tall prairie grass

there they fished at Willamette Falls, hunted game on the prairies,

gathered abundant Camas bulbs and picked berries in the nearby mountains

#### HUDSON’S BAY COMPANY ESTABLISHES A HUGE LAND GRANT

Competition between the British Hudson’s Bay Company and Canadian North West Company  
increased when Hudson’s Bay Company tightened their grip on their Canadian holdings

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk acquired enough shares

of the British Hudson’s Bay Company to control the enterprise

Hudson’s Bay Company granted Lord Selkirk 116,000 square miles

or seventy-four million acres on the Red River -- June 12, 1811

(this territory comprised large portions of present-day Manitoba, Saskatchewan,  
Northern Minnesota and North Dakota)

Lord Selkirk’s land claim was also a problem for the North West Company

as the settlement lay directly across the main North West Company supply route

North West Company voyageurs were cut off from their Montreal headquarters and supplies

Selkirk’s claim also occupied the heart of the buffalo range which the Nor’Westers depended on

for vital supplies of pemmican

#### ASTORIANS AND MISSOURI FUR COMPANY ARRIVE AT THE ARIKARA VILLAGES

Wilson Price Hunt's Astorians and Manuel Lisa's Missouri Fur Company

arrived at the Arikara village (in central South Dakota near northern boundary) -- June 12, 1811  
they pitched their camps near the mouth of the Grand River on opposite shores

Manuel Lisa sent young sightseer Henry Brackenridge to Wilson Price Hunt's tent

with the suggestion that to assure their mutual safety they should enter the Indian village together  
with the outward appearance of friendliness

Hunt was aware that these Indians who were new to him were old acquaintances of Lisa's  
this arrangement would at least allow Hunt to water the Indians when they met

During the council with the Arikara Lisa removed much of the suspicion Hunt had felt toward him

Lisa's speech assured the Indians that although his party and the Astorians had separate interests  
Lisa would resent any wrong done to his rivals as if they had been done to him

Lisa also provided Hunt every assistance in acquiring horses since the Astorians had decided  
to leave the Missouri River at this point and pursue their way overland across the plains

in fact, Lisa knew that leaving the route of Lewis and Clark to blaze their own way  
was a foolhardy move

Manuel Lisa well might smile while he was giving assistance to Wilson Price Hunt

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT AND MANUEL LISA REMAIN IN THE ARIKARA VILLAGES

Horses proved to be difficult to acquire from the Arikara Indians -- June 15, 1811

both Wilson Price Hunt and his party of seventy Pacific Fur Company employees

and Manuel Lisa with his twenty-five Missouri Fur Company men

spent in excess of a month among the Arikara villagers

#### AT THE ARIKARA VILLAGE EDWARD ROSE WAS ADDED TO THE OVER LAND EXPEDITION

Edward Rose was a very unpleasant, insolent renegade ex-Lisa man

with a vicious appearance and sullen disposition who was a friend of the Crow Indians

he was a big, powerful man with a violent temper -- but he also possessed great ability

he had a sinister reputation and no one trusted him

he seemed to be motivated only by his own interests

he was well known to the guides, Kentuckian Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor

(Edward Rose had first come up the Missouri River with Manuel Lisa [1807]

and had passed the winter of John Colter's adventure in a Crow village

after a dispute with Lisa he had returned to the Crows where he lived for a number of years)

Since his expedition would pass through Crow country

Wilson Price Hunt believed Rose would be a valuable asset and added him to the expedition as an interpreter and guide

#### TONQUIN VISITS VANCOUVER ISLAND

*Tonquin* sailed up the Pacific coast to Vancouver Island and into Clayoquot Sound -- June 15, 1811

Captain Jonathan Thorn did not know these natives were waiting for a chance to take revenge in retribution for Captain G.W. Ayres of the *Mercury* carrying off a dozen of their people and leaving them on California's barren Farallon Islands in Drake's Bay [1810]

Chief Wickaninnish invited Chief Trader Alexander McKay to land and stay with him

McKay went ashore to a large Tla-o-qui-aht Indian village to visit with Wickaninnish

McKay was received in a most cordial manner

at the same time, six Indians were held on the *Tonquin* as hostages to ensure the safety of McKay

Captain Thorn did not wait for the return of Alexander McKay to begin trading

packets of goods were laid out: cloth, blankets, knives, ribbons, buttons, hatchets, beads, fishhooks and clothes were put on display to entice trade

Chief Nookimus, who was aboard the *Tonquin*, was anxious to begin the trading

trade did not go well as the Indians were very familiar with trading with "Bostons" (Americans) in reaction to the high prices set by the natives Captain Thorn thrust his hands into his pockets he paced up and down the deck of his ship in sullen silence

shrewd old Chief Nookimus followed him to and fro holding out sea otter skins pestering the captain to trade

Captain Thorn became increasingly enraged at the prices set by the natives

Thorn spit at Chief Nookimus' feet to show his disgust with the Indian

Nookimus thrust a sea otter pelt in Captain Thorn's face

Thorn suddenly turned and snatched the otter skin from the chief's hand and rubbed the old man's face with it

Thorn then lifted the old Chief up and threw him overboard

Indians quickly cleared the deck and silently paddled back to their village where they spent the night

#### CHIEF TRADER ALEXANDER MCKAY RETURNS TO THE TONQUIN

After an overnight stay in the Tla-o-qui-aht Indian village

McKay was unaware of the events that had unfolded aboard the *Tonquin* he left the Indian village and returned to the ship-- June 16, 1811

Native interpreter Lamazee related what had happened to Alexander McKay

and begged McKay to prevail on the captain to depart from Clayoquot Sound  
Astor's partner and Chief Trader Alexander McKay ordered the *Tonquin* to sail  
Captain Jonathan Thorn made ignored this demand

Thorn pointed out the cannon and firearms provided adequate protection  
Thorn believed the Indians would return to trade -- and at his price  
McKay and Thorn retired to the Captain's cabin where a hot argument ensued  
but the *Tonquin* remained anchored in place

#### DAVID THOMPSON CONTINUES HIS "VOYAGE OF A SUMMER MOON"

After spending overnight with his clerks Finan McDonald and Jacques Finlay  
Thompson prepared to leave Spokane House traveling on borrowed horses after complaining  
that strayed horses had delayed his departure until the late hour of 8:45 a.m. -- June 17, 1811  
Thompson and his small party of Iroquois, Sanpoil Indians and French-Canadian voyageurs  
headed northwest along an Indian trail linking fishing places until this trail eventually left the river  
and continued north toward Chamokane Creek where they camped  
after butchering an old horse for dinner the men retired for the night  
and a constant fight with mosquitoes which were very troublesome<sup>23</sup>

#### INDIANS ARRIVE AT THE *TONQUIN* TO TRADE

While Captain Jonathan Thorn and Chief Trader Alexander McKay were asleep  
twenty unarmed Indians in a large canoe commanded by Chief Shrewish  
paddled out to the *Tonquin* -- morning June 17, 1811  
they held up sea otter skins and made signs that they wanted to trade  
Indians paddled closer and came alongside the *Tonquin* to trade  
as everyone was eager to trade the officer of the watch,  
who was in charge of the ship in the absence of the captain,  
ignored standard procedures and permitted the natives to mount the deck  
Soon a second large canoe arrived -- these Indians also proceeded to board the ship  
more canoes came along side and more Indians clambered onto the vessel  
it was noticed the canoes were paddled by women  
as more and more Indians came on board the *Tonquin*  
Thorn and McKay both reached the deck of the *Tonquin* to watch over the trading  
Indians climbed up the rope ladders on one side of the ship  
every native had a packet of furs held over his head as a sign they wanted to trade

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<sup>23</sup> Jack and Claire Nisbet, HistoryLink.org Essay 8677, July 7, 2008.

Indians moved slowly across the deck making their selections from piles of trade goods that had been laid out for their inspection  
trade did not advance well even with Chief Trader McKay urging on the exchanges  
Indians always offered fewer furs than was demanded by Thorn  
after crossing the ship's deck to the far rail the Indians climbed down the rope ladders  
but instead of boarding their canoes and leaving the natives climbed back aboard the ship  
crew members saw themselves surrounded by a multitude of natives  
each sailor had several Indians in his immediate vicinity

#### *TONQUIN IS OVERRUN WITH INDIAN*

One of the sailors aloft in the rigging became alarmed as the Indian numbers rapidly increased  
he called a warning to Captain Jonathan Thorn and Chief Trader Alexander McKay  
McKay urged Thorn to clear the ship and get under way  
Thorn again made light of the advice -- after all, Astor's partners did not command his ship  
he said that with the firearms on board  
there was no reason to fear an even a greater number of Indians on board  
however, all of the weapons were placed in storage in a cabin below the deck  
*Tonquin's* crew was actually unarmed and scattered about the deck  
Captain Thorn, after enough time had passed indicate his independence, issued orders to sail  
sailors began to weigh anchor while other crewmen were sent aloft to make ready the sail  
Indians now offered to trade with the Captain -- and on the captain's terms  
frantic trade was commenced and the Indians gathered up goods  
*Tonquin's* anchor was nearly up and her sails were loose  
when Captain Thorn, in a loud voice, ordered the ship to be cleared

#### *BATTLE ON BOARD THE TONQUIN LASTED FIVE MINUTES*

One of the Indians gave a yell as a signal  
trade bundles were dropped from the Indians' hands revealing war clubs, tomahawks,  
and new hatches and knives that had been acquired in trade  
Thorn had armed an enemy aboard his ship while his crew remained defenseless  
Natives rushed to attack their victims  
first man to fall was clerk James Lewis who was leaning with folded arms over a bale of blankets  
as he bartered with an Indian  
Lewis received a stab wound in the back and fell down the companionway to the deck below  
Chief Trader Alexander McKay who had been seated sprang to his feet  
he was instantly knocked down with a war club and thrown backwards overboard

in the water he was killed by women in the canoes who beat him with their paddles  
Captain Jonathan Thorn out up a desperate fight against fearful odds  
he had come up on deck without a weapon  
Chief Shrewish rushed him at the first outbreak -- Thorn barely had time to open a clasp knife  
with one blow the young chief fell dead at the captain's feet  
several of Shrewish's followers set upon the captain who defended himself vigorously  
he attempted to fight his way to the cabin where the firearms were located  
slain and wounded natives were strewn about the quarterdeck  
Thorn was struck from behind with a war club which felled him to the deck  
he was dispatched with knives and thrown overboard  
for the women to avenge the insult to their chief

Using knives, handspikes and what other weapons they could grasp the sailors defended themselves  
but they were soon overpowered by numbers and were mercilessly butchered  
Seven crewmen who had been aloft to make ready the sail contemplated with horror the carnage below  
without weapons they let themselves down in the hope of getting below decks  
three were mortally wounded in the effort  
remaining four, including one who received a bad knife wound  
made good their retreat into the cabin where the arms were kept  
there they found Astorian James Lewis still alive  
Sailors barricaded the cabin door and the guns were taken up  
crewmen broke holes through the companionway and briskly fired the muskets and pistols  
until the decks were cleared of attacking Indians  
Lamazee, the Indian interpreter, was taken to the village  
Survivors of the crew rushed out and discharged some of the deck guns  
and drove all of the Indians to shore in their canoes

#### FOUR CREWMEN AND CLERK JAMES LEWIS REMAIN ALIVE ABOARD THE *TONQUIN*

Four sailors were not enough to sail the ship  
James Lewis insisted the sailors take a boat and row out to sea during the night  
four men left the *Tonquin* -- clerk James Lewis remained on board alone  
unable to clear the entrance to the sound the sailors were obliged  
to stop and rest for the night  
exhausted by fatigue and watching for approaching Indians ready for the kill  
they fell into a sound sleep in the ship's boat

#### ONLY ONE MAN REMAINED ABOARD THE *TONQUIN*

After the battle clerk James Lewis was the only known survivor

on board the *Tonquin* -- early morning June 18, 1811

After a time some Indian canoes ventured forth to reconnoiter

they brought out the interpreter, Lamazee, who after the attack had spent the night in the village

Indians paddled around the *Tonquin* keeping a safe distance

only one man was seen on deck and Lamazee recognized him as James Lewis

Lewis made friendly signs and invited the natives on board

About two hundred Indians paddled out to the ship where the complete cargo of trade goods

was available for the taking

those who mounted the deck met no opposition as James Lewis had disappeared

other canoes pressed forward and the decks were soon crowded with Indians intent on plunder

As Indians scrambled about the ship the *Tonquin* became a volcano

ship fragments were blown high into the air as were arms, legs and mutilated bodies

apparently James Lewis had set off barrels of black powder -- 4½ tons were ignited

hundreds of natives were destroyed by the explosion

many more were shockingly mutilated

Indians swam for their lives or struggled with the agonies of coming death

those who escaped the danger remained aghast and stupefied by the results

for miles the beach was strewn with dismembered body parts

and the wreckage of canoes and the ship

for days afterwards the limbs and bodies of the slain were thrown on the beach by the tides

#### *TONQUIN* VANISHED IN THE EXPLOSION

Inhabitants of Clayoquot Sound were overwhelmed with consternation

then one of the *Tonquin*'s boats was seen with four crewmen aboard -- morning June 18, 1811

shouts of fury greeted the sight of the unfortunate sailors who were forced ashore by natives

and brought to the Tla-o-qui-aht Indian village as captives

Lamazee was permitted to converse with the prisoners

he gathered from them some of the particulars already related

James Lewis advised them to slip the cable on a boat as soon as it was dark

and put off quietly in the ship's boat in an effort to get out to sea

Lewis declared his intention to remain on board until daylight

to decoy as many Indians as possible and then set fire to the powder magazine

he planned to terminate his own life with a remarkable act of vengeance

all four unfortunate sailors perished in a painful and protracted manner

Aboard the *Tonquin* thirteen crewmen and traders and six Kanakas had perished

unknown hundreds of Indians had been killed and maimed

## LOSS OF THE *TONQUIN* HAS A DEVASTATING AFFECT ON THE ASTORIANS

Although the Astorians did not yet know it

loss of the *Tonquin* was a grievous blow to the infant establishment of Astoria:

- loss of twenty-three men severely hindered the Astorians' ability to defend themselves and they were now without one of their most respected trading partners, Alexander McKay;
- loss of the ship ended the possibility of conducting the all-important Russian trade and they could not ship furs they managed to acquire to China as planned;
- area open for trade was now limited to the country around Astoria;
- loss of irreplaceable trade goods was a bitter blow;
- loss of the psychological advantage of having an armed vessel at their backs undercut their very sense of security

## THOMPSON VISITS WITH FREE TRAPPERS WORKING THE COLVILLE RIVER AREA

Awakening the next morning to thunder and lightning -- June 18, 1811

David Thompson was visited in camp by a free (unaffiliated) hunter who was trapping nearby

Thompson and his nine traveling companions were back on the trail -- 7:30 a.m.

they rode northwest, crossing several creeks that form the headwaters of the Colville River

along the way they paused to purchase a sack of roots from a group of Indians

and, a little farther along, they stopped to visit a small native camp

here they met another independent French-Canadian trapper

After resting their horses they continued north through the Colville Valley

## DAVID THOMPSON CONTINUES ACROSS THE COLVILLE VALLEY

Thompson discovered the trail he was following crossed the Colville River<sup>24</sup>

(a few miles north of present-day Arden, Washington)

He sent one of his men to a nearby Indian camp to hire a canoe to ferry their cargo across,

he purchased roots and fish and twenty-two muskrat pelts

David Thompson reached Ilthkoyape Falls (today's Kettle Falls) on the Columbia River

(now submerged under Franklin Roosevelt Lake behind Grand Coulee Dam)

## DAVID THOMPSON RESTS AND BUILDS A CANOE AT KETTLE FALLS

Spring salmon run had just begun at Kettle Falls,

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<sup>24</sup> Jack and Claire Nisbet, HistoryLink.org Essay 8677, July 7, 2008.

Indian fishermen hung kettle-shaped baskets on the end of poles close to the falls  
salmon trying to jump the thundering cataract fell back in incredible numbers  
into the primitive traps

Thompson spent two weeks searching for materials suitable for building a large split-cedar canoe  
sharp at both ends, the canoe was thirty foot long with a five-and-one-half foot beam  
flat cedar timbers were bent to the desired shape by steaming  
planks of cedar were bolted to a flat keel  
nails were not used -- seams were gummed

David Thompson had heard on his trip back to the North West Company headquarters at Rainy Lake  
that an American exploring party (Lewis and Clark) reached the mouth of the Columbia [1805]  
he was thus undoubtedly eager to make a better claim to the area for Great Britain  
than Lewis and Clark or John Jacob Astor would make for the United States

Thompson had been instructed to follow the complete course of the Columbia River in an effort  
to arrive at the river's mouth before North West Company's newest rival the Pacific Fur Company  
could stake a claim to the "Great river of the West"  
however, David Thompson did not act like a man in a hurry  
but rather he seemed to be a canny trader building good will for the future

#### DAVID THOMPSON CONTINUES DOWN THE COLUMBIA RIVER

North West Company employee and his eleven men cast off near Kettle Falls  
bound for the mouth of the Columbia River in their large split-cedar canoe -- July 3, 1811

Thompson struck a British flag into the stern of his canoe  
as a demonstration to the natives and any Americans he might encounter

Thompson's canoe was propelled by eight oarsmen  
five French voyageurs and Thompson himself, an Iroquois bowman and steersman  
two additional Sanpoil Indians accompanied him

Thompson was met by friendly Indians along the Columbia River who had never seen white men  
whenever he encountered Indians he stopped, sometimes in the face of hostile demonstrations,  
he passed out British flags and added eloquent testimonials about the North West Company  
consequently, native peoples along the Lower Columbia greeted him warmly  
near Crab Creek (about three miles east of today's Reardan, Washington)  
the two Sanpoil Indians were exchanged for a Shoshone chief and his wife

#### DAVID THOMPSON REACHES THE CONFLUENCE OF THE SNAKE AND COLUMBIA RIVERS

Thompson continued down the Columbia to the mouth of the Snake River  
(near today's Pasco) -- July 9, 1811

Thompson during a rest stop at the mouth of the Snake River set up a pole with a message formally taking possession of the land for Great Britain's King George III he also noted his future intention to build a trading post: **“Know hereby that this country is claimed by Great Britain as part of its territories, and that the N.W. Company of Merchants from Canada, finding the Factory [trading post] for this people inconvenient for them, do hereby intend to erect a factory in this place for the convenience of the country around. D. Thompson. Junction of the Shawpatin [Snake] River with the Columbia. July 9th, 1811.”**<sup>25</sup>

#### DAVID THOMPSON CONTINUES DOWN THE COLUMBIA RIVER

David Thompson followed Lewis and Clark's route of six years earlier only a short distance down river, Thompson met Chief Yellepit of the Walla Walla Tribe who displayed an [1801] Jefferson medal and a small American flag proof of the passage of the American Lewis and Clark Expedition

David Thompson camped opposite the John Day River -- July 10, 1811

he learned from the Indians of the arrival of John Jacob Astor's ship *Tonquin* and of Astor's expedition at the mouth of the Columbia River three months before

When David Thompson reached The Dalles and his first Chinook village

Thompson's Shakaption chief and his wife turned back up the Columbia River leaving his with seven traveling companions

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND HIS MEN PREPARE TO COMPLETE THEIR EXPLORATION

Nor'Wester David Thompson and his traveling companions delayed starting from the Chinook village until 6:15 a.m. July 15, 1811

they shaved and spruced up their clothes to make a proper appearance for the Astorians also, they made sure that the British flag was flying from the stern of their canoe

#### ASTORIANS AT ASTORIA PREPARE TO JOURNEY UP THE COLUMBIA RIVER

David Stuart, one of Astor's partners, was ordered to construct by Chief Factor Duncan McDougall to build a second trading post at an appropriate trading area several hundred miles up the Columbia River

guiding the trading party upstream was the pair of Kootenai Indians who were purported to be husband and wife

Just as they were about to set out -- July 15, 1811

a canoe came paddling down the Columbia River flying the British flag

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<sup>25</sup> Cecil Dryden, *History of Washington*, P. 65-66.

## NOR'WESTER DAVID THOMPSON STOPS AT ASTORIA

When David Thompson arrived at John Jacob Astor's post he found that the Astor sea party had already arrived and the Americans had built four log huts of a permanent shelter  
Thompson he had his voyageurs sweep him smartly to the dock -- afternoon of July 15, 1811  
Astorians ran to the river's edge to see the newcomers:

- Scottish clerks with their native brogue still strong;
- French-Canadian voyageurs hailing the Nor'Westers in accents of their own;
- Kanakas imported as workers from the Hawaiian Islands,
- Chinook Indians peering curiously out beneath deformed, sharply sloping foreheads;
- at the front of the unique crowd stood three former Nor'Westers

Duncan McDougall, David Stuart and David's nephew Robert Stuart

Thompson was informed they called their post Astoria in honor of the American financier

## DAVID THOMPSON IS WELL-RECEIVED BY THE ASTORIANS

Astorians would have been delighted to see any white men  
many of the Astorians had formerly worked for the North West Company  
and were already acquainted with David Thompson  
they were doubly excited to meet one of their old friends

Friends and former partners welcomed Thompson boisterously  
they hurried him into their private quarters where he was well received by the former Nor'Westers  
they entertained Thompson and his men as hospitably as they could

Before he had left Fort William to lead the Columbia Brigade to the West  
David Thompson had been informed by North West Company leaders  
that the Nor'Westers and Pacific Fur Company planned to work together  
to develop the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest

when he delivered the news of his understanding of the arrangement to the Astorians  
they had no reason to disbelieve the Nor'Wester  
the fact that the deal had fallen though was unknown to David Thompson

## DAVID THOMPSON RECOGNIZES THE KOOTENAI INDIAN COUPLE

Thompson had first met the two Kootenai Indians posing as husband and wife three years before  
the woman masquerading as a man had been living with one of his voyageurs  
Thompson had run off for loose morals and troublemaking  
this couple was now busily preparing to guide Astorian David Stuart up the Columbia River  
David Thompson discovered one of the Kootenais occupied herself posing as a great prophetess,

she had frightened the Chinook Indians with threats of smallpox  
(a disease they had become all too familiar with during virulent epidemics  
brought by sea otter traders a few years before Lewis and Clark)  
and with tales of two giants who were approaching  
overturning the ground burying whole villages  
if Thompson had not calmed down one angry delegation of Chinook Indians  
they very well may have murdered the pair because of their “bad medicine”

#### DAVID THOMPSON CONTINUES ON TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN

David Thompson set out by canoe for the mouth of the Columbia River -- July 16, 1811  
he reported in his journal: **“The next day in my canoe with my men I went to Cape  
Disappointment, which terminates the course of this river, and remained until the tide came in. At  
ebb tide we noticed the current of the river riding in waves over the surface to the sea for about four  
miles; on all the shores of this ocean the agitation of the sea is constantly breaking against the rocky  
shore with high surges, and my men now allowed the great volume of water forming these high  
surges to be far superior to those of any lake.”**<sup>26</sup>

wind-whipped waves on the ever broadening Columbia River interested Thompson

Thompson reached Tongue Point where he reported: **“We continued our journey, amused with the  
seals playing in the river...we arrived at Tongue Point [today’s Astoria, Oregon], which...brought us  
to a full view of the Pacific Ocean.”**<sup>27</sup>

After a brief visit to the great sandbar of the Columbia River

David Thompson returned upriver to Astoria

#### ASTORIANS AND NOR’WESTER EXCHANGE INFORMATION

David Thompson had earned a week’s rest before heading back up the Columbia River

had mapped the Columbia River’s full length and examined its mouth

Thompson believed with the completed navigation of the Columbia River

this task had taken him four years and three months

with the geographic work done he was now ready

to attempt to draft a detailed map of Northwest America

Thompson, to deflect American interest, reported to the Astorians

there was poor trading in the interior -- but the ploy did not work

as the Astorians knew this information was inaccurate

Astorians knew more about the upper country than David Thompson might think

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<sup>26</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 77.

<sup>27</sup> Priit J. Vesilind, *National Geographic*, May, 1996, P. 131.

based on the information in the letter Nor'Wester Finan McDonald at Spokane House had written to Nor'Wester John Stuart stationed somewhere in New Caledonia that had accidentally been delivered to them by the two Kootenai Indians posing as husband and wife

Finan McDonald's report of the upper river was considerably different from Thompson's in truth, desertions, Indian difficulties and lack of supplies prevented the North West Company from providing much competition for Astor's Pacific Fur Company however, the Nor'Westers who had joined the Astorians, too, had reasons to be discouraged things had not gone well since they had joined Astor's American Fur Company

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S PACIFIC FUR COMPANY OVERLAND EXPEDITION SETS OUT

Hunt and his Astorians would not follow the route of Lewis and Clark

up the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers to the Columbia River as ordered by John Jacob Astor rather they would strike out overland implementing Wilson Price Hunt's new travel plan

Hunt abandoned the keelboats in preparation for their westward overland journey

Astorians parted company with the two British scientists

John Bradbury and Thomas Nuttall chose this time to return to St. Louis with their specimens

Wilson Price Hunt led his approximately sixty-eight Astorians with eighty-two horses

they departed from the Arikara villages -- July 18, 1811

Hunt had not been able to produce mounts for all his people

seventy-six horses were used as pack animals that carried freight, merchandise and supplies containing ammunition, goods for trade, traps, equipment, Indian corn, corn meal, condensed soup, dried meat, trade merchandise and other essentials

only six animals were used for saddle purposes

Astor's partners Wilson Hunt Donald, McKenzie, Ramsay Crooks, Joseph Miller and Robert McClellan were mounted

Pierre Dorion and his wife Marie trudged along together she at his heels

leading a horse on which were securely roped little Baptiste and Paul

ages four and two and their bundle of possessions

as was Marie Dorion and her two sons Baptiste and Paul aged four and two

Marie showed obvious signs of being pregnant

Hunt and his Astorians were guided by Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor

as they took a southwesterly route course across prairies

#### MANUEL LISA LEAVES THE ARIKARA VILLAGES BEHIND

Manuel Lisa and his Missouri Fur Company trappers had learned Andrew Henry was safe

Lisa was thus relieved of the responsibility of searching for his partner  
After Hunt's departure from the Arikara villages Lisa traded his own horses  
which were pastured among the Mandan's horses

for Wilson Price Hunt's four excellent keelboats -- July 18, 1811

Lisa returned ventured up the Missouri River leading his twenty-five men on a trapping expedition  
into the Rocky Mountains

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION REACHES THE GRAND RIVER

Hunt's caravan crossed the Grand River -- July 21, 1811

Hunt charged his course to a little more westerly direction  
across prairies knee-deep in grass where the horses could contentedly

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S OVERLAND PARTY ENTERS CHEYENNE INDIAN COUNTRY

Because some of the members of "Pilot Knobs" his expedition were sick

Hunt stopped at a friendly Cheyenne Indian camp to trade for buffalo meat -- July 22, 1811  
there Hunt purchased thirty-six more horses

Wilson Price Hunt rested his Astorians

bales of baggage were distributed among the additional horses  
and one horse was allowed to every two men so they could alternate riding and walking

In order to bring the party through this country Pierre Dorion had to use his native-like ability  
to read signs, find good fords across rivers, locate water holes and hunt game animals for food  
he was obviously well worth the trouble he had been to Wilson Price Hunt

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND DAVID STUART START UP THE COLUMBIA RIVER TOGETHER

Nor'Wester David Thompson and Astorian David Stuart both finished preparations  
for their journeys up the Columbia River

David Thompson and Astorian David Stuart set out in associated parties -- July 23, 1811

Thompson accompanied by the Kootenai Indian couple who had caused trouble at Astoria  
traveled in the same canoe that had carried him downriver to Astoria

David Stuart traveled in two clumsy, overloaded Chinook Indian canoes

with twenty-one Astorians including clerk Alexander Ross, voyageurs Ovide de Montigny,  
Francis Benjamin Pillette and Donald McClennan and three Kanakas (Hawaiians)  
including forty year old Naukane who was also known as John Coxe

Stuart noted of two of his men were particularly valuable: **"...one of our Sandwich Islanders, a bold and trustworthy fellow named [John] Coxe"...**[who] was looked upon by Mr. Thompson as a prodigy of wit and humor, so that those respectively acceptable qualities led to the exchange [of

pleasantries].” “...[A]nd a Canadian, called [Michael] Boulard. Boulard had the advantage of being long in the Indian country, and had picked up a few words of the language on his way down [the Columbia River].”<sup>28</sup>

#### ASTORIANS REMAINING AT THE POST WORRY ABOUT THEIR SITUATION

David Stuart’s departure upriver with Nor’Wester David Thompson

left fewer than three dozen men to defend Astoria

one third of these were Kanakas from the Sandwich Islands

Astorians were very aware that North West Company was already trading in the area

No word had been heard from Wilson Price Hunt and his land party

anxiety was growing at Astoria concerning the men and the supplies he was to bring

To complicate matters, Comcomly, the crafty, one-eyed chief of the Chinooks,

spread suspicion among upriver natives regarding the intentions of the Astorians

to keep these Indians from selling furs directly to the Pacific Fur Company traders

To make matter worse the Astorians at the post picked up vague rumors from the Indians

that something had happened to the *Tonquin*

#### THOMPSON AND STUART REACH THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE

Nor’Wester David Thompson and Astorian David Stuart stayed close together

as they traveled nearly one hundred fifty miles up the Columbia River

before they reached The Cascades of the Columbia River

Thompson and Stuart had many anxious hours at The Cascades

travelers on the river had to make contact with the Wishram Indians here

and were to pay a tribute to these tribesmen who were notoriously difficult to deal with

#### DAVID THOMPSON AND DAVID STUART MAKE PLANS TO TRAVEL SEPARATELY

Once at the rapids known as the Dalles

Nor’Wester David Thompson decided to take advantage of his fast canoe

which was also lighter and more easily portaged when they reached Celilo Falls ahead

Thompson and Astorian David Stuart would then travel up the Columbia River independently

Before parting ways there was an exchange of employees

Thompson exchanged Michel Boulard for Kanaka Naukane (also known as John Coxe)

Boulard had worked with Thompson off and on over eleven years

Naukane (John Coxe) was valuable to Thompson for his great strength and he was entertaining

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<sup>28</sup> Alexander Ross, *Adventures of the First Settlers On the Oregon and Columbia River*, P. 123-124.

Boulard, although weaker with age, was useful to the Astorians  
because of his knowledge of the upper Columbia River geography and native affairs  
Taking advantage of his fast canoe when he left The Dalles  
David Thompson pushed on ahead of David Stuart and the Astorians

#### LORD SELKIRK'S RED RIVER COLONY MOVES A STEP CLOSER TO REALITY

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk was a large Hudson's Bay Company stockholder  
he was concerned that tenant farmers in his Scottish homeland were being displaced  
by the spread of large-scale sheep raising operations on former croplands  
Lord Selkirk believed the only way for Scottish Highlanders to escape their harsh living conditions  
was to emigrate to Canada where they could find farmland available -- his farmland  
Lord Selkirk undertook the expenses necessary for transport, government, protection his colonists  
and to quiet the Indians' title to the land -- summer 1811  
pamphlets were printed to be distributed in Scotland and Ireland  
noting that land was to be given away or sold at a very low cost  
transportation to Canada would be provided for free or according to the individual's means  
Royal Canadian Volunteers Captain Miles Macdonell was sent to recruit colonists in Ireland  
Lord Selkirk invited him to be the first governor of his colony  
Colin Robertson, who formerly held a job with the North West Company, was sent to Scotland  
Robertson had been fired by the North West Company and dreamed of exacting revenge  
Captain Roderick McDonald recruited colonists in the city of Glasgow, Scotland  
One hundred twenty-five tenant farmers sailed to Canada to develop Lord Selkirk's vast land grant  
of 116,000 square miles which comprised large portions of  
(today's Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Northern Minnesota and North Dakota)  
these settlers became affiliated with Hudson's Bay Company

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S PARTY CROSSES CHEYENNE INDIAN COUNTRY

Because several members of his Overland Expedition were ill two weeks had been spent  
hunting and trading with the Cheyennes  
Hunt assigned six hunters to look for buffalo  
Wilson Price Hunt led his Overland Expedition out of the Cheyenne camp -- August 6, 1811  
his long cavalcade crossed the Cheyenne River and moved off veering to the south for several days  
terrain they crossed became red ground as hard as brick with little grass  
however, the hunters killed several buffalo  
Travel was easy and forty-two miles were made August 6 and 7

#### NOR'WESTER DAVID THOMPSON REACHES THE SNAKE RIVER

Thompson arrived at the mouth of the Snake River ahead of David Stuart and the Astorians here Thompson on his way down the Columbia River had left a message formally taking possession of the land for King George III and Great Britain he now added a British flag to his notice -- August 7, 1811

David Thompson discovered a huge gathering of Nez Perce in the area and found an Indian interpreter in an effort to protect the north country for the North West Company he asked the Indian to divert the trailing Astorians up the Snake River

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT ENTERS THE BLACK HILLS WITH HIS ASTORIANS

Ground over which they traveled became rough and water was scarce

Hunt slowed the pace to his hunters who were behind him could catch up Pierre Dorion led Wilson Price Hunt's approximately fifty-nine Astorians and their heavily laden pack string traveled through the Slim Buttes area (South Dakota) as they skirted around the northern edge of the Black Hills

#### HUNT'S OVERLAND EXPEDITON CONTINUES THEIR TREK SOUTHWESTWARD

Having found their way around the Black Hills, Wilson Price Hunt's overland Astorians entered briefly into (present day Montana)

turning southwest they followed the Little Missouri River

Astorians traveled without incident -- they frequently camped with friendly natives they crossed the Little Missouri River (Montana) -- August 11, 1811

#### DAVID THOMPSON TURNS UP THE SNAKE RIVER

Leaving the Columbia River Nor'Wester Thompson traveled up the Snake River which he followed as far as the Palouse River there he secured horses and went cross-country to the Spokane River where he arrived -- August 13, 1811

David Thompson remained in camp on the Spokane River while he built a cedar canoe

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION SEES THE BIG HORN MOUNTAINS

(Having touched briefly into Montana the Astorians entered Wyoming)

Travel became very difficult as the terrain was extremely rugged

Hunt retraced his route found his hunters had killed eight buffalo

Wilson Price Hunt and Astor's partner Donald McKenzie climbed a nearby hill from the top their view to the west revealed far off mountains -- August 17, 1811

this was the Big Horn Mountain range of the Rocky Mountains  
that appeared to block their route

#### DAVID THOMPSON JOURNEYS DOWN THE SPOKANE RIVER

Nor'Wester David Thompson having built a cedar canoe  
was off once again descending Spokane River -- August 17, 1811  
Thompson and his seven men reached the Columbia River at Spokane House that day  
Kanaka Naukane (also known as John Coxe) traveled with Thompson as far as Spokane House  
there he was left with Nor'Wester Jaco Finlay  
After spending one night at Spokane House David Thompson and his six voyageurs  
continued rapidly on their journey upriver bound for Kettle Falls -- August 18, 1811

#### DAVID STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS REACH THE SNAKE RIVER

David Stuart with his twenty-one Astorians had trailing behind Nor'Wester David Thompson  
since they two parties had parted company at the Columbia River gorge  
when the Astorians arrived at the mouth of the Snake River they found the British flag  
with a paper notice left by David Thompson that claimed the area for Great Britain  
and warned subjects of other nations not to trade north of this point  
Nez Perce Indians tried to persuade the Americans to travel up the Snake River  
however, David Stuart detected this was a maneuver initiated by Thompson  
ignoring David Thompson's message, the Astorians continued up the Columbia River  
with the Kootenai Indian couple serving as guides

#### TRAVEL BECOME EASIER FOR WILSON PRICE HUNT'S ASTORIANS

Water was available among the hills and wild berries were plentiful -- five buffalo had been killed  
however, the weather turned cold and it froze at night  
they had reached the location that separates the water flowing east into the Missouri River  
from the water flowing west into the Yellowstone River -- August 20, 1811

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S EXPEDITION JOURNEYS TOWARD THE BIG HORN MOUNTAINS

Hunt's Astorians set their course by the summits of the Big Horn Range far to the west  
Wilson Price Hunt continued across the open country (of today's eastern Wyoming)  
water was scarce and the heat stifling  
they saw no more buffalo as the ground was bare of grass  
corn meal and a wolf provided them with supper one night  
after twenty-five miles along a waterless route

a small stream gave cherished relief to the parched throats of Astorians and horses alike  
another long stretch of hard travel was necessary before they came to a fork of the Powder River  
at last, they had reached a green meadow and water where they camped -- August 25, 1811

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S ASTORIANS LEAVE THE POWDER RIVER BEHIND

Wilson Price Hunt set a slow pace along the banks of the Powder River (Wyoming)  
buffalo were plentiful here and the hunters were busily killing and drying meat  
Astor's Overland Expedition made camp (probably near today's Cloud Peak)  
near the southern end of the Big Horn Mountains  
they had traveled nearly four hundred miles since leaving the Arikara villages -- August 30, 1811  
While camp was being prepared interpreter Edward Rose suddenly appeared  
with two scouts from a band of Crow Indians  
it was evident the Indians had kept Hunt's expedition under observation for some days

#### ASTORIAN DAVID STUART SELECTS A SITE FOR A SECOND PACIFIC FUR COMPANY POST

David Stuart and Alexander Ross along with twenty-one Astorians who had traveled on the *Tonquin*  
journeyed up the Columbia River for thirty-nine days before they selected a site  
for the second of John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company posts -- August 31, 1811  
on the east bank of the Okanogan River about one-half mile above the confluence  
of Okanogan and Columbia rivers -- this became known as Fort Okanogan

#### MANY MORE CROW INDIANS ARRIVE THE CAMP OF HUNT'S OVERLANDERS

Crow Indians on horseback rode into Wilson Price Hunt's camp -- not even the children were on foot  
interpreter Edward Rose was an ex-Lisa employee which raised Hunt's suspicions  
that he was plotting to betray the expedition to the Crows  
Hunt, who was fatefully inexperienced, would never ask the totally reliable Rose for advice  
Hunt and some of the Astorians followed the Indians to their village accompanied by Edward Rose  
who was pleased to see his old friends the Crows once again  
When the Astorians arrived at the village Edward Rose established cordial relations with these Indians  
they were warmly received them by the chief  
Hunt gave him a piece of red cloth, some powder, bullets and other items  
Hunt also gave him presents of tobacco, knives and trade goods to give to his people  
Wilson Price Hunt purchased buffalo robes and traded his tired horses for fresh ones  
he also purchased enough well-trained horses able to cross the mountains  
to bringing the total to 121  
However, when Hunt attempted to end the session the Crows turned hostile

Hunt attributed this development to Edward Rose

Wilson Price Hunt was none too certain of keeping the horses he had paid for in goods if the Crows should take a notion to recover them

#### OVERLAND ASTORIANS LOSE THEIR WAY

Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition was again under way -- September 2, 1811

however, their progress through the Bighorn Mountains was blocked

they were forced to return to their camp of [September 1]

Hunt learned that his Edward Rose approached some malcontents of the party

with a plan to run off the pack horses with their rich bales of trade goods and join the Crow Indians

Hunt stopped the plan with a bribe:

he offered Rose a year's pay, a horse, three beaver traps and merchandise

and he could to go back to the Crows after Rose guided the party through Crow country

Edward Rose eagerly accepted and joined the first Crow Indians that were encountered

Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor serving as guides became confused

this route through the Big Horn Mountains was unknown to them

the maze of ravines they now entered led nowhere

#### CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON FORT OKANOGAN

Fort Okanogan was located on the east bank of the Okanogan River

one-half mile above its confluence with the Columbia River

this was the first American settlement in (today's Washington State)

and became the principal interior factory of John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company

Astorians set to work building Fort Okanogan as clerk Alexander Ross wrote in his journal: **"As soon as we could dismiss the distant tribes, who had come to welcome our arrival, we commenced erecting a small dwelling house, sixteen by twenty feet, chiefly constructed of driftwood, being more handy and easier got than standing timber;..."**<sup>29</sup>

#### ASTOR'S OVERLANDERS RECEIVE ANOTHER VISIT FROM EDWARD ROSE

Edward Rose, who had left with his Crow brethren, came into camp -- September 4, 1811

he delivered a message from a Crow chief who advise the white men they had taken a wrong turn

Rose pointed out a trail through the Bighorn Mountains that was both shorter and better

Since Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor's attempts to find a pass over the mountains

had been futile, Wilson Price Hunt followed the new trail -- although with serious misgivings

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<sup>29</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 80.

Soon Crow Indians taking the same route were encountered and led the way  
with the way and the Pacific Fur Company Land Expedition following  
if the Crows were famed for their horse stealing, they were no less justly famed  
for the superior horsemanship -- every man, woman and child rode  
their small-hoofed, slight ponies could seemingly cling to the face of a cliff  
or race along the rocky ledges with the confidence of mountain goats  
there was a child tied to a two-year-old colt with buffalo thongs who held the reins in one hand  
he frequently used his whip  
Hunt asked about the child's age and was told that he had seen two winters -- did not yet talk!  
Camp was made that night beside a small river in the middle of the Big Horn Mountains  
the next day the Overland Expedition rested as they waited for the return of their hunters  
when they returned they had killed two buffalo and a gray bear  
Crows left Hunt's expedition far behind but they had shown him the road  
though Hunt had suspected their motives it appeared they were sincere with their help

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S PARTY MET A PARTY OF SHOSHONE (SNAKE) INDIANS

Hunt's Overlanders were fortunate enough to meet three Indians families  
some of the eight natives were Flatheads and some were Snakes (Shoshones) -- September 6, 1811  
Joining the natives they continued westward across the second ridge of the Big Horn Mountains  
they saw some beautiful country: an abundance of springs, green grasslands, forests of pine  
and innumerable plants in bloom  
They camped near a brook that flowed north and emptied into the Big Horn River  
here the ground was covered with two species of gooseberries  
one of men brought some strawberries that he had just picked  
They killed an elk and several black-tailed deer  
buffalo were quite numerous, too, so that the mountainside looked like one continuous barnyard  
Hunt's Astorians and the Indians enjoyed a buffalo hunt  
Shoshones directed Hunt toward the Wind River some thirty miles distant  
they told the Astorian that it would lead him toward the pass which opened  
on the south fork of the Columbia River (Snake River) and the land of the Shoshones  
Shoshones then went on their separate way as the Overland Expedition entered the plains

#### DAVID THOMPSON COMPLETES HIS VOYAGE OF A SUMMER MOON

Traveling by canoe from Kettle Falls Nor'Wester David Thompson and his voyageurs  
ascended the Columbia River and navigated the Arrow Lakes (British Columbia)  
They continued upriver (to the area north of today's Revelstoke, British Columbia)

Thompson arrived at Boat Encampment and remained overnight there -- September 7-8, 1811

#### ASTORIANS TRAVELING OVERLAND WITH WILSON PRICE HUNT REACH THE WIND RIVER

Once again guided by Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor

Hunt's Overland Party arrived at the Big Horn River which was here called the Wind River

because the wind blows so continually that the snow never remains on the ground (Wyoming)

Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reznor assured Wilson Price Hunt

that by tracing the Wind River to its source and crossing the ridge of mountains there

they would reach the headwaters of the Snake River

After journeying up the Wind River for about eighty miles over several days

camp was made on the banks of a small river -- September 9, 1811

they could see below the canyon through which the river escaped the mountain meadows

it was a very narrow gorge flanked on both sides by cliffs

Several days were taken as Wilson Price Hunt's Astorians crossed and re-crossed the Wind River

sagebrush in ample supply provided fuel for their campfires

mountains closed in on the plain and country became very rugged and the footing tortuous

#### ASTORIANS SEEK OUT INTERIOR INDIANS TO CONDUCT TRADE

David Stuart ordered twelve of his trappers out to establish trap lines and contact local Indians

After supplying the post with trade goods and ammunition Astorian David Stuart and eight other men

proceeded north from Fort Okanogan three hundred miles up the Okanogan River

leaving Alexander Ross behind to serve as Clerk-in-charge at Fort Okanogan

Alexander Ross recorded in his journal: "...**but while the building was in a half-finished state...**

**Mr. Stuart and the remaining men set off on a journey towards the north, or headwaters of the Okanogan, intending to return in the course of a month, while I was to remain alone at the establishment till Mr. Stuart's return, my only civilized companion being a little Spanish pet dog from Monterey, called Weasel."**<sup>30</sup>

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S PARTY ENTERS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Wilson Price Hunt decided to veer again to the southwest and follow a distinct and easy Indian trail

where Hunt had heard another river cut a way through the Rocky Mountains

and they would see buffalo again -- September 15, 1811

Hunt led his Astorians southwest along the high country touched here and there with snow

after forty miles they reached a high ridge which commanded a wide view

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<sup>30</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 80.

a hunter pointed to where three towering majestic peaks  
that loomed in snowy grandeur pierced the sky far to the west  
(these were the famous Three Tetons astride present-day Wyoming-Idaho border)  
Hunt said that at the feet of the Tetons was the tributary of the Columbia River  
and named the peaks "Pilot Knobs"

#### ASTOR'S OVERLANDERS CROSS THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Wilson Price Hunt turned northwest again to seek a pass through the Rocky River Mountains  
they frequently encountered snow as they approached the summit  
Wilson Price Hunt and his Overland expedition crossed the Continental Divide -- September 16, 1811  
(probably at Union Pass south of today's Dubois, Wyoming)  
Eight miles of riding southward from (Union Pass) led the Overland Party to a little mountain stream  
Astorians followed the flowing water to the Green River Valley (Wyoming)  
They halted beside the Green River in a beautiful green meadow where many buffalo grazed  
here they were surrounded by mountains  
Hunt supposed this river would empty into the Columbia River  
(in fact, after emptying into the Colorado River it reaches the Gulf of California  
Hunt and his Astorians were on the north fork of the Colorado River  
this was not the Columbia River as Hunt had anticipated)

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT IS LOST AND DOES NOT KNOW IT

Hunt led his Overland Expedition northwest toward where he thought the Columbia River was located  
they turned up a small stream that flowed from the mountains  
where they stopped to dry the last buffalo meat they would need  
before they reached the Columbia River and could catch fish -- September 18, 1811  
While hunting, some of the men met Indians who appeared extremely frightened by the whites  
Hunt, Donald McKenzie, Robert McClellan and two others gave chase for eight miles  
before finally catching two young men who were put at ease and led the whites to their camp  
these were Shoshone Indians who had come to this area to hunt and dry meat  
they fed the Astorians and made them feel welcomed  
they had only one buffalo robe and a dozen beaver pelts which the Astorians bought  
Hunt urged them to kill more of the beaver and told them they would return to their camp  
to trade with them which seemed to please the Indians a great deal  
Hunt purchased nearly two thousand pounds of dried buffalo meat that when added  
to the more than four thousand pounds Hunt's men had prepared loaded all of the horses but six

## DAVID STUART BUILDS A THIRD PORT FOR THE PACIFIC FUR COMPANY

David Stuart and his party of eight men became the first whites to travel through the Okanogan Valley as they searched the area between the Columbia and Fraser rivers

looking for a place to locate yet another trading post

Stuart and his men passed Osoyoos Lake and Okanogan Lake

and continued through Thompson River country to the forks of the Thompson River

this was the land of the Shu-swap Indians (in present British Columbia)

David Stuart with his eight men arrived at “Cumcloups”

(the original Shu-swap Indian name for Kamloops meaning “meeting of the waters”)

Stuart intended to establish a fur trading empire for the United States-based Pacific Fur Company

Stuart spent the (winter) trapping and trading in that region at a post (later named Kamloops)

## INDIANS AROUND ASTORIA BECOME VERY THREATENING

Months would pass before full details of the tragedy of the *Tonquin* would be learned

but even before the full story was known at the post Astorians sensed Indian trouble was brewing inspired by rumors about the fate of Astor’s ship

natives along the Columbia River had begun making strong talk:

if the white man’s ship could be captured, why not a similar attack on his fort?

Luckily a secondary Chinook chief sounded a warning

alarmed Astorians threw up a long palisade around their warehouse,

dragged cannon into the corner bastions and instituted drills and watches

## CHIEF FACTOR DUNCAN McDOUGALL THREATENS THE CHINOOK INDIANS

Acting head of Pacific Fur Company stationed at Astoria Chief Factor Duncan McDougall

learned of the dreadful loss of Indian life that had resulted from a smallpox epidemic

Indians were mortally fearful of contracting the disease

he also remembered the terror which the man-dressed Kootenai prophetess

had inspired with her talk of smallpox

Duncan McDougall sought to bolster the Astorians’ defenses by a bluff

he called the local principal chiefs to meet together inside the post

he closed the doors, held up a small bottle and asked the natives if they remembered smallpox

their serious faces showed that they did

McDougall showed them the small vial and told them it contained smallpox

he said: **“Listen to me. I am the great smallpox chief. In this little bottle I keep the great smallpox. If I uncork the bottle and let it out I will kill every man, woman, and child of the Indians. Now go in peace, but if you make war upon us I will open the bottle, and you will die.”**<sup>31</sup>

Appalled, the Indians were frightened and promised to behave  
but they had lost respect for a chief who would use such tactics  
and they did not forget the white man’s claim of being able to control disease

#### LORD SELKIRK’S COLONISTS REACH HUDSON BAY

After a stormy voyage of nearly two months across the North Atlantic Ocean  
Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk’s ships entered the long, barren strait leading to Hudson Bay  
they anchored along the shallow western shore of Hudson Bay  
where two rivers, the Nelson and the Hayes, enter the bay and the passengers disembarked  
they marched to Hudson’s Bay Company’s York Factory on the north bank of the Hayes River  
There was not enough room for all of the colonists at York Factory so they crossed to the Nelson River  
and ascended it until they found a large stand of white spruce  
here they built a post for the (winter) under the direction of Governor Miles Macdonell  
settlers naturally banded themselves into groups based on their original home  
as fall (and winter advanced) and living conditions grew increasingly harsh  
these groups with their separate grievances gave Macdonell a great deal of trouble

#### PACIFIC FUR COMPANY OVERLANDERS DEPART FROM THE GREEN RIVER VALLEY

Wilson Price Hunt and his Overland Expedition broke camp -- September 24, 1811  
their westerly course across the Gros Ventre Range of the Central Rocky Mountains  
In a rugged valley and within close view of the Three Tetons Mountains  
they reached a stream where Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reznor  
had trapped beavers a year before  
Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reznor announced this was a branch  
of the Columbia River and the southern edge of Jackson’s Hole (Wyoming)  
Hoback River (as it is still called) is a tributary of the Snake River  
and therefore one of the source streams for the Columbia River  
here they stopped to rest

#### HUNT’S OVERLAND PARTY LEAVES THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Wilson Price Hunt’s Party continued down the Hoback River through precipitous passes

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<sup>31</sup> Lyman, William Denison, *The Columbia River*, P. 122.

to its mouth where it emptied into wider turbulent waters of Snake River  
at times there was barely a ledge wide enough for their horses  
one of the pack horses fell into the river from a height of nearly two hundred feet but was not hurt  
Camp was made at the confluence of the Hoback and Snake rivers -- September 27, 1811  
men and horses were given a rest  
this opportunity was taken to kill and dry meat enough for the remainder of their journey  
There was great joy in camp that night  
they had crossed two hundred and sixty miles of hard country during September  
evening meal was a feast of celebration as all believed their troubles had ended  
they now were apparently almost within hailing distance of the Columbia River  
four of the men who had joined for the purpose of hunting and trapping  
cast off from the party and launched into the wilds on their own  
Since the expedition was camped near the headwaters of the Snake River  
it was hoped they could continue their journey by water -- voyageurs set about canoe-making  
however, finding suitable trees for building canoes proved to be impossible

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT DISPATCHES A TRAPPING PARTY TO FORT HENRY

Three French-Canadians were sent north to investigate beaver streams  
Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry  
they were fitted out with traps, arms, ammunition, horses and every other necessity  
these three trappers set out to the northeast away from the Snake River  
in a effort to reach the Missouri River

#### HUNT'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION MAKES CANOES TO TRAVEL DOWN THE SNAKE RIVER

Wilson Price Hunt moved his camp further down the Snake River -- September 29, 1811  
because the trees there were better suited for making canoes  
Voyageurs happily went about their work constructing canoes as sleet and rain impeded their efforts  
many trees were felled that were not useful because they were filled with knots  
and their wood grain was not strait enough

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT PREPARES FOR A DESPERATE FUTURE

Because the lack of food prevented any delay in their journey  
Hunt and the remainder of the Overland Expedition went to work sorting their baggage  
they set aside only what was most necessary and began to dig holes  
to cache the remainder of their goods  
rain fell so hard it was impossible to finish digging the holes

Clerk John Reed along with hunter John Day and interpreter Pierre Dorion  
were sent down the Snake River to try to get horses and provisions from the local Indians  
and learn if the river was passable beyond where Hunt had investigated -- September 30, 1811

#### SOME CONSTRUCTION AT ASTORIA IN OREGON IS COMPLETED

In spite of the troubles and illnesses of the Astorians and Kanakas,  
some sort of a post was finally completed -- but not until late September  
It was planned that Astor's agents would secure most if not all of the furs trapped by coastal Indians  
these furs would be sent to Canton, China and exchanged there for tea and silk at a profit  
tea and silk would be sold in New York City at an added profit  
however, the destruction of the *Tonquin* and lack of trade goods made this impossible

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY BRIGADE IS DUE AT SALEESH HOUSE

Carrying supplies from North West Company headquarters on Lake Superior  
the supply brigade was due to arrive at Saleesh House-- October 1, 1811  
however, the expedition was late and some goods were left east of the Rocky Mountains  
loss of these supplies and trade goods left a negative effect on morale and trade  
which would be felt (all through the coming winter)

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT RELEASES FOUR MORE MEN TO TRAP

Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michel, Pierre Detaye and Pierre Delaunay  
were released from duty -- October 1, 1811  
they were to trap the upper part of Snake River and its neighboring streams  
then make their way to the Columbia River with their catch  
Trappers generally worked in pairs so they could assist, protect and comfort each other  
in their lonely and perilous occupations  
Carson and St. Michel formed one couple, and Detaye and Delaunay another  
All four trappers took leave of their comrades and started off with stout hearts and cheerful attitudes  
to return eastward to trap the headwaters of the upper Snake River  
these trappers would probably be busy for some months  
when they had collected a sufficient quantity of pelts they were to pack them on their horses  
and make their way the best they could to the mouth of Columbia River  
or to any intermediate post which might be established by the Pacific Fur Company

#### ASTORIAN CLERK JOHN REED RETURNS TO WILSON PRICE HUNT'S CAMP

Rain continued to hinder their digging holes and the work was not finished until October 2, 1811

when they put their baggage and merchandise into six caches  
Clerk John Reed, John Day and Pierre Dorion returned to the camp after scouting the river ahead  
they had gone beyond where Hunt had scouted the river but met no Indians  
they said the Snake River maintained its furious course between rocks that rose like walls  
boiling through narrow rugged channels  
in disgust and despair Reed's men had named one long volcanic chute they followed  
"The Devil's Scuttle Hole"  
they reported they had been obliged to leave their horses  
as they were of no help in climbing the mountains  
after an hour's effort to get through on foot along the river banks  
they had been forced to abandon their attempt  
they concluded that to get across the peaks would have been an endless labor  
Snake River became very narrow with its twisting course obstructed by many rapids  
so far as the scouts could see the river continued to flow through the heart of the Rockies  
and was not navigable  
Their report only added to the general feeling of hopelessness  
Hunt concluded it would be necessary to look farther downstream for wood for their canoes  
to avoid the dangers that stood in their path

#### ASTORIANS ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER LAUNCH A SMALL SHIP OF THEIR OWN

Framework of a small ship was carried in the hold of the *Tonquin*  
this small trading schooner was constructed at Astoria  
as other planking was made from native woods grown along the Columbia River was added  
christened *Dolly* in honor of Mrs. John Jacob Astor, she was launched -- October 2, 1811  
this was the first boat to be constructed in the Pacific Northwest by Americans

#### HUNT'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION SETS OUT FROM THE HOBACK AND SNAKE RIVERS

Preparations for what Hunt believed would be the last mountains they would have to cross  
were completed -- October 4, 1811  
Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition crossed the Snake River in water  
up to the bellies of their horses  
while the storms had ended the surrounding slopes were covered with snow  
Camp was made that night at the foot of the Teton Range of the Rocky Mountains

#### HUNT'S ASTORIANS TRAVEL THROUGH THE TETON MOUNTAINS

Climbing the mountain range began -- October 5, 1811

guided by Shoshone Indians the expedition followed an easy heavily-used trail  
Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reznor were also familiar with the route

#### HUNT'S OVERLANDERS REACH FORT HENRY ON THE SNAKE RIVER

Wilson Price Hunt's Astorians now numbering about fifty-two people  
reached Fort Henry on Henry's Fork of the Snake River (near present-day St. Anthony, Idaho)  
during a squall of wind and snow -- October 8, 1811  
nearly three months after leaving the Arikara villages  
Andrew Henry had abandoned the post [during the spring 1811]  
however, several small buildings remained along the bank of Henry's Fork of the Snake  
Hunt took possession of the Henry's Fort for John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT INSISTS ON CONSTRUCTING CANOES

Hunt was obsessed with reaching the Pacific Ocean by water rather than land  
the Snake, at least in Wilson Price Hunt's mind, provided a water route to the Columbia River  
and on to the Pacific Ocean  
Hunt decided to abandon the horses at Henry's Fort in favor of the Snake River  
he insisted on building canoes for the run down the Snake River  
his voyageurs spent ten valuable days building cottonwood canoes

#### LAMAZEE MANAGED TO RETURN TO ASTORIA AFTER SEVERL MONTHS

Lamaze, who had served as interpreter for Chief Trade Alexander McKay onboard the *Tonquin*,  
reached Astoria several months where he was persuaded to tell his tale  
although the Chehalis Indian was not convincing regarding his own part in the tragedy  
none-the-less clerk Gabriel Franchere recorded Lamazee's story in his *Journal*: (after Chief  
Trader Alexander McKay had both been killed in the attack on the *Tonquin* Lamazee said) **"I jumped  
overboard, to escape a similar fate to that of the captain and Mr. M'Kay: the women in the canoes,  
to whom I surrendered myself as a slave, took me in, and bade me hide under some mats which were  
in the pirogues; which I did. Soon after, I heard the discharge of firearms, immediately upon which  
the Indians fled from the vessel, and pulled for the shore as fast as possible, nor did they venture to  
go alongside the ship again the whole of that day."**<sup>32</sup>

Lamazee was the only Pacific Fur Company employee to survive the attack

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR NEGOTIATES AN ARRANGEMENT WITH THE RUSSIANS

Astor had diligently pursued an arrangement with the Russian-American Company

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<sup>32</sup> Gabriel Franchere and Jedediah Huntington, *Franchere's Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast, 1811-1814*, P. 291.

to bind his trading companies and the Russians to an agreement:

- neither company would enter each others hunting grounds;
- neither company would provide weapons or ammunition to the Indian;
- both companies would provide mutual support against any rival company that entered their area;
- in addition the Pacific Fur Company would have exclusive rights to supply the Russian posts and receive payment in pelts;
- Pacific Fur Company also would carry Russian furs to Canton, sell them at a commission and bring back the proceeds

This arrangement was agreed to by the Russian Czar -- October 1811

it was to run for four years and could renewable for another four

This arrangement was meant to exclude rival trapping and trading companies from the Pacific coast and would change the nature of the fur trade from the arrival of an occasional trading ship to a fleet of Pacific Fur Company trading ships operating constantly along the Pacific coast

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR DISPATCHES A SUPPLY SHIP TO HIS COLUMBIA RIVER POST

Four hundred ninety ton ship *Beaver* under Captain Cornelius Sowle

was loaded with stores and trading equipment in New York City

for the post at the mouth of the Columbia River

and to supply the Russians in Russian-America

also on board was John Jacob Astor's newest partners John Clarke

five clerks, fifteen American laborers and six French-Canadian voyageurs

Astor planned to diminish the importance of former Nor'Westers working for him

and increase the significance of Americans to make the Pacific Fur Company American

American John Clarke had been employed in the fur trade since the age of sixteen

*Beaver* sailed from New York City -- October 10, 1811

Captain Cornelius Sowle was to journey first to the Hawaiian Islands

to learn of the fortunes of the *Tonquin* and, if a post had been established on the Columbia,

he was to take as many Kanakas (Hawaiians) as possible

when Captain Sowle arrived at the Columbia River he was to use great caution

because even if a post had been built it could have fallen into hostile hands

he was to put in as if he were under distress and say he was a coasting trading ship

he was not to say anything about the ship belonging to John Jacob Astor

until he was certain who possessed the post

if the post was operating as hope he was to land the cargo intended for Astoria

then proceed to New Archangel, Russian-America with supplies for the Russians

these were to be paid for with pelts  
Captain Sowle was then to return to Astoria and take in the furs there  
before sailing for Canton, China

#### HUNT DISPATCHES A TRAPPING PARTY TO WORK THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY

After an outburst of rage by Astor's hot tempered partner Joseph Miller  
it was decided Miller would lead a party of trappers composed of the Kentuckians  
Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor who had completed their service as guides  
and wanted to remain in their old trapping grounds and seek beaver pelts  
they were accompanied by Martin Cass who had joined the expedition at the Arikara Villages  
they took two Shoshone Indians, four horses two beaver traps as they set out down the mountains  
to find an Indian tribe to acquire useful information regarding their hunt -- October 10, 1811  
Joseph Miller along with Edward Robinson, John Hoback, Jacob Reznor and Martin Cass  
struck a northerly route from Fort Henry on the Snake River (Idaho)  
these trappers followed the Snake River until it began to turn westward  
they remained in the region around Fort Henry but not in the lands they already knew

#### HUNT'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION PREPARED TO CONTINUE WEST

Wilson Price Hunt turned loose his seventy-seven horses  
in the care of two Shoshone Indians -- October 17, 1811  
Hunt loaded the freight onto fifteen canoes and left the Indians in charge of the post  
saddles were cached and their location was shown to two young Shoshone Indians  
Indians in the vicinity of Fort Henry (Idaho) were very poor  
while many buffalo and some elk visited the region in season  
hunger plagued these people the remainder of the year  
wind blew constantly and often violently from the west and caused a great deal of damage

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT SETS OUT FROM FORT HENRY ON THE SNAKE RIVER (IDAHO)

Hunt and his forty-four men, Marie Dorion and her two children left Fort Henry  
and started down Henry's Fork of the Snake River  
in their newly-made canoes loaded with goods and supplies -- October 19, 1811  
Presently Henry's Fork joined with the green-tinted waters of a river Hunt named the "Canoe River"  
(today's Teton River)  
they were over six hundred miles above the point where Lewis and Clark  
had launched their canoes on the Snake River six years before  
Wilson Price Hunt's fleet ran the Snake River with ease as down the widened river

sped the canoes at a rapid pace  
voyageurs were singing to the swift rhythmic strokes of their paddles  
they made thirty miles before they camped for the night  
banks of the river were lined with small cottonwoods with beaver, ducks and geese common  
it was cold and snowed all day

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S JOURNEY BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT

Snake River became more beautiful and much larger as they continued downriver -- October 20, 1811  
forty miles were made that day but throughout the last twenty the river was broken by rapids  
with increasing velocity the current swept them into the great semicircular curve the river  
carved through southern (Idaho)  
they passed over some of the rapids by cordelling from shore with a towline  
as the canoes were tied to ropes and floated down the river  
two of the canoes were swamped and Hunt's expedition was forced to stop  
Hunt sent his canoe and one other to the rescue as the men were saved  
but a good deal of merchandise and supplies were lost to the river  
Rocky Mountains remained on their left as they moved on  
it was cold as they traveled on still within sight of Pilot Knob (the Grand Tetons)

#### DAVID THOMPSON CROSSES ATHABASCA PASS

From Boat Encampment, Nor'Wester David Thompson struck overland toward Athabasca Pass  
to Henry House (near today's Jasper, Alberta)  
David Thompson then, once again, re-crossed Athabasca Pass -- October 21, 1811  
returning to Boat Encampment on the Canoe River (British Columbia)

#### HUNT AND HIS ASTORIANS CONTINUE THROUGH THE RAPIDS OF THE SNAKE RIVER

They kept to Snake River for ten grueling days of portages, cordelling and disheartening hazards  
mishap followed mishap as the surrounding land grew barren  
treeless cliffs of black lava two and three hundred feet high pinched tight on the boiling water  
hopes for an easy completion of their journey were dashed  
Their dangers and difficulties increased daily  
canoes had to be lightened to pass through the very rough waters  
during these perilous passages, Marie Dorion, in a boat with her husband Pierre,  
held on to her two children amid the icy spray lest they fall overboard and be lost  
portages were necessary to avoid waterfalls and rapids  
they found a large rock obstructed the river from bank to bank

ropes were used to lower the canoes  
they lost four canoes along with most of the cargo in them

#### ASTORIAN JOSEPH MILLER AND HIS TRAPPERS SEARCH FOR BEAVER STREAMS

Astor's partner Joseph Miller with Edward Robinson, John Hoback, Jacob Reznor and Martin Cass veered south where the Snake River until it began to turn westward they and trekked more than two hundred miles across the Continental Divide but their route did not cross through any mountain pass they entered the desert and their route took them to the Bear River (Utah) after almost a month of travel on the lower end of the Bear River they found streams alive with beaver and halted to gather a rich harvest of pelts in (today's Great Salt Lake region)

#### SNAKE RIVER BECAME A RAGING TORRENT AT CALDRON LINN

Continuing the journey down the Snake River Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition reached raging rapids they named "Caldron Linn" that threatened the destruction of both men and canoes (today's Star Falls where the Snake Rivers squeezes down to less than forty feet wide west of today's Burley, Idaho) -- October 28, 1811

French-Canadian boatmen leaped into action

to avoid being sucked into the vortex of a whirlpool that formed behind a huge rock river-wise voyageurs managed by almost superhuman effort to pull the first boat out of the suction caused by the whirlpool and reached the safety of land

Ramsay Crooks' canoe steered by Antoine Clappine was not as fortunate this canoe was sucked into the watery vortex

Ramsay Crooks and one of the oarsmen stayed afloat long enough to be cast on the river's bank by the revolving current

two other voyageurs in the canoe hung precariously to a rock protruding out of the white water

Clappine clung to the dugout but was eventually shaken loose

sucked into the angry water the former Nor'Wester was seen no more

Clappine was one of the most experienced and skillful of the French-Canadian voyageurs his death was a great loss to the expedition

Hunt and his shaken companions made camp next to the raging waters of Caldron Linn

Astor's partners held a council to contemplate their future course

loss of the supplies and especially the loss of Antoine Clappine was extremely distressing

Hunt sent three men downriver along the south bank of the Snake River in search of a portage site

Hunt took three men ahead to see if they could take their canoes through the north side of the gorge they traveled along the bank of the river for thirty-five miles following the river northwest through the mountains as the river bed narrowed to a width of from sixty feet to ninety feet full of rapids with waterfalls from ten to forty feet high  
Hunt discovered there were only two places where they could climb down to the river as high cliffs compressed the river along most of its route  
supper that night for Hunt and his three companions consisted of the fruit of a rose tree isolated from the main group they slept beside their campfire that night

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT RETURNS TO CALDRON LINN

Hunt returned to his camp along Caldron Linn -- October 29, 1811  
there he learned from the three men he had sent along the south bank that they had found a place where they believed a portage of six miles could be taken around Caldron Linn  
Sixteen voyageurs with the expedition's four best canoes followed the route to the portage that had been suggested along the south bank of the Snake River  
to see if they could progress past Caldron Linn

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION'S SITUATION IS CRITICAL

After some two hundred and fifty miles of water travel down the Snake River they had experienced cataracts and waterfalls that forced laborious portages and finally deep gorges with sheer walls that made progress almost impossible  
advice from Shoshone Indians they met along the way had convinced Hunt that the Snake River Canyon would smash any canoe  
nearly a month had been lost in indecisiveness and inaction since leaving the Missouri River  
Pacific Fur Company expedition became disorganized and demoralized:

- Snake River was unnavigable;
- horses were 340 miles away -- too far to be of any use;
- Indians in the area were poverty-stricken themselves;
- food was giving out, only five days' worth remained, and game was scarce;
- (winter) was advancing as snow and cold increased their anxiety

Snake River itself was labeled by Wilson Price Hunt the "Accursed Mad River"

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT PREPARES FOR A DESPERATE FUTURE

Once again clerk John Reed was dispatched along with three men  
this time he was travel down the Snake River to try to get horses and provisions from the Indians and learn if the river was passable beyond where Hunt had investigated -- October 31, 1811

Because the lack of food prevented any delay in their journey

Hunt and the remainder of the Overland Expedition went to work sorting their baggage  
they set aside only what was most necessary and began to dig holes  
to cache the remainder of their goods  
rain fell so hard it was impossible to finish digging the holes

#### HUNT'S SIXTEEN VOYAGEURS WHO ATTEMPTED THE SUGGESTED PORTAGE RETURNED

Sixteen of Wilson Price Hunt's voyageurs had followed the suggested route to the portage  
they had tried to force a passage through the Snake River Canyon

They struggled back up the river through a pelting rain

to give their depressing report to Hunt -- October 31, 1811

they said the banks of the Snake River had been investigated for forty miles

with discouraging results as the river channel was impassable because of treacherous rapids  
and narrow canyons

ahead lay 212 foot high (Shoshone Falls) where the Snake river plunges down

through a narrow chasm between towering sides of sheet rock

this was followed by 182 foot high (Twin Falls)

one of their canoes and its load of merchandise was lost

three other canoes were caught among the rocks and had to be left

#### ASTOR'S PARTNERS LEADING THE OVERLAND EXPEDITION MAKE A FATEFUL DECISION

Situation of Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition was virtually without positive prospects:

- they were in the heart of an unknown wilderness unexplored by white men;
- they were at a loss as to what route to take and how far they were from Astoria;
- they did not know what direction to travel to find people to give them information;
- repeated accidents to their canoes had reduced their provisions to five days allowance

it strongly appeared that famine would be added to their list of sufferings

There appeared to be no way to continue their journey by water -- November 1, 1811

after losing two canoes, one man and most of their provisions in the wild rapids of the Snake River

Astor's partners who shared responsibility for the expedition decided

to split into smaller groups and fan out on foot in different directions

in hopes of finding either a passable route or Indians who would provide them horses

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT SPLITS HIS EXPEDITION INTO SEPARATE PARTIES

Wilson Price Hunt decided the only way to escape from the Snake River was to divide into sections

he hoped one of the sections might find game or a way out of the Snake River's Caldron Linn

and report their success to the others

Remaining forty-six Overland Astorians were separated into five parties -- November 3, 1811

- Astor's partner Donald McKenzie with four men would turn northward in the hope that a trek across the arid Snake River Plains would enable them to find a route that would bring them ultimately to a navigable branch of the Columbia River;
- Astor's partner Robert McClellan with three men returned on foot back up the Snake River hoping to encounter a Shoshone Indian encampment where they might be able to procure food and a few horses if this hope failed, they were to make the long journey back to Fort Henry on the Snake River where they hoped to find the horses that had been left behind and return with them to the main body;
- Astor's partner Ramsay Crooks with three men would return on foot back up the Snake River hoping to encounter a Shoshone encampment where he might be able to procure food and a few horses if this hope failed, he was to make the long journey back to Fort Henry on the Snake River where he hoped to find the horses that had been left behind and return with them to the main body;
- two hunters to search for game animals were dispatched by Wilson Price Hunt;
- Astor's partner Wilson Price Hunt would keep the main party of thirty-one men with him plus the pregnant Marie Dorion and her two children Baptiste and Paul they set a net in the river in preparation to setting out but managed to catch only one fish Hunt led the main contingent in four canoes and paddled back upstream away from Caldron Linn while going around a point in the middle of some rapids they lost a canoe but saved the cargo

#### RAMSAY CROOKS RETURNS TO HUNT'S MAIN PARTY

Wilson Price Hunt's hunters caught up with the main party -- November 4, 1811

they had killed only eight beaver -- scant relief for the thirty-six traveling with Hunt

Ramsay Crooks unexpectedly returned with his three men

for a moment joy spread through the Astorians as they thought Crooks had found food and help joy turned to despair as Crooks reported they had found the distance to Fort Henry greater than they had expected and difficulties increasing with each step

Crooks concluded that he could not reach Fort Henry and get back before (winter) therefore he abandoned the scheme

Thirty-seven Astorians plus Marie Dorion and her sons Baptiste and Paul continued east back up the Snake River away from Caldron Linn one avenue of hope, John Reed, was all but closed

remaining hope centered on the party led by clerk Robert McClellan  
(partner Donald McKenzie had been assigned to travel directly to the Columbia River)

#### ALEXANDER ROSS FACES LIFE ALONE AT FORT OKANOGAN

Alexander Ross traded one hundred-ten beaver pelts for a yard of white cloth  
one morning before breakfast

Clerk-in-charge Ross filled the loneliness by writing, **“The novelty of white men, and particularly of a white man alone, drew crowds of inquisitive Indians about the place. I mixed with them, traded with them, and at last began to talk with them, and ... soon came to understand them; but still the evenings were long and the winter dreary. Every night before going to bed I primed my gun and pistol anew and barricaded the door of my lonely dwelling; and the Indians, friendly inclined, always withdrew from the house at dusk. Yet they often had alarms among themselves and often gave me to understand that enemies or ill-disposed Indians were constantly lurking about; and whenever they began to whoop or yell in the night, which they frequently did, I, of course, partook of the alarm.”**<sup>33</sup>

**“One night I was suddenly awakened out of my sleep by the unusual noise and continual barking of Weasel, running backwards and forwards through the house. Half asleep, half awake, I felt greatly agitated and alarmed. My faithful gun and pistol were at hand, for they lay always at my side in bed; but then all was dark; I could see nothing, could hear nothing but the barking of Weasel, which was continually growing louder and louder.**

**I then thought there must be somebody in the house, for I was ready to put the worst construction on appearances. In this perplexing dilemma I got my hand, with as little noise as possible, to the muzzle of my gun, and gradually drawing out the ramrod, tried, with my right arm stretched out, to stir up the embers so that I might see; but here again a new danger presented itself: I was exposing myself as a mark to a ball or an arrow, without the chance of defending myself, for the light would show me to the enemy before I could see my object. But there was no alternative and something must be done.**

**Between hope and despair I managed to stir up the ashes, so that I could see little Weasel running to and fro to the cellar door. I concluded that the enemy must be skulking in the cellar. I then, but not without difficulty, got a candle lighted. Holding the candle in my left hand, I laid hold of my pistol. With the lynx eye and wary step of a cat ready to pounce on its prey, I advanced rather obliquely, with my right arm stretched out at full length holding the cocked pistol, till I got to the cellar door, the little dog all the while making a furious noise; when, lo! what was there but a skunk sitting on a roll of tobacco! The shot blew it almost to atoms, and so delicately perfumed everything in the house that I was scarcely able to live in it for days afterwards.”**<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P 80-81.

<sup>34</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P 81.

**“October had now passed by and November also, but no Mr. [David] Stuart came, and various reports were circulated by the Indians as to his fate; and I now began to despair of his return. The delay of Mr. Stuart’s party had a visible effect on the conduct of the Indians: they became more bold, neglected their hunting and loitered about the place, as if in expectation of some sudden change. Strange Indians were every day swelling the camp; they held councils, too; altogether they were a changed people.”<sup>35</sup>**

#### TWO OF CLERK JOHN REED’S MEN RETURNED TO THE MAIN PARTY

Clerk John Reed and three men had set out [October 31] to investigate the Snake River beyond the area already investigated by Wilson Price Hunt two of those men now arrived back at Hunt’s main party and were hopefully received but their report only added to the general feeling of hopelessness -- November 6, 1811 they had gone beyond where Hunt had scouted the river but met no Indians the Snake River maintained its furious course boiling through narrow rugged channels and between rocks that rose like walls in disgust and despair Reed’s men had named one long volcanic chute they followed The Devil’s Scuttle Hole

#### DONALD “FATS” McKENZIE’S DETACHMENT HAD DISAPPEARED ACROSS THE PLAINS

With no accurate maps or experienced guides to rely on the followed an old Indian trail (near the lava fields which now comprise the Craters of the Moon National Monument (Idaho) it was believed that crossing the trackless wilderness of the (Idaho) plains would be very difficult for five days McKenzie and his four men attempted to support themselves by trapping and fishing along the Snake River -- both of which were unproductive they soon exhausted their scant provisions and were unable to find any food at all to appease their hunger they ate beaver skins roasted over the fire

#### HUNT’S OVERLAND EXPEDITION FACES A DESPERATE SITUATION

Both of the men traveling with clerk John Reed returned to the main expedition reporting no Indians could be found nor was any prospect of a route to take them to safety Wilson Price Hunt and Ramsay Crooks had a choice of impossible options:

- to wait for help that was not even expected from Donald McKenzie meant starvation;
- they could abandon the Snake River and launch out over the vast trackless plains without food where they could perish of hunger or thirst

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<sup>35</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 82.

in fact, deserts of sand and gravel lay ahead of them  
all the way from the Snake River to the Columbia  
there was thin vegetation for pasture for game  
treeless desolate and barren prairies stretched on for hundreds of miles  
(this, of course, was all unknown to Hunt and Crooks)

- they could keep to the river where they would always have water and possibly fish or beaver  
also, there was a stronger possibility of meeting Indians who could provide them food

## WAR OF 1812 BACKGROUND

Great Britain was locked in a long and bitter conflict with Napoleon Bonaparte's France  
in an attempt to cut off supplies from reaching their enemy  
each combatant attempted to block the United States from trading with the other combatant

Many issues had remained unresolved since the end of the American Revolution [1783]

major American complaints against Great Britain included:

- trade restrictions brought about by Britain's continuing war with France;
- insults to American national honor by British humiliations on the high seas;
- impressment (kidnapping) of American merchant sailors into the British Navy;
- Britain support for American Indian tribes impeding America's expansion;
- American interest in annexing part of Canada which had been denied  
at the end of the Revolution

United States took the opportunity to attempt to invade Canada

Indiana Territory Governor William Henry Harrison fought the Battle of Tippecanoe against  
Shawnee Indian leader Tecumseh, his brother Tenskwatawa (known as "The Prophet")  
and an Indian confederation of tribes -- November 7, 1811

this attack convinced the Indians of the region they needed British protection from America

British government then sent 15,000 more troops to North America

(United States declared war on Great Britain, Ireland and England's North American colonies  
and their Indian allies [June 18, 1812])

## DONALD MCKENZIE SUDDENLY ENCOUNTERS JOHN REED

Some distance below what had been named the Devils Scuttle Hole

Donald McKenzie's unexpectedly encountered clerk John Reed and his traveling companion  
these seven Astorians traveled together following the banks of the Snake River  
through one of the most rugged sections of the United States

to their west lay the vast canyon of the Snake River -- in places more than a mile deep  
ahead and to the right timber-choked mountains towered above them

there was seldom any fresh water to be found on the arid plains high above the Snake River  
thirst-crazed men of the McKenzie-Reed Party drank their own urine  
Members of the McKenzie-Reed party became so exhausted  
that McKenzie was forced to carry his own pack plus two of his men's blankets

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT MAKES ANOTHER ILL-ADVISED DECISION

Wilson Price Hunt and Ramsay Crooks agreed the best course was to divide the company  
into two parties and proceed independently along the Snake River -- November 8, 1811  
Wilson Price Hunt would lead nineteen men Astorians plus Marie Dorion and her two children  
along the north bank of the Snake River  
Ramsay Crooks would lead nineteen others along the south bank  
More time was lost as supplies and trade goods were cached in nine separate locations  
each cache was placed in an underground depository lined with dry grass, sticks, or poles  
these were covered and camouflaged  
their excess supplies were thus hidden for future recovery  
men caught a few beaver which increased their scanty food supply only slightly  
essential items were put in twenty pound packs  
each person carried five pounds of food including a quarter pound of meat  
expedition's forty pounds of corn, twenty pounds of fat and five pounds of bouillon cubes  
were divided among the packs to keep forty-three Astorians alive  
some blankets, ammunition, traps and other essentials were packed  
in addition each person also carried their own articles and equipment

#### OVERLAND EXPEDITION SETS OUT ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE SNAKE RIVER

Far below the Astorians the river raged at the foot of cliffs two hundred and three hundred feet high  
Wilson Price Hunt set out with his nineteen men, Marie Dorion and her sons Baptiste and Paul,  
along the north bank of the Snake River  
Ramsay Crooks led his nineteen men along the south bank of the Snake River  
from a place (later known as "Farewell Bend" where the Oregon Trail left the Snake River)  
Hunt and his companions trudged for twenty-eight miles -- November 9, 1811  
Marie Dorion bore her pack -- frequently with the added weight of her two-year-old son Paul  
while the other child Baptiste aged four marched beside her  
there is no record of any complaint from her although she was now seven months pregnant  
Hunt's Astorians camped under an outcropping of overhanging rocks high above the river's edge  
some rain had fallen during the day and puddles of water provided adequate relief from thirst  
as it was only with great difficulty that water could be brought up from the river in a kettle

## HUNT CONTINUES WITH HIS PARTY OF ASTORIANS ALONG THE SNAKE'S NORTH BANK

Wilson Price Hunt's Astorians pressed onward with the river far below them  
thirsty except for little pockets of water they found on in hollows of rock  
Finally they came to place where they could reach the Snake River -- November 10, 1811  
everywhere the river was filled with rapids but at this spot the water was quiet

## McKENZIE-REED PARTY DISCOVERS MORE ASTORIANS

Below the Devils Scuttle Hole on the Snake River the seven men of the McKenzie-Reed party  
met Robert McClellan and his three men as they continued to follow the Snake River  
they had suffered great privations and were desperate  
McKenzie-McClellan-Reed party consisted of eleven men -- two of Astor's partners and a clerk  
they were all in the same predicament  
without horses, provisions, or information of any kind  
they agreed it would be worse than useless to return to Hunt with so many starving men  
their only prospect was to remove themselves from this land of starvation as soon as possible  
and make their way to the Columbia River

## WILSON PRICE HUNT REACHES A SHOSHONE INDIAN CAMP

Hunt found a trail well worn by horses that he chose to follow rather than climb the cliffs  
following this route his party met two Shoshone Indians who showed Hunt a knife  
that had been given to the Indian by some other Astorians (probably Donald McKenzie)  
Hunt and his party of twenty-two were led along the path away from the Snake River  
across a prairie to where a few Indians were camped -- November 11, 1811  
at their approach the women fled in fear in such haste they left their babies that could not walk  
they simply covered the infants with straw  
when Hunt lifted the straw he could see the babies were terrified  
even the men trembled in fear  
however, the Indians gave the Astorians a small amount of fish and sold them a dog  
One of these Indians guided the Astorians to the river where they found it lined with Indian tents  
Hunt made camp nearby and the Astorians were visited by about fifty Shoshone men  
(Hunt later reported these people were honest and very obliging)

## WILSON PRICE HUNT PRESSES ON WITH HIS OVERLAND EXPEDITION

Hunt purchased two more dogs from the Shoshones  
one of which they had for breakfast -- November 12, 1811

Their difficult march continued over jagged, volcanic rocks, across plains of sagebrush,  
and stretches of sand -- although always within sight of the Snake River far below them  
fresh water was never within reach  
after twenty-eight miles of tortuous travel they were able to scramble down rocks  
close enough to the river to obtain a kettle of water with great difficulty  
Over the next three days they traveled sixty-three miles generally to the northwest  
they again met Indians whose women were badly clad and their children were worse off  
Ahead of them was a snow-covered mountain that the river seemed to penetrate

#### McKENZIE-McCLELLAN-REED PARTY STRUGGLES ACROSS THE SNAKE RIVER PLAINS

Pressing on along the river bank traveling downstream, the McKenzie-McClellan Reed Party  
clambered over rocks and high hills  
although almost constantly within sight of water, one of their greatest sufferings was thirst  
as the river had carved a deep channel through the Rocky Mountains hundreds of feet below  
no streams or brooks flowed in the vicinity of the Astorians high above the river  
only occasionally would they discover pockets of rainwater to quench their burning thirst

#### NOR'WESTER DAVID THOMPSON REACHES SALEESH HOUSE

David Thompson journeyed along (British Columbia's) Canoe River to the Columbia River  
and continued down the Columbia to Spokane House on the Spokane River  
he continued on to Saleesh (Flathead) House where he arrived -- November 13, 1811  
Thompson (will spend the winter of [1811-1812]) at Saleesh House on the Clark Fork River  
and take several short trapping trips throughout the (winter)

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT CONTINUES TO FOLLOW THE SNAKE RIVER

Hunt and his overland Astorians walked twenty-eight miles along the Snake River  
which was entirely free of rapids along this stretch -- November 15, 1811  
stench of dead salmon lining the banks of the river permeated the whole atmosphere  
a chance meeting with some Indians added two dogs and some salmon to their food supply  
Indians they met told them some of the Astorians (McKenzie' party) had passed through this area

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT AND HIS ASTORIANS TRUDGE ON

Snake River once again became turbulent as it forced its way  
through a narrow channel between steep rocks and tumbled down a violent rapids  
Twenty miles along a rugged road was traveled -- November 16, 1811  
as they approached a mountain in the northwest that was covered with snow

They had only dried corn and the remains of their dried meat to eat

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S ACQUIRES A HORSE

Wilson Price Hunt was successful in obtaining a horse from a reluctant native in exchange for a tin kettle -- November 17, 1811

Hunt purchased the animal to use as a pack beast because his men had grown so weak from hunger and fatigue that they could no longer carry their packs

Hunt's expedition reached the area of (present-day Glens Ferry, Idaho) -- November 18 they had only a quart of grain and a piece of fat for each person no wood was available for a fire which made for a miserable camp that night

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT AGAIN MAKES A BAD DECISION

Hunt traded a tomahawk, a steel for making fire, a knife and some beads for a horse for his own use -- November 19, 1811

Following the advice of the Indians Hunt once again changed course he led his starving and exhausted Astorians across a prairie where there was no water at all it appeared things would improve the next day, but that was a false hope twenty-five miles to the northwest was covered before camp was made fortunately for Hunt and his Astorians it began to rain during the night water collected in puddles was used to quench their thirst

#### RAIN BRINGS LIFE TO WILSON PRICE HUNT'S ASTORIANS

Wilson Price Hunt with his nineteen Astorians, Marie Dorion and her two children started out at dawn as rain fell throughout the day -- November 20, 1811 thirst was replaced by hunger as they trudged across the prairie for thirty-three miles on only a little dried corn

Rain continued throughout the night

#### HUNT'S ASTORIANS COME UPON ANOTHER INDIAN ENCAMPMENT

At daybreak Wilson Price Hunt's party saw the Snake River ahead as it flowed to the northwest its banks lined with cottonwood and willow trees -- November 21, 1811

(at a point about ten miles west of present day Boise, Idaho)

Indians had made camp there and had many horses

they were better clothed than other natives they recently had seen

Hunt was told that upstream beaver were plentiful but there only a few in this vicinity

Here an Indian told Hunt that the horse he was riding had been stolen from him

because it was necessary to get food for the expedition Hunt returned the horse  
he purchased some fish and two dogs  
Two Astorians, one was Pierre Dorion, each purchased a horse in exchange for a buffalo robe  
Pierre Dorion's pregnant wife Marie and her two children were provided a great deal of relief  
because they occasionally were able to ride  
When Wilson Price Hunt questioned local Indians regarding the distance to the Columbia River  
they could not even tell him which direction to travel in order to find it  
Hunt's expedition returned to the Snake River in an effort to maintain their bearings  
rain was so heavy that only twelve miles were made that day  
however, spirits were raised by a meal of fish and dogs purchased from the Indians

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S ASTORIANS ENTER THE FOOTHILLS

Mountains ahead were covered with snow  
Hunt's party continued their trek westward suffering the same hardships  
that had accompanied them throughout the month of November  
Occasional meetings with Indians provided them the opportunity to barter for food  
information about the Columbia River was even more difficult to acquire  
When the foothills of the (Salmon River Mountains) were reached they crossed the Snake River  
and began the difficult climb -- November 26, 1811  
before them was a wintry looking mountain covered with snow on all sides

#### TRAVEL BECOMES VERY DIFFICULT FOR WILSON PRICE HUNT'S EXPEDITION

Wilson Price Hunt's Pacific Fur Company over land expediting toiled through a canyon  
so sheer walled that horses had to be unpacked so they could get through -- November 27, 1811  
Marie Dorion carried her children and her pack through this area without complaint  
for more than two weeks Hunt and his men with the Sioux woman and her children  
wandered through the mountains near the Snake River  
Day followed day with harsh conditions being the rule rather than the exception  
sometimes they found a little game or met with Shoshones  
and obtained a couple of dogs or a few horses -- most often they went hungry  
Indians told Hunt some whites who had followed the same trail they were taking  
and about some other whites who had passed on the opposite side of the river  
this news relieved Hunt greatly regarding Ramsay Crooks and his companions  
Mountains whose heights were covered with pines and snow narrowed the Snake River channel  
they could advance only with the greatest difficulty because of the sharp rocks  
and steep cliffs that plunged to the very banks of the river

they killed a black-tailed deer which gave them an excellent meal

#### SPIRITS ARE RAISED AT ASTORIA

Robert Stuart returned from a successful venture into the Cascade Mountains

hardly a hundred miles away from Astoria near the mouth of the Columbia River

It was learned by the Astorians at the post that David Stuart had found a prosperous site for a post where the Okanogan River enters the Columbia River

These positive reports had an uplifting effect on morale

however, pessimism soon crept back as the rain-swept year dragged toward an end with no word from the reinforcements crossing overland from St. Louis

#### HUNT'S EXPEDITION IS STOPPED

Wilson Price Hunt's party traveled only thirteen miles -- December 1, 1811

terrain had a great deal to do with it as the country became increasingly broken

this resulted in the distance covered decreasing each day

hunger sapped their strength -- their diet that day consisted of one small beaver

and some frozen blackberries and chokeberries for all twenty men, a woman and two children

Weather added to their misery as rain in the gorges and snow knee deep on the ridges

accompanied by bitter winds increased the pain of their travel -- and it was extremely cold

horses had to be unloaded to remain on the narrow trail close to the Snake River

baggage was carried in the arms of the Astorians up icy crags and against blinding snowstorms a large snow storm the cut travel time to zero -- December 2

and only nine miles were covered the following day

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT WAS FORCED TO LEAVE THE SNAKE RIVER

Once again the Astorians, Marie Dorion and her sons Baptiste and Paul climbed into the mountains that were covered with snow up to their knees

temperatures remained extremely cold and the members of the expedition were nearly exhausted

By good luck they reached a grove of pine trees at sunset -- December 4, 1811

they were comforted by a warm fire

although they had struggled ahead all day because of the twisting course of the river

they had traveled only four miles from the camp of the day before

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT RETURNS TO THE SNAKE RIVER

It began to snow on their pine tree encampment about 3:00 a.m. December 5, 1811

visibility was reduced to about three hundred feet but the roar of the river could be heard far below

they followed the sound as they slid down the mountainside

one horse fell several hundred feet with his load but the animal was not hurt

Weather was less severe in the valley than it had been on the mountain slopes

it was raining there and the snow was only ankle deep

only six miles were covered that day and Hunt had to kill another horse for food

almost a month of brutal toil had brought Hunt's group

(to today's Seven Devils Mountain area beside the Grand Canyon of the Snake River)

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S PARTY AND RAMSAY CROOKS' PARTY COMMUNICATE

Stumbling to the Snake River for water during the snowy morning -- December 6, 1811

Hunt's men to their astonishment and distress saw white men on the south side of the Snake River

they appeared to be Ramsay Crooks' party

Both Hunt's and Crook's Astorians had traveled parallel routes but out of touch with each other

on either side of the Snake River

Ramsay Crooks hailed Hunt's people across the river

much shouting over the sounds of the Snake River elicited the fact

that Crooks and his eighteen men were nearly starved and exhausted

they had been completely unsuccessful in the search for food or Indian guidance

worn with fatigue and emaciated from hunger

they seemed in even more wretched physical condition and desolate than Hunt's people

#### WILSON HUNT BUILDS A BULL BOAT TO CROSS THE SNAKE RIVER

Hastily Wilson Price Hunt returned to his camp and built a bull boat with the hide of the horse

he had killed the night before

When one of the voyageurs volunteered to ride the bull boat across the raging Snake River

Hunt launched it and successfully delivered some food to their starving companions

#### RAMSAY CROOKS IS TAKEN ACROSS THE SNAKE RIVER

On the return trip in the bull boat Ramsay Crooks and French-Canadian Francois Le Clerc

were ferried to the north bank

Crooks was almost completely exhausted by fatigue and hunger, Le Clerc was ill

After he had eaten, Crooks told a hopeless tale of impassable cliffs along the river

they were returning from a point about three day's journey down the Snake River

where they could not continue because there were no longer banks and ledges

and cliffs cut them off from drinking water hundreds of feet below

mountain walls of rock rose almost perpendicularly

from their base in the boiling waters to their crests covered in snow  
there were equally impassable snowdrifts in the mountains  
(this was the Grand Canyon of the Snake River)  
for six days they had had only the meat of their dogs for food  
yesterday Crooks and his party had eaten the last of their food -- their moccasins  
Wilson Price Hunt spent a sleepless night reflecting on their situation

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT CONSIDERS HIS PROSPECTS

Hunt was now responsible to provide for both his party and that of Ramsay Crooks  
he had more than twenty famished people to care for including Marie Dorion and her two sons  
something had to be done for Ramsay Crooks' men on the south side of the Snake River  
no time could be lost -- to linger was to starve  
ahead the depth of snow in the rugged mountains seemed impossible to conquer  
their only alternative appeared to be to turn back, seek out the Indians and purchase horses  
even this alternative would condemn the Astorians to starvation  
as they would have only wild berries, hawthorn plants and one skin and bone horse left  
and Hunt knew Ramsay Crooks and several of his men were too ill to accompany them

Once again the bull boat was sent across the Snake River to deliver food to Crooks' men  
this time the bull boat was lost

thorough searches of the area revealed there was no ready material available  
with which to construct another boat so a raft was made of driftwood  
Several unsuccessful attempts were made through the turbulent waters  
to send Ramsay Crooks and Francois Le Clerc on the raft back across the river  
with the remainder of the meat to the starving men  
however, all efforts to float a raft across the raging Snake River failed  
their failure demonstrated there was no means of crossing the river  
Crooks and Le Clerc would have to travel with Wilson Price Hunt  
leaving Ramsay Crooks' eighteen men on the south shore without an official leader

#### ONCE AGAIN HUNT MAKES A FATERUL AND INCORRECT DECISION

With the little remaining strength they possessed both Hunt's party and Crooks' former party  
slowly retraced their painful course back up the Snake River -- December 7, 1811  
retracing the steps they had only just recently taken along both banks of the Snake River  
It was soon apparent that Crooks and Le Clerc were too feeble to walk so Hunt slowed the pace  
knowing the great distance they had to travel to reach a Shoshone Indian camp if it was still there  
Hunt's twenty-four traveling companions grew impatient with the delay

they believed remaining with Crooks and Francois Le Clerc meant starvation  
by ones and twos Hunt's men left him to retrace their steps at a faster pace  
until only five remained with Crooks and Le Clerc

#### ANOTHER ATTEMPT IS MADE TO SEND SUPPLIES ACROSS THE SNAKE RIVER

Another raft was built to send Ramsay Crooks and Francois Le Clerc back to Crooks' men  
but the crossing could not be made because of the swift current -- December 8, 1811  
It was very cold that night and one of the men was severely frostbitten  
Ramsay Crooks became very ill -- another two days would be lost  
before an Indian village they had passed while traveling down the Snake River could be reached

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT DECIDES TO LEAVE CROOKS AND LE CLERC BEHIND

Wilson Price Hunt left two men to care for Ramsay Crooks and Francois Le Clerc  
he left two beaver skins with them and took another for himself  
Hunt and three companions set out to catch the main body of his party -- December 9, 1811  
traveling through the terrible cold on empty stomachs was grueling  
sharing one beaver tail for supper helped very little

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT CATCHES HIS MAIN PARTY OF OVERLAND ASTORIANS

Hunt and his three companions overtook the main body of Astorians -- early December 10, 1811  
one horse remained, the one belonging to Pierre Dorion that he had paid for it with a buffalo robe  
it carried his pregnant wife, children and his possessions  
Hunt suggested slaughtering the animal but Dorion would not consent to the idea  
despite the fact the animal was a walking skeleton  
Pierre realized that Marie would need the strength of the horse to carry her and his children  
after she had given birth to the baby  
Wilson Price Hunt threatened and offered bribes, but Dorion would not change his mind  
finally it was agreed to let the animal live  
until they knew if the Shoshone village they were seeking remained in the same place  
They did not travel far until they came upon Shoshones who had come down from the mountains  
after the Hunt's Overland Expedition had passed by on their way west  
these Indians had twenty horses grazing in front of their tepees  
Hunt purchased five horses and one was killed immediately, hastily cooked and devoured  
as some of Hunt's men had not eaten since they had left him [November 7]  
some of the meat was taken by horseback to the men staying with Ramsay Crooks  
Hunt learned a camp of Indians was located ahead at the mouth of the (Weiser River [Idaho])

Ramsay Crooks' starving eighteen men were still not able to cross the Snake River  
they saw the arrival of the five horses and the butchering of a horse across the river  
although they were crying out for food none of Hunt's men were willing to risk crossing the river

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT LOSES ANOTHER MAN

Ramsay Crooks and his three companions used the horse that brought them meat  
to reach the main camp -- early morning December 11, 1811

When Crooks arrived in camp he was shocked to find  
that although Hunt's people were well supplied with food none had been sent to his people  
at this location the river was narrow but deep and everything could be seen and heard across it  
Crooks called out to his men to set water boiling in their kettles as he was sending over meat  
across the Snake River -- Crooks ordered a bull boat constructed -- December 11, 1811  
when all was ready Crooks in his weakened state collapsed while trying to launch it  
however his effort thoroughly shamed the men

Finally Ben Jones, a hunter, volunteered and successfully delivered the raw meat  
after Jones returned across the river to the main party  
one of Crooks' voyageurs, Jean-Baptiste Prevost, ran up and down the beach crying out  
to be taken across the river away from starvation  
he said he would not take another step but would lay down and die

Once again the bull boat was sent across the river carrying more supplies  
this time with voyageur Joseph Delaunay aboard  
when Delaunay arrived on the south side of the river Prevost insisted on being taken across  
he could not wait for the meat to cook -- he needed to eat immediately  
Prevost forced himself aboard the bull boat as preparations were made for the return trip  
but as the opposite bank was approached Prevost became frantic  
at the sight of meat roasting over a fire in Hunt's camp  
Prevost's energetic activities upset the bull boat  
throwing Delaunay and Prevost into the churning water -- Prevost was lost  
but Delaunay, after much difficulty and heroism by the Astorians, was rescued  
however, the bull boat was swept away by the turbulent current

#### JOHN DAY JOINS WILSON PRICE HUNT'S ASTORIANS

Wilson Price Hunt killed another horse and had a bull boat made out of the hide  
which he used to send over more supplies to the opposite shore  
John Day, a hunter and one of Ramsay Crooks party, became convinced he was dying  
he requested that he be allowed to spend his last hours

with his former employer and commander Crooks  
Day was transported across the Snake River  
poor John Day, once an active and vigorous man was now more feeble than Crooks

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT LEAVES CROOKS, DAY AND DUBREUIL BEHIND

All of their scanty resources had been distributed to both sides of the river -- December 12, 1811  
Hunt was determined to lead his party to an Indian village  
but John Day would never be able to keep up  
unwilling to abandon the man, Ramsay Crooks urged Hunt to keep the expedition together  
French-Canadian, Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil also was ill and requested to remain with Crooks

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S PARTY CONTINUES ALONG THE SNAKE RIVER

Hunt, now traveling with eighteen men, Marie Dorion and her two sons Baptiste and Paul set out  
leaving Ramsay Crooks, John Day and Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil behind -- December 13, 1811  
all three Astorians were ill

Hunt left two horses with them and part of the carcass of the last horse that had been killed  
this, he hoped, would be sufficient to sustain them until they could reach an Indian camp  
Weather was so cold that ice was running in the Snake River and snow fell frequently  
eighteen Astorians with Wilson Price Hunt traveled along the north side of the Snake River  
they came to a stream (probably Boise Creek)

They followed the Snake River's bank upriver some distance  
before nightfall they found a small encampment of Shoshone Indians  
who had constructed a winter lodge along a nearby creek  
there were a number of horses pawing for grass under the light snow  
Indians traded a horse for an old pewter kettle and some glass beads

Hunt's party camped for the night in level open country next to the Shoshone Indian lodge

#### RAMSAY CROOKS STOPS AT A SHOSHONE CAMP

Ramsay Crooks, John Day and Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil reached a Shoshone camp  
Crooks stopped to make a winter camp along Snake River where they remained for twenty days  
as they treated John Day's physical and mental deterioration  
although Day was completely unable to travel Crooks refused to abandon his friend  
who had worked for Crooks and always proved to be most faithful  
over the days John Day and Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil deteriorated in health  
Ramsay Crooks, John Day and Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil were without resources  
they had nothing to offer the destitute Shoshone Indians who remained with them

soon the Indians drifted away  
Death seemed very near for everyone when a couple of Shoshone Indians wandered by,  
started a fire and fed them a meal before continuing on  
somewhat revived John Day managed to kill a wolf that had been prowling around the camp  
this improved the condition of the two very sick men and Ramsay Crooks  
While the three Astorians remained in camp they were shocked to see the arrival of  
Astorians Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry  
who had gone off on their own from Fort Henry (Idaho) to investigate beaver streams  
along the Missouri River  
Crooks and the men with him remained in the camp for twenty days  
as they treated John Day's physical and mental deterioration  
although Day was completely unable to travel Crooks refused to abandon his friend  
who had worked for Crooks and always proved to be most faithful  
occasionally Crooks and his men were assisted by friendly Indians

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT FINDS A SHOSHONE INDIAN CAMP

Hunt and his traveling companions saw a dozen Shoshone Indian tepees  
along a small tributary of the Snake River -- December 16, 1810  
Descending from the mountains Hunt and his Astorians reached a broad lava plain  
where they camped on the banks of a river they had previously crossed [November 26]  
Hunt noted they had futilely tried to find a passage along the Snake River for twenty days  
Hunt rested his party for a few days beside the Shoshone camp  
he was informed it would not be possible to find a passage following the river  
Hunt purchased a horse and a dog on one day  
and another horse, dried fish, a few roots and some pounded cherries the next day  
Hunt spent most of his time attempting to find a route to the Columbia River  
and the Cayuse Indians who lived there  
advice was plentiful but always differed from what had just been learned  
however, all agreed the trail was good  
and the journey would take seventeen to twenty-one nights  
there would be snow waist high in the mountains  
Hunt visited every Indian lodge asking for someone to guide them across the (Blue) mountains  
no one would accept regardless of what he offered as a reward for the service  
Shoshones invited the Astorians to remain with them until (spring)  
Hunt was again in a dilemma, to attempt a mountain crossing without a guide was certain death  
to remain there, after having already been so long on the journey and at such great expense,

was worse to him than “two deaths”

Hunt changed his tactics and berated the Indians for lying about the conditions in the mountains because they were afraid and lacked courage

one Indian agreed to guide the Astorians across the mountains for a gun, a pistol, three knives, two horses and a little bit of everything the traders had with them

#### McKENZIE-McCLELLAN-REED PARTY PASS THROUGH THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

After crossing the Snake River Plain the eleven members of the McKenzie-McClellan-Reed Party arrived at the Seven Devils and Craig Mountains of the Rocky Mountain chain which loomed in front of them

they began to force their way up steep grades and through the canyons against terrifying obstacles  
Sufferings from hunger because there was no game

they subsisted on strips of beaver skin broiled on the campfire coals

an allowance barely enough to keep them alive -- then they ran out of beaver strips still they feebly dragged one limb after another suffering from thirst and hunger until a severe snow storm forced them to stop

to struggle against it, in their exhausted condition, was impossible  
cowering under an impending rock at the foot of a steep mountain,  
they prepared themselves for that wretched fate which seemed inevitable

#### ONCE AGAIN WILSON PRICE HUNT SETS OUT WITH HIS OVERLAND EXPEDITON

Wilson Price Hunt and his party left the Shoshone Indian camp -- December 21, 1811

soon their guide was joined by two others Shoshone Indians who led them to the Snake River no rafts could be found to make a crossing so two horses were killed and a bull boat was made on the south side they met thirteen of Ramsay Crooks' leaderless men who reported they had not seen Crooks or the two men with him since they left

#### McKENZIE-McCLELLAN-REED PARTY FACES FAMINE

With death by starvation very near Robert McClellan looked higher up the mountain where he saw a bighorn sheep standing on a rock on the hillside above he was the only member of the party with the strength to go in pursuit

McClellan set off to get within range of the animal -- his companions watched in breathless anxiety their lives depended on his success

McClellan made a cautious circuit and when he arrived at the proper distance

he leveled his rifle, took careful aim and fired -- the animal dropped dead where it stood  
this was very fortunate as no one had the strength of pursue a wounded animal

McClellan rolled the carcass down the mountain to the waiting Astorians  
who were too feeble to climb the rocks  
they displayed amazing self-denial as they carved up the bighorn sheep  
they made themselves content with soup made from the bones  
and saved the flesh for the future

Strengthened by the food the eight Astorians continued their agonizing journey  
frequently they were reduced once again to near starvation  
only their small number kept them alive as they could survive on little food  
enabled them to travel through this desolate region and remain alive

#### WILSON PRICE HUNTS GATHERS UP SOME OF RAMSAY CROOKS' MEN

All of Ramsay Crooks' men crossed the Snake River using the bull boat -- December 23, 1811  
Crooks' men were extremely weak and exhausted -- four of them even more than the others  
three of them were so weak they expressed the wish to remain with the Shoshones

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT CONTINUES HIS JOURNEY

Three of Ramsay Crooks' men took the bull boat across the Snake River -- December 24, 1811  
Hunt gave them some supplies and the bull boat  
Hunt's party now consisted of twenty-eight Astorians, a very pregnant Marie Dorion and her two sons,  
and three Shoshone Indians who served as guides  
they had five exhausted, half-starved horses that carried their baggage  
and, in case of need, were to furnish them with provisions for their trip over the mountains  
Hunt's guides set out northwest away from the Snake River -- morning December 24, 1811  
they headed for the chain of forested and snow-covered (Blue Mountains) of eastern Oregon  
rising between the men and their goal -- but their hardships would not end

Conditions remained intolerable

they made only fourteen miles a day across plains and over hills occasionally covered in snow  
one sparse meal a day of horsemeat hardly took the edge off their hunger  
rain and snow impeded their march  
heavy frosts at night chilled them through as they lay in camp  
and gave an icy temperature to the streams they were obliged to cross from time to time

#### HUNT'S MAIN PARTY OF ASTORIANS REACH THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Wilson Price Hunt's remaining expedition crossed a northward flowing stream -- December 28, 1811  
(this was the Powder River flowing out of Oregon's Blue Mountains)  
turning west the thirty-two traveling companions penetrated the rugged (Blue Mountains)

as they continued forward snow and rain fell -- twice they were forced to cross the icy river  
Mountains crowded in on each side -- to the left was one they had to climb  
it extended from north to south was heavily wooded and was covered with snow

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S OVERLAND PARTY CROSS THE (BLUE MOUNTAINS)

Traveling for two weeks, Hunt's cold, hungry party average twenty-eight miles a day  
in rain and snow as they crossed the rugged Wallowa Mountains (of Oregon)  
they entered the (Grande Ronde) region -- a beautiful valley several miles wide and very long  
with a pretty stream meandering through it -- beaver seemed to be plentiful

Happily the Astorians found six Shoshone tepees and many horses  
these Indians sold them four horses as well as three dogs and some roots  
they said it would be three nights to sleep before the Cayuse Indians were reached  
they pointed out a pass in the mountains that had to be taken

Indians said there would not be much now but Hunt doubted this information  
as they were surrounded by snow-blanketed mountains

#### McKENZIE- McCLELLAN-REED PARTY CONTINUES THEIR JOURNEY TOWARD ASTORIA

Meat of the bighorn sheep temporarily gave them strength to pursue their journey  
Donald McKenzie, Robert McClellan and John Reed and their seven men crossed overland  
north toward the Clearwater River  
they trudged across mammoth ridges, through dense forests and past the gorges  
of the Little Salmon and the Salmon rivers  
they were frequently reduced almost to starvation  
only the small number in the party that required only a small amount of food

#### MARIE DORION GIVES BIRTH TO HER THIRD CHILD

Madame Marie Dorion gave birth in the bleak and snowy dawn -- December 30, 1811  
hers was the first child born on the trek across North America

Wilson Price Hunt's decency was divided between his senses of duty toward the expedition  
and his feelings of humanity for the mother and infant

he hesitated about taking up the day's march even in the face of their situation  
food was very scarce and every hour of delay was dangerous

author Washington Irving described the birth of the baby: **"...the [wife] of Pierre Dorion, who had hitherto kept on without murmuring or flinching, was suddenly taken in labor, and enriched her husband with another child. As the fortitude and good conduct of the poor woman had gained for her the good-will of the party, her situation caused concern and perplexity. Pierre, however, treated**

**the matter as an occurrence that could be arranged and need cause no delay. He remained by his wife in the camp, with his other children and his horse, and promised soon to rejoin the main body, who proceeded on their march.”<sup>36</sup>**

(a marker on the Oregon Trail near North Powder, Oregon approximately locates the site)  
Overland Astorians pressed onward while Dorion and his children remained with the mother

#### DORION FAMILY CATCHES UP WITH HUNT AND THE ASTORIANS

Pierre Dorion walked into the camp leading his skeleton of a horse -- December 31, 1812  
which, perhaps with this emergency in mind, he had deliberately refused to have killed  
author Washington Irving again describes the scene: **“In the course of the following morning the Dorion family made its reappearance. Pierre came trudging in advance, followed by his valued, though skeleton steed, on which was mounted his [wife] with her new-born infant in her arms, and her boys of two and four years old wrapped in a blanket and slung at her side. The mother looked as unconcerned as if nothing had happened to her.”<sup>37</sup>**

#### McKENZIE- McCLELLAN-REED PARTY ARRIVES AT THE CLEARWATER RIVER

After twenty-one days of toil and suffering, the eleven Astorians crossed through  
the Seven Devils and Craig Mountains of the Rocky Mountain

They arrived at the southern fork of the Snake River (today's Clearwater River)

here they found wild horses -- the first they had seen west of the Rocky Mountains  
Donald McKenzie, Robert McClellan and John Reed and their eight men

made their way to the Snake River where they found a friendly tribe of Indians  
(probably Nez Perce) who provided food and shelter

Living with the Nez Perce was a young white man in a mentally unstable condition

when he was lucid he told the Astorians he was Archibald Pelton from Connecticut

he had worked for Manuel Lisa and came west with Andrew Henry

he had helped build Fort Henry on the Snake River (Idaho)

he had survived an attack on the post by hostile Indians and had been wandering for three years

when he came upon this friendly band who took him in cared for him

Horses were acquired from the Indians -- one was slaughtered for food

McKenzie-McClellan-Reed Party members gratefully mounted the remaining animals

they set out to the west with Archibald Pelton accompanying them

#### ALEXANDER ROSS IS NOT HAPPY TO SPEND THE WINTER ALONE AT FORT OKANOGAN

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<sup>36</sup> Washington Irving, *Astoria*, P. 70.

<sup>37</sup> Washington Irving, *Astoria*, P. 72.

Alexander Ross was unhappy to spend the winter among the natives alone at the post

he kept an account of his experiences in the wilderness: **“Only picture to yourself, gentle reader, how I must have felt alone in this unhallowed wilderness, without friend or white man within hundreds of miles of me, and surrounded by savages who had never seen a white man before. Every day seemed a week, every night a month. I pined, I languished, my head turned gray, and in a brief space ten years were added to my age. Yet man is born to endure, and my only consolation was in my Bible.**

**“The first thing I did after my friends left me was to patch up the house a little and put the few goods I had, so tempting to Indians, into a kind of cellar, which I made in the middle of the house. This done, I set to in earnest to learn the Indian language, and wrote vocabulary after vocabulary; and although the task was a hard one, I soon found from my progress that perseverance would overcome many difficulties.”<sup>38</sup>**

#### ASTORIAN JOSEPH MILLER AND HIS TRAPPERS SEARCH FOR BEAVER STREAMS

Astor’s partner Joseph Miller along with Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor, and Martin Cass had successfully worked the Snake River Country

They left the region around Fort Henry on the Snake River (Idaho)

and veered south where the Snake River until it began to turn westward

they and trekked more than two hundred miles across the Continental Divide -- winter 1811-1812

but their route did not cross through any mountain pass

#### ASTORIANS ALONG THE COLUMBIA RIVER EXPAND THEIR AREA OF OPERATION

Astorians at the fort made the best of bad conditions -- winter 1811-1812

brisk trade was established with the neighboring natives

Indians kept them informed of other activities happening in the area

Astorians had competition from North West Company trappers

who had heard of Astor’s venture and did not wish to share the natural wealth

Partner Robert Stuart and Clerk Donald McGillis

led a trading party up the Willamette River to investigate Champoege -- December 1811

#### ASTOR’S OVERLAND EXPEDITION WAS FORCED TO STOP

Wilson Price Hunt urged his party of thirty-three Astorians to hit the trail

but soon found that not a French-Canadian worthy of the name would travel on New Year’s Day

In spite of the pitiful conditions Hunt’s party faced,

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<sup>38</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 80.

permission for a holiday was granted and the celebration began

New Year's Day 1812 was greeted with roasted, boiled, fried and fricasseed horsemeat, edibles of dog and boiled roots and a punch composed almost entirely of hot water musicians in the expedition brought out their fiddles as the voyageurs danced and sang

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S OVERLAND EXPEDITION IS AGAIN UNDER WAY

Having celebrated the New Year as best they could, Hunt and his party

began walking across (today's Grande Ronde) valley

following a small stream for several miles into the Blue Mountains -- January 2, 1812

Local Indians pointed out a distant gap through which they must pass to cross the Blue Mountains they assured the Astorians there would be little snow

and in three days they would arrive among the Cayuse Indians living beside the Great River

Hunt put no stock in this pronouncement as he had been deceived several times before

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S PARTY AGAIN ENTERS THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Hunt and his people followed a small stream for several miles into the Blue Mountains

after crossing the (Grande Ronde) valley they climbed many pine-covered hills -- January 3, 1812

at the summits they waded through snow to their knees and at times to their waists

fresh water was not available

#### DORION FAMILY CATCHES UP WITH HUNT AND THE ASTORIANS

Wilson Price Hunt and his Astorians were high in the snow covered Blue Mountains

weather was overcast and cold

Pierre Dorion walked into the Shoshone Indian village

leading their of a skeleton horse -- January 4, 1812

which, perhaps with this emergency in mind, he had deliberately refused to allow to be killed

author Washington Irving again describes the scene: **"In the course of the following morning the**

**Dorion family made its reappearance. Pierre came trudging in advance, followed by his valued, though skeleton steed, on which was mounted his [wife] with her new-born infant in her arms, and her boys of two and four years old wrapped in a blanket and slung at her side. The mother looked as unconcerned as if nothing had happened to her."**<sup>39</sup>

#### BLUE MOUNTAINS CONFRONT HUNT'S OVERLAND ASTORIANS

Once more Wilson Price Hunt's thirty-three Astorians assailed the Blue Mountains -- January 5, 1812

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<sup>39</sup> Washington Irving. *Astoria*, P. 72.

as they trudged toward the mountains pass in the distance  
There appeared to be no end to the difficult terrain  
for three days they struggled along over boulders and fallen trees  
as knee deep and sometimes waist-deep snow and added to their misery  
they followed trails that ended in impassable mountains or canyons and had to retrace their route  
they grew weak from hunger, fatigue and despair

#### McKENZIE- McCLELLAN-REED PARTY REACHES THE SNAKE RIVER

When the river they were following emptied into an even larger stream, the eleven Astorians realized  
they had finally reached the Columbia River (at present-day Pasco, Washington)  
From their knowledge of the Lewis and Clark Expedition  
they now believed they had been riding along the Snake River  
(only later did they discover in fact they had returned to the river they had earlier abandoned)  
Here another gathering of Indians agreed to trade two canoes for the Astorians' horses  
eleven men of the McKenzie-McClellan-Reed Party was water bound down the Columbia River  
portaging around the rapids, waterfalls and obstacles at the Dalles and the Cascades

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT'S PARTY CROSSES THE SUMMIT OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

High in the Blue Mountains Wilson Price Hunt's remaining Overland Expedition members  
saw the sun for the first time since climbing into the mountains -- January 6, 1812  
far below them to the west was a broad plain  
they reached a small stream that led them to an extremely narrow pass  
Hunt's thirty-three Astorians crossed the Blue Mountains -- January 7  
and began the descent down the Western slopes  
everywhere they found horse trails used by Indians to hunt black-tail deer -- many herds were seen  
as the sun came out, warmer air melted the snow which disappeared  
their little stream joined another much larger one  
In the five days since leaving the Shoshone camp they had come about sixty miles  
hard travel and the cold temperatures weakened some of the men so badly they could not keep up  
their guide assured them they would be among the natives of the Columbia River the next day  
an encouraged Wilson Price Hunt ordered the party to push on  
he hoped to find a friendly Indian village on the (Umatilla Plains) ahead  
where he might obtain food and shelter

#### DEATH AGAIN VISITS THE HUNT EXPEDITION

Wilson Price Hunt briefly noted in his journal -- January 7, 1812

**“In the course of this day’s march the recently-born child of Pierre Dorion died.”<sup>40</sup>**

no record had been made of the child’s name or gender

Marie Dorion amazingly had not caused a moments delay thus far on the trip

she had obviously withstood many more hardship than any man on the trek

There was not much of a funeral that evening as the little body was wrapped in a piece of cloth or fur and with little ceremony was buried in an unmarked grave (probably near Duncan Station, Oregon)

Pierre remembered a brief prayer which he spoke

rocks were mounded over the tiny grave to further protected the body from scavenging animals

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT HAS A FORTUNATE MEETING WITH FRIENDLY INDIANS

Hunt’s party had only two horses left and both were reduced to skin and bones

in this desperate condition after so many terrible hardships

and the loss of several members of their party, another friendly encampment was seen

thirty-four Indian mat lodges could be seen along a small creek in the distance

Wilson Price Hunt pressed his thirty-three Astorians forward to reach the native village

many of the men dropped behind the main group because they were so feeble

they could not keep up with the already snail-like movement of the pacesetters

Hunt’s Overland Party, including Marie Dorion and her two surviving children

arrived in the camp of friendly and prosperous Cayuse and Nez Perce Indians

who were camped on (today’s Umatilla River) -- January 8, 1812

Indians informed Hunt the Columbia River was only two days away

These Indians had at least two thousand horses

their tepees were made of matting

they were clothed in good robes of buffalo or deerskin

they had deerskin shirts and leggings as good as the best-provided Indians Hunt had seen yet

they had kettles and copper pots in their homes which suggested trade with the coastal Indians

their tools consisted of axes and stone hammers used to pound roots, cherries and other fruit

as well as fish into pemmican

pointed pieces of elkhorn served as wedges to split wood into planks for all kinds of uses

women had willow-twig hats very neatly made and decorated

After the typical greeting, Hunt succeeded in buying a mare and colt which were immediately shot and prepared for the stew kettle along with some roots

soon the hunger of the entire party was temporarily appeased

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<sup>40</sup> Washington Irving, *Astoria*, P. 75.

## WILSON PRICE HUNT AND HIS PARTY REMAINS WITH THESE NATIVES FOR SIX DAYS

Trade was conducted and horses were obtained very cheaply from the Cayuse and Nez Perce Indians who owned a large herd

an old musket, a rifle, a tomahawk, a kettle and a small amount of ammunition

brought in return four horses, three dogs and a quantity of edible roots

a blanket or knife or a half pound of blue beads would purchase a horse

eight horses and two colts were purchased by Hunt

two of there were given to Hunt's guides as payment for their service

many of the men got horses for their individual use because of the low prices

Roots, horsemeat and dogmeat roasted on the fire for several nights

all feasted on these delicious provisions

several men became ill -- some from overeating and others apparently from eating roots

still other men remained lame from their trek across the Blue Mountains

Natives gave the expedition a great deal of information about conditions at Astoria

here Wilson Price Hunt and his thirty-two Astorians learned that a band of white men

had recently gone down the river (probably the Umatilla River)

which flowed by this encampment on to the Columbia River

Hunt and the members of his party were overjoyed to learn this good news

from the accounts of the party given him by the Indians

Hunt reasoned from the numbers and descriptions given

that they were the men led by Donald McKenzie, John Reed and Robert McClellan

Nez Perce Indians in the camp also spoke of Nor'Wester Jaco Finlay

with whom they had traded for tobacco

this indicated to Hunt that their Canadian competition was in the vicinity

Astorians remained with the Cayuse and Nez Perce Indians natives for six days

as stragglers staggered into camp until all but one voyageur, Michel Carriere, had arrived

he was expected momentarily as he had been seen the previous afternoon

sitting on horseback behind a Shoshone Indian in front of a lodge the expedition had passed

the night before a few miles from the camp

Astorians made preparations to continue their journey -- each person made himself moccasins

two men were sent to look for Michel Carriere but they could not find him

as the Shoshones seen with him had moved on and no information could be learned

## WILSON PRICE HUNT AND HIS ASTORIANS CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY TOWARD ASTORIA

Hunt and his thirty-two Astorians left the Cayuse and Nez Perce Indians' camp -- January 15, 1812

they followed the (Umatilla) river Hunt's downstream toward the Columbia River

Hunt's expedition reached a village of Cayuse Indians camped along the (Umatilla) river  
they were superb horsemen who hunted deer by chasing them on horseback and surrounding them  
then killed the animals with remarkable skill using bow and arrow  
these Indians had some venison but they wanted to sell it at such a high price  
the Astorians could not afford to purchase it  
Indians informed Hunt that in about six nights they would be at the Great Falls of the Columbia  
It rained so heavily during their stay on the banks of the (Umatilla) river  
that water rose with amazing speed and the Astorians were forced to break camp in a hurry  
three of the Astorians' horses tied to stakes in the lowlands drowned  
Cayuse Indians also had to move to higher ground and Hunt bought four more horses from them  
he wanted a lot of horses because the Cayuse Indians told him  
he could get a canoe in exchange for a horse and Hunt had thirty-three people to transport

#### WINTER AT ASTORIA PASSED PEACEFULLY

Fears of Indian hostility proved unfounded  
as winter pressed on the Indians seemed to disappear from the sea coast  
to such an extent provisions became difficult to acquire for the Astorians  
who often faced half-rations of food  
hunters made frequent and wide excursions in search of game  
but the terrain was so difficult and the forest so dense that little success was achieved  
long lasting rains made keeping their weapons in order almost impossible

#### RAMSAY CROOKS STOPS AT A SHOSHONE CAMP

Astor's partner Ramsay Crooks with John Day and Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil who were both ill  
reached a camp of Shoshone Indians -- January 1812  
Crooks stopped to make a winter camp along Snake River  
as they treated John Day's physical and mental deterioration  
although Day was completely unable to travel Crooks refused to abandon his friend  
who had served Crooks as a very faithful employee  
Crooks, Day and Dubreuil were without resources and had nothing to offer the destitute Shoshones  
who remained with them -- soon the Indians drifted away  
over the days John Day and Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil deteriorated in health  
Death seemed very near for everyone when a couple of Shoshone Indians passed by,  
they started a fire and provided a meal to the Astorians before continuing on  
somewhat revived John Day managed to kill a wolf that had been prowling around the camp  
this improved the condition of Ramsay Crooks and the two very sick men

While the three Astorians remained in camp they were shocked by the arrival of three more Astorians  
Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry  
who had gone off on their own from Fort Henry (Idaho) to investigate beaver streams  
along the Missouri River  
(they had fallen in with a band of Shoshones and were attacked by Blackfoot Indians  
northeast of the Snake River)  
Ramsay Crooks and the two men with him remained in the camp for twenty days  
occasionally they were assisted by friendly Indians passing by

#### JOSEPH MILLER'S PARTY OF TRAPPERS IS ROBBED BY INDIANS

Astor's partner Joseph Miller with Edward Robinson, John Hoback, Jacob Reznor and Martin Cass  
had crossed the continental divide of the Rocky Mountains by an unknown route  
and entered the (Utah) desert  
after almost a month of travel and their route took them to the Bear River  
they had traveled an erratic path that led them more than 1000 miles  
through land that had been seen only by Indians  
while on the lower end of the Bear River they found streams to be alive with beaver  
they halted to gather a rich harvest of pelts in (today's Great Salt Lake region)  
These five Astorians continued south into Arapaho Indian country  
where they saw their good luck run out as they were robbed by Arapahos -- January 1812  
Joseph Miller with Edward Robinson, John Hoback, Jacob Reznor and Martin Cass set up a camp  
probably in (Wyoming's) northern foothills of the Medicine Bow Mountains  
(or perhaps to the northwest along the southern tributary of the Wind River Mountains)  
they had only two horses with them

#### McKENZIE- McCLELLAN-REED PARTY ARRIVES AT ASTORIA

Shouts went up when up from the men at Astoria -- about 5:00 P.M. January 18, 1812  
two canoes carrying white men were approaching along the Columbia River  
Astoria commander Duncan McDougall being ill sent clerk Gabriel Franchere  
who hurried out to provide the welcome Donald McKenzie Robert McClellan,  
John Reed and their eight traveling companions all in dreadful condition  
McKenzie-McClellan-Reed party arrived at Astoria exhausted, emaciated and in rags  
they were the first of the Overland Expedition to arrive at Pacific Fur Company's Astoria  
Donald McKenzie estimated the length of his journey at more than 3,500 miles  
(although it does not exceed 1,800 miles in a direct line)  
these emaciated new arrivals scarcely resembled men

even massive Donald McKenzie who normally weighed three hundred pounds  
resembled a hide-covered skeleton

#### DONALD "FATS" MCKENZIE REFLECTS ON HIS NORTH WEST COMPANY ROOTS

Experienced, energetic, ambitious Donald McKenzie has suffered several personal set-backs  
"Fats" originally had been attracted by Astor's promises of wealth and advancement  
he had expected to be a co-leader of the overland expedition  
but Astor had put Wilson Price Hunt in charge of the expedition  
McKenzie and Hunt had argued, often rancorously, about significant leadership questions  
McKenzie's rational, informed opinions were usually ignored  
by the impractical, impulsive and quite often unaware Wilson Price Hunt

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT WAS UNDER WAY ONCE AGAIN

Hunt bought yet another horse from the Cayuse Indians  
(he later reported these were the cleanest Indians he had seen in his travels  
like all other natives they were very proud people Cayuse natives ate neither dogs nor horses  
and would not allow anyone to bring this meat into their tents)  
they were very pleased to be told by Hunt that he would return to their village  
with merchandise to trade for beaver pelts  
they told a confusing tale of white men coming to trade with them  
traders gave the Indians some tobacco and then sat and smoked with them  
one of these white men had told the Indians he lived in a house on the Columbia River  
Hunt's voyageurs believed these must be North West Company rivals)  
Having regrouped their numbers and regained their strength after satisfying their appetites  
Hunt and his thirty-two weary Overland Astorians set out down the Umatilla River  
in the direction of the Columbia River -- January 19, 1812  
several, including Hunt, were on horseback  
one man, Michel Carriere, had not yet caught up so he was left behind to forage on his own

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT AND HIS OVERLAND EXPEDITION REACHES THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Two days of gentle walking across a rolling prairie led Hunt and his thirty-two Astorians  
to the Columbia River at the mouth of the Umatilla River -- January 21, 1812  
they had trekked 240 miles through wintry wastes and the rugged Blue Mountains  
since leaving the Snake River  
Columbia River had been a cherished goal for a long, long time  
they had come 1,751 miles and lived through unbelievable hardship and privation

since their departure from the Arikara Villages on the Missouri River  
This area was occupied by a wretchedly poor tribe that had neither moccasins nor leggings  
their clothing consisted of only a robe of buffalo, deer, rabbit, fox, or even duck skin  
to this meager protection they sometimes add wolf-skin sleeves  
their huts were well constructed of matting with roofs like the roofs of houses  
these structures were very well lit and warm  
holes scooped out of the ground and lined with mats were living quarters  
women were usually naked -- some had a fragment of robe to cover their shoulders  
but all of them wore around their waists a leather belt that passed between their thighs  
and indicated an intention of modesty  
these Indians were better stocked with food than the Shoshones as dried salmon was plentiful  
they gave Hunt's party many fresh trout they had caught at the mouth of the Umatilla River  
this was excellent fish  
their canoes were made of pine tree trunks split in half  
since they had no adze they used fire to hollow out their canoes  
around them the area was filled with beaver dams  
Hunt learned from native sources that people at "the large house" (Astoria)  
were anxiously awaiting the coming of many of their friends from the east  
Indians said their was a road on the north side of the Columbia River  
when the members of the Overland Expedition were seen by a Yakima Indian  
from across the Columbia River that evening he swam across the river to their camp  
and gave the Astorians a detailed description of whites who had preceded them downriver

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT LEADS HIS PARTY DOWN THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Hunt spent all day making the crossing the of the Columbia River  
to the north (Washington) side -- January 22, 1812  
Hunt purchased some fish and nine dogs -- January 23, 1812  
he and his Astorians followed down the north bank of the Columbia River  
this route along the river was very good  
weather had become beautiful and very mild much like a beautiful day in [October]  
camp that night was made close to a village of Indians who had about fifty canoes  
Hunt purchased nine dogs that were quite fat and made a delicious dinner

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT AND HIS OVERLAND EXPEDITION FOLLOWS THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Columbia ran almost directly west and the banks were bare making travel easy -- January 24-28, 1812  
frequently the thirty-three Astorians came on Indian lodges and purchased fish and dogs

but they put such a high price on elk or deer venison that the Astorians could not afford it  
departures in the morning were often delayed as Indians took the ropes tethering the horses  
if not the horses themselves and time was lost capturing stray animals  
Sixty miles were crossed before they reached hilly country where the Columbia River  
became constricted between rocky banks and poured over numerous tumultuous rapids  
Indians in this region appeared wealthier and arrogant  
Hunt received word from these Indians that a number of white men had built a large house  
at the mouth of the great river and surrounded it with a wooden wall  
Wilson Price Hunt became aware the natives had turned untrustworthy -- January 22, 1812  
Indians they met attempted to steal their stray horses  
At one village they learned a successful native hunter had killed an elk  
upon approaching him to obtain some venison  
they soon found that his price was far beyond their ability to pay,  
so they traded for dog meat and considered it a fine delicacy -- far superior to horse meat

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT CAMPS ACROSS FROM THE DESCHUTES RIVER

Camp was made along the north side of the Columbia River  
across the river from the mouth of (today's Deschutes River)  
Indians came in great numbers to dance in honor of the arrival of the Astorians -- January 30, 1812  
but they arrived in such large numbers that Hunt became concerned  
he pretended to be ill and asked to be left alone -- in a short time the Indians complied

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT AND HIS OVERLANDERS PASS CELILO FALLS

Hunt's party reached the falls known to the Indians as Timm or Tumwater (today's Celilo Falls)  
here the Columbia River's course was dammed by rocks over which the water rushed  
violently through several channels  
They reached a village of Wishram Indians on the north river bank -- early morning January 31, 1812  
this was the greatest fishing area of the Columbia River  
on both sides of the river the Astorians saw large platforms made of carefully woven stakes  
used by the Indians to dry their fish.  
ground around the platforms was covered with bones and heads of fish  
(Hunt later reported that the Indians in this area were the most intelligent encountered so far  
one of them who knew a few English words  
he told Hunt that David Stuart had gone to one of the northern tributaries of the Columbia  
to spend the winter -- in fact, this native had visited Stuart's trading post  
he also recounted the disaster that overtook Alexander McKay and the ship *Tonquin*

as well as the tragic loss of Alexander McKay with the *Tonquin*  
he asked for news about Mr. Lewis and Mr. Clark and some of their companions  
however, this Indian had somehow learned of the death of Meriwether Lewis  
an incredible amount of information reached the Indians of the Columbia River  
Not far below the waterfalls they saw a snow-covered peak on the south bank  
Hunt supposed this was Captain George Vancouver's Mount Hood

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT CONTINUES DOWN THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Hunt saw several extremely well made canoes with elevated bows and sterns -- February 1, 1812  
some were capable of carrying three thousand pounds and more  
however, he found it very difficult to bargain with these natives who were more intent on pilfering  
Hunt could purchase only one canoe which cost him a horse

After traveling another twelve miles on this day camp was made -- February 1, 1812

Wilson Price Hunt soon found he was surrounded by Indians loitering around the camp  
seeking out what they could pilfer -- but a close watch impaired these activities  
Toward evening a number of warriors entered the camp painted and dressed for battle  
they were armed with lances, bows and arrows and scalping knives  
they informed Wilson Price Hunt that a party of thirty or forty braves  
were coming from a village downriver to attack the camp and steal the horses,  
but that they were determined to stay with him and defend him  
Hunt was unimpressed with their story but he gave them a pipe to smoke  
he then set up a watch around the camp and the warriors dejectedly left  
however, the warriors returned bringing with them a still more heroically dressed warrior  
who was introduced as the chief of the attacking villagers  
it was said that he had used his authority to prevent the attack on the Astorians  
Hunt again produced the pipe and smoked with the chieftain and his companions  
but made no further display of gratitude  
the warriors remained all night but in the morning they left  
having received nothing but smoke for the efforts  
Despite Hunt's keeping a close watch the Indians managed to acquire an axe  
encouraged by this success several of them followed the Overland Expedition the next day

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT FINDS HE IS IN A COMMUNITY OF THEIVES

Indians continually attempted to pilfer anything that was attractive or of interest to them  
they snatched two guns -- February 2, 1812  
although the horses were kept in the camp that night

one horse was lost about eleven o'clock

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT TAKES TO THE WATER

Hunt embarked in a canoe and sent his horses ahead along the trail -- February 3, 1812

he rejoined his Overland Expedition at a village at the mouth of the Klickitat River

there he purchased three additional canoes each costing one horse

but while the trade was being transacted Indians took a tomahawk and Hunt's last axe

Pierre Dorion assumed he was immune from theft because he was married to an Indian woman and was a Metis himself

he decided to set his camp apart from the rest of the Astorians

his cherished horse tethered beside his tent was stolen during the night

much to his embarrassment and chagrin -- Marie was without a mount to ride

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT IS STOPPED BY BAD WEATHER

Violent winds forced Hunt to remain with these Indians for five days -- February 5-10, 1812

he believed the land portion of expedition was over as the trail ended at this village

cottonwoods, oaks and ash trees grew to the edge of the river

hills covered with pine trees became snow-covered once again

rain increased -- sometimes accompanied with snow

When Hunt tried to get canoes from his Indian neighbors he soon learned they were hard traders after several days of watchful waiting and painful negotiations

he purchased another canoe for a horse and traded his last three horses for two more canoes

he now had enough canoes for the final leg of the trip to Astoria

however heavy winds delayed the his start

#### RAMSAY CROOKS LEADS HIS MEN FROM THE SHOSHONE INDIAN CAMP

When John Day was finally well enough to be able to travel -- February 1812

Ramsay Crooks, John Day and Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil finally felt able to follow Hunt's trail

Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry chose to remain behind

they preferred their own miseries to unknown grief

they returned to a Shoshone Indian encampment where they passed the remainder of winter

(historian Daniel Lee in *Ten Years in Oregon*, claimed Landry, La Chapelle and Turcotte

"deserted" Crooks, Day and Dubreuil

more likely they returned to the Shoshones who had guided Hunt [in October])

Ramsay Crooks and his party followed in Wilson's Price Hunt's tracks for several days

they usually slept in the open air and suffered untold hardships

eventually they came to a low prairie where the trail faded out  
Ramsay Crooks, John Day and Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil became lost in the Blue Mountains  
they wandered for weeks in and around the (Grand Ronde) valley  
subsisting sometimes on horse meat, sometime on beavers and their skins  
and part of the time on roots alone

#### LIFE IMPROVES AT ASTORIA

Shortages of game experienced during the winter were replaced by huge runs of smelt-like fish  
that the Indians called “uthlecan” (candlefish) that appeared at the mouth of the Columbia River  
in schools often more than five feet deep and easily scooped with nets at the end of long poles  
these had a delicious flavor and were so fat they often were burned like candles by the natives  
arrival of these fish soon brought the Indians back to the coast -- February  
men caught them and filled their canoes or piled them along the river bank  
women dried them and strung them on cords  
trade with the Indians was again conducted at Astoria  
sturgeon made their appearance shortly after the candlefish  
these were sometimes speared by the natives but more often were caught with hook and line  
occasionally a long line was sunk in the river with a buoy at one end to keep it floating  
hooks attached to short lines a few feet apart were baited with small fish  
these were set out at night and brought up in the morning often with several sturgeon  
although a large strong fish sturgeon seldom fight when caught

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR’S SUPPLY SHIP ARRIVES IN THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

When Captain Cornelius Sowle reached the Hawaii with the supply ship *Beaver* -- February  
he heard rumors of the disastrous fate of the *Tonquin*  
this news increased doubts that a post had been constructed at the mouth of the Columbia River  
after some consideration the captain took on board twelve Kanakas (Hawaiians)  
to serve at Astoria -- if the post existed  
Captain Sowle sailed the *Beaver* for the mouth of the Columbia River

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT BEGINS THE FINAL LEG OF HIS JOURNEY TO ASTORIA

Hunt was finally able to set out down the Columbia River -- February 10, 1812  
these last 220 miles downriver by canoe should have been calm, peaceful and refreshing  
after the distress and disasters of the previous winter  
however, Hunt’s troubles were not yet over  
violent head winds accompanied by snow and rain continued to impede his progress

however, he was favored by the current so the flotilla made good progress  
Traveling fifteen miles from Celilo Falls they arrived at the beginning a series of a short rapids  
Hunt examined the north bank for a passage -- 10:00 a.m. February 10  
he discovered a trail about a mile and a half long and the portage was made around the rapids  
these rapids provided the Indians with a second abundant fishery  
after making the portage around the short rapids Hunt's Overlanders pressed on to a long rapids  
which required a portage of three miles  
Oaks and ash trees became more common along with hazelnut trees  
numerous little rivers plunged down from the mountains to add to the beauty of the countryside  
here camp was made for the night

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT AND HIS ASTORIANS REACH THE CASCADES OF THE COLUMBIA

About eight miles from the long rapids Hunt and his thirty-two Overland Expedition members  
again were forced to land their canoes and portage around the rapids at the Cascades  
where the Columbia River crashes through the Cascade Mountains -- February 11, 1812  
here the river dropped fifteen feet in a tumult of violent water 1½ miles long  
(together Celilo Falls, the short, long rapids and Cascade rapids became known as the Dalles  
[Wascopam to the natives] an eight miles stretch of violently turbulent water)  
Below the Cascades Rapids the Columbia spread out until it was about three-quarters of a mile wide  
hills diminished in size and retreated from the banks of the river  
pine, oak, ash, cottonwood, maple, hazelnut and willow trees filled in the gaps

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT PASSES THE WILLAMETTE RIVER

Hunt and his flotilla of canoes passed the mouth of (Oregon's Sandy River) -- February 13, 1812  
twenty miles on they reached the (Willamette) river with a large island (Sauvie Island) at its mouth  
several small islands stretch out below the bigger island  
seals became numerous indicating the nearby ocean -- rain, hail and snow fell all day long

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT MAKES CONTACT WITH THE SEA PARTY ASTORIANS

Mountains closed in on the Columbia River once again -- February 14, 1812  
camp was made that night on the north bank of the (Cowlitz) river  
here Indians talked about the trader living at the post on the Columbia River  
they said it would be one more night before the destination was reached  
Hunt led his canoes glided past several large islands in the Columbia River -- February 15, 1812  
he stopped at some Indian huts and found four Astoria men trading for sturgeon and candlefish  
after travelling twenty-seven miles camp was made on two low islands near the south bank

## WILSON PRICE HUNT ARRIVES AT ASTORIA

Hunt and his Pacific Fur Company Overland Party set out early -- February 16, 1812<sup>41</sup>

four months after putting their canoes in at Fort Henry at Henry's Fork of the Snake River what remained of John Jacob Astor's Overland Party were joyfully welcomed to Astoria with cannon fire and salutes from rifles and muskets

Thirty-two Astorians had completed the expedition with Wilson Price Hunt -- February 16, 1812 his party, which had been given up for lost, was warmly welcomed by their fellow Astorians

Hunt noted the occasion: **“On the 16th we started early. It had rained all night. The fog was so thick that we could see only the lowlands and some small islands; all was covered by it. It disappeared in the afternoon at high tide. I found that we were navigating along a large bay, and shortly afterward I saw the fort of Astoria on the southerly bank.**

**“I had the pleasure there of again meeting Messrs. McKenzie and McClellan, who had arrived more than a month before, after having suffered incredible hardships.... It was a very real pleasure for travelers harassed by fatigue to rest in quiet and be surrounded by friends after so long a journey in the midst of savages, of whom it is always prudent to be wary. We had covered 2073 miles since leaving the Arikaras' village.”<sup>42</sup>**

## PACIFIC FUR COMPANY EMPLOYEES CELEBRATE AT ASTORIA

Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall and the Astorians within the post held a grand celebration in honor of the arrival of Wilson Price Hunt and his companions

Cannon and small arms continued to be fired, liquor kegs were tapped, a huge table in the banquet hall was spread with such delicacies as fish, beaver-tails, and roasted venison

In fact, Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition had been a dismal failure

Astor's partners Donald McKenzie, Robert McClellan and company clerk John Reed had safely reached Astoria along with eight voyageurs

of Hunt's and Ramsay Crooks' combined parties of forty Astorians thirty-three had reached Astoria

(only fourteen Astorians both the *Tonquin* and the Overland Expedition will become permanent settlers of Oregon

William Canning (or Cannon), Joseph Gervais, Pierre Dorion, Marie Dorion, Alexander Carson, John Coxe (Kanaka), Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil, “Sailor Jack,” Louis I. LaBonte, Michel Laframbois, Etienne Lucier, Jean McKay, Francois Payette

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<sup>41</sup> Note: There is confusion as to the actual date of arrival as the Astorians at the post noted the date as February 15, 1812.

<sup>42</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 72.

and George Ramsey)  
nothing had been seen of Ramsay Crooks, John Day, Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil,  
and the three voyagers who early had dropped out of the march  
Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry  
or of Astor's partner Joseph Miller along with the Kentuckians Edward Robinson,  
John Hoback, Jacob Reznor accompanied by Martin Cass  
they all were now counted as lost

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT TAKES COMMAND OF ASTORIA

Astor's partner and experienced trader Duncan McDougall was replaced by Wilson Price Hunt  
who took over command of the Pacific Fur Company operations at Astoria  
Hunt had no practical experience in leading an enterprise as large as Astoria  
he had been spectacularly unsuccessful leading the Overland Party from St. Louis to Astoria

#### THREE FRENCH-CANADIANS SEEK OUT SHOSHONE INDIANS FOR ASSISTANCE

Astorians Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry were destitute  
they had chosen to remain in a Shoshone camp but they wore out their welcome  
La Chapelle, Turcotte and Landry informed the Shoshone chief  
they knew where a great quantity of food and trade goods had been left in caches  
by Wilson Price Hunt and his Astorians while they were traveling west  
La Chapelle, Turcotte and Landry said there was enough there to enrich the whole tribe  
These Astorians led the Shoshones to the caches at Caldron Linn

Shoshone Indians could not believe their good fortune as **“Blankets and robes, brass trinkets and blue beads were drawn forth with chuckling exultation, and long strips of scarlet cloth produced yells of ecstasy.”**<sup>43</sup>

they were now armed, equipped and decorated with the riches they had uncovered

#### ASTORIA WAS IN DISARRAY WHEN HUNT TAKES COMMAND

Little settlement at Astoria was in agitation -- March 1812

several important things needed to be done:

- it was necessary to send a supply of goods to David Stuart's Fort Okanogan;
- cache of supplies left by Wilson Price Hunt at Caldron Linn  
had to be collected and brought to Astoria;
- new trading posts had to be established to compete with North West Company

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<sup>43</sup> Washington Irving, *Astoria*, P. 395.

and to open new territory;

- dispatches had to be sent to John Jacob Astor in New York

reporting the loss of the *Tonquin*

announcing the arrival of the Overland Expedition informing him of conditions at Astoria and relating the unknown status of the several trading expeditions

that had set out from Henry' Fort on the Snake River (Idaho);

- trade with the Russian-America Company needed to be undertaken

Wilson Price Hunt believed Astoria now had enough personnel to expand their operation

beyond simply Astoria and Fort Okanogan with excursions into the Thompson River region

preparations were begun to develop new trading posts in the interior

#### PIERRE AND MARIE DORION LIVE IN COMFORT AT ASTORIA

Pierre Dorion worked as a hunter

being skilled in his trade he contributed his fair share to the larder at Astoria

Meanwhile, Marie Dorion lived in comparative luxury in the settlement

while her two boys regained their health

#### WHILE AT ASTORIA CLERK ROSS COX DESCRIBES A RED-HEADED INDIAN

In his journal Ross Cox reported on an Indian who visited Astoria

who had the name Jack Ramsay tattooed on his left arm "**His skin was fair, his face partially**

**freckled and his hair quite red. He was about five feet ten inches high, was slender, but remarkably well made; his head had not undergone the flattening process; and he was called 'Jack Ramsay'.**"<sup>44</sup>

Clatsop Indians alleged that his father had been an English sailor

who had deserted from a trading ship and had lived for many years among their people

he married one of the their women

when Jack was born his father insisted on preserving the child's head in its natural state

but while he was young the name "Jack Ramsay" was tattooed into his arm

Old Ramsay had died some twenty years before [about 1792] -- he had several children

Ross Cox noted in his journal that Jack Ramsay was fond of his father's countrymen

he had the decency to wear trousers whenever he came to the fort

therefore a collection of old clothes was taken for his use

this provided him clothing sufficient to last for several years

This must have been the same man William Clark had described [1805]

in his journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition

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<sup>44</sup> Elliott Coues, editor, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, Vol. II, P. 768.

## NEWLY WEALTHY SHOSHONE INDIANS DECIDE TO HUNT BUFFALO

Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry

had shown the Shoshones the location of the caches left by Wilson Price Hunt

now rich beyond their wildest imaginings the party of Shoshone Indians

decided to go to hunt buffalo so their larder would match their new economic state

Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry accompanied them

as the Indians safely crossed the Rocky Mountains and descended on the east side

to the headwaters of the Missouri River where they generated havoc with the buffalo herds

Their hunting camp was full of meat and the Shoshone Indians gorged themselves

as they remained busy drying buffalo meat and making buffalo jerky

in the midst of their revelry a band of Blackfoot Indians surprised them

several Shoshone were killed on the spot as the others fled into the mountains

accompanied by the three French-Canadians without meat, horses or anything else

## DAVID THOMPSON LEAVES SALEESH HOUSE TO GO TO SPOKANE HOUSE

Nor'Wester David Thompson had spent the [winter of 1811]-1812 at Saleesh House

where he made a couple of surveying expeditions along the Clark Fork River

he traveled to (today's Missoula, Montana) to see the route traveled by Lewis and Clark

later he made a journey to the south end of Flathead Lake

David Thompson left Saleesh House bound for Spokane House -- March 13, 1812

to build canoes for the journey east to North West Company headquarters at Fort William

## ALEXANDER ROSS' SOLITARY LIFE AT FORT OKANOGAN

Clerk-in-charge of Fort Okanogan Alexander Ross had remained alone at the post

with no more company than his dog Weasel

Ross's plight continued until March 22, 1812

as he recorded in his journal: **"December now was passed, and the new year of 1812 ushered in, but still there was no account of the absent party. January passed, and likewise February, but no Mr. [David] Stuart; nor was it until the 22nd of March that little Weasel announced early in the morning the approach of strangers, and I was rejoiced to meet again at my lonely dwelling my long-expected friends all safe and well.**

**"During Mr. Stuart's absence of 188 days I had procured 1,550 beavers, besides other peltries, worth in the Canton market 2,250 £ sterling, and which on an average stood the concern in but 5.5£ apiece, valuing the merchandise at sterling cost, or in round numbers 35£ sterling -- a specimen of our trade among the Indians!**

**“Here follows Mr. Stuart’s account of his journey: ‘After leaving this place,’ he said, ‘we bent our course up the Okanogan, due north for upwards of 250 miles till we reached its source; then crossing a height of land fell upon Thompson’s River.... The snow fell while we were in the mountains and precluded our immediate return, and after waiting for fine weather the snows got so deep that we considered it hopeless to attempt getting back and therefore passed our time with the She Whaps and other tribes in that quarter. The Indians were numerous and well disposed, and the country throughout abounds in beavers and all other kinds of fur; and I have made arrangements to establish a trading post there [today’s Kamloops] ....The distance may be about 350 miles.’”<sup>45</sup>**

#### ASTORIAN DAVID STUART’S TRAPPING PARTY RETURNS TO FORT OKANOGAN

Astorian David Stuart and his trapping party of eight men returned to Fort Okanogan from the forks of the Thompson River (Kamloops) they provided Alexander Ross glowing accounts of the trade possibilities farther to the north

#### AT ASTORIA WILSON PRICE HUNT PREPARES THREE EXPEDITIONS

Robert Stuart would lead a four-man expedition including a young clerk, Ross Cox, to forge up the Columbia River to take supplies to David Stuart, Robert’s uncle, at Fort Okanogan also they were to collect additional furs from the Indians along the way and to establish a new post on the Spokane River

Clerk Russell Farnham the tall “Green Mountain Boy” from Vermont would head an expedition east to pick up supplies that Wilson Price Hunt had cached along the way at Caldron Linn and to search for Ramsay Crooks, John Day and Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil gather any pelts accumulated by them and return to Astoria

Farnham was accompanied by another clerk, Donald McGiles, also a guide and eight additional men to assist in bringing home the cached goods

Clerk John Reed had just completed the westward ordeal with Donald McKenzie, Reed, an eager and energetic young Irishman, was entrusted to deliver dispatches to John Jacob Astor in New York City announcing the arrival of the Overland Expedition, loss of the *Tonquin* and other items of significance reflecting his Irish enthusiasm for a task, John Reed had a shiny tin case made in which the letters and papers to Astor were soldered he planned to carry it strapped to his back at all times

Reed was accompanied by Kentucky hunter Ben Jones and two voyageurs it was hoped he might find Astor’s partner Ramsay Crooks so Reed carried a small supply

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<sup>45</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State.*, P 83.

of goods and provisions to aid Crooks and those with him on their way to Astoria  
Astor's partner Robert McClellan, who had announced his desire to give up his partnership  
and leave the country, decided to travel east with John Reed  
because he was a strong-willed man it was determined let him go without opposition

### THREE GROUPS OF ASTORIANS WOULD TRAVEL TOGETHER

Route of these parties would be the same for nearly four hundred miles up the Columbia River  
and the notorious Wishram Indians would be encountered at The Cascades

thus it was thought advisable the three groups would start at the same time and to keep together  
as they traveled up the Columbia River as a unit led by Robert Stuart

to provide mutual protection in the treacherous region of the Dalles

accordingly seventeen men in two canoes set out from Astoria -- March 22, 1812

Clerk Ross Cox wrote a narrative of his exploits along the Columbia River

he also gave an account of an encounter of a different kind: **“We had half expected Indian trouble, but were totally unprepared for that overwhelming army of fleas that attacked on the front, flank, and rear. Our only defense was to strip off clothes and dip them in the water, thus drowning the swarms of invaders.”**<sup>46</sup>

### RAMSAY CROOKS, JOHN DAY AND JEAN-BAPTISTE DUBEUIL CONTINUE ON

Crooks, Day and Dubeuil, lost in the Blue Mountains, wandered aimlessly

their crossing was as harrowing as the exploits of the other Astorians

they were rescued and sustained from time to time by small bands of Indians

who often were not much better off than were Crooks and his men

Finally Jean-Baptiste Dubeuil gave out and was left in the lodge of a Shoshone Indian

who agreed to care for the French-Canadian hunter -- end of March

Ramsay Crooks and John Day still continued on now that the snow had diminished

they gathered information from the Indians regarding how to cross this last mountain range

happily, they succeeded and reached the lodge of Yeckatapam a Walla Walla Indian

living along the banks of the Walla Walla River who kindly received the wanderers

and killed a horse for them to eat

he gave them directions to find the Columbia River

### ROBERT STUART LEADS THE ASTORIANS UP THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Robert Stuart continued to lead his expedition for Fort Okanogan

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<sup>46</sup> James A. Crutchfield, *It Happened in Washington*, P. 15.

accompanied by two other expeditions

Russell Farnham was on his way the caches at Caldron Linn left by Wilson Price Hunt

John Reed was carrying a shiny box of dispatches to deliver to John Jacob Astor in New York

Robert Stuart arrived at the Long Rapids, a notorious plundering place -- early April

here it was necessary to unload the canoes and portage both canoes and cargoes by land three miles to the head of the rapids

seventeen men were not enough to accomplish the task

they were forced to seek the assistance of Wishram Indians

who loaded some of the goods on their horses

Stuart's caravan set off accompanied by the Indians with their horses well loaded

first load was conveyed by John Reed and five well-armed men

with the gallant Irishman striding along at the head of the parade

his tin case of dispatches glittering on his back

while passing through a rocky and intricate defile some of the Wishrams

turned their horses up a narrow passage and galloped off

carrying with them two bales of goods and a number of smaller articles

following them was useless

#### ROBERT STUART'S ASTORIANS SPEND A WATCHFUL NIGHT IN CAMP

Stuart set up a guard at the Wishram village to protect the remaining supplies

this duty made sleep impractical

At first light the Astorians pushed up the Columbia River

Wishrams were not so easily discouraged from their desire to possess the trade goods

and especially the shiny tin box that was so securely guarded

that it must contain "strong medicine"

Astorians had not gone far when they discovered Wishram natives

whooping and yelling in groups along the river bank

#### ASTORIANS REACH THE LOWER END OF THE SHORT RAPIDS

Here they were surrounded by upwards of four hundred Wishram natives

armed with bows and arrows, war clubs and other weapons

Indians pressed forward with offers to carry the canoes and goods around the short portage

Robert Stuart declined to allow them to carry the supplies,

but did allow the canoes to be taken up river accompanied by eight well-armed Astorians

When the short portage was completed the Wishram became mischievous

to the point of attempting to destroy the canoes thus holding the Astorians hostage for more theft

this ploy was stopped by an old man who dispersed his fellow natives  
although about fifty Indians crossed to the north side of the river and laid in wait

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS EXPEDITION REACH CELILO FALLS

In an effort to outwit the Wishram Indians Robert Stuart roused his men in the dead of night  
he proposed they portage the goods themselves by the bright moonlight  
Stuart led the first group carrying supplies  
while John Reed and Robert McClellan stayed below the falls with remainder of the goods  
By dawn only two loads of goods remained to be brought to the head of the Dalles  
Robert Stuart sent several men back to retrieve the remaining supplies  
with instructions for John Reed to keep as many men as necessary  
to protect the final load of trading goods  
Reed decided he and McClellan were be able to protect the remnant themselves  
and sent the other Astorians back upriver with all they could carry

#### JOHN REED AND ROBERT McCLELLAN COME UNDER ATTACK

Indian canoes carrying about fifty men arrived from across the Columbia River  
they had been guided by the glint of the sun on the tin box carried by John Reed  
thus what was meant to protect the dispatches in fact exposed them to peril  
Reaching shore the Wishrams sprang toward the remaining trade goods  
Robert McClellan saw a native holding a buffalo robe advancing as if to trade  
McClellan stepped back just as the warrior lunged to stab him  
raising his rifle, McClellan shot him through the heart  
John Reed, at this time, was fumbling with his rifle  
he was hit on the head with a war club that laid him senseless on the ground  
his rifle, pistols and the glimmering tin box all were immediately stripped away

#### WISHRAM INDIANS ARE DRIVEN OFF

Just in the nick of time Robert Stuart who had heard the native war cries  
reached the scene with Ben Jones and seven other men  
Jones shot a one warrior who was standing over John Reed raising a tomahawk  
all of the warriors took flight taking the tin box of dispatches with them  
John Reed was carried to the head of the portage around Celilo Falls  
where preparations were attempted to escape from the savage attack  
confusion broke out when it was discovered  
the expedition's canoes had been damaged and were too leaky to put in the water

and the paddles had been left at the bottom of the falls

Robert Stuart restored order

two men were sent to retrieve the paddles while the others caulked the canoes

#### ROBERT STUART MANAGES TO REACH A TRUCE WITH THE WISHRAM INDIANS

Robert Stuart discussed with his men the possibility of retreating back to Astoria to escape

however, the two men who returned with the paddles

reported the route was cut off by Wishram warriors

who had traveled down the north side of the Columbia River on horseback

faster than the Astorians could repair their equipment and travel on water

Astorians held parlay with the Wishram chief who decided he would be appeased

by the acceptance of blankets for the dead native and some tobacco for the living

#### ROBERT STUART'S EXPEDITION MEMBERS DECIDES TO TRAVEL TO FORT OKANOGAN

Since the tin box carrying reports and dispatches to John Jacob Astor had been lost

the purpose of Robert Stuart's journey was gone

all three parties of Astorians, Robert Stuart, Russell Farnham and John Reed,

changed their courses to go to David Stuart's Fort Okanogan on the Okanogan River

accompanied by Astor's partner Robert McClellan

who had been frustrated in his effort to go home

#### JEAN-BAPTISTE DUBREUIL ATTEMPTS TO TRAVEL ON HIS OWN

French-Canadian voyageur Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil had been left in a friendly Shoshone village

by Ramsay Crooks and John Day when they departed

After leaving that village, Dubreuil had traveled alone and became lost in the Blue Mountains

fortunately, he stumbled on a friendly village of Shoshone Indians

where he was nurtured for the winter

(he set out on his own once again in the [spring])

#### ASTORIAN DONALD McKENZIE ENTERS THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Rebounding quickly from the ordeal of his overland crossing

McKenzie left Astoria with William Matthews and Joseph Gervais

to explore up the Willamette River educate the Indians on how to better preserve fur pelts

that the trappers were especially interested in acquiring

They reached a tributary of the Willamette River now bearing McKenzie's name

there they started another promising trading post (near today's Eugene, Oregon) -- April 1812

When McKenzie and Matthews returned to Astoria they reported an abundance of beaver and wild game was available in the region to the south

#### ASTORIANS LEAVE FORT OKANOGAN TO RETURN TO ASTORIA

After their ordeal on the Columbia River at Celilo Falls portage

Robert Stuart led his party to Fort Okanogan on the Okanogan River to supply his uncle, David Stuart

Robert Stuart and his party rested for two or three days at Fort Okanogan before again taking the Columbia River back to Astoria

during that time Alexander Ross enjoyed the company of other Astorians at Fort Okanogan in addition to his dog Weasel

Robert Stuart, Russell Farnham, John Reed and their parties along with Robert McClellan left Fort Okanogan accompanied by David Stuart on the downriver journey to Astoria

David Stuart along with three members of his trapping party brought out 2,500 beaver pelts that had been gathered at Fort Okanogan and while wintering in the Thompson River region (Kamloops, British Columbia)

#### SHOSHONE BUFFALO HUNTERS RETURN TO THEIR SNAKE RIVER ENCAMPMENT

After being robbed while hunting buffalo the now destitute Indians

and Astorians Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry plodded back to their homeland deprived of horses, meat and all of their possessions La Chapelle, Turcotte and Landry were poorer than ever -- but they had their lives

By good fortune while staying with the destitute Shoshone Indians the Astorians

met Pacific Fur Company hunter Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil who wandered into camp alone

Dubreuil had become so exhausted he had been left by Ramsay Crooks and John Day when they set out in an effort to reach Astoria [March 1812]

he had become lost in the Blue Mountains and wandered about alone and without hope

#### RAMSAY CROOKS AND JOHN DAY REACH THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Traveling from Yeekatapam's lodge on the Walla Walla River

Ramsay Crooks and John Day reached the Columbia River -- mid-April 1812

They followed the Columbia downstream for about one hundred miles

until they had just passed the mouth of a river (now known as the John Day River)

they came to within twenty miles of Celilo Falls

here they met the local Wishram natives who received them in a friendly way and fed them but as the two Astorians were eating, their rifles were stolen

Crooks and Day were robbed of everything, stripped naked and were forced to leave  
even Crooks' request for a flint and steel to make fire were refused  
Fearing the Indians downriver and in a desperate condition of deteriorating physical and mental health  
Ramsay Crooks and John Day had no idea how far they were from Astoria  
Now even worse off than they had been and with their spirits broken  
they decided to try to retrace their steps back up the Columbia River  
to friendly Walla Walla Indian Yeckatapam's lodge  
Crooks and Day traveled about eighty miles back up the Columbia River  
they subsisted on rotting fish they found along the river bank

#### DAVID THOMPSON ARRIVES AT SPOKANE HOUSE

After building canoes for his cross-continent trip to North West Company Fort William's headquarters  
David Thompson left Spokane House for the final time -- April 22, 1812  
this time he led thirty North West Company voyageurs who paddled six canoes  
as they transported 122 bales of furs each weighing ninety pounds  
to the company's supply depot and central meeting place and headquarters  
at Fort William on Lake Superior (now Thunder Bay, Ontario)  
these furs were worth approximately \$50,000 on the London market  
Thompson and the members of his expedition set out for their first stop at Boat Encampment  
Kanaka (Hawaiian) Chief Naukane now known as "John Coxe" had arrived on the *Tonquin*,  
he became a loyal North West Company employee  
he accompanied David Thompson from Astoria by canoe and portage across the continent  
Nor'Wester Finan McDonald remained in charge of Spokane House  
he and the other Nor'Westers soon learned their fur trade monopoly in the Columbia Department  
was being challenged by John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company out of New York

#### RAMSAY CROOKS AND JOHN DAY ARE MIRACALOUSLY RESCUED

To their amazement Crooks and Day saw four canoes paddled by white coming down the Columbia  
both of the desperate men shouted in an effort to catch the voyageurs attention -- May 1, 1812  
Men in the canoes saw two wretched individuals standing beside the river entirely naked  
they paddled to shore as Crooks and Day approached without weapons and nearly starved  
these voyageurs proved to be the Astorians David and Robert Stuart, Russell Farnham, John Reed  
and their expedition along with Robert McClellan on their way from Fort Okanogan to Astoria  
Ramsay Crooks and John Day experienced boundless joy to again be among their countrymen  
who gave them a warm and hearty welcome  
Crooks learned of the disasters which had befallen "Fats" McKenzie, McClellan and Reed

who were the first of Hunt's Overland Expedition to reach Astoria [mid-January 1812]  
Astor's partner Robert McClellan had decided that the hardships and dangers  
were not worth the company shares which he had been allotted

#### MANUEL LISA ARRIVES BACK IN ST. LOUIS

New Missouri Fur Company launched an aggressive trade expedition -- May 1, 1812

Manuel Lisa sent eighty-five men to the upper Missouri River region

on the way they built Fort Manuel among the Arikaras (south of Mobridge, South Dakota)  
to gain passage upriver Toussaint Charbonneau then making his third trip to the Upper Missouri  
hired out to fur trader Manuel Lisa

district judge of Louisiana Territory Henry M. Brackenridge traveling in the same group

wrote that Charbonneau "**...who had spent many years amongst the Indians, was become  
weary of civilized life.**"<sup>47</sup>

although Charbonneau returned to the Arikara villages additional traces of the rest of his life  
occur in journals and records from other frontier travelers

(Later the New Missouri Fur Company dispatched trapping parties to the Wind River [Wyoming],  
the Little Big Horn River [southern Montana] and to the Arkansas River)

#### STUARTS AND THEIR ACCOMPANYING ASTORIANS CONTINUE DOWNRIVER

While traveling down the Columbia River from Fort Okanogan

Robert Stuart managed to enlighten the Wishram natives

regarding the high prices the Chinook Indians were getting for their furs at Astoria

(this information resulted in so many Indians eventually coming to Astoria

that it was necessary to call upon Chief Comcomly

to help maintain amicable relations during trading)

#### THREE ASTORIANS REACH THE SHOSHONE CAMP ON THE SNAKE RIVER

Shoshone Indians' encampment had become the home of voyageurs

Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte, and Francis Landry who had been join by  
voyageur Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil when he wandered into the encampment alone

Three other stragglers of Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition made their appearance

Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michael and Pierre Delaunay

all were trappers who had been accompanied by Pierre Detaye

they had been left by Hunt to trap beaver in the mountains [October 1811]

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<sup>47</sup> Henry M. Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana, Together with a Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River in 1811*, P. 202.

they had reached the upper Missouri River where they successfully trapped beaver  
but the group had been attacked by Crow Indians  
Pierre Detaye was killed and the rest robbed  
dejected and destitute Carson, St. Michael and Delaunay returned to the Pacific Fur Company

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR'S SUPPLY SHIP *BEAVER* REACHES THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Captain Cornelius Sowle, a timid and inflexible man, sailed the Pacific Fur Company supply ship  
*Beaver* as near as possible to the mouth of the Columbia River -- May 6, 1812  
two cannons were fired as a signal to John Jacob Astor's post -- if it existed  
no answer was returned increasing doubts regarding the existence of a post  
As night came on the *Beaver* stood out to sea -- as the land faded so too did hope

#### ASTOR'S SUPPLY SHIP *BEAVER* RETURNS TO THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Captain Cornelius Sowle sailed to within four miles of shore and again fired his signal guns  
again there was no reply from the post -- May 7, 1812  
Captain Sowle dispatched a boat to find a channel over the sandbar so an entrance could be attempted  
tremendous swells and breakers hampered the effort -- *Beaver* again turned out to sea  
One more attempt was made to approach the river's entrance -- evening May 7  
when the signal guns were fired there was again no response  
all hope was given up and the *Beaver* stood off to sea once again  
it was believed no post existed because the Astorians had been killed before they arrived  
or a post had been built and Indians massacred the occupants  
Astor's newest partner, tall, handsome, boastful and vain America John Clarke arrived on the *Beaver*  
he was another former Nor'Wester who was experienced in the fur trade  
John Clarke announced to Captain Sowle that he would establish a post  
using the Astorians on board the *Beaver*

#### ONCE AGAIN THE SUPPLY SHIP *BEAVER* APPROACHES THE MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA

Once again Captain Cornelius Sowle fired the *Beaver's* signal guns -- morning May 8, 1812  
to the great joy of the ship's crew three distinct guns were heard in response  
Captain Sowle, timid and hesitant by nature, remembered Astor's instructions  
Sowle proceeded with great caution believing the Indians could be treacherous and cunning  
perhaps the natives had fired the response signal to lure in the *Beaver* in to attack her  
when a white flag was hoisted on Cape Disappointment as a signal those on the *Beaver* cried out  
but the captain believed this too could be a trick  
when a signal fire burned through the night Captain Sowle claimed it was treachery

and the hesitant captain turned out to sea

#### BEAVER ANCHORS OF CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT OUTSIDE THE BAR OF THE COLUMBIA

*Beaver* came to anchor off Cape Disappointment -- morning May 9, 1812

toward noon a canoe was seen making for the ship -- all hands were ordered on full alert

then a barge was seen following the canoe

hopes and fears were both raised for those on board the supply ship

Captain Cornelius Sowle ordered armed sailors to receive the visitors

it was soon discovered the canoe was occupied by Chinook Chief Comcomly and six Indians

the barge held Astor's partners Duncan McDougal and Robert McClellan and eight voyageurs

with the captain's fears quelled the *Beaver* crossed the bar piloted by the Astorians

and safely anchored in Baker Bay

#### BOTH STUARTS ARRIVE AT ASTORIA BRINGING RAMSAY CROOKS AND JOHN DAY

David Stuart and his nephew Robert, John Reed, Robert McClellan and Russell Farnham

arrived back at Astoria -- May 11, 1812

they were accompanied by the long-lost Ramsay Crooks and John Day

Robert Stuart had to report the disastrous loss of John Reed's dispatches and all of their trading goods to the Wishram Indians at the Dalles

David Stuart and his three companions delivered the only good news to be heard at Astoria

they had brought out 2,500 beaver pelts from the Fort Okanogan and Thompson River regions

they also gave a glowing account of conditions up the Columbia River

#### NOR'WESTER DAVID THOMPSON LEAVES BOAT ENCAMPMENT

Traveling from Spokane House on his journey to deliver pelts to North West Company's Fort William

Thompson left Boat Encampment and the Canadian Rocky Mountains

he reached the house of William Henry on the Athabasca River -- May 11, 1812

("Henry House" was in the Jasper, Alberta area)

Thompson continued on to Fort Augustus and Boggy Hall (near present-day Edmonton, Alberta)

where his wife Charlotte lived with their five children

Accompanied by his family, Thompson and the brigade journeyed with \$50,000 in furs

to Cumberland House by way of the Churchill River

[he arrived there June 18, 1812]

#### CONDITIONS IMPROVE AT ASTORIA WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE BEAVER

Morale for the Astorians skyrocketed with the sight of the supply ship *Beaver*

soon the *Beaver* loaded with stores and trading equipment managed to get the supplies to Astoria where they were unloaded -- at last the Astorians had abundant materials  
New reinforcements of men also arrived and spirits soared at last  
*Beaver* had brought out thirty-six more eager clerks and fresh workers  
and twelve Kanakas (Hawaiians) hired to work at Astoria  
in the Columbia River region a number of Kanakas served as voyageurs and laborers

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR'S PARTNERS HOLD A MEETING IN ASTORIA

Improved conditions and morale at Astoria were reflected as Wilson Price Hunt called a meeting of Astor's partners to discuss future plans to develop the Pacific Northwest -- May 1812  
Fort Okanogan on the Okanogan River was to be reinforced  
four new posts were planned up the Columbia River  
another attempt was to be made to recover the cached goods near Caldron Linn  
it was still necessary to make a second attempt to deliver dispatches to Astor in New York City  
in spite of the almost euphoric mood at Astoria, there were major obstacles to success  
unfriendly Indians, commercial pressure from the North West Company,  
United States had instituted a policy of refusing to trade with Great Britain or France  
and war with Britain was looming  
Ramsay Crooks, like Robert McClellan, gave up his partnership status  
both waited for an opportunity to return east and home

#### ARRIVAL OF THE SUPPLY SHIP *BEAVER* MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO EXPAND OPERATIONS

Pacific Fur Company partners at Astoria could now establish new posts in the interior  
Astor's partners would throw out a ring of forts thus blocking any advance  
down the Columbia River by the North West Company:

- David Stuart, recently arrived at Astoria from Fort Okanogan,  
was to deliver supplies up the Columbia River to Fort Okanogan and to again lead  
a party into the Thompson River region (today's Kamloops region for the winter)
- Donald McKenzie, who had been staying at Astoria, was given the task to lead  
a trapping party into Snake River country and open a third outpost (for the winter)  
traveling with McKenzie was the Irishman John Reed
- newly arrived Astor partner John Clarke was to construct a post up the Columbia River  
at a location that would provide competition to the Canadian North West Fur Company
- Robert Stuart, although he had arrived in Astoria aboard the *Tonquin*  
and had never crossed the continent, was selected to lead an expedition east  
to deliver dispatches to replace those lost by John Reed

first to St. Louis and then to be delivered to John Jacob Astor in New York City

#### ROBERT STUART'S ASSIGNMENT WAS ESPECIALLY VITAL TO THE ASTORIANS

John Jacob Astor needed the reports to determine supplies, trade goods and personnel necessary to maintain Pacific Fur Company operations

Robert Stuart's youth and vigor were believed sufficient to equip him to lead the expedition. Four Astorians who had accompanied Wilson Price Hunt across the continent would accompany him: hunters Ben Jones and John Day, voyageurs Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc. In addition, John Jacob Astor's former partners Ramsay Crooks and Robert McClellan, who had given up their shares in the company, would accompany Robert Stuart to the east.

#### WAR OF 1812 BREAKS OUT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN

President James Madison was pressured by "War Hawks" in Congress for a Declaration of War. This demand for war came from the American South to increase the area under slavery and the West to increase the availability of cheap land for farming.

War was announced by President Madison -- June 18, 1812

In fact, the United States was not ready for war as few ships sailed under the American flag and the United States Army was small and badly trained. Oddly, this war which was fought for America's freedom of the seas started with a United States attack on Canada.

(throughout the war all of America's efforts to invade Canada failed)

News of the hostilities dampened the spirits of Yankee traders and merchants. Many merchant ship captains hastened to tie up in neutral ports to escape attack by British fighting ships.

When the War of 1812 was declared, the American trapper and trader Alexander Henry enrolled in the United States Army and rose to the rank of major.

Captain Oliver Hazard Perry built a small fleet of ships on Lake Erie and, after a major battle, successfully cut off British supplies to their frontier forts.

Perry proclaimed: "**We have met the enemy and they are ours**"<sup>48</sup>

British soldiers attacked Washington City in retaliation for America's invasion of Canada. They burned the capital city to the ground and attacked Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor. During this battle, Francis Scott Key wrote new words to an old English drinking song.

This music became known as *The Star Spangled Banner*.

(it will become America's national anthem [1931])

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<sup>48</sup> [www.encyclopedia.com/doc](http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc)

America's Navy enjoyed better success in the war effort than did the Army

#### UNITED STATES NEEDS INDIAN ALLIES IN DURING THE WAR OF 1812

U.S. Government was looking for someone to keep the Missouri River Indians neutral or perhaps induce them to join with the Americans

on the recommendation of Louisiana Territory Governor William Clark

Manuel Lisa was chosen for the task

Lisa not only kept the Indians from joining the British

but he organized them into bands operating for the Americans

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR'S PLANS ARE THREATENED BY THE WAR OF 1812

It was a terrible blow for John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur company plans when the War of 1812 broke out

No news had been heard of the fate of the *Tonquin* or her crew or of Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition

Manuel Lisa had predicted the overland party would be destroyed

some North West Company employees had spread rumors to that effect significantly elevating the levels of anxiety regarding the expedition

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY LEADERS LEARN OF THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

North West Company partners-in-the-field were gathered for their annual meeting at Fort William (today's Thunder Bay, Ontario) on Lake Superior

they received word of America's declaration of war by express canoe from Montreal

they realized this event was a serious threat to their operations not only in Canada

but also in Pacific Northwest whose ownership was in doubt

North West Company employee John George McTavish along with Alexander Henry the Younger were named leaders of the annual Nor'Wester supply brigade to the West from Rainy Lake House

they were to alert North West Company employees in the Columbia Department to the danger (Nor'Wester John George McTavish had wintered at Spokane House [1811-1812])

he also had accompanied David Thompson to the North West Company's headquarters at Fort William [April 1812])

seventy-five singing, beaded, belled and fringed voyageurs

left the Montreal company headquarters

#### RUSSIAN-AMERICAN COMPANY ESTABLISHES FORT ROSS IN CALIFORNIA

Russian trappers and traders in Russian-America (Alaska) found it difficult to grow their own food

as the growing season was very short  
Because of native hostility to Europeans and Americans in the territory south of Russian-America  
and because of the increasing presence of British and American traders in Oregon  
Russian American Company abandoned all attempts to create trading outposts in Oregon  
company leaders reasoned a permanent a settlement in California  
would provide both food and access to the abundant sea otter trade there  
War of 1812 had hardly more than begun when Ivan Kuskov in his capacity  
as senior assistant to Russian-American Company leader Alexander Baranov  
extended the Russian fur trade into Spanish California  
Russian traders sailed from New Archangel (Sitka, Alaska) down to Bodega, California  
where Kuskov constructed a trading post with the permission of the Spanish authorities  
which was subsequently transformed into a fort  
Fort Ross (short for Russia) was built about seventy-five miles north of San Francisco -- 1812  
(in the vicinity of today's Sacramento, California)  
this was the most southern outpost of Russian power in America  
it was composed of a fourteen-foot stockade with two-storied blockhouses  
mounted guns protected fifty-nine buildings including living quarters, warehouses,  
Russian Orthodox chapel, steam bath house and jail  
fifty Russians resided at the fort within the redwood walls  
they were occupied with hunting, shipbuilding, raising cattle and crop farming  
Russians were assisted by a small encampment of Aleut Indians located outside the walls  
(When Spanish authorities changed their mind and objected to the Russian fort in their territory  
Russian settlers refused to budge despite the indignant cries from Mexico City  
Fort Ross later was later sold to John Sutter for \$30,000 [1841])

#### FOUR PARTIES SET OUT FROM ASTORIA BOUND FOR THE WALLA WALLA RIVER

Astor's partners Donald McKenzie, David Stuart, Robert Stuart and newly arrived John Clarke  
were given their assignments:  
Donald McKenzie was to build a trading post on the Clearwater River  
David Stuart was to return to Fort Okanogan  
John Clarke was compete with North West Company's Spokane House  
Robert Stuart was to deliver news of the fate of the *Tonquin* to St. Louis  
Four Astorians led their combined parties that numbered sixty Astorians including partners, clerks,  
voyageurs, Kanakas (Hawaiians) and American hunters out of Astoria -- June 29, 1812

to proceed past the treacherous Dalles of the Columbia River  
treacherous for two reasons -- rapids and Indians  
guns of Astoria were fired in salute  
This united expedition was to travel to the mouth of the Walla Walla River  
where they would divide into their assigned tasks  
they traveled in ten canoes and two barges and were to keep together for mutual protection

#### JOHN DAY BECOMES COMPLETELY DERANGED

They were barely under way when hunter John Day became restless and uneasy  
this was shocking as he was usually very cheerful and easy-going  
it appeared his previous trials in the wilderness seemed to weigh on his mind  
While Robert Stuart and his Astorians were camped near the Columbia River's (Wapato Island)  
John Day became increasingly agitated and he began to talk wildly and incoherently  
and to show signs of becoming mentally deranged -- July 2, 1812  
Ramsay Crooks explained the horrors and suffering both he and Day  
had experienced during the horrifying journey West to Astoria  
John Day became violent as the sight of Indians through him into a rage  
Day's mental sufferings led him to become frantic and he attempted to kill himself  
he was disarmed and became very quiet before apologizing for his actions  
he pretended to fall asleep but just before daylight he leaped up and grabbed two pistols  
in his rush to commit suicide he fired high and missed his head  
he was secured and placed under guard in one of the barges  
What to do with John Day became a concern for the members of the expedition  
clearly he could no longer accompany them on their journey east  
fortunately a party of Wapato Indians known to the Astorians was met  
Robert Stuart sent John Day without a weapon back to Astoria in the care of Wapato Indians  
who regarded insanity as a sign of being possessed by a great spirit  
John Day returned safely to the Pacific Fur Company post on the Columbia River  
where he continued to serve as a hunter and trapper primarily in the Willamette River Valley

#### ASTORIANS TRAVELING TO THEIR ASSIGNMENT REACH THE LONG RAPIDS

Fifty-nine Astorians camped at the foot of the Long Rapids -- July 6, 1812  
Early the next morning guards were posted along the portage route -- July 7  
every man was armed and his cartridge box was replenished  
each wore an arrow proof overcoat of elk hide reaching from the neck to the knees  
five officers took positions at each end of the three mile portage

lookouts were posted high on the cliffs above the portage route  
everyone else busily dragged the barges and canoes up the Columbia River  
and carried supplies and goods along the narrow portage trail  
Their preparations proved profitable as a canoe overturned sinking some goods and floating others  
immediately hordes of Indians who had remained unseen set out to claim the prize  
one bundle washed up on an island and half of the treasure was divided among the natives  
while the other half was stored in a lonely hut on the island  
Robert Stuart set out in a canoe with five men and regained the lost items  
Similar precautions were taken at the Short Rapids and at Celilo Falls  
fifteen days were taken to ascend the eighty miles of rapids

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT DECIDES TO TRAVEL WITH THE SUPPLY SHIP *BEAVER*

Wilson Price Hunt was John Jacob Astor's agent in charge of Pacific Fur Company operations  
no one at Astoria was aware of the outbreak of the War of 1812  
Astor's supply ship was to carry supplies to the Russian trappers and traders in Russian-America  
it was decided by the council of partners at Astoria that Wilson Price Hunt would travel with her  
on its journey to New Archangel (Sitka) Russian-America (Alaska)  
to become acquainted with the coastal trade  
and to negotiate the terms to be established in supplying Russian trappers and traders  
and carrying a portion of the Russian's harvest of pelts to Canton, China  
Hunt was to return to Astoria on the supply ship [in October]  
after which the *Beaver* would proceed to Hawaii and on to Canton, China

#### FIFTY-NINE ASTORIANS REACH THE HEAD OF THE DALLES

After reaching the area above Celilo Falls great speed was made on the Columbia -- July 19, 1812  
as the Astorians took advantage of the smoother water only occasionally interrupted  
by rocks and rapid that allowed the voyageurs to use sails to ease their efforts  
hills, cliffs and forests disappeared -- tufts of short grass were scorched by the summer sun  
Natives in this region all lived on the north side of the Columbia  
they were hunters and fishermen and had a great number of horses  
some of these were purchased and killed on the spot  
however, finding fuel for fires was difficult  
as threats from the natives diminished those concerns were replaced by rattlesnakes  
which infested the rocks of the rapids and portage routes  
at one place a nest of snakes lay coiled together basking in the sun  
several guns were fired at them and thirty-seven were killed or wounded

to keep the snakes away at night tobacco was occasionally placed around the tents  
Because they were in the region (of today's John Day River) where Ramsay Crooks and John Day  
had been robbed and stripped guards were posted at night around the camp

#### RAMSAY CROOKS RECOGNIZES TWO INDIANS WHO HAD ROBBED HIM

In the morning a number of Indians gathered around the camp during breakfast -- July 20, 1812  
to his great delight Ramsay Crooks recognized two of the intruders who had robbed him  
they were instantly seized, bound hand and foot and thrown into one of the canoes  
where they lay in unhappy fear expecting to be executed  
Crooks, however, was not a vengeful man and agreed to release the offenders  
as soon as the pillaged property was restored  
Indians immediately started off in different directions  
before night the rifles of Crooks and Day were produced  
both of the thieves were released

#### FIFTY-NINE ASTORIANS REACH THE MOUTH OF THE WALLA WALLA RIVER

Continuing up the Columbia River the Astorians arrived at the Walla Walla River -- July 27, 1812  
where the combined parties who had thus far voyaged together were to separate  
When Walla Walla Indians who had aided Ramsay Crooks and John Day  
learned of the arrival of the Astorians they traveled to greet them  
in celebration the Indians built a great bonfire in their camp  
men and women danced singing the praises of the white men and welcoming them

#### ROBERT STUART PREPARES TO UNDERTAKE HIS TRIP ACROSS THE CONTINENT

Trade with the Walla Wallas was begun to procure horses for the overland journey -- July 27, 1812  
Robert Stuart purchased twenty horses for his expedition -- some for riding; others for the baggage  
Robert Stuart spent two days arranging pack saddles and preparing for his arduous journey  
with the loss of John Day he was now accompanied by five men -- a small number for the task  
Robert McClellan and Ramsay Crooks, both had given up their partnerships in the company,  
hunter Ben Jones and two French-Canadians Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc  
all but McClellan were young men full of courage, health and good spirits  
they were stimulated by their travels to St. Louis rather than appalled by danger

#### ROBERT STUART SETS OUT TO CROSS THE CONTINENT

Robert Stuart and his five men mounted their horses to undertake their own adventures  
they took leave of their fellow Astorians to hearty cheers from those left behind -- July 29, 1812

Stuart traveled to the southeast down the Walla Walla River retracing the disastrous course taken by Wilson Price Hunt (the winter before)  
in the distance were seen the Blue Mountains they would have to cross  
Robert Stuart's expedition continued up the Walla Walla River for about fifty miles to where they found a Cayuse Indian village of forty huts covered with mats

#### REMAINING FIFTY-THREE ASTORIANS REMAINED AT THE WALLA WALLA RIVER

Expedition leaders and Astor's partners Donald McKenzie, David Stuart and John Clarke met to lay plans  
they agreed to rendezvous at the mouth of the Walla Walla River (beginning of [June 1813])  
to provide mutual protection when they traveled together back to Astoria  
during the necessary journey past the Wishram Indians on the Columbia River)

#### DAVID STUART CONTINUES UP THE COLUMBIA RIVER TO FORT OKANOGAN

David Stuart led his party of Astorians eight from the mouth of the Walla Walla River -- July 31, 1812  
they continued up the Columbia River on their way back to Fort Okanogan  
(when they arrived there he delivered a supply of trade goods and ammunition to clerk-in charge Alexander Ross who had remained at the trading post)

#### DONALD MCKENZIE LEADS TEN ASTORIANS UP THE SNAKE RIVER

McKenzie set out from the Walla Walla River up the Columbia River to the mouth of the Snake River  
traveling with his second-in-command clerk Alfred Seton, John Reed and eight other Astorians  
this trapping party turned up the Snake River  
wandering bands of Indian tribes were seen traveling in various directions  
some of these people had large herds of horses

#### JOHN CLARKE IS ASSIGNED TO ESTABLISH A POST TO COMPETE WITH NOR'WESTERS

It was John Clarke's plan store his barges at the mouth of the Walla Walla River  
and proceed overland about 150 miles to the east to reach the Spokane Indians  
where he would construct a new trading post to compete with North West Company's  
Spokane House operated by Finan McDonald  
John Clarke bartered with the Nez Perce Indians for horses but they asked a high price  
Clarke spent a week before he could acquire a sufficient number of animals to make the trip  
during this time he was annoyed by repeated thefts  
his demands to the chiefs for restitution resulted in no compensation  
Ross Cox, a clerk traveling with John Clarke described the lifestyle of the Indians

**“These Nez Perces [Pierced Noses] live in huts made of poles covered with mats of bark or rushes. Some houses were oblong, some cone-shaped, and some square. An opening at the top served the double purpose of window and chimney. They were clean, ambitious, smart-looking people who were fond of their children and kind to the aged. Apparently, they were all in good health, although many were afflicted with sore eyes. Both men and women wore a sort of leather shirt reaching to the knees. In addition, the men wore leggings made of some kind of skin. The Nez Perces were good hunters and excellent horsemen. Their saddles were made of dressed deerskin and stuffed with hair. The wooden stirrups were covered with raw skin which, when dry, became hard and lasted a long time. Bridles were merely ropes made out of the hair from horses’ tails.”<sup>49</sup>**

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS FIVE TRAVELING COMPANIONS CROSS THE DESERT

Robert Stuart set out from the Cayuse Indian village along the Walla Walla River

he had counted on a more favorable season than (winter) as had been faced by Wilson Price Hunt  
to provide abundant plant and animal life to provision them in their crossing of the continent

however, each season provided its own unique type of hardship

they had not gone far when they found themselves among arid hills without vegetation

sand and clay soil had been baked brittle and seemed to have never seen rain

not a spring, pool or stream of running water was to be seen

dusty ravines in the sun burnt landscape showed where the (winter’s) water once ran

One day they continued on without resting with a blazing sun over their heads

parched desert lay at their feet with just enough wind to surround them with dust from the sand

their sufferings became intense -- their only companion, a young dog, died of thirst

they were approaching despair when what appeared to be a fringe of forest was seen ahead

they knew where there were trees there would be water

they quickened their pace as even the horses seemed to sense water ahead

It was late at night when they reached the trees and heard a pleasantly rippling brook

their horses raced ahead, plunged their muzzles into the water and drank deeply

riders also took long drinks in an effort to quench their thirst

they had covered forty-fives that day before camp was made on the bank of the stream

they slept until well into the morning hours the following day

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT SAILS TO NEW ARCHANGEL RUSSIAN-AMERICA (SITKA, ALASKA)

John Jacob Astor’s supply ship *Beaver* under the command of Captain Cornelius Sowle

sailed from Astoria carrying Astor’s agent and commander of the Pacific Fur Company

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<sup>49</sup> James A. Crutchfield, *It Happened in Washington*, P. 16.

Wilson Price Hunt to New Archangel, Russian-America (Sitka, Alaska) -- August 4, 1812

Hunt left former Nor'Wester Duncan McDougall in charge of Astoria

Hunt was to negotiate a contract to supply the Russian trappers of the Russian-American Company carry the company's furs to Canton, China and sell them before returning to Russian-America with more supplies and the proceeds from the sale of the pelts

once these arrangements had been completed the *Beaver* was to return to Astoria

to deliver Wilson Price Hunt to the post before continuing on carrying Russian pelts to Canton  
*Beaver* and Wilson Price Hunt were expected to return to Astoria [in October]

#### BEAVER PUT OUT TO SEA BOUND FOR NEW ARCHANGEL

With the departure of the *Beaver* and the various brigades, Astoria had only a few men remaining this was soon noticed by the Chinook Indians who became more insolent and hostile

Fishing season brought villages of coastal Indians to the fishing grounds of the Columbia River including the villagers who had massacred the crew of the *Tonquin* on Vancouver Island

these natives also were disrespectful and aggressive

Precautions were taken at Astoria to guard against danger

bastions around the post were heightened and guards were posted around the clock

fortunately the Chinooks and other resident people remained peaceful

old Comcomly maintained control of his people because he was aware of the advantages of having white traders as allies and neighbors

he remained a firm friend of the Astorians and protected them against hostile visitors

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS FIVE COMPANIONS SET OUT ONCE AGAIN

When camp in the trees along the babbling brook was broken in the morning

Robert Stuart and his four Astorians recognized the Umatilla River

where Wilson Price Hunt and his companions had arrived after their difficult and hazardous crossing of the Blue Mountains which now lay ahead of them

Robert Stuart led his party into the Blue Mountains through dense forests and deep ravines

sometimes they followed the raging creeks below steep cliffs on either side

at other times to make progress they were forced to cross and re-cross stream beds

dark dense forest continued on for mile after mile

then, almost as if by magic, the landscape changed into beautiful hills

and sparkling gravel brooks surrounded by lush pasture

Leaving the Blue Mountains they entered the (Grande Ronde Valley) almost sixty miles across

rich soil was seen with streams meandering through in every direction

cottonwood and willow trees fringed the banks of the brooks

these provided an abundant resource for dams for the profuse beaver seen in the vicinity Astorians passed beside a great pool three hundred yards in circumference fed by a sulfur spring elk horns, which had been shed in the (springtime), were strewn about the pond

#### JOHN CLARKE FINALLY IS ABLE TO BEGIN HIS TREK TO THE SPOKANE INDIANS

After acquiring an adequate number of horses, John Clarke made arrangements for his departure he laid up his barge and canoes in a sheltered location on the Walla Walla River where they were protected from the sun by the shade of overgrown shrubs and willows he promised compensation to an old Nez Perce chief for keeping a watchful eye of over them during the Astorians' absence

John Clarke took his place at the head of the column of thirty-two Astorians and their horses as they began the journey to the Spokane Indians -- August 7, 1812 like other expeditions traveling to the east they experienced steep and rocky hills, cliffs and crags and miles of sunburned plains abounding with rattlesnakes both men and horses suffered with intolerable heat and thirst

#### JOSEPH MILLER AND HIS TRAPPING PARTNERS RETURN TO (TODAY'S IDAHO)

(Joseph Miller with Edward Robinson, John Hoback, Jacob Reznor and Martin Cass had been attacked by Arapaho Indians [January] and had made winter camp somewhere in [Wyoming's] northern foothills)

During the (spring) and summer they had traveled to (Idaho's) Boise River where they camped about seventy miles above the mouth of the river and busied themselves with trapping -- August 1812

Martin Cass was no longer with the trappers

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS FIVE COMPANIONS REACH (WOODVILE CREEK, IDAHO)

Robert Stuart and his party arrived on the banks of Woodvile Creek (western Idaho) where they saw a herd of nineteen antelopes -- August 10, 1812 they attempted to shoot one but were unsuccessful as the animals remained out of range Stuart had reached the region where Wilson Price Hunt had left Ramsay Crooks and John Day behind before beginning their ascent of the Blue Mountains

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS ARRIVE AT THE SNAKE RIVER

Stuart continued to lead his five companions on their trek across the continent to St. Louis they reached the banks of the Snake River -- August 12, 1812 each of Robert Stuart's companions with the exception of Stuart himself

remembered the hardships they had faced here -- August 12, 1812  
they had reached the area of (today's Farewell Bend  
where later the Oregon Trail would leave the Snake River as pioneer traveled westward)  
They entered the Rocky Mountains following the southern bank of the Snake River

#### ROBERT STUART'S PARTY IS VISITED BY A LONE SHOSHONE INDIAN

A single Shoshone native visited the Astorians' camp -- August 14, 1812  
he told Stuart there was a white man living with his tribe about a day's journey up the Snake River  
this was thought to probably be a survivor of Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition  
everyone was eager to press on and find their lost comrade  
Stuart and his men set out early in the morning -- August 15  
they traveled for two days without finding the survivor

#### ALL OF THE OHIO VALLEY COULD BE LOST TO THE BRITISH

2,500 United States troops under General Hull captured most of (today's) Michigan  
General Hull camped at Fort Detroit across the Detroit River from 100 British regulars, 300 militia  
and 150 Indians led by Tecumseh  
General Hull crossed the river and made his headquarters in a Canadian farmhouse  
he attempted to terrorize the Canadians in the Great Lakes region by distributing printed flyers  
however, he failed to protect American forts on Lake Michigan  
Fort Michilimackinac fell to a small force of British soldiers and Indians under Tecumseh  
Fort Dearborn (Chicago) was lost to the Indians  
After these small but strategic victories, small bands of Indians from the Ohio and Mississippi rivers  
hurried north to join Tecumseh on the Canadian frontier  
within a short time, the great Indian commander had more than six hundred braves  
all ready and eager for battle  
General Hull grew increasingly nervous at the thought of facing an enemy force of British regulars  
sharpshooting Canadian backwoodsmen and hundreds of angry Indians  
in near panic General Hull ordered his troops to retreat to Fort Detroit across the Detroit River  
Fort Detroit was attacked by British troops and Indians under hundreds of Indians under Tecumseh  
seeing advancing force and hearing hundreds of Indians raising their war cries  
struck terror into General Hull who surrendered Fort Detroit -- August 16, 1812  
although his forces outnumbered the attackers  
in addition to winning an easy victory, the daring invaders captured valuable goods,  
including thirty-three cannon, a large quantity of stores and equipment, a number of horses  
and a newly built sailing ship

even more significantly the British had gained a valuable ally in Chief Tecumseh  
U.S. Army suffered defeat after defeat against British, Canadians and Indians  
it was obvious the whole Ohio Valley could be lost to the British

#### ROBERT STUART LEARNS OF A PARTY OF WHITE MEN IN THE AREA

Robert Stuart and his five companions arrived at the mouth of a large river  
that entered the Snake from the east (today's Bruneau River) -- August 16, 1812  
this was a major fishing area and meeting ground for the local Shoshone Indians  
When Stuart encountered an Indian camp he enquired about the white man  
he was told there were white men living with the Indians across the Snake River  
Ramsay Crooks hoped these were the discouraged men he had left behind  
Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry  
others thought they might be Astor's partner Joseph Miller, Martin Cass  
and the three Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor  
who had left the main body at Fort Henry (Idaho) to trap along mountain streams  
Stuart sent an Indian across the Snake River to question the white men and bring them to his camp  
that night swarms of mosquitoes prevented virtually any sleep

#### ROBERT STUART RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT SEVERAL WHITE MEN

Morning found Stuart and his five Astorians in an ill mood due to lack of sleep from mosquitoes  
and the anticipation of finding their long lost companions -- August 17, 1812  
when the Indian returned without any further information they grew even more irritable  
As they broke camp and began their day's trek a Shoshone Indian galloped after them  
Stuart stopped to wait for the Indian but when he arrived  
he threw his arms around Stuart's horse's neck and appeared to attempt to kill the animal  
the horse seemed neither alarmed nor displeased by this greeting  
he said the horse had been his prized possession and had been stolen by Walla Walla Indians  
in fact, this was a prized animal -- admirably shaped, graceful in movement and fleet of foot  
Robert Stuart had intended to take him to New York and present him to John Jacob Astor  
Suddenly some of the Astorians recognized the Shoshone Indian as an old friend and ally  
who had guided Wilson Price Hunt's expedition to Fort Henry (Idaho) the preceding (autumn)  
he had also been one of the two Indians left at Fort Henry to take charge of the horses  
when Hunt set out with canoes  
as the Astorians questioned the Indian he explained the cache had been plundered  
and the saddles and equipment were carried off  
this Indian said Joseph Miller and his companions had trapped for some time

but had fallen into the hands of marauding Crow Indians  
who robbed them of their horses, weapons and trade goods  
he said he had met with three other white men about ten days before  
they were in miserable condition having one horse and one rifle among them  
they had been mistreated by Crow Indians  
when the Indian tried to pronounce the names of the whites it was suspected they were  
three of the four hunters detached from Wilson Price Hunt's expedition  
Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michel, Pierre Detaye and Pierre Delaunay  
in the course of the conversation the Indian said the route taken by Wilson Price Hunt was bad  
he knew a much shorter and easier way through the Rocky Mountains  
Robert Stuart urged him accompany the Astorians as a guide and promised to reward him  
with a pistol with powder and ball, a knife, an awl, some blue beads, a blanket  
and a looking glass -- the native could not refuse such a generous offer  
besides, he said, he was tired of salmon and longed for buffalo meat  
he left immediately to get his weapons and equipment and promised to return the next day  
he was good to his word

#### SHOSHONE INDIAN RETURNS TO GUIDE ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS

Because the Shoshone Indian said nothing more about Stuart's horse they traveled in harmony  
although the Indian occasionally was seen looking wistfully at the horse -- August 18, 1812  
They had traveled only about nine miles when they came to a great bend in the Snake River  
here their guide told them that cutting across the hills would save them many miles  
however, this route would be a long day's journey  
he advised them to make camp for the night and get an early start in the morning  
they took his advice

#### ROBERT STUART GETS AN EARLY START

All six Astorians rose early to begin their ascent of the Rocky Mountains -- August 19, 1812  
they soon discovered their guide was missing and supposed he was checking the route ahead  
when they began to collect the horses Robert Stuart's prized steed was missing  
a quick search for the horse belonging the Shoshone Indian found it also was missing  
tracks of two horses, one being ridden and the other following, were found leaving camp  
it was obvious the horse had been taken during the night  
they followed the tracks for a few miles until they crossed the Snake River  
from then on the night was divided into three watches with one person mounted at all times  
It was decided to keep to the Snake River rather than attempting the proposed short cut

during the day the heat was oppressive and the horses became almost frantic from the sting of flies  
nights were suffocating and it was impossible to sleep because of the swarms of mosquitoes

#### BEAVER ARRIVES AT NEW ARCHANGEL, RUSSIAN-AMERICA (SITKA, ALASKA)

Wilson Price Hunt sailing with Captain Cornelius Sowle aboard the supply ship *Beaver*  
did not reach New Archangel (Sitka) until August 20, 1812

New Archangel was a fort placed at the crest of a rocky promontory

it displayed one hundred large and small guns, and was impregnable to Indian attack

Hunt met with Count Alexander Baranov the Russian governor of the different colonies

Count Baranov was a rough, rugged, hospitable, hard-drinking old Russian

somewhat of a soldier, somewhat of a trader and above all a fun-loving, rowdy companion

Count Baranov commanded sixty Russians and a vast number of Kodiak Indian hunters

who continually came and went and lounged and loitered around the New Archangel fort

Baranov, although addicted to vodka and amusement, was a strong disciplinarian

seven guards were posted in the fort day and night

Baranov also commanded numerous maritime traders who extended the governor's power  
along the whole Pacific coast

American captains whose ships were engaged the maritime trade

would arrive at New Archangel empty-handed

they would be furnished with about fifty canoes and a hundred Kodiak hunters

who were given provisions enough to hunt sea otter

then the American captains would sail for California

where parties of hunters would be dropped off in their canoes

when enough pelts were collected the American captains would gather the hunters

and return to New Archangel to deliver the hunters and the pelts

for their service to the hunters the captains kept one-half of the skins

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS FIVE COMPANIONS AGAIN TAKE UP THEIR TREK

Robert Stuart continued to parallel the Snake River as the day grew sultry -- August 20, 1812

some of the Astorians became parched with thirst and left the others to go to the river bank

as they passed through a line of willow trees they were surprised to see a white man fishing

this proved to be the Kentucky trapper John Hoback -- one of their lost comrades

Almost immediately three other men who had been sleeping came out of the willows

Astor's partner Joseph Miller, Jacob Reznor and the long ago scalped Edward Robinson

Astorian Martin Cass who had traveled with the others was missing

all four had left Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition at Fort Henry (Idaho)

Stuart quickly made camp as Miller, Robinson, Hoback and Jacob Reznor expressed their great joy all of the Astorians celebrated the amazing luck of the accidental discovery

#### JOSEPH MILLER AND HIS TRAVELING COMPANIONS TELL THEIR STORY

Joseph Miller, Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor explained

that after leaving Hunt's expedition at Caldron Linn they continued eastward with Martin Cass along the south bank of the Snake River until they reached (today's Porteneuf River)

there they turned south aiming for a pass that Shoshone Indians had told them about they made their way about two hundred miles where they trapped beaver on a river which according to their account, discharge itself into the ocean to the south of the Columbia (this actually proved to be the Bear River that empties into Lake Bonneville west of the Rocky Mountains)

after collecting a large number of beaver pelts they made them into packs and loaded their horses they traveled two hundred miles east where they encountered sixty Arapaho lodges these natives attacked the trappers and robbed them of their pelts, most of their clothing and several of their horses

fortunate to escape with their lives, some of their clothing and a few of their horses they proceeded about fifty miles east and made camp (for the winter)

according to Joseph Miller, Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor

they suffered from starvation because of a lack of game and fish during the [winter 1811-1812]

Miller, Robinson, Hoback and Reznor resumed their journey [early in the spring]

but they encountered a Crow war party that frightened them to the north as they fled along (what is today's Idaho-Wyoming border) the Crows followed, stole every horse and left them afoot in the wilderness

Miller, Robinson, Hoback and Reznor had pressed on suffering great hardships

they still had their rifles and ammunition but the desert offered no game birds or animals they were forced to follow rivers and subsist by fishing

but at times no fish were available -- starvation added to their suffering

then just two weeks before being found the trio had been robbed yet again

this time by Shoshone Indians who took one of their two horses, beaver pelts, equipment and nearly everything else

they said their last horse was taken by Martin Cass

now without horses Joseph Miller and his three companions

endured hunger, thirst and exhaustion while traveling across barren wastes

their worn and gaunt look and naked condition spoke of their extensive suffering

(later when Edward Robinson was relating their story to Astorian John Reed

he stated that Martin Cass had been killed by Arapahos

because of these inconsistencies rumors spread that Cass's four companions had killed  
and eaten him during the lean winter)

Once again the Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor

spoke of going home only to decide to remain and trap

they agreed to remain with Astor's Pacific Fur Company

they were provided traps, weapons, ammunition and equipment for a two year hunt

(for nearly a year the three men trapped the country around Jackson Hole [Wyoming])

Joseph Miller decided to join Robert Stuart, Robert McClellan, Ramsay Crooks, Ben Jones,

Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc on their journey to St. Louis

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY EAST

Robert Stuart and his now six traveling companions set out together -- August 21, 1812

for several days they followed the Snake River occasionally taking shortcuts across hills

where the river bent and turned

they passed several Shoshone camps where they purchased salmon

Robert Stuart attempt to purchases horses for the recently discovered Astorians

but most often the Indians were too poor to be able to conduct trade

#### JOHN CLARKE ACCIDENTALLY LEAVES A MAN BEHIND

John Clarke's party of thirty-two Astorians continued on horseback

on their way to the Spokane Indians

Ross Cox, a young clerk, took a nap in the warm afternoon sun of an August day

he awoke about 5:00 to find the previous night's campsite deserted

coals from the fire indicated his companions left about three hours before

they had left him with no supplies, no equipment, no horse and no weapon

Ross Cox was unprepared for the adventures that might lie ahead and was terrified

he was not an experienced man of wilderness as indicated by the fact he wore

**“a gingham shirt and summer trousers, badly worn moccasins, and no hat”<sup>50</sup>**

Cox made camp for the night near the Astorians' former campsite

Early the next day he traveled east in an attempt to catch up with the other Astorians

on the following night he was confronted by a giant rattlesnake but he escaped unharmed

on the third night he was about to settle into a small cave

when he was surprised and terrified by a large gray fox that emerged

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<sup>50</sup> James A. Crutchfield, *It Happened in Washington*, P. 16.

## GEOGRAPHER DAVID THOMPSON REACHES FORT WILLIAM ON LAKE SUPERIOR

David Thompson with thirty North West Company voyageurs who paddled six canoes and his wife Charlotte and their five children transported 122 ninety pound bales of furs worth approximately \$50,000 on the London market to North West Company headquarters at Fort William on Lake Superior (now Thunder Bay, Ontario) -- August 1812

David Thompson attended the annual meeting of North West Company partners-in-the-field there for six years he had been in charge of trading in the North West Company Columbia Department beyond the Rocky Mountains

North West Company sent a delegation to accompany the bundles of pelts to London England Kanaka John Coxe was a member of the delegation and was probably the first Hawaiian to visit England

## NOR'WESTER DAVID THOMPSON RETIRES FROM THE NORTH WEST COMPANY

Now forty-five years old David Thompson was never again to travel west to the great rivers, the Rocky Mountains and beyond to the Columbia Department he had developed After the Nor'Westers meeting David Thompson moved to Terrebonne (near Montreal, Quebec) while many traders simply left their native families in the bush

Thompson settled down with his family

he had his children baptized and his marriage to Charlotte solemnized in a Catholic Church Thompson, the "praying trapper" also was known as Koo-Koo-Sint "the Man Who Looks at Stars"<sup>51</sup> remained in eastern Canada for the rest of his life

David Thompson was now ready to attempt to draft a detailed map of the Columbia Department he had traveled over 1,200,000 square miles of Canadian territory he had traveled over 500,000 square miles of eventual United States territory North West Company put David Thompson to work for five years [1812-1817] he constructed a monumental (ten and one-half feet by five and one-half feet) detailed map of the Pacific Northwest

## ASTORIANS AND NOR'WESTERS MEET ON THE SPOKANE RIVER

John Clarke and his party of Astorians reached the Spokane River where North West Company operated Spokane House under Finan McDonald Cordial relations were quickly established between the trappers of the rival companies

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<sup>51</sup> Tom Shardlow, *Mapping the Wilderness: The Story of David Thompson*, P. 122.

Pacific Fur Company and North West Company men were most jovial toward each other  
amiable horse races were held between the competing companies  
after all, most of the men at Astoria were former North West Company associates  
at the same time each company was sending scouts to watch Indian trappers  
to assure their company would get first pick of the Indians' trapping successes

#### JOHN CLARKE BUILDS FORT SPOKANE FOR THE ASTORIANS

Astor's partner John Clarke began construction on the Pacific Fur Company trading post  
on a point of land at the junction of the Spokane and "Pointed Heart" (Little Spokane) rivers  
within a hundred yards of the North West Company's Spokane House -- August 1812  
Fort Spokane was built on a grand scale to impress the natives (when it was completed in [December]  
this post housed thirty-two laborers, clerks and traders who operated it  
There was intense but friendly competition between the two companies  
for trade with the Spokane, Kootenai and Flathead natives  
Americans dispatched trading brigades to undercut the Nor'Westers  
among the Kootenai and Flathead Indians [in the fall]  
however, both companies agreed not to use alcohol to obtain furs from the Indians

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS COMPANIONS REACH SALMON FALLS

Stuart and his seven traveling companions reached a great fishing place  
which they named Salmon Falls (north of Twin Falls, Idaho) -- August 25, 1812  
here on the north side of the Snake River was a twenty foot waterfall  
while a series of rapids were on the south side  
There were about a hundred Shoshone lodges at the falls  
and the Indians were busy catching and drying salmon  
shortly after sunrise the fish began to leap and the natives swam to the center of the falls  
and stood on the rocks while others stood up to their waists in the water holding spears  
salmon were taken in incredible numbers as they attempted to leap the falls  
Robert Stuart purchased a good supply of salmon and the Astorians resumed their journey

#### ASTORIAN ROSS COX ARRIVES AT FORT SPOKANE

After two weeks on his own in the wilderness Ross Cox had shredded his clothes  
his **"moccasins were completely gone, and... [his] feet were torn and bruised by thorns and sharp rocks"**<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> James A. Crutchfield, *It Happened in Washington*, P. 17.

unarmed, it was impossible to kill any game for nourishment

Cox encountered a grizzly bear and escaped when he climbed a tree and waited several hours)  
For two weeks after he had fallen behind John Clarke's expedition to Spokane Indians

Ross Cox crossed the desolate country alone with no weapon for protection or food  
Ross Cox chanced upon a Spokane Indian camp these friendly natives fed and clothed him  
he was escorted by Spokane natives to the Spokane River the next day -- August 1812  
where John Clarke and other Astorians were building a third post -- Fort Spokane  
right next door to North West Company's Spokane House

Cox wrote of his reunion: **“My deerskin robe and tanned complexion deceived them for a minute, but when they recognized me a great shout went up. All the men thronged around me, asking me questions, and congratulating me upon being found. I had been given up for lost. Just the day before, my clothing had been sold at auction, but now the purchasers hurried to bring it back to me. A holiday was declared to celebrate my return, and the Indians who had taken care of me were liberally rewarded.”**<sup>53</sup>

#### LORD SELKIRK'S COLONISTS ARRIVE AT THE RED RIVER

Governor Miles Macdonell led seventy colonists from the shore of Hudson Bay  
toward Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's colony to be located almost forty miles  
from the mouth of the Red River where the river bends sharply east forming Point Douglas  
(in the present-day city of Winnipeg, Manitoba) -- August 30, 1812  
Metis (mixed French and Indian blood) settlers living in the area received the colonist  
wearing war paint and making threatening signs  
this was the country of the fur traders -- settlers were not wanted  
they must move further inland  
in contrast, full-blooded Indians camping along the Red River welcomed the colonists

#### ROBERT STUART NOW TRAVELS WITH SIX COMPANIONS

Robert Stuart accompanied by Astor's former partners Ramsay Crooks and Robert McClellan  
along with hunter Ben Jones, voyageurs Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc  
and newly added Joseph Miller who declined to remain and trap with the three Kentuckians  
set out to continue the journey to St. Louis -- September 1, 1812  
they followed the Snake River eastward as the hills that had closed in on the river  
opened to wide plains -- occasionally belts of green interrupted the dusty desert  
fringes of willow and cottonwood followed the river bank and could be seen from hilltops

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<sup>53</sup> James A. Crutchfield, *It Happened in Washington*, P. 17.

which allowed shortcuts to be taken and return to the river  
summer had parched the ground and little game was to be had  
each of the Astorians searched in vain across the barren landscape  
For a week they moved eastward suffering from thirst and hunger  
they depended on the few fish the streams offered and an occasional dog  
purchased from very poor and forlorn Shoshone Indians

#### DONALD McKENZIE AND HIS MEN REACH THE CLEARWATER RIVER

Donald McKenzie and his ten traveling companions had continued up the Snake River  
for fifteen or sixteen days when they reached the Clearwater River  
McKenzie dispatched John Reed and four men to continue up the Clearwater for two days  
to look for the caches left by Wilson Price Hunt at Caldron Linn  
McKenzie was planning to use these supplies to supplement what he had carried with him  
John Reed was familiar with the surrounding countryside as he had been there the year before  
McKenzie continued up the Snake River with six men for several days  
but an absence of signs of beaver discouraged him  
he returned down the Snake River to the mouth of the Clearwater River

#### DONALD McKENZIE AND HIS MEN CONSTRUCT McKENZIE'S POST

Donald McKenzie built McKenzie's Post on a prairie beside the Clearwater River  
(about eight miles north of today's Lewiston, Idaho) -- beginning of September 1812  
local Indians here will demonstrate little interest in trapping and trading  
much to the frustration of Donald McKenzie and his Nor'Westers

#### TWO INDIANS ARRIVE AT McKENZIE'S POST ON THE CLEARWATER RIVER

John Reed was gone less than a week when two Indians arrived at McKenzie's Post  
they announced the caches had been robbed by Shoshones  
who had been guided by whites staying with the Indians  
as proof they produced an English saddle and bridle that belonged to Ramsay Crooks

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS SIX ASTORIANS STRIKE AWAY FROM THE SNAKE RIVER

Joseph Miller, now traveling with Robert Stuart and his men had visited the area earlier while trapping  
he informed his companions he knew a better route that also avoided the Blackfoot Indians  
tired of the trackless wastelands they had been crossing, Stuart's party followed the guidance  
given by Miller and left the banks of the Snake River -- September 7, 1812  
Joseph Miller soon became bewildered by the rugged hills and unknown streams

and the burnt and barren desert they faced

eventually they reached the river where Miller had previously trapped

Robert Stuart's Astorians named this "Miller River" (presumably today's Bear River, Utah)

they followed up the river for two or three days surviving on fish

#### ROBERT STUART'S PARTY BECOMES CONCERNED ABOUT CROW INDIANS IN THE AREA

Astor's partner's Robert Stuart Ramsay Crooks, Robert McClellan and Joseph Miller

along with hunter Ben Jones, voyageurs Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc

found themselves in very dangerous country

camp was made early to allow time for fishing -- September 12, 1812

when they returned to camp they found a number of Indians prowling about

to the concern of the Astorians they proved to be Crows

Upon seeing the whites the Crow chief, a huge Indian about six-foot-four,

approached them with a confident air -- however, he conducted himself peacefully

he sent some of his men back to his camp to collect buffalo meat to share

the huge chief informed Stuart that he was on his way to trade with the Shoshones

who resided below Fort Henry (Idaho) where they cultivated a tobacco that was greatly desired

however, there was something sinister about this man

Little by little throughout the night an increasing number of Crow Indians arrived in camp

until there were twenty-one who became belligerent, disrespectful and troublesome

great uneasiness was felt by the Astorians who were concerned about their goods and horses

everyone kept a watchful eye during the night

#### ROBERT STUART IS CONFRONTED BY THE GIGANTIC CROW INDIAN CHIEF

Morning dawned without any incident having taken place -- September 13, 1812

Robert Stuart purchased all of the buffalo meat the Crow Indians could spare

As they prepared to depart the Indian chief requested gunpowder and offered horses in exchange

Stuart thought it ill advised to further arm these people and flatly refused

At this the gigantic chief stepped forward and slapped his chest indicating he was an important chief

it was customary for great chiefs to exchange gifts -- he request Stuart's horse

when this was refused the chief grabbed Stuart and rocked him back and forth in the saddle

Stuart remained calm and shook his head

next the chief grabbed the horse's bridle and jerked it startling the animal

nearly knocking Stuart out of the saddle

Robert Stuart drew his pistol and pointed at the chief's head

ending his swaggering, the chief leaped behind his horse to escape the expected shot

as the other Crows watched from a distance  
Stuart told his men to level their rifles on the Indians but not to fire  
Indians fled or threw themselves on the ground out of sight  
left alone the chief quickly recovered himself and began laughing to indicate this was a joke  
Robert Stuart joined in -- knowing only the small size of the Indian party  
and the alertness of the Astorians and prevented an open attack  
After the Indians had departed it was discovered they had taken a bag  
containing almost all of the eating utensils belonging to the party

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN CONTINUE THEIR TREK TOWARD ST. LOUIS

Robert Stuart set a course to the east over a chain of hills -- September 13, 1812  
they had gone many miles when they saw columns of smoke rising in different directions  
from the summits of the highest mountains  
these signal fires were proof the Astorians were traveling through hostile country  
great numbers of Indians could be expected in a short period of time  
Robert Stuart changed direction to travel to the north away from Miller's (Bear) River  
they followed a large tributary into the Salt River Range of the Rocky Mountains (Wyoming)  
and made camp for the night  
all of the horses were hobbled or tethered and an armed guard was posted until morning  
everyone slept with his rifle on his arm

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS WERE AGAIN ON THE MARCH

Keeping in a northerly direction Robert Stuart and six his Astorians  
soon began to ascend the Rocky Mountains -- September 14, 1812  
no sign of the Crow Indians was seen but that did not improve the confidence of the white men  
Camp was made on the edge of a stream after twenty-one miles had been covered  
in the evening an alarm regarding the arrival of Indians was given and put everyone on alert  
but they proved to be three Shoshones who were informed about the band of Crow Indians  
prowling in the vicinity -- the Shoshones left showing signs of great concern

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN CONTINUE NORTH

Weary days and watchful nights had brought the seven Astorians to a rapid north-running stream  
they concluded this was one of the branches of the Snake River -- September 15, 1812  
(probably today's Salt River in Wyoming)  
It was decided to follow this river as it would take them away from Crow Indian country  
they would look for the route Wilson Price Hunt had taken on his way west

and follow it across the Rocky Mountains -- that way they would at least be sure of their route

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS COMPANIONS AGAIN REACH THE SNAKE RIVER

Following (Wyoming's Salt River) for three days brought the Astorians to a large raging, roaring river  
they camped on the banks of the Snake River -- September 18, 1812

Six days had passed since their encounter with the Crow Indians

they had traveled 150 miles to the north and west and began to relax their vigilance

where there was good pasture they lingered sometimes for half a day

as the horses needed time to rest and recover from their forced march over rugged hills,

among rocks and fallen timber and across swampy valleys

#### CROW INDIANS RETURN TO SEEK REVENGE

Robert Stuart and his six Astorians arose at dawn -- September 19, 1812

some had begun to prepare breakfast while others arranged the packs for the day's march

Stuart was on the bank of the Snake River when he heard a blood-curdling yell

as a Crow Indian galloped past the camp bearing a red flag and stopped on a knoll

where he sat on his horse and waved the banner

another blood-curdling yell was heard beyond the horses on the opposite side of the camp

Stuart described the scene: **"We were all up soon after the dawn and I had just reached the river bank, when I heard the Indian yell raised in the vicinity of our Camp, and the cry 'To Arms.' 'There's Indians' echoed by all of our Party -- We had just time to snatch our arms when two Indians at full gallop passed 300 yards to one side of our station driving off every horse we had...."**<sup>54</sup>

The horses became frightened and dashed across the camp toward the red flag that attracted them

as the Indian holding the banner galloped his horse away from camp

he was followed by the horse herd that was now even more frightened

by the shouts and howls of Indians behind them

Stuart and the Astorians grabbed their rifles and attempted to cut off the Indians following the herd

their attention was drawn to shouts and yells coming from the opposite direction

yet another party of Crow Indians were about to carry off their baggage

Astorians raced to secure their belongings but the Indians rode off yelling in triumph

the last to leave was the gigantic Crow leader who stood in the saddle

and made an insulting gesture

Ben Jones raised his rifle and took aim but Robert Stuart assured him

it would mean death for all of them

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<sup>54</sup> Robert Stuart's Journal

Now without horses or most of the belongings the Astorians gazed at the raiders in shame and despair  
however, they did have to admire the daring of the twenty Indians who made the raid

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS COMPANONS FACE A GRIM FUTURE

Seven disheartened Astorians surveyed the prospect of crossing rugged mountains  
and vast trackless plains that lay before them on foot while carrying on their backs  
what remained of their food, clothing, weapons and other necessities -- September 19, 1812  
without options, they set about immediately creating packs of indispensable items  
what remained was placed in caches -- all day was consumed with these preparations  
after a small meal of their remaining provisions they slept to escape their grave concerns

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS SIX COMPANIONS TRAVEL ON FOOT

At first light they were up and completed their preparations while Ben Jones visited a beaver trap  
he had set on the river bank the night before  
this effort was rewarded with a medium-sized beaver which served as breakfast  
as Ben Jones was returning to camp he glanced the sight of two heads watching him from a cliff  
he believed they probably were wolves but when they remained in place it occurred to him  
they might be Indian scouts

had they not been out of range of his rifle he would have confirmed his suspicions  
When he reached the camp he pointed out his observers and everyone agreed they were Indians  
probably watching to see where the caches would be hidden  
it was decided to deprive the Crows of their next reward and take everything he could with them  
what remained was burned or thrown into the river

About 10:00 A.M. they set out along the bank of the Snake River -- September 20, 1812

Robert Stuart held out hope they might find Shoshone Indians to buy horses to carry the baggage  
fatigue from carrying their heavy packs was accompanied by hunger  
trout caught in the Snake River were inadequate to provide needed nourishment  
fortunately they had taken a beaver trap with them which occasionally provided meat  
that was immediately cut up and distributed

Eighteen miles a day were made before the seven Astorians stopped  
to build two rafts to cross to the north side of the Snake River -- September 22, 1812

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS CROSS THE SNAKE RIVER

After completing the construction of the rafts and sleeping through the night  
four Astorians on one raft and three on the other crossed the Snake River -- September 23, 1812  
Discovering the rafts were sturdy enough to withstand the rushing water

they decided to float down the river with the current

mountains of black rock towered above them where the river had cut its channel

those on the east side were the Rockies while the hills on their west side were bleak and barren

fortunately there were no rapids or waterfalls on this portion of the Snake River

vast quantities of beaver provided nourishment for the men

Ben Jones also killed a deer and a wolverine -- both were placed on a raft

For two days they kept to the river drawing their rafts up on shore to camp at night -- September 23-24

in their travels they passed an island that was home to a herd of elk

Ben Jones killed one of the animals and the Astorians continued on as a storm was gathering

Next day they remained in camp -- September 26

sheltering themselves as best they could from rain and snow

this sign of early winter did not escape Robert Stuart, Ramsay Crooks, Robert McClellan,

Joseph Miller, Ben Jones, Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc

#### McKENZIE'S POST ON THE CLEARWATER RIVER IS COMPLETED

Three weeks after beginning work on the trading post the task was finished -- later September

McKenzie's Post was composed of a store, a house for the men

and two additional houses for McKenzie and second-in-command clerk Alfred Seton

This was the season of migration and various tribes were passing and re-passing in great numbers

location of McKenzie's Post appeared to be a great thoroughfare

for tribes traveling across the Rocky Mountains to make war on the Plains Indians

and to hunt buffalo and gather roots

North West Company was bothered by no rival trading opposition whatsoever

#### JOHN REED GATHERS UP LOST ASTORIANS

Clerk John Reed and his party of four men had no difficulty in reaching the Snake River

there he camped with Shoshone Indians near Fort Henry (Idaho)

In the Shoshone encampment John Reed met six white men who had accompanied Wilson Price Hunt

on the Overland Expedition across the continent and had wintered east of the Blue Mountains

Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michael, Pierre Delaunay and Pierre Detaye

had been left by Hunt to trap beaver in the mountains (the proceeding October)

this group had been attacked by Crow Indians

Pierre Detaye had been killed and the others robbed

Andre La Chapelle, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte and Francois Landry had led the Shoshone Indians

to the caches before joining the natives in a buffalo hunt

they were subsequently robbed and left destitute by Blackfoot Indians

they had returned to this Shoshone Indian camp with nothing but despair  
All eleven of the Astorians now led by John Reed  
headed back to McKenzie's Post on the Clearwater River with the sad news  
that the Caldron Linn cache had been thoroughly plundered

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS SIX ASTORIANS CONTINUE DOWN THE SNAKE RIVER

Although the storm had brought cold weather  
their rafts provided easy transportation for two days-- September 25-26, 1812  
they had floated about ninety-one miles when they discovered the mountains to the east  
were reduced in size so they landed and prepared to again set out on foot  
Reed and his men spent one day making moccasins from the elk hide  
and jerky from the meat -- September 27  
each man was given twenty pounds of jerky to carry

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS PARTY ARE AGAIN ON FOOT

Stuart and his six Astorians traveled northeast keeping to the southern edge of the same mountains  
where Fort Henry (Idaho) was located -- September 28, 1812  
Their walk was slow and difficult as they traveled over rough hills  
and passed through thick growths of willows, cottonwoods and hawthorns  
Hunting was not possible as any shot might be heard by Blackfoot Indians  
they came on a large horse trail and followed it until they made camp beside a small stream  
where the Indians had camped about three weeks before

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN RECOGNIZE THERE ARE INDIANS IN THE AREA

In the morning the seven Astorians set out from camp -- September 29, 1812  
they followed the well-marked Indian trail but after some time they discovered the Indians  
had formed hunting parties and separated in every direction  
in addition to losing the trail this meant the Indians had remained in the region  
Caution was necessary and every Astorian kept a vigilant eye looking for scouts or smoke  
nothing was seen as the landscape was harsh and lifeless  
Camp was made that night in a deep gully near several hot springs  
(about thirty miles from Tetonia, Idaho)  
for two days Ramsay Crooks had been ill and he developed a high fever that night

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN BREAK CAMP JUST AFTER DAYBREAK

Stuart's six Astorians resumed their trek -- September 30, 1812

they stopped to hold a meeting to discuss their course of travel  
they considered continuing to skirt the mountains and perhaps encounter Blackfoot Indians  
it seemed more advisable to cross directly over the mountain  
hot-headed and indolent Robert McClellan objected to this plan saying he would rather  
face hostile Indians than attempt the difficult and painful mountain crossing  
McClellan lost the discussion

As the younger Astorians began their ascent of the mountain following the Teton River upstream  
McClellan who was twice their age soon lost his breath and fell behind the others  
when it was McClellan's turn to carry the heavy beaver trap he suddenly stopped  
he would go no further and threw the trap halfway down the hill  
he was offered a package of meat to carry but he also threw this on the ground

#### STUART AND FIVE OF HIS ASTORIANS STRUGGLE OVER THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Robert Stuart, Robert McClellan, Joseph Miller, Ramsay Crooks, Ben Jones, Andre Vallar  
and Francis Le Clerc continued their difficult climb through deep snow  
over the Rocky Mountains -- October 1, 1812  
although all of the other Astorians objected,  
Robert McClellan set out to walk around the mountain rather than over it  
being strong willed and something of a braggart he often took pride in doing foolish things  
Robert Stuart and his men crossed the summit early in the afternoon  
and saw the familiar "Pilot Knobs" (Three Tetons)  
below them was a river about fifty yards wide sometime gleaming in the sun  
and other times running through the shadows of willows on the river banks  
they descended into Jackson Hole (Wyoming)  
those who had traveled west with Wilson Price Hunt pointed out the countryside to Robert Stuart  
they indicated the direction to Fort Henry (Idaho) where they had abandoned their horses  
On their way down the mountain the six Astorians saw Robert McClellan in the distance  
he had continue to attempt to walk around the mountains  
crossing through (today's 8,431 foot high Teton Pass)  
McClellan made no indication of seeing them and continued in his brooding solitary travel  
when the Astorians reached the plain they continued for about six miles  
until they reached a knee-deep river fringed with willow trees -- here they made camp  
During the night Ramsay Crooks' fever rose so high that it was impossible for him to travel  
several of the men insisted they continue on and leave Crooks behind  
they believed they were in imminent danger from Blackfoot Indians,  
the season was late and the weather had turned very cold,

the mountains would soon be impassable with snow  
their provisions were exhausted and there was no game to be seen  
they could not fire their rifles anyway because of the fear of Blackfoot Indians  
Robert Stuart refused to leave Crooks behind explaining the fever would break in a few days  
and he would be able to travel

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIAN REMAINED WITH RAMSAY CROOKS

Astorians remained in the camp under the willow trees beside the shallow river -- October 2, 1812  
as Ramsay Crooks was far too ill to travel

because they could not fire a rifle for fear of attracting Blackfoot Indians

they were forced to rely on the beaver trap

which had been retrieved after Robert McClellan's outburst

Since they were to remain in camp for several days and the beaver trap could not be relied on

Ben Jones received permission to risk hunting in an area away from their camp

he set off at daybreak to find a an area to hunt

while tramping through a thicket with the trap on his shoulder and his rifle in his hand

he heard a crashing noise and turned to see a growling grizzly bear advancing

leveling his rifle he fired -- the bear was wounded but not killed

luckily the great animal retreated and escaped

Ben Jones came upon a herd of elk and killed five about six miles from camp

Ramsay Crooks was carried to where the elk lay as he could not walk

Robert Stuart built a small oval hut of willows and covered it with a hide

he made the sick Ramsay Crooks crawl naked inside and steamed him red

by throwing water onto hot stones

Astorians remained there for three days drying meat to carry with them as Crooks recuperated

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT COMPLETES NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE RUSSIAN LEADER

Wilson Price Hunt, Astor's Agent, attempted to negotiate with Russian Alexander Baranov

Russian-American Company's manager at New Archangel (Sitka), Alaska

Negotiations did not go well for the Astorian as Count Baranov subjected him to endless rounds  
of bargaining punctuated by drunken brawls

Hunt, at heavy cost to his stomach, noted: **“He is continually giving entertainments by way of parade, and if you do not drink raw rum, and boiling punch as strong as sulfur, he will insult you as soon as he gets drunk, which is very shortly after sitting down to table.”**<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> James P. Ronda, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 283.

When an agreement was finally reached after forty-five days of drunken negotiations  
Astorians delivered \$56,000 worth of goods to be paid for with 80,000 seal skins  
to be sold in Canton, China

it was then revealed by the Russian governor that the seal skins were warehoused  
on the island of St. Paul in the Bering Sea

Wilson Price Hunt was required to travel to St. Paul Island with Captain Cornelius Sowle  
aboard John Jacob Astor's supply ship *Beaver* -- October 4, 1812

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS CONTINUE ACROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Ramsay Crooks recovered sufficiently to continue the journey to the south -- October 5, 1812

his pack had been divided and they progressed very slowly

only eight miles through swamps made by beaver were traveled that day

they killed a grizzly bear which was added to their supply of elk jerky

Next day Ramsay Crooks was strong enough to carry his own rifle and pistols

eighteen miles were made that day -- October 6

#### ONCE AGAIN ROBERT STUART'S ASTORIANS FACE DIFFICULT CONDITIONS

Their journey through the Rocky Mountains became increasingly difficult

and their suffering increased dramatically as they were forced to walk in the channel of a river

they continued across the rugged summit of the Three Tetons

which were covered in snow nine inches deep

For several days they traveled eastward as much as possible

sometimes they walked along steep cliffs several hundred feet above the raging torrent

sometimes they crossed over rocky heights and deep ravines and across swift icy cold rivers

they reached the Hoback River following the route previously taken by Wilson Price Hunt

numb with despair they plodded along the grueling canyon of the river

from the river's upper reaches they crossed to the sagebrush plains

which stretched farther than they could see

hunger added to their suffering as the small amount of meat they had been able to carry ran out

there was little time to hunt and little game to be seen

they ate nothing for three days but a small duck and a few small trout

antelopes were seen but they could not get within range of the shy animals

only one was killed and provided meager rations for several days (today's Green River)

#### JOHN REED RETURNS FROM HIS EXPEDITION TO THE CACHES AT CALDRON LINN

Clerk John Reed and his men reached Donald McKenzie's Post on the Clearwater River

from their journey to the caches -- October 1812

they were accompanied by three surviving members of the overland expedition

Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michael and Andre La Chapelle

Reed reported to Donald McKenzie that most of the caches had been discovered and destroyed

#### SIGNS OF ROBERT McCLELLAN ARE DISCOVERED BY ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN

Robert Stuart, Joseph Miller, Ramsay Crooks, Ben Jones, Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc

camped on a small stream near the foot of "Spanish River Mountain" -- October 11, 1812

(they were approaching today's Wind River Mountains section of the Rockies)

here they saw traces of Robert McClellan left behind on his solitary journey east

he had camped at this spot the night before and had dined on a miserable wolf

but he was better off than the five Astorians as they had nothing to eat

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS AROSE HUNGARY AND ALERT

Robert Stuart and his traveling companions left Wilson Price Hunt's trail

they set out for the pass south of the Wind River Mountains -- dawn October 12, 1812

these proved to be very steep and difficult

traces of ancient volcanic eruptions could be seen in several directions

their desperate detour to Fort Henry (Idaho) and the non-existent caches

they realized all too painfully had taken them 400 miles out of their way

Robert Stuart, Joseph Miller Ramsay Crooks, Ben Jones, Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc

reached the headwaters of the Green River (Wyoming) about noon

and continued to follow downstream through the afternoon

they had expected to find buffalo on the plain below -- this hope had driven them onward

to their great disappointment the river bank was deserted and the landscape barren

Starving, the Astorians continued on for several miles looking for signs of beaver

finding some they made camp and Ben Jones set out to trap

Suddenly the smoke from a large campfire was seen some distance to the southwest

great joy was expressed as food might be found

even fear of the Blackfoot paled in the face of starvation

Francis Le Clerc was sent by Robert Stuart to reconnoiter

remaining Astorians stayed up until midnight waiting for Le Clerc and hoping for food

when he did not appear they settled into a hungry sleep hoping the trap had better results

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS DISCOVER ROBERT McCLELLAN

At daybreak the famished campers walked to their beaver trap -- October 13, 1812

they found only a forepaw in the trap chewed off by its owner in the effort to escape  
They took up their journey with dejected spirits and had not gone far when they saw Francis Le Clerc  
they hurried to meet him hoping for good news -- he had none to give  
he said the fire belonged to Robert McClellan and had spread while he fished -- unsuccessfully  
during the twelve days McClellan found little to eat  
as alone he followed the route taken by Wilson Price Hunt on his westward journey  
McClellan was ill, worn down and heartsick-- now even his stubbornness was exhausted  
he announced to Le Clerc that he would wait in his camp for the others  
hoping they would bring food

When Robert Stuart and his men reached McClellan's camp they found him so feeble  
he could barely raise his head -- but the arrival of his old comrades revived him somewhat  
they had no food to give him but encouraged him to get up continue with them  
he shook his head -- he would die were he lay as there was no hope in continuing

After a great deal of persuasion McClellan rose to his feet and moved forward  
in this way they traveled seventeen miles over level plains of sand  
until they saw a few antelopes in the distance and made camp beside a small stream  
everyone who was capable of exertion set out to hunt for a meal  
they returned to camp after dark famished and without success

For the third night they prepared to lie down to sleep without food  
Francis Le Clerc, wild with hunger, approached Robert Stuart  
they would all die before they could reach St. Louis  
it would be better to cast lots for one to die so the others could live  
as an added inducement Le Clerc suggested the leader of the party would be exempt  
Stuart's efforts to convince Le Clerc his horrible suggestion was unacceptable were ignored  
at last, reaching for his rifle Stuart said if Le Clerc persisted he would be shot on the spot  
Le Clerc dropped to his knees and begged forgiveness  
promising never again to make such a suggestion

Robert Stuart, exhausted by the scene, spent a sleepless night considering their desperate prospects

#### STARVING ASTORIANS ARE AGAIN UNDER WAY

Robert Stuart and his six companions set out before daylight -- October 14, 1812  
they had nothing to detain them and to linger was to starve  
faint and weak they proceeded slowly past the skulls and bones of buffalo  
that only mocked their misery  
Traveling nine miles along the plain they climbed a range of hills for two more miles  
at the crest of the hill they saw an old bull buffalo standing alone

taking great care as their lives depended on success they managed to kill the animal  
he was instantly cut up -- they were so hungry they ate the flesh raw  
they carried the remaining meat to a nearby brook, made camp, lit a fire and began to cook  
Robert Stuart was fearful they would over indulge and become sick  
he had a soup made of some of the meat to be eaten before supper  
this apparently worked -- although they sat up late into the night eating no one became ill

#### ROBERT STUART'S ASTORIANS ARE ABLE TO PROCEED

Next morning the feasting resumed -- October 15, 1812

somewhat refreshed Robert Stuart, Robert McClellan, Joseph Miller, Ben Jones, Andre Vallar  
and Francis Le Clerc set out once again toward a mountain towering to the east about midday  
they expected to see the headwaters of the Missouri River on the other side  
buffalo skeletons continued to be scatted about the plain in every direction  
they crossed an Indian trail about fifteen days old that reached north  
as they relentlessly walked toward the east in the direction of St. Louis

#### SEVEN ASTORIANS COME ACROSS AN OLD INDIAN CAMP

Robert Stuart and his men crossed a large river its banks covered with pine trees -- October 16, 1812

they found traces of a large Crow Indian camp and many buffalo bones strewn about  
(in the vicinity of today's Pinedale, Wyoming)

this camp had apparently been abandoned about a month before  
in the center was a lodge approximately 150 feet in circumference

it was supported by twenty tree trunks twenty-four feet long and twelve inches in diameter  
pine and willow branches were piled against the framework to provide shade  
at the west end of the lodge immediately opposite the door lay three bodies  
buried with their feet toward the east

at the head of each grave was a red cedar branch planted in the ground

at the foot was a large buffalo skull painted black

ornaments and a large number children's moccasins were placed about the lodge  
these were probably the bodies of noted warriors and hunters

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS SIX MEN CONTINUE BESIDE THE WIND RIVER MOUNTAINS

Seven Astorians crossed two large tributaries

whose sources were in the Wind River Mountain section of the Rocky Mountains

surrounding peaks were spectacularly high, rugged and coved in many places with snow

They saw a few buffalo bulls and some antelope but could not kill any -- October 17, 1812

their supply of provisions began to run out  
As they trudged southeast parallel to the spectacular peaks of the Wind River Mountains  
game disappeared

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS CROSS THE WIND RIVER MOUNTAINS

Seven Astorians crossed the plain south of the Wind River Mountains -- October 18, 1812  
they waded across branches of the "Spanish River" (today's Green River)  
on one occasion they climbed a river bank and met about 130 Shoshone Indians  
they were friendly and led the Astorians to their camp three miles away  
Shoshone Indian camp was made up of about forty tepees made primarily of pine branches  
these Indians were very poor and had been harassed by marauding Crow Indians  
who took most of their horses, several women and most of their property  
in spite of their poverty these natives were very friendly and welcomed the hungry strangers  
Astorians purchased a supply of buffalo meat and leather for moccasins for a few trinkets  
however, their most prized purchase was a sorry old horse -- the only one that remained  
he had cost a pistol, an axe, a knife and a few other small articles  
shifting their loads to the animal made walking easier  
Robert Stuart learned a large encampment of Crow Indians was to the east  
Stuart explained the power of the white man would soon be felt  
Shoshones could ally themselves with the whites and take revenge on the Crows and Blackfoot  
Shoshones expressed great joy for the opportunity  
Indians and whites, both forlorn, smoked to their eternal friendship and vengeance on their enemies

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN FIND AN INDIAN TRAIL TO FOLLOW

By sunrise the seven Astorians had loaded their old horse with buffalo meat for five days  
they took leave of their new friends, the poor but hospitable Shoshones -- October 19, 1812  
they began once again through the increasingly cold weather toward the snowy mountains  
here the ground was level surrounded by lofty mountains both east and west  
They traveled about three miles to the south where they reached a large Crow Indian trail  
that had been used four days before by a very large band of Indians  
since it was easy to follow and ran to the southeast the Astorians decided to follow it  
they cautiously followed the track of the Indians across mountain streams and along long ridges  
and through narrow valleys as a cold wind blew from the northeast with flurries of snow  
Robert Stuart and his men made camp early on the sheltered bank of a brook  
Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc killed a young buffalo bull in the evening  
as the wind blew snow about them the seven Astorians sat beside their campfire

and ate a hearty meal in warmth

## ROBERT STUART AND HIS PARTY CONTINUE TO CROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Snow had fallen during the night

it was late morning before they again took up their trek -- October 20, 1812

they did not travel far before the trail they followed changed direction to the north-northeast  
they abandoned the trail with some feeling of relief at leaving potentially hostile Indians behind

they traveled eighteen miles through beautiful rolling country

with the main chain of the Rocky Mountains on their left and high ridges on their right

Robert Stuart discovered a series of plains and plateaus leading across the Continental Divide

they passed over a low ridge to their right and came to a level plain about ten miles across  
encrusted with salt twelve to eighteen inches deep

they had moved from Blackfoot and Crow country to that of the Sioux Indians

Camp was made on the open prairie with nothing to use to make a fire

they wrapped themselves in their blankets to escape the biting northeast wind

that evening Robert McClellan, who had regained his strength, killed a buffalo

but it was some distance from camp so they waited until morning to collect the meat

## SEVEN ASTORIANS CONTINUE THEIR WALK ACROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

When they again took up their trek the weather was cold and snow fell -- October 21, 1812

they trudged toward the summit of a mountain that lay ahead

they again found a large Indian trail reaching a little to the right of the mountain peak

it was presumed this was another band of Crow Indians on a hunting expedition

With (winter) on the land the party was forced to stop after fifteen miles

where they found enough wood for a fire but no water was available in the vicinity

## ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN CROSS THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Once again Robert Stuart and his party were up at daybreak -- October 22, 1812

they faced the challenge of scrambling eight miles up the mountains

which provided an easy gateway through the Rocky Mountains

they suffered from thirst and cold as they moved into a broad gray defile

(it is generally believed the party crossed South Pass in Wyoming's Wind River Range

which is, in fact, the easiest route across the Continental Divide)

this experience led Robert Stuart to claim that **“a journey across the continent of North America might be performed with a wagon”**<sup>56</sup>

(indeed, South Pass was later used by wagons crossing the continent

its ascent was so gentle later travelers would have trouble locating the exact summit)

After a short rest at the summit to take in the beautiful but wild view

they began the rugged descent down the east side along deep ravines and defiles

and overhangs of crags and cliffs where bighorn sheep leaped fearlessly from rock to rock

two of these were shot to provide nourishment for the men

They passed through a low gap and reached the East side of the Rocky Mountains

(their route was later used as the route to Oregon, California and Utah between [1841] and [1869]

as more than 250,000 emigrants followed the Oregon Trail, Mormon Trail and California Trail

this route also was used by military expeditions, mountain men, hunters, trappers, Indians,

freighters, stage coaches, Pony Express riders, telegraph lines and Wyoming highway 28)

Robert Stuart and his six Astorians found a spring of water oozing out of the ground

which they fancied looked and tasted like the Missouri River

here they camped for the night and enjoyed mountain mutton

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS LEAVE THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Morning broke bright and very cold -- October 23, 1812

early in the day they came to a stream running east between low hills of blue earth

Robert Stuart supposed this was the headwaters of the Missouri River

and decided to follow its banks

After a march of twenty-six miles they arrived at the summit of a hill and he changed his mind

he saw a vast plain bounded only by the horizon with the stream wandering though it

since it ran south-south-east it could not be the Missouri River

Stuart changed his course to the east toward a range of mountains sixty miles away

now the weather was so severe and traveling so difficult Stuart decided to stop for the winter

that night they had to camp in the open near a small pool of water with no wood for a fire

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS SIX ASTORIANS CAN FIND NO CAMPSITE FOR THE WINTER

An inhospitable cold northeast wind forced the Astorians to break camp early -- October 24, 1812

for two days they traveled in an easterly direction against the bitter wind and occasional snow

lack of water forced them to drink melted snow

lack of pasture reduced their poor pack horse to skin and bones

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<sup>56</sup> Derek Hays, *Historical Atlas of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest*, P. 103

while they saw a few buffalo the wind blew in a direction that gave the animal warning  
and they ran away

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN REACH THE SWEETWATER RIVER

Astorians turned east-northeast toward a wooded ravine through a mountain -- October 26, 1812  
to their great joy they discovered an abundant stream running under willowed banks

(this was the Sweetwater River, Wyoming)

they had arrived at the headwaters of the North Platte River system  
that eventually empties into the Missouri River

Sweetwater River was followed for twenty miles until it crossed a low prairie  
which provided excellent pasture for numerous herds of buffalo

Late in the afternoon they came to where the stream became much larger  
and carved its way through a narrow ravine of red stone two hundred feet high  
this passage looked like a frightful spectacle in the gathering darkness

Here the seven Astorians halted for the night and Ben Jones luckily trapped a beaver  
they killed three buffalo cows which provided them with three savory humps

Robert Stuart decided to remain in camp the next day feasting and resting -- October 27  
their exhausted horse also earned a rest from his labors

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS ASTORIANS CONTINUE ALONG THE SWEETWATER RIVER

Part of the day the Sweetwater River's wild wanderings took the Astorians  
through a variety of scenes -- October 27, 1812

sometimes they were high on the plain with herds of buffalo around them  
other times rocky defiles broken into cliffs and sheer drops

were home to blacktail deer and bighorn sheep that basked on the sunny cliffs

During the afternoon they came upon a spectacular sight as they passed across a mountain

here the Sweetwater River roared through a deep ravine out of sight far below

masses of rock that had fallen into the river stirred the river to a foaming rampage  
as they crept along the terrifying heights they saw the river thunder down a succession  
of waterfalls throwing up clouds of spray and making a remarkable roar

they stopped to gaze in awe at the furious cataract

which Robert Stuart named "The Fiery Narrows"

(although the name has been changed several times

today it is Pathfinder Canyon in Pathfinder National Wildlife Refuge)

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS FIVE ASTORIANS DECIDE TO CAMP FOR THE WINTER

Morning dawned gloomy with showers of rain and sleet -- October 28, 1812

but Robert Stuart, Robert McClellan, Joseph Miller, Ben Jones, Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc resumed their journey in spite of the weather

after they had traveled about thirty miles along the Sweetwater River they stopped they had no idea where they were

discussions were held to determine how they should proceed

it was determined they could not continue on in this weather which promised to become worst they were still hundreds of miles away from the Missouri River their route crossed immense barren and bleak prairies with no wood for fires ahead were hostile Sioux or Cheyenne Indians or both they decided to winter as this forlorn region provided protection against attack

When they came to an excellent wintering place the decision was unanimous

there was a bend in the river just below where it exited the mountains and turned northeast this point of land was covered with cottonwood and willow trees for building and for fires moderately high mountains stood about two miles away to the east, south and southwest their cliffs offered innumerable bighorn sheep while the woods provided bear and deer there were buffalo grazing on the lower ground

(they were camped along Poison Spider Creek

about twenty-eight miles west of today's Casper, Wyoming)

#### LIFE AT ASTORIA BECAME MORE DIFFICULT WITH THE CHANGE IN SEASON

Autumn began the season of scarcity in the Pacific Northwest and lasted until (February)

to better provision Astoria a number of men were dispatched to the Willamette Valley

this river entered the Columbia River about sixty miles upriver from Astoria

here the country bordering on the river is finely diversified with prairies and hills

forests of oak, ash, maple and cedar provide habitat for elk and deer

streams entering the Willamette River were well-stocked with beaver

Failure of the supply ship *Beaver* to return with Wilson Price Hunt

caused great anxiety at Astoria during October

she may have suffered the same fate as the *Tonquin* or been wrecked along the coast

Duncan McDougall, acting commander of Astoria in Hunt's absence, became despondent

his added responsibilities and concerns destroyed his confidence and dampened his personality

Pacific Fur Company became a burden and every circumstance indicated disaster was near

#### DONALD MCKENZIE HEARS OF OTHER WHITE MEN IN THE AREA

Indians had informed McKenzie at McKenzie's Post and his second-in-command, clerk Alfred Seton

that white men were building houses at a location some two days away  
McKenzie sent Seton with four men to investigate who this could be -- end of October 1812  
food for two days was packed and the Astorians rode off to find who was rivaling them  
after a day of hard riding their guide was asked when they would reach their destination  
he told Seton the white men were three day's hard ride away  
this was discouraging news as they had food for one more meal  
it was not until three hungry days later they reached their destination and discovered the whites  
were John Clarke and his men at Fort Spokane  
who received their fellow Astorians as best they could  
Clarke reported to Seton that North West Company was not happy about having competition  
less than one hundred yards from their Spokane House post  
Alfred Seton returned to Donald McKenzie's Post to report good trapping in the area of Fort Spokane  
in spite of the very close competition with the North West Company

#### ASTOR'S SUPPLY SHIP *BEAVER* ARRIVES AT ST. PAUL ISLAND (ALASKA)

*Beaver* carried Wilson Price Hunt from New Archangel (Sitka) to St. Paul Island,  
one of five islands located in the Bering Sea, where she arrived -- October 31, 1812  
Hunt found about one hundred native hunters living in cabins that looked like upside down canoes  
these were formed from a whale jaw bone placed as rafters  
pieces of driftwood covered with long grass, large sea animal skins and dirt cover the bone  
these structures proved to be warm and comfortable  
Hunt moved into of the cabins to oversee the loading of pelts on board the *Beaver*  
this was a slow process as it was necessary to inspect every pack  
before being taken in large boats out to the ship which remained some distance from shore  
One night while Hunt and some of the crew were busy inventorying 80,000 seal skins  
Captain Cornelius Sowle and the *Beaver* were caught in a Bering Sea storm  
when daylight broke the supply ship *Beaver* could not been seen  
all day a vigil was kept but in vain  
day after day wintry storms pounded the village and the sea

#### ROBERT STUART AND FIVE OF HIS MEN GO HUNTING

Before they made camp for the winter the Astorians began gathering provisions -- November 2, 1812  
Robert Stuart, Robert McClellan Ben Jones, Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc went hunting  
leaving Robert McClellan to watch the camp  
their hunting was unusually successful -- in two days they killed thirty-two buffalo  
this meat was collected about a mile from the camp near a small brook

fortunately, a severe frost froze the river so the meat was easily carried to camp  
next day a herd of buffalo came by and more fifteen were killed

they now had enough meat for the winter and freezing weather to preserve it

only the appearance of a grizzly bear caused alarm in this idyllic setting

All of the men set to work constructing a lodge eight feet wide and eighteen feet long

walls were six feet high and the whole structure was covered with buffalo hides

a fireplace in the center emitted smoke through a hole in the roof

Hunters were next sent out to acquire deer skins for clothing and moccasins

twenty-eight bighorn sheep and black-tail deer were killed in two days

now the party had an abundance of food and supplies

Evenings were spent in the peace and quiet of winter dining on roasted, boiled and broiled meat

feasting on venison, mountain mutton, buffalo hump and bone marrow

and telling stories of past adventures waiting for (spring)

when they would float down the (Sweetwater to the North Platte to the Missouri river  
to reach St. Louis)

One morning at daybreak they were startled by a savage yell and they grabbed their rifles

two or three other voices repeated the yell

cautiously peering out of their lodge they saw several warriors all armed and in war paint

Joseph Miller informed his friends these were the same Arapaho warriors who had robbed him

preparations were made to fight it out

Robert Stuart, as the leader of the party, was selected to meet with the Indians

he stepped out of the lodge holding his rifle in one hand

he extended his other hand to the man who appeared to be the chief

both of the men shook hands in a token of friendship

The Arapaho Chief explained they were tracking a party of Crow Indians

who had attacked their village while the warriors were gone and had taken several of their women

and most of their horses

they were seeking vengeance but had had little to eat for several days

they had heard gunshots and seen the place where the deer had been killed

following the tracks they came to the lodge

Robert Stuart invited the chief and a lieutenant inside the lodge but made signs for the others to wait

twenty-three warriors gathered at the door as the two Indians entered

both the chief and his lieutenant looked longingly at the rafters where the meat hung

Stuart invited them to help themselves which they eagerly did

meat was passed outside to the others and a feast was begun that lasted into the night

after an incredibly huge meal the chief and lieutenant were invited back into the lodge

where they could be held hostage if the need arose  
night was spent comfortably although occasionally and Indians sleeping outdoor would awaken  
and indulge in another round of food  
as the Astorians took turns standing watch through the night  
In the morning Robert Stuart again invited the Indians to take what they needed with them  
on their expedition to find the Crow Indians  
the chief request gunpowder as they had none telling Stuart the whites would be rewarded  
when the Arapaho warriors returned in two weeks with many horses and scalps  
Stuart told them to bring the horses and then they would get gunpowder  
When the Arapaho war party had traveled beyond hearing distance the Astorians held a council  
their security had been breached and they faced three potential enemies:  
Arapahos, Sioux and Cheyennes

#### DONALD MCKENZIE'S POST IS A DISAPPOINTMENT

Astorian Donald McKenzie had endured an unsuccessful effort at McKenzie's Post  
where the men suffered several desertions and death due to disease  
he was heartily disgusted and disappointed with his trading post  
he had difficulty with the Nez Perce Indians  
who, being interested in horse trading and buffalo hunting,  
did not turn their attention to trapping and had limited furs to offer  
majority of his trade goods were spent acquiring horses to eat  
rather than the few furs that might be available  
also, the natives stole his goods and cut off his food supplies  
McKenzie spent most of his time grumbling about the refusal of the Nez Perce to trap  
returns were slim and he resolved to abandon the post  
When Donald McKenzie heard from Alfred Seton that trapping and trading prospects were better  
at Fort Spokane among the Spokane Indians he traveled to pay a visit to fellow his Astorians  
to evaluate the prospects at John Clarke's and Ross Cox's post

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY OUTFITS A SUPPLY SHIP FOR THE COLUMBIA RIVER

North West Company's merchant ship *Isaac Todd* under Captain Fraser Smith  
sailed from London to Canada -- fall 1812  
on board were North West Company partner Donald McTavish  
(not to be confused with John George McTavish currently en route to Astoria)  
and partner John McDonald of Garth along with six voyageurs, four clerks  
and Kanaka (Hawaiian) John Coxe returning to Astoria from London

Because of the ongoing war *Isaac Todd's* decks were refitted to accommodate twenty cannon in case she met with American ships en route

North West Company partners asked the British government for protection

arrangements were made to sail the Atlantic Ocean with a fleet of merchant vessels guarded by a convoy of Royal Navy warships

in addition, the British Admiralty agreed to provide a 36-gun frigate, H.M.S. *Phoebe* to escort the *Isaac Todd* all the way through the Pacific Ocean to the Columbia River

In an effort to keep secret the final destination of the *Isaac Todd* and *Phoebe* the British Admiralty issued sealed orders marked *Most Secret* to the *Phoebe's* Captain James Hillyar to be opened in the South Atlantic after he cleared the port of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

#### LIVING CONDITIONS ALONG THE RED RIVER BECOME INCREASINGLY HARSH

Temporary tents and cabins were constructed -- fall 1812

colonists named their settlement Ossinibonia -- but it was commonly called Red River Colony

It became apparent the second (winter) in Canada threatened to be almost as difficult as the first winter had been along the Red River

Governor Miles Macdonell found a suitable place to spend the winter south of the Pembina River here a storehouse and other buildings were put up

and the little encampment was surrounded by palisades

as a finishing touch a flagstaff was raised in the stockade, and the post was named Fort Daer in honor of one of Lord Selkirk's titles (located near today's Pembina, North Dakota)

#### ASTOR'S SUPPLY SHIP *BEAVER* SAILS TO THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

After the storm passed the badly damaged *Beaver* returned to St. Paul Island -- November 13, 1812 quickly the remainder of the cargo was loaded and the *Beaver* put out to sea

Hunt wanted to return to Astoria, but Captain Cornelius Sowle refused

Captain Sowle determined the *Beaver's* sails and rigging had been so badly damaged it would not be possible to cross the sandbar of the Columbia River to reach Astoria

Captain Sowle announced they would sail to Canton, China with the cargo of furs

however, if they sailed directly to Canton they would arrive so late in the trading season

that prices would be depressed by the flood of pelts that had arrived earlier

and the purchase of supplies for the return trip would be extremely expensive

Captain Sowle produced a letter from John Jacob Astor

giving him complete control over his ship's movement

Wilson Price Hunt considered it to be in the best the interest of the Pacific Fur Company to proceed at once to the Hawaiian Islands

where he would wait for the arrival of John Jacob Astor's annual supply vessel from New York  
and then take passage to Astoria aboard that ship

In a bargain struck between Captain Sowle and Wilson Price Hunt it was decided  
to sail the *Beaver* for Hawaii where repairs could be made

Hunt would be left there as the *Beaver* sailed on taking her valuable cargo to Canton  
Hunt could take passage on Astor's next supply ship while *Beaver* sailed for China

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY'S SUPPLY BRIGADE ARRIVES AT SALEESH HOUSE

Nor'Wester's supply brigade led by John George McTavish and Alexander Henry the Younger  
accompanied by Nor'Wester James McMillan with fifteen men, goods and supplies

paddled upstream to the foot of the Rocky Mountains and crossed Athabasca Pass  
they canoed down the Columbia to Kettle Falls

as they brought trade goods for the North West Company posts

(in present-day western Montana, northern Idaho and Eastern Washington)

at Kettle Falls they switched their cargo to ten horses for the last leg of their journey

traveling to Kootanae House on the Kootenay River

and Saleesh House on the Clark Fork River

Finan McDonald and James McMillan remained at Saleesh House

John George McTavish's brigade also carried the news of war

between the United States and Great Britain

after departing from Saleesh House Nor'Wester John George McTavish

led his fifteen men of the North West Company supply brigade on to Spokane House

where he had previously had been stationed

#### DONALD MCKENZIE LEARNS OF WAR BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE U.S.

Donald McKenzie set out from McKenzie's Post on the Clearwater River for Fort Spokane

he left clerk Alfred Seton in charge of the post and the trappers in the area

He reached Fort Spokane -- November 17, 1812

he discovered that during his six months absence Spokane House was nearly completed

in spite of the fact that North West Company's Spokane House was only one hundred yards distant

McKenzie was favorably impressed

As McKenzie was admiring the development of Fort Spokane when the North West Company's

annual supply brigade under John George McTavish and Alexander Henry the Younger

arrived at the Nor'Westers' Spokane House

#### JOHN GEORGE MCTAVISH DELIVERS NEWS OF WAR BETWEEN THE U.S. AND BRITAIN

McTavish quickly and happily crossed the short distance to Pacific Fur Company's Fort Spokane to share the news that war had been declared on Great Britain by the United States with his competitors Donald Mackenzie and John Clarke at Fort Spokane

McTavish produced a copy of President James Madison's proclamation of war that had been delivered to McTavish at Lake Winnipeg by the North West Company partners

McTavish also informed the Astorians that a North West Company supply ship was due to arrive at the mouth of the Columbia [in the spring] escorted by a Royal Navy warship

this war ship was also bringing a new North West Company governor

John George McTavish further informed the Astorians at Fort Spokane

this was only a vanguard with other British warships to follow

Astoria was to be eliminated from the Pacific Northwest

McTavish further warned the Astorians that French-Canadians trading under the American flag would find themselves in difficulty with British authorities

Donald Mackenzie and John Clarke realized that the residents of Astoria must be informed

they decided the most sensible course of action would be for McKenzie

to return to the Clearwater River and close his trading post before traveling downriver to Astoria with his men

with the urgency of the news of the war on his mind, Donald McKenzie left John Clarke at Fort Spokane while he rushed back to the Clearwater River post

#### CONDITIONS AT MACKENZIE'S PORT ON THE CLEARWATER RIVER ARE DIFFICULT

Several parties that had been sent out to trap returned to the post extremely cold and hungry

fearful that all of the Pacific Fur Company trapping parties could be suffering

Alfred Seton, then in charge of McKenzie's Post, sent for Donald McKenzie

#### WALLACE HOUSE IS CONSTRUCTED ALONG THE WILLMATTE RIVER (OREGON)

Astorian William Wallace established Wallace House to conduct trade in the Willamette Valley

on edge of Champoeg (opposite Newberg, Oregon) -- November 23, 1812

Wallace House served as the wintering place for part of the expedition

and became the headquarters for several trappers in the Willamette Valley

William Wallace brought out seventeen packs of furs

and thirty-two bales of dried venison to help sustain the residents of Astoria

#### SUCCESSFUL PACIFIC FUR COMPANY OUTPOSTS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED

William Wallace had established a trading post along the Willamette Valley at Champoeg (Oregon)

Both John Clarke at Fort Spokane and Alexander Ross at Fort Okanogan

along with their clerks and assistants had succeeded admirably  
in establishing branch stations for John Jacob Astor  
David Stuart had enjoyed success in the Thompson River (Kamloops) region  
he sent some of his company back to the mouth of the Columbia River  
but he himself wintered at Okanogan

Donald McKenzie's Post had been less successful as he was not able to establish a permanent post  
along the Clearwater River

#### DONALD MCKENZIE CLOSES HIS POST ON THE CLEARWATER RIVER

McKenzie made the three-day ride from Fort Spokane to McKenzie's Post on the Clearwater River  
to prepare to lead his employees back to Astoria -- November 25, 1812  
Donald McKenzie gathered his clerks together at his post along the Clearwater River  
he informed Alfred Seton, John Reed and John Coxe and his men of the war that was in progress  
McKenzie had already decided to return to Astoria with his men  
remaining trade goods from his post would be delivered to John Clarke at Fort Spokane  
who could make better use of them as they were in good beaver country  
McKenzie set out for Fort Astoria in the rain

#### TWO ASTORIANS JOIN A BUFFALO HUNT

Buffalo hunting Shoshone Indians on their incursions into Blackfoot country  
were sometimes accompanied by fur traders  
this caused frequent skirmishes and brought Americans and French-Canadians  
further into natives' conflict with the Blackfoot Indians  
Astorians Ross Cox and Russell Farnham set out from Spokane House to hunt buffalo  
in the upper Missouri River region -- November or December 1812

#### ALFRED SETON CARRIES SURPLUS MCKENZIE POST SUPPLIES TO FORT SPOKANE

Seton with three men and thirteen horses loaded with supplies from McKenzie's Post  
he set out with provisions for ten days of travel -- early December 1812  
on the first day out it began to snow but they pushed on until they were forced to stop  
camp was made on a mountaintop where they made a temporary shelter out of two blankets  
in an effort to keep the snow off

#### DONALD MCKENZIE BECOMES CONCERNED ABOUT SETON AND HIS MEN

McKenzie suspected the snow had detained Alfred Seton and his men on their way to Fort Spokane

he backtracked and reached Alfred Steton's makeshift camp with the supplies  
but the animals were too weak from lack of pasture to continue to Fort Spokane  
Together Donald McKenzie and Alfred Seton set out together back to McKenzie's Clearwater post  
after a walk of thirty miles in two feet of snow they reached the post an hour before sunset  
Next morning forty fresh horses were taken to the makeshift camp, the horses were loaded  
and the supplies were returned to McKenzie's Post  
Delivering the supplies to Fort Spokane would delay the return of McKenzie and his men to Astoria  
it was decided to lightly load some of the horses with McKenzie Post supplies  
but it would be necessary to cache the remainder along the Clearwater River  
Donald McKenzie set out down the Columbia River with John Reed and Alfred Seton  
to deliver news of the war to Fort Astoria  
cold weather and a raw wind made travel down the Columbia harsh  
every drop of water they encountered was icy  
low water in the river made the current very strong and the icy rapids very dangerous

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN SADLY SAID GOOD-BYE TO THEIR CAMP

Stuart and his six Astorians decided to leave their (Poison Spider Creek) winter camp  
as the appearance of the Arapaho way party presented too much of a danger to remain there  
they again took up their eastward trek following (today's North Platte River) -- December 13, 1812  
toward its confluence with the Missouri River  
if they could not get that far at least they could reach a part of the river  
where canoes could be built  
Travel was difficult as the snow was covered by a thin layer of frost not able to hold their weight  
their feet became sore breaking through the crust and their legs exhausted by the lack of a foothold  
their horse suffered the same hazards walking  
and had only the tips of willow twigs and cottonwood tree bark to eat  
for the first three days the memory of their warm and comfortable camp increased their fatigue  
Stuart's small party of Astorians grew stronger as they pressed on making 330 miles in fourteen days  
during this time the weather varied -- sometimes the snow was deep  
for a day or two it felt like a mild and tranquil (autumn) had set in  
then the river froze so solid they could walk on the surface

#### ROBERT STUART SEES THE COUNTRY AROUND HIM CHANGE

As Robert Stuart, Ramsay Crooks, Robert McClellan, Joseph Miller, Ben Jones, Andre Vallar  
and Francis Le Clerc traveled they noted the timber gradually diminished -- December 26, 1812  
there was scarcely enough wood for fuel for their fire and game became scarce

snow was fifteen inches deep and progress was extremely painful  
They reached a vast plain with no timber to be seen and not even the sign of an animal  
they stopped to consider their situation  
to continue to follow the (North Platte) river in this country was extremely dangerous  
weather was threatening to change and a large snowstorm could be fatal  
they had passed a sheltered place surrounded by forest populated by animals  
but it was seventy-five miles behind them  
they voted five to two to return to the sheltered place back up the (North Platte) river

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN DECIDE TO BACKTRACK

Seven Astorians retraced their steps seventy-five miles in intense cold  
to make winter camp -- December 27, 1812  
three days later a thick forest of cottonwood trees and herds of buffalo were their reward  
They made a second winter camp along Muddy Creek (near today's Torrington, Wyoming)  
where there was **"...a sheltering growth of forest trees and a county abundant in game."**<sup>57</sup>  
several animals were killed, they put up a shed and began to build a lodge  
here there were trees large enough to make canoes

#### ALEXANDER ROSS SPENDS A SECOND WINTER AT FORT OKANOGAN

Ross had spent the previous winter [1811-1812] in solitude at Fort Okanogan  
now he spent the winter of 1812-1813 in the company of five men  
who trapped in the area between Fort Okanogan and Fort Spokane  
these six Astorians trapped and traded with the local Indians  
and into the interior as far north as the Thompson River (today's Kamloops, B.C.)

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT REMAINS IN THE SANDWICH ISLAND (HAWAII)

Astor's supply ship *Beaver* under Captain Cornelius Sowle received repairs to her rigging and sails  
after a stay of seven weeks she sailed from (Oahu, Hawaii) for Canton, China -- January 1, 1813  
Hunt remained on Oahu to await the arrival of John Jacob Astor's annual supply ship  
to deliver him to the Pacific Fur Company post of Astoria  
Astor's next supply vessel was to have sailed from New York City [September 1812]  
however wartime delays kept her in port  
(Hunt's stay was far longer in Hawaii than he had anticipated  
month after month he looked for the arrival of the supply ship -- always in vain

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<sup>57</sup> Robert Stuart's Journal

leaving his Pacific Fur Company companions at Astoria concerned and fearful had Hunt followed Astor's orders the *Beaver* would have delivered him to the post, taken on the cargo of furs and delivered them in Canton, China along with the Russian furs (huge profits would have been the reward for everyone involved in the enterprise)

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS SIX ASTORIANS CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR

Work in the winter camp along Muddy Creek (today's Torrington, Wyoming) was suspended while the day was given to feasting -- January 1, 1813

choice buffalo hump and tongues were roasted and marrow bones were devoured having no tobacco they cut up Joseph Miller's old tobacco pouch and smoked it in honor of the day

Work was again taken up -- January 2, 1813

soon an abundance of buffalo were killed winter passed without any visitors, hostile or friendly, and game remained plentiful two large cottonwood trees were felled and shaped into canoes to carry them to St. Louis

#### ASTORIA WAS IN A CONSIDERABLY WEAKENED CONDITION

Since the sailing of *Beaver* with Pacific Fur Company Commander Wilson Price Hunt [August 1812] nothing had been heard although the ship was due back at Astoria [fall 1812]

(months of September, October, November and December had passed apprehension regarding the fate of the ship now began to plague the Astorians perhaps the *Beaver* had been wrecked along the Pacific coast or surprised like the *Tonquin* no one was more concerned than acting commander of Astoria Duncan McDougall whose confidence gave way to despondency regarding the future of their enterprise

To increase McDougall's concerns

Indians had raised their prices outrageously making trade very difficult to conduct Astor's partners Alexander Ross, John Clarke, Robert Stuart and David Stuart were in the interior Astor had provided for an annual supply ship but it was late in arriving and the crisis at the fort had depleted stocks to well below normal levels

#### HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AND NORTH WEST COMPANY STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

Metis (mixed-blood) workers for both the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company were employed as free traders or buffalo hunters supplying pemmican for the fur traders

Metis workers reacted violently to the agricultural invasion of the Red River district they feared losing their land since they were "squatters" and did not hold legal title although they had long occupied the region

Hudson's Bay Company wanted to stop the Metis from selling pemmican to the North West Company  
Red River Colony Governor Miles Macdonnell imposed a law  
to stop the sale of pemmican -- January 1813  
Metis leader Cuthbert Grant and his followers ignored the new law  
which led to constant conflict between the Metis and the Red River Colony settlers

#### ASTOR'S SUPPLY SHIP *BEAVER* ARRIVES SAFELY AT CANTON, CHINA

In China, Captain Cornelius Sowle learned of the War of 1812  
Captain Sowle also found a letter from John Jacob Astor waiting for him -- 1813  
directing the captain to deliver new instructions to Astoria  
Captain Sowle wrote a reply in which he refused the orders  
he said he would wait in Canton until peace had been arranged between the U.S. and Britain  
then he would sail to New York City  
Captain Sowle was offered \$150,000 for the Russian furs he had taken on board at St. Paul Island  
trade items provided to the Russians cost about \$25,000 in New York  
Sowle could have taken the money and purchased Chinese goods for sale in New York  
if he was concern about being intercepted by the British Navy  
he could have placed his Chinese cargo in storage and returned to Astoria without difficulty  
there he could report the success of selling the Russian furs  
and the prospect of even greater returns with the sale of American pelts  
instead Captain Sowle refused the offer of \$150,000 and demanded higher terms  
furs began to fall in value as new supplies reached Canton which only stiffed Sowle's resolve  
soon the price fell so low that Sowle could not sell at all  
he had borrowed money at 18% interest on Astor's account to repair his ship  
and kept the ship in port while waiting for peace  
expenses had outstripped potential income possibilities  
(*Beaver* remained in hiding in Canton he until the war was over)

#### WAR OF 1812 U.S. WAS NOT GOING WELL FOR THE AMERICANS

American losses are high in (present-day) Michigan at the Battle of Frenchtown -- January 1813  
American who survived the battle were killed by Indians the next day in the Raisin River Massacre  
(more Americans were killed in this fighting than any other battle of the War of 1812)  
Two weeks after the battle, Brigadier General James Winchester reported that 547 of his men  
were taken as prisoners-- only thirty-three escaped the battlefield

#### DONALD McKENZIE UNEXPECTEDLY ARRIVES AT ASTORIA WITH NEWS OF WAR

Donald McKenzie shocked Astorians when he unexpectedly returned to Astoria -- January 16, 1813  
McKenzie brought news of the declaration of war on Britain by the United States [in June 1812]  
that had been carried by Nor'Wester John George McTavish to John Clarke's Fort Spokane  
McTavish also said there was talk of an impending British naval invasion  
in addition McKenzie said John George McTavish was at this moment on his way to Astoria  
this information immediately cast doubt on John Jacob Astor's ability  
to send the yearly supply of provisions and trade goods necessary for continuing operations  
Donald McKenzie was disappointed to discover Wilson Price Hunt was absent  
he had boarded the supply ship *Beaver* and gone to meet with the Russians in New Archangel  
no news had been received concerning the *Beaver* or her passengers and crew  
this caused grave concern as the ship had been due to return to Astoria [in the fall]

#### DUNCAN McDOUGALL AND DONALD McKENZIE DECIDE TO ABANDON ASTORIA

Pacific Fur Company's working agreement called for a formal partners' meeting to abandon their posts  
and dissolve the enterprise if it proved to be unprofitable for five years  
Duncan McDougall and Donald McKenzie were all that remained of Astor's partners  
all of the others had either resigned or were in the interior on expeditions  
Donald McKenzie, who had been demoted from Pacific Fur Company co-commander,  
continued to bear several real and imagined grudges against John Jacob Astor  
and the other partners for his loss of power and prestige to Wilson Price Hunt  
Astor's two partners knew that a state of war made resupplying Astoria difficult if not impossible  
without fresh supplies and trade goods no trade could be conducted  
also, if Astor had failed to send them a relief ship there could be no escape by sea  
Commander Duncan McDougall suggested the future fur trading prospects were in doubt  
both of John Jacob Astor's partners believed Astoria should be abandoned  
portable property should be removed to the interior before the British ships arrived  
Pacific Fur Company partners, clerks and voyageurs must return across the Rocky Mountains  
plans were laid to cross overland to St. Louis with the journey to begin [July 1, 1813]  
(because of Donald McKenzie's previous overland ordeal with Wilson Price Hunt  
this decision suggests desperate sincerity rather than treachery)  
McDougall and McKenzie decided to keep the plan to abandon Astoria secret from their men  
for fear their employees would become lazy and belligerent  
Commander McDougall and McKenzie suspended all trade with the natives except for provisions  
they already had more pelts than they could carry away and needed all of their trade goods  
to barter for horses, clothing and food for their people when they crossed the continent  
Donald McKenzie began preparations to travel to David Stuart's Fort Okanogan

and John Clarke's Fort Spokane to inform them of the decision to end the Pacific Fur Company

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR HAD NOT FORSAKEN HIS POST ALONG THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Actually the merchant was playing every angle he could

Astor advised the United States government concerning the progress of his business at Astoria he pointed out that even the slightest military support would hold the post against any British attack by sea

Astor wrote a letter to Wilson Price Hunt the head of the Pacific Fur Company -- if it existed he warned Hunt to be on his guard against any attempt of surprise attack from the British or the Canadian North West Company

John Jacob Astor made every effort to supply his Columbia River post

John Jacob Astor had attempted to dispatch his annual supply ship

but because of delays caused by the war she did not put to sea from New York when Astor was unable to secure an escort vessel from the American government to defend his supply vessel from British seizure

he sent to his agents in London £12,000 to buy and outfit the British brig *Forester* and sail her to the Northwest under British colors chaos in England's war-harassed ports delayed the *Forester*

Astor took the bold step of outfitting the 300-ton *Lark* in New York City -- March 1813

*Lark*, a ship known for its speed, made ready to sail but at the last moment her captain refused the assignment and the ship was placed under former first mate Samuel Northrup Nicholas G. Ogden, a well trusted Astor employee, sailed as supercargo (the person placed in charge of trade goods and conducting trade)

Astor finally sprang his annual supply ship through the British blockade -- March 6, 1813 by means of a sailing permit the Russian consul obtained from the English admiralty on the pretext that the *Lark* was going to Russian-America (Alaska)

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS SIX TRAVELING COMPANIONS BECOME WATERBORNE

Robert Stuart's expedition across the continent had been forced to spend (winter) along Muddy Creek where that stream entered the North Platte River (near today's Torrington, Wyoming)

When the ice on the North Platte River broke up -- March 8, 1813

Robert Stuart, Ramsay Crooks, Robert McClellan, Joseph Miller, Ben Jones, Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc launched their two canoes in an effort to deliver dispatches to St. Louis before Robert Stuart would continue to New York City and meet with John Jacob Astor

They soon discovered the island-filled river was too shallow for their vessels progress was difficult as they waded and dragged their canoe over sandbars and islands

at last the effort was abandoned and they were again on foot aided by their faithful packhorse  
Stuart correctly guessed they were on the North Platte River  
they followed a more southerly route than that taken by Lewis and Clark  
Inclement weather again forced a stop

#### DONALD McKENZIE SETS OUT FROM ASTORIA BACK UP THE COLUMBIA RIVER

With the decision to abandon Astoria made, several items of business needed to be addressed  
it was necessary to close Fort Okanogan and Fort Spokane and retrieve the cache of goods  
that were not taken to Spokane House from McKenzie's Post  
it also was necessary purchase horses and provisions for the caravan back across the Rockies  
Donald McKenzie set off for his abandoned post on the Clearwater River  
he was accompanied by two of the clerks, John Reed and Alfred Seton, and seventeen men  
McKenzie carried dispatches from Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall  
to David Stuart at Fort Okanogan and John Clarke at Fort Spokane informing them  
of the intentions to close Astoria and giving them time to make preparations of their own  
they were to close their posts and barter for horses to be used to carry  
all of the portable assets of the Pacific Fur Company to St. Louis  
McKenzie and his men traveled in two canoes without any incident  
until they arrived in the neighborhood of the always difficult Columbia River Dalles rapids  
after they stopped for a small lunch they portaged around the long narrows  
when the portage was completed they faced a long evening that required watchfulness  
as they anticipated approaching the short narrows

#### ANOTHER INCIDENT AT THE WISHRAM INDIAN VILLAGE

Across the Columbia River from where Donald McKenzie and his men made camp  
was a village of the Wishram Indians whose bad reputation was widely acknowledged  
they previously had attacked John Reed and stolen his shiny tin box of dispatches  
Reed's rifle was still retained by the villagers as a trophy  
Donald McKenzie suggested to his men that if anyone would accompany him  
he would cross the river and demand the return of Reed's rifle  
two volunteers, clerk Alfred Seton and cook Joe de la Pierre stepped forward  
These three men soon crossed to the southern bank of the Columbia River  
landing, they primed their pistols and rifles  
they followed a path from the river for one hundred yards  
as it wound among the rocks and crags to the village  
no notice seemed to be taken of their approach -- even the village dogs were silent

When the three Astorians entered the village a boy made his appearance  
silently he pointed to the largest house in the village  
as they entered the lodge the three Astorians had to stoop to pass through the low opening  
when they crossed the threshold, the narrow passage behind them  
was filled by a sudden rush of Indians who had kept out of sight  
McKenzie and his two companions were in a twenty-five by twenty-foot room  
there was a bright fire on side of the room and nearby sat the sixty-year-old Wisham chief  
one glance around the room revealed the dangerous assembly into which they had intruded  
Indians in large numbers wrapped in buffalo robes sat in rows three deep  
forming a semicircle around three sides of the room  
all retreat was cut off by the crowd of natives which now blocked the entrance  
Wishram chief pointed to the vacant end of the room opposite to the door  
he motioned for the white men to sit there -- all three Astorians complied  
there was a deadly silence as grim warriors sat like statues each in his robe watching the intruders  
who felt they were in a perilous predicament  
McKenzie said to his companions: **“Keep your eyes on the chief while I am addressing him.  
Should he give any sign to his band, shoot him, and make for the door.”**<sup>58</sup>  
McKenzie moved toward the chief and offered a tobacco pipe but it was refused  
McKenzie told the Indians of the reason for their visit  
he proposed to exchange two blankets, an axe, some beads and tobacco for the rifle  
when the Wishram chief responded his voice which was quiet at first  
became increasingly loud and violent as he worked himself into a furious rage  
matters were verging on a crisis as it became evident the warriors  
were only waiting for a signal from their chief before springing on their prey  
during the speech McKenzie and his two companions had gradually raised their rifles  
resting the gun barrels in their left hand  
McKenzie’s muzzle was within three feet of the speaker’s heart  
Astorians cocked their rifles and the sound of hammers being drawn back gave the natives pause  
Donald McKenzie, Alfred Seton and Joe de la Pierre casually but promptly  
made their way to the door of the lodge and the Indians fell back and allowed them to pass  
Cautiously they walked back to their canoe, crossed the Columbia River and safely returned to camp  
they decided the stolen weapon was not worth a second visit

## DONALD McKENZIE MEETS NOR’WESTER JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH

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<sup>58</sup> Washington Irving, *Astoria*, P. 403.

Donald McKenzie with clerks Alfred Seton and John Reed and seventeen men broke camp they resumed their struggle up the Columbia River on their way to Astor's interior posts to retrieve the trade goods cached there

Some distance above Celilo Falls they saw two bark canoes merrily sweeping down the river carrying fifteen white men and flying the British flag

French-Canadian voyageurs, as usual, were boisterously singing as they paddled these canoes belonged to Nor'Wester John George McTavish who was commander of the seventy-five North West Company employees employed at Spokane House bound for the mouth of the Columbia River to await the arrival of their supply ship and its British Naval escort

both Pacific Fur Company and North West Company voyageurs greeted each other as comrades rather than as employees of rival trading companies whose countries were at war

Both the Astorians and the Nor'Westers made camp together that night

#### DONALD McKENZIE AND JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS

After breaking camp in the morning

Astorian Donald McKenzie resumed his difficult effort up the Columbia to the interior posts to deliver Commander Duncan McDougall's dispatches to forts Okanogan and Spokane, retrieve the caches and begin negotiations for horses with which to exit the country

Nor'Wester John George McTavish continued his leisurely trip down the Columbia River to its mouth where they would await the arrival of the North West Company ship and her British Navy escort

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR HAS REASON TO WORRY ABOUT HIS PACIFIC FUR COMPANY

Astor received information justifying all of his concerns regarding British hostility -- March 20, 1813 North West Company had written a second memorial to the British government expressing fears that if the establishment at Astoria was not crushed

North West Company could be driven from the Pacific Northwest

this was of great concern to Astor as a large portion of his employees in the Pacific Northwest were Scotsmen and French-Canadians -- several of whom had worked for North West Company in fact, the partner in charge of the *Tonquin* expedition was Duncan McDougall

whose loyalty to the Pacific Fur Company had been attacked by Captain Jonathan Thorn there was even a possibility the British government would send a military force as this had previously been requested by the North West Company

Astor wrote to United States Secretary of State James Monroe but had heard no response probably because the U.S. government was actively engaged in war

## ROBERT STUART AND HIS MEN AGAIN TAKE UP THEIR TRAVELS TO ST. LOUIS

After being stopped in their journey to St. Louis by inclement weather

Robert Stuart and his six Astorians set out once again down the North Platte River  
traveling in two newly constructed canoes -- March 20, 1813

## NORTH WEST COMPANY SENDS A MERCHANT SHIP TO THE PACIFIC COAST

North West Company outfitted the *Isaac Todd* at Portsmouth, Ontario to travel to the Columbia River  
carrying supplies and trade goods to its Columbia Department trading posts -- March 25, 1813  
also aboard were North West Company partners Donald McTavish and John McDonald of Garth  
along with six voyageurs, four clerks and Kanaka (Hawaiian) John Coxe  
who was returning from Astoria from London

## ROBERT STUART PARTY LEAVES THEIR CANOES AND SET OUT OVERLAND

Continual difficulties with the canoes forced the seven Astorians to abandon their canoes  
they took up their eastward journey to St. Louis on foot -- March 27, 1813

Spring weather had brought pasture and the land was teeming with game

buffalo dung replaced wood as fuel for campfires to ward off the cold of the nights

three buffalo were killed one evening simply for their hides to make a shelter

Continuing on over the days they crossed one hundred miles of prairie without trees

they saw sixty-five wild horses -- buffalo seemed to cover the country

wild geese abounded and a swamp was home to immense flocks of ducks and a few swans

They found the sameness of the landscape became dreary and tiresome

(famous sights that would later mark the Oregon Trail were passed during this time:

Devil's Gate, Independence Rock, Upper Platte Canyon, Scotts Bluff, Chimney Rock,  
Courthouse Rock and Jailhouse Rock)

they longed to see a forest, grove or even a single tree

they began to focus on signs they were nearing the end of the wilderness

bunches of grass or driftwood with axe marks were seen as positive signs

still, the hoped-for Missouri River eluded them

They found a Pawnee Indian hut that held three old women too sick to accompany their people  
who had gone south to hunt buffalo -- otherwise the country was completely deserted

Continuing on, Robert Stuart, Ramsay Crooks, Robert McClellan, Joseph Miller, Ben Jones,  
Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc passed from the North Platte River to the Platte River

## LORD SELKIRK'S COLONISTS MOVE BACK TO THE RED RIVER

Governor Miles Macdonell moved his colonists back to the Red River  
after spending the (winter) at Fort Daer -- spring 1813

As the season advanced solid structures were constructed on this site

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's Hudson's Bay Company settlement  
became known as Red River Colony

attempts were made to farm but the only agricultural implement colonists brought was a hoe  
they tried fishing by the river produced an inadequate catch  
even the bushes failed to produce fruit -- they resorted to using weeds as food

#### HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AND NORTH WEST COMPANY CONFLICTS ESCALATE

When Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company trappers and traders invaded the same area  
they fought a series of battles in an attempt to control the region

As the competition heightened bloody incidents increased in frequency and intensity

especially in the vicinity of the Red River Colony owned by Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk  
whose claim comprised parts of (today's Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Northern Minnesota  
and North Dakota)

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS PARTY SEE THEIR FIRST SIGN OF CIVILIZATION

Stuart's six men recognized their first landmark, an island about seventy miles long -- April 6, 1813  
this they assumed was Grand Island which meant they were 140 miles from the Missouri River  
Three days later they met an Otto Indian who confirmed their location -- April 9

#### NOR'WESTER JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH ARRIVES AT ASTORIA

John George McTavish paddling down the Columbia River from Spokane House  
arrived at Astoria with fourteen voyageurs -- April 11, 1813

John George McTavish met with the Pacific Fur Company Commander Duncan McDougall  
and told him of the expected North West Company supply ship and British Royal Navy escort

John Jacob Astor's partner at Astoria decided to wait behind his fortified walls to see what developed

#### THERE SEEMED LITTLE CAUSE FOR ALARM AT FORT ASTORIA

Relations between the Astorians and the Nor'Westers were so friendly  
that the Nor'Westers were invited by their fellow French-Canadians at Astoria  
to participate in the post's annual birthday celebration -- April 12, 1813

John George McTavish and his North West Company employees enjoyed the good food and liquor  
which made for a festive time

John George McTavish proceeded down the Columbia River to its mouth

to make his camp at Baker Bay below Astoria  
there he would await the approach of the North West Company supply ship  
and her British Royal Navy escort  
which he expected to arrive within a few weeks to seize the American post  
in truth, the immediate future of Nor'Wester John George McTavish and his camp was in doubt  
they had only a slim store of provisions and their situation was uncertain  
both of the North West Company ships were long overdue which raised doubts  
perhaps something had happened to them -- or perhaps the whole story was a bluff  
But more than Astoria was a risk as the Columbia River itself was the great prize  
American Captain Robert Gray had won it after British navigators had given it up [1792]  
Nor'Wester David Thompson had explored the full length from source to mouth [1811]  
but he found the Astorians' post had been constructed and they controlled the river's commerce  
British claims to the Columbia Department centered on David Thompson's trading posts  
to the north of Columbia and Spokane rivers

#### ROBERT STUART'S PARTY LEARN OF THE WAR BETWEEN THE U.S. AND BRITAIN

Robert Stuart and his six Astorians were guided to an Otto Indian village  
(located at present-day Yutan, Nebraska)  
There they met two white trappers (who had arrived three days before) -- April 13, 1813  
Baptiste Dorouin and Francois Roi were the first white men they had encountered  
since setting out from Caldron Linn [September 1, 1812]  
Stuart and his men first learned of the outbreak of the War of 1812  
Two days were spent with questions regarding national affairs and especially the war  
during this time the fur traders employed Indians to make a canoe frame  
twenty feet long, four feet wide and eighteen inches deep to be covered with buffalo hide  
Stuart left their faithful horse with Dorion  
who gave the Astorians enough supplies to reach Fort Osage, Missouri on the Missouri River

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS PARTY ARE AGAIN WATERBORNE EN ROUTE TO ST. LOUIS

Entering their buffalo hide canoe they again drifted down the Platte River -- April 16, 1813  
they had traveled about ten miles when a high wind forced them to camp  
here they set about making oars  
Continuing merrily down the river the next day -- April 17  
they traveled for thirty-five miles then merged into the Missouri River  
whose current carried them briskly downriver  
After a couple of hundred miles the frame of their canoe began to show the effect of the voyage

they found two wooded canoes left behind by some hunting party and took the larger  
after another fifty-five miles they arrived at Fort Osage (today' Sibley, Missouri)  
where Wilson Price Hunt's expedition had begun their journey eighteen month before  
Robert Stuart and his travel companions remained at Fort Osage for two days  
resting and waiting for the weather to clear  
it was noted after their return to civilization that the luxury the seven Astorians most missed  
was bread -- they had eaten none in over a year

#### COMPANY BATTLES ESCALATE INTO COMPANY WARS

Competition between the North West Fur Company and Hudson's Bay Company  
exploded beyond all bounds of reason or sanity  
bloodshed, debauchery of the Indians and a frantic stripping of the country  
of every possible fur-bearing animal became integral parts of the struggle for supremacy  
Although the Columbia Department lay far from the actual conflict around the Red River Colony  
repercussions inevitably reached across the Rocky Mountains  
as the discipline of the trappers and traders crumbled  
Warfare kept the best North West Company voyageurs east of the Continental Divide  
in their place Iroquois and Abenaki Indians from the St. Lawrence River region  
were used in the Columbia Department  
undependable at best, these untrustworthy, explosive Eastern Indians  
harassed their Western Indian counterparts  
wanton pillaging and horse thievery so inflamed the Willamette and Cowlitz Indians  
that both of these fur-rich valleys had to be written off the books  
as potential fur grounds for the next few seasons

#### ROBERT STUART AND HIS PARTY REACH ST. LOUIS

After incredible hardships Astorians Robert Stuart, Robert McClellan, Ramsay Crooks, Ben Jones,  
Andre Vallar and Francis Le Clerc arrived at St. Louis in good health -- April 30, 1813  
they had been joined late in their travels by trappers Baptiste Dorouin and Francois Roi  
Their return caused quite a sensation in the town as they delivered the first news  
of Wilson Price Hunt and his expedition  
and of the establishment of Astoria, Fort Okanogan and trading operations in Oregon  
Efforts to absorb the changes that had taken place in the United States during their three year absence  
took them from houses to stores and taverns as they gather information regarding the war  
they learned the Upper Great Lakes had fallen into British hands  
and Indians there had joined the British cause against the Americans

Native Americans from as far away as the Missouri River were flocking to the British  
Robert Stuart's Astorians had traversed 3,700 miles in 306 days  
their route through (Idaho), (Wyoming) and (Nebraska) was almost precisely the path  
later followed by the (Oregon Trail)

Robert Stuart wrote an account of the journey from Astoria to St. Louis: *Journal of a voyage across the  
Continent of North America from Astoria The pacific Fur Company principal Establishment on the  
Columbia To the City of New York kept by Robert Stuart* [sic]

in his rendition Robert Stuart identified sites for future Pacific Fur Company trading posts  
in this literary effort, young Stuart traced the route which, with some modifications,  
would later become famous as the Oregon Trail  
(Accounts of Robert Stuart's exploits and those of the *Tonquin*  
were written by American author Washington Irving in *Astoria* published [1836])

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR HAD HEARD NO WORD FROM HIS PACIFIC FUR COMPANY

Although Astor was a great businessman and not easily discouraged  
the dangers faced by his enterprise slowly eroded his spirits and confidence  
he was gloomily sitting by a window at his home reflecting on the loss of the *Tonquin*  
and the sad fate of her unfortunate crew fearing the overland expedition had met a similar fate  
he received the evening newspaper and saw a paragraph that announced the arrival  
of Robert Stuart and his party at St. Louis  
they had carried the news that Wilson Price Hunt and his companions  
had reached the mouth of the Columbia River

#### DUNCAN McDOUGALL FINALIZES PLANS TO CLOSE THE PACIFIC FUR COMPANY

Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall did not plan to defend Astoria against a North West Company  
he saw no reason to treat his fellow Scotsmen with anything other than decent hospitality  
McDougall announced to everyone that Astoria would close [July 1, 1813] -- May 21, 1813  
McDougall busied himself with preparations to cross overland to St. Louis  
McDougall's decision cast no small amount of doubt on his loyalty to the Pacific Fur Company  
his old relationship with the North West Company seemed to have resurfaced  
he had been very hospitable North West Company commander John George McTavish  
as if he was a friend rather than a competing company employee come to reconnoiter  
and to wait for the arrival of a hostile ship  
had Duncan McDougall given the word, the Chinook Indians would have driven off the rivals  
but instead McDougall supplied the Nor'Westers from the stores in Astoria  
and treated them as friends -- thus they were accepted as such by the Chinooks

#### DONALD McKENZIE AND HIS MEN ARRIVE AT McKENZIE'S POST ON THE CLEARWATER

McKenzie, Alfred Seton and John Reed and seventeen men in two canoes hastened up the Columbia until they reached the abandoned post on the Clearwater River

to begin work to retrieve their caches and to start bartering for the three or four hundred horses that would be necessary for transporting the huge cavalcade to St. Louis

McKenzie's return to the deserted post was very distressing

he discovered, to his chagrin, that his caches had been found and rifled

in fact, he was dependent on the now stolen goods for the purchase horses from the Indians

McKenzie sent men out in all directions to locate the thieves

Nez Perce villagers, who the whites assumed were guilty, denied the thefts

Not believing the Nez Perce, McKenzie took reckless action

he and John Reed stalked angrily from tepee to tepee

they slashed open potential hiding places with their daggers

completely surprised by the Astorians' arrogance the Indians promised

to produce the stolen articles if the whites would stop their destruction

McKenzie gave in (although only a portion of the goods were returned)

this did nothing to enhance the Pacific Fur Company's relations with the Indians

#### JOHN REED WAS SENT BY DONALD McKENZIE TO THE OTHER INTERIOR POSTS

McKenzie sent far-wandering John Reed to deliver dispatches from Commander Duncan McDougall to David Stuart at Fort Okanogan and John Clarke at Fort Spokane

stating his intention to close Astoria and return to the United States

David Stuart and John Clarke were to close their posts and barter for horses

to carry all of the Pacific Fur Company's portable assets to St. Louis

McDougall ordered them to rendezvous at the confluence of the Walla Walla and Columbia rivers [June 1, 1813]

#### DONALD "FATS" McKENZIE'S OWN HORSE TRADING STARTS SLOWLY

Nez Perce Indians, resentful of his highhanded tactics regarding the stolen goods, declined to barter

exasperated, McKenzie began pointing toward whatever animal he wanted,

he offered a fair price, and then on being refused, shot the horse dead

this was repeated until the Indians relented and began to barter

McKenzie's actions shocked and alarmed the Nez Perce who counted their wealth in horses

## ASTORIA COMMANDER DUNCAN McDOUGALL'S DIRECTIVE IS NOT WELL RECEIVED

Astor's partners David Stuart at Fort Okanogan and John Clarke at Fort Spokane had been very successful at their posts when they received the directive written by Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall they were very unhappy with McDougall making such a decision on his own without even waiting for their arrival at Astoria especially when he knew they would not agree they considered McDougall's orders to abandon their posts to be rash and cowardly they refused to comply no arrangements were made by either Stuart or Clarke to leave the country instead they made preparations to expand their prosperous establishments however, they did prepare to take the winter's catch to the rendezvous site

## JOHN JACOB ASTOR LEARNS OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY'S ISAAC TODD

John Jacob Astor learned the North West Company merchant ship *Isaac Todd* was en route to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil escorted by a British Navy frigate HMS *Phoebe* Astor was very aware of the menace this provided to his Pacific Fur Company and Astoria Astor wrote a letter to Secretary of State James Monroe asking that President James Madison be shown a copy of the report on the activities of the North West Company included by Astor although he had little hope of this actually happening President Madison was eventually shown the report and the United States government decided to send the frigate *Adams* under Captain William Crane to protect the American foothold and commerce in the Pacific Ocean When Astor learned of this plan he immediately outfitted the supply ship *Enterprise* with additional supplies to accompany the *Adams* bound for Astoria

## ASTOR'S PARTNER JOHN CLARKE SETS OUT FROM FORT SPOKANE

As the appointed time for the rendezvous approached, John Clarke packed all his furs from Fort Spokane on twenty-eight horses Clarke departed from Fort Spokane with fifty-seven men -- May 25, 1813 bound for the rendezvous site at the confluence of the Columbia and Walla Walla rivers he left a clerk and four men in charge of the post

## ASTORIANS FROM THE INTERIOR POSTS REACH THE RENDEZVOUS LOCATION

David Stuart paddled down the Columbia River from the company's first outpost at Fort Okanogan he was the first to arrive at the rendezvous point on the Columbia River

where the Walla Walla River entered

Donald "Fats" McKenzie leading a retreat from his unsuccessful venture at McKenzie's Post arrived next after he had incited of the Nez Perce Indians with his reckless actions slashing tepees until he recovered part of the goods stolen from his Clearwater River cache and shooting Indians' horses until the Nez Perce agreed to sell him adequate stock to allow him to cross the continent to St. Louis

#### JOHN CLARKE REACHES THE LOCATION WHERE HE HAD LEFT HIS CANOES AND BARGE

John Clarke and most of the men from Fort Spokane reached the Nez Perce village at the mouth of the Walla Walla River where they had exchanged their canoes and barge for horses to continue on to the Spokane Indians their vessels had been left under the protection of an old Nez Perce chief who had kept careful watched over his charges although Clarke planned to continue on to the rendezvous on horse back his vessels were found in very good order needing only minimal repair -- May 30, 1813

Camp was made near the Indian village

because this village frequently engaged in pilfering, Clarke ordered a close eye be kept John Clarke was a tall handsome man somewhat given to pomp and ceremony which made him a person of note in the eyes of the natives he had a silver goblet (drinking cup) which he used with a magnificent air then, after an appropriate ritual, he would lock his goblet in a large wooden case which accompanied him in his travels and stood in his tent when in camp this goblet had been a gift from John Jacob Astor to his partner Alexander McKay who had been killed in the explosion of the *Tonquin* and had arrived after the ship had sailed Astor' partner John Clarke took possession and appreciated the cup's sentimental value

This glittering silver goblet could not help but be attractive to the villagers

such a wonder had never been seen in this land before Indians talked about it among themselves and noted the care taken when it was used they concluded that it must be of great worth that night Clarke failed to lock up the prized possession when the wooden case was opened in the morning the precious relic was gone

#### JOHN CLARKE IS OUTRAGED BY THE LOSS OF HIS SILVER GOBLET

Clarke threatened that unless the goblet was returned promptly he would hang the thief should that unfortunate person ever be discovered day passed into evening without the return of the goblet

That night guards were secretly posted about the Astorian camp  
even at that, a native sneaked into the American camp undetected,  
it was only when he attempted to leave the camp that he was discovered and captured  
Astorian John Clarke was sure this was the thief who had stolen his precious goblet

#### SUPPOSED THIEF OF THE GOBLET WAS BROUGHT TO TRIAL

At daybreak the suspect was brought to trial and promptly convicted of theft -- May 31, 1813  
immediately he represented the person responsible for all of the pilfering  
done to the Astorians by these villagers

John Clarke passed a sentence of death upon him

Astorians constructed a gallows of oars, the village chief and his people were assembled  
the offender was brought forward and his legs and arms were tied  
Clarke berated the villagers telling them of all of the benefits they had received from the whites  
and the many thefts and other misdeeds that had taken place and been ignored  
this man was to be punished for his actions and as a warning to all of the other natives

Indians now gathered around John Clarke

they were willing that he be punished severely, but they pleaded that his life be spared  
other Astorians, too, considered the sentence too severe

they advised Clarke to moderate the punishment but he remained unbending

Russell Farnham, a clerk who had himself been robbed of a pistol, acted as executioner  
at the signal the poor Indian resisting, struggling and screaming was launched into eternity  
Indians stood about in stunned silence and mute astonishment

but they had made no attempt to stop the execution, or even show any emotion whatsoever

#### JOHN CLARKE DECIDES TO TRAVEL DOWN THE COLUMBIA RIVER BY CANOE

John Clarke realized his party would have had to pass through Nez Perce Indian country  
Nez Perce were all excellent horsemen and hard riders

they might pursue them to take vengeance for the death of their comrade

John Clarke changed his plans -- May 31, 1813

rather than proceeding on horseback as he originally intended

their loads were transferred to canoes to be taken to the rendezvous site

Clarke and his men set out down the Columbia River -- May 31, 1813

four members of Clarke's Party were sent back to Fort Spokane with the horses

although the four Astorians made light of the danger when they departed they traveled quickly  
(all four eventually were glad to find themselves safely at Fort Spokane)

#### ASTOR'S PARTNER JOHN CLARKE ARRIVES AT THE RENDEZVOUS LOCATION

John Clarke led fifty-three Astorians down the Columbia River -- June 1, 1813  
on their arrival at the rendezvous point they found the other Astorians waiting  
Clarke informed them of the punishment he had inflicted on the Nez Perce native,  
he anticipated admiration would be heaped upon him for meting out justice  
instead, he was strongly censured by Donald McKenzie for being inhumane,  
and likely to provoke hostilities from the Nez Perce Indians  
David Stuart and John Clarke intended to return to Fort Okanogan and Fort Spokane to trade  
rather than continue on to Astoria as they had been ordered by Commander Duncan McDougall

#### INDIANS WERE ALSO IN THE VICINITY OF THE RENDEZVOUS POINT

Threatening Indians in large numbers were seen near the rendezvous point  
word of the unprecedented hostile actions by Donald McKenzie and John Clarke  
had spread quickly from village to village

#### ALL OF THE ASTORIANS AT THE RENDEZVOUS DECIDE TO RETURN TO ASTORIA

Astorians were warned of an impending attack by an agitated Indian chief  
David Stuart and John Clarke decided to return to Astoria with Donald McKenzie  
rather than journey back to Fort Okanogan and Fort Spokane  
As a precaution camp was broken in the middle of breakfast -- June 2, 1813  
Donald McKenzie and his twelve men along with David Stuart and his twenty Astorians  
and John Clarke leading fifty-three more Pacific Fur company employees  
formed a squadron of two barges and six canoes  
they managed to escape to safety as more and more excited Indians arrived in the area

#### ASTORIANS OPERATING IN THE WILLAMATTE VALLEY REACH ASTORIA

William Wallace had led a fourteen-man trapping and trading expedition into the Willamette Valley  
they had opened and maintained Wallace House in the area of Champoeg  
where he and his men trapped and traded for numerous packs of beaver pelts  
Wallace abandoned Wallace House and return to Astoria carrying numerous packs of beaver pelts  
as a result of seven months' worth of effort -- June 2, 1813

#### ASTORIANS SET OUT FROM THE RENDEZVOUS BOUND FOR ASTORIA

Donald Mackenzie paddled down the Columbia River from the rendezvous point -- June 3, 1813  
he was accompanied by Astor's partner David Stuart, John Clarke and eight-five Astorians  
who had come down the river from McKenzie's Post, Fort Okanogan and Fort Spokane

David Stuart and a group of twenty Astorians were attacked while making the portage at the Cascades  
Stuart was wounded by arrows and their goods were stolen but the party escaped with their lives  
David Stuart and his men reunited with the main party and continued down the Columbia River

#### DUNCAN McDUGALL ANNOUNCES THE CLOSING OF ASTORIA

Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall called a meeting of Pacific Fur Company clerks  
to discuss the future of Astoria -- June 3, 1813  
warnings were given not to tell the Indians about the decision to close the post  
fearing their neighbors would take it as a sign of weakness and attack

#### INTERIOR TRADING PARTIES ARRIVE AT ASTORIA

Astor's partners Donald McKenzie David Stuart and John Clarke with eighty-five Astorians  
delivered their valuable cargo of pelts from the interior posts to Astoria -- June 12, 1813  
McKenzie, David Stuart and Clarke found Duncan McDougall actively preparing to close Astoria  
in anticipation of departing to cross the continent to St. Louis (on July 1, 1813)  
as had been agreed to by McDougall and Donald McKenzie

David Stuart and John Clarke expressed their vigorous opposition to this plan  
McDougall's strong ties with the North West Company led to questions regarding his dependability  
and his friendly treatment of Nor'Wester John George McTavish was provided  
as evidence of disloyalty to John Jacob Astor

Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall, in turn, was disappointed to find  
that neither David Stuart nor John Clarke had made preparations to comply with his directives  
to purchase horses and provisions for a caravan across the Rocky Mountains to St. Louis  
it was now too late to make the preparations necessary in time to cross the Rockies before (winter)  
abandoning Astoria and the Pacific Fur Company's operations had to be postponed

#### CONDITIONS AT ASTORIA BECOME STRAINED

Population at Astoria swelled with the arrival of the interior traders  
putting a huge strain on the limited store of supplies  
Over the next two weeks bickering between Astor's partners and clerks added to the tension  
Commander McDougall insisted they should quit the post, pack everything of value  
and head overland across the Rocky Mountains to St. Louis and the United States  
McDougall asserted that the war and poor returns made abandonment inevitable  
(actually trade had been quite productive as reported by the clerks on [June 1]  
returns from the Columbia, Okanogan, Spokane and Willamette regions  
had been better than anticipated)

David Stuart and John Clarke were reluctant to abandon the financial returns they had achieved at Fort Okanogan and Fort Spokane based only on the strength of Commander Duncan McDougall's spur-of-the-moment decision with the support of Donald "Fats" McKenzie they criticized McDougall's judgment and McKenzie's allegiance to John Jacob Astor they insisted their trapping success in the interior justified holding the posts and the region to say nothing of trade arrangements that might be made with the Russian-America Company

David Stuart and John Clarke also noted Astoria was well armed and would withstand any attack short of a naval bombardment they resented the decision of the two partners to sell Astoria to the North West Company

Duncan McDougall enjoyed the vocal support of Donald McKenzie who used his skill and prestige to push for abandonment of the enterprise

McKenzie argued the only course was for the Astorians to save what they could before the British navy came and took everything

summing up his position, Mackenzie noted, "**All these inauspicious circumstances taken together point out the absolute necessity of abandoning the enterprise as soon as possible.**"<sup>59</sup>

#### NOR'WESTER JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH IS RUNNING LOW ON SUPPLIES

It had become apparent the supply ship and British Naval escort had encountered difficulties

John George McTavish traveled from his camp at the Columbia River's Baker Bay to Astoria there he requested a small supply of trade goods be provided to him

so he could conduct business with the Indians during his return journey to Spokane House

John George McTavish's request was discussed by Astor's partners

Duncan McDougall urged the request be honored

he further suggested that Fort Spokane should be given up

as the Astorians lacked sufficient trade goods to compete with the North West Company

(in fact, this was not true -- the Astorians had more trade goods than the Nor'Westers)

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR RECEIVES A LETTER FROM ROBERT STUART THEN IN ST. LOUIS

While Astor was making preparations to sail the supply ship *Enterprise* to Astoria escorted by the United States Navy frigate *Adams*

Astor received a letter from Robert Stuart (dated May 1, 1813) -- middle of June 1813

confirming newspaper accounts of his arrival in St. Louis

and of the arrival of Wilson Price Hunt's land expedition at Astoria

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<sup>59</sup> James P. Ronda, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 281.

Robert Stuart also wrote of the success enjoyed by Astorians of the Pacific Fur Company  
Astoria was established and Fort Okanogan was in operation along the Okanogan River  
also successful trapping ventures had been conducted in the Willamette Valley  
and along the Thompson River (Kamloops)  
at the same time Astor learned the supply ship *Beaver* had arrived at Astoria  
this provided Astor additional hope for success

Astor concluded the future of his Pacific Fur Company looked bright

Wilson Price Hunt, an American, led the operation and Astoria was being supplied  
a third supply ship (after the *Lark*), *Enterprise*, was about to set sail for the post  
Quickly these happy prospects faded away as Commodore Isaac Chauncey at Lake Ontario  
called for reinforcements to his command which was under attack by British forces  
frigate *Adam*'s crew was immediately transferred to Lake Ontario and the *Adams* was laid up  
Astor decided to send the *Enterprise* to take her chances unescorted  
but just then the British Navy arrived off New York City and blockaded the harbor  
*Enterprise* was unloaded and dismantled putting Astor's hopes solely on his supply ship *Lark*

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT CHARTERS THE *ALBATROSS* TO SAIL TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Wilson Price Hunt had remained in the Hawaiian Islands since [November 1812]  
where Astor's supply ship *Beaver* had deposited him before sailing on to Canton, China  
Hunt had waited in vain for the arrival of the Pacific Fur Company's annual supply ship  
American merchant ship *Albatross* sailing under Captain William Smith reached the Hawaiian Islands  
from Canton, China -- June 20, 1813

Captain Smith delivered the news of America's war with Great Britain to the islands  
this explained Hunt's long wait for a ship to take him back to Astoria

Hunt also learned a fleet of British warships had departed from Rio de Janeiro

HMS frigate *Phoebe* was joined by sloops-of-war *Cherub* and *Raccoon*  
accompanied a North West Company's *Isaac Todd* mounted with twenty cannons  
it was assumed Astoria was to be destroyed

Wilson Price Hunt immediately thought of the welfare of Astoria

he concluded the Pacific Fur Company employees would be in need of supplies and leadership  
he chartered the *Albatross* for \$20,000 to deliver him at Astoria

supplies were loaded and the *Albatross* sailed for the mouth of the Columbia River

this would be the second time this American ship had visited the Columbia River

she had previously been brought to the Pacific Northwest by the Winship Brothers [1810]

#### FORMAL MEETING OF ASTOR'S PARTNERS IS NECESSARY TO ABANDON THE ENTERPRISE

Pacific Fur Company's Commander Duncan McDougall called an official meeting of Astor's four partners in Astoria -- McDougall, Donald McKenzie, David Stuart and John Clarke they were to discuss the future of Astor's Pacific Fur Company and Astoria -- June 25, 1813 this debate centered on relinquishing the post to the North West Company even resident clerks were assembled although they had no vote in policy decisions

Commander Duncan McDougall responded to the criticisms of David Stuart and John Clarke

McDougall wrote his official explanation of his actions in the company letter book: **"We are now destitute of the necessary supplies on the trade, and we have no hopes of receiving more. We are yet entirely ignorant of the coast, on which we always had great dependence. The interior parts of the country turn out far short of our expectations. Its yearly produce in furs is very far from being equal to the expenses the trade incurs; much less will it be able to recover the losses already sustained, or stand against a powerful opposition and support itself. In fine, circumstances are against us on every hand, and nothing operates to lead us into a conclusion, that we can succeed."**<sup>60</sup>

this version of events was carefully worded by McDougall to support his actions

#### DAVID STUART AND JOHN CLARKE BEGIN TO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS

No supply ship had arrived from John Jacob Astor and the failure of the supply ship *Beaver* to return with Wilson Price Hunt increased David Stuart's and John Clarke's concerns that conditions were deteriorating

they began to listen to the arguments proposed by Duncan McDougall and Donald McKenzie perhaps the Astorians situation of being left alone on a hostile coast surrounded by enemies was as desperate and hopeless as it had been depicted

left without the support of John Jacob Astor they must shift for themselves or perish

By the end of the meeting all four of Astor's partners reached an agreement -- June 25, 1813

McDougall and McKenzie together had convinced Stuart and Clarke to accept their proposition

David Stuart and John Clarke consented to abandon Astoria

It was obvious Duncan McDougall's proposal to leave the country [on July 1] was unachievable any overland journey during the present summer was impossible

because of delays in leaving the interior trading posts

and the complexities of packing the furs, goods, supplies and provisions then at Astoria

#### ASTOR'S PARTNERS MAKE PLANS TO REMAIN IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST FOR A YEAR

Commander Duncan McDougall stated Fort Okanogan and Fort Spokane

would be sold to the North West Company

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<sup>60</sup> James P. Ronda, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 283.

Astoria would be abandoned but the Astorians would spend one more year in the Northwest  
new departure date of [July 1, 1814] was set by the partners  
however, the store of goods at Astoria would not be adequate to meet the needs  
of all of the Astorians for a year

John Jacob Astor's partners agreed on the necessary tasks to remain in the field for another year:

- acquire enough food to exist until their anticipated departure [July 1, 1814];
- purchase enough horses to convey all of the Pacific Fur Company's portable goods  
over the Rocky Mountains and across the Great Plains to St. Louis;
- collect as many pelts as they could acquire with their diminished supply of trade goods

#### ASTOR'S PARTNERS AGREE ON ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE COMING (WINTER)

Astor's partner Duncan McDougall would remain in command of Astoria

he would keep forty men to ready a fleet of canoes to transport goods to the Willamette Valley  
if a British sail was sighted

because if the post was captured before they could depart everything would be lost  
men at Astoria would have to depend at least partially on local Chinook Indians for their food  
while they currently remained friendly it was feared if the future of the post was known,  
or how weak the post actually had become, the Chinooks might become hostile;

Partner Donald McKenzie, because it was necessary to make Astoria independent from the natives,  
would take four hunters and eight men to Wallace House to the Willamette Valley  
they would lower the strain on Astoria's limited supplies and supply needed provisions  
but also remain in a position to receive Astoria's trade goods if that became necessary;

Partner David Stuart and clerk Alexander Ross would travel to Fort Okanogan

Stuart would close the Thompson River operation among the She Whap Indians  
(near today's Kamloops, British Columbia)

clerk Alexander Ross would spend another (winter) at Fort Okanogan

Because there were too many clerks for the number to trappers and traders at Astoria  
three men, all British subjects, Ross Cox, Donald McGillis and Robert McClellan,  
went to work for the North West Company

Ross Cox, who distinguished himself as an historian at Astoria,

was the first established trader to stress the practical need for missionaries in the Northwest

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY TRAPPERS ARE ASSIGNED TO THE SNAKE RIVER REGION

Nor'Wester Clerk John Reed was to establish a (winter) headquarters on the Snake River plains  
with hunters Pierre Dorion and Pierre Delaunay

voyageurs Francis Landry, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte, Andre La Chapelle and Gilles Le Clerc

Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor  
and American free trappers William Canning (or Cannon) and Alexander Carson  
as usual Pierre Dorion was accompanied by his wife Marie and their two children  
Reed was to trap for beaver along the Malheur River (eastern Oregon) on the Snake River plain  
and gather supplies for the trip across the continent to St. Louis -- 1813

#### ASTOR'S FOUR PARTNERS SIGN A RESOLUTION TO ABANDON ASTORIA

With assignments now in place, an agreement was drawn up  
that stated unless John Jacob Astor provided orders to continue Astoria  
and necessary support and supplies were received, Astoria would be abandoned -- July 1, 1813  
Commander Duncan McDougall was empowered to arrange for sale of all posts, goods and furs  
to the North West Company  
Pace of activities at Astoria quickened  
furs had to be baled, remaining trade goods packed, personal items secured  
all of this activity caught the attention of the Chinook Indians who began to ask questions

#### ASTORIA COMMANDER DUNCAN McDOUGALL NEGOTIATES WITH THE NOR'WESTERS

Faced with the bleak prospect of being unable to trade for provisions with the natives  
Astorians made a remarkable proposal to John George McTavish:

- Nor'Westers would acquire Astorians' Kootenai House and Fort Spokane  
in return the North West Company would promise the Astorians a year's free hand  
in the Willamette Valley using Willamette House and the Snake River region
- Astorians would make available to the Nor'Westers whatever goods they could spare  
to be paid for [in the spring] with horses;
- Nor'Wester John George McTavish was also requested to forward dispatches to Astor  
by way of the North West Company winter express

McTavish and McDougall further agreed not to reveal news about the War of 1812  
to the neighboring Indians or the common laborers until the British warship arrived  
North West Company's Columbia Department was thus divided with the Astorians

#### NOR'WESTER JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH TRAVELS FROM ASTORIA

Supplies from Astoria were loaded into North West Company canoes  
to be taken to Fort Okanogan or Fort Spokane -- both now under the Nor'Westers' control  
McTavish and his voyageurs set out up the Columbia River -- July 5, 1813  
in addition to added trade goods and a promise of horses in exchange Astor's forts  
McTavish carried private letters, reports and dispatches to be delivered to John Jacob Astor

by the usual (winter) North West Company overland express

#### ASTORIANS BEGIN THEIR JOURNEYS TO THEIR (WINTER) ASSIGNMENTS

Sixty-eight Astorians pushed up the Columbia River led by John Clarke -- July 5, 1813

David Stuart and clerk Alexander Ross set out for Fort Okanogan and the Thompson River

John Clarke set out the Clearwater River to conduct a (winter) trapping operation

Alexander Ross and John Reed began their travels to their respective trapping assignments

clerk John Reed to trap in the rugged regions of the Snake River

#### DONALD MCKENZIE GOES TO THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Donald McKenzie with four hunters, two clerks and six laborers

the left Astoria for Wallace House along the Willamette River at Champoeg

in the Willamette Valley -- July 8, 1813

McKenzie set up a hunting camp to feed Duncan McDougall's force at Astoria,

he also journeyed back and forth along the Willamette River bartering for fish

in an effort to lower the strain on Astoria's limited supplies

#### TRADE EXPEDITIONS FROM ASTORIA ARRIVE AT THE UMATILLA RIVER

Astorians David Stuart, John Clarke, Alexander Ross and John Reed reached the Umatilla River

John Reed was the first expedition leader to set out for his assigned area on the Snake River plains

twenty-one year old Marie Dorion urged Reed to go across the Blue Mountains

Pierre Dorion advised doing this because of the desirability of setting up winter camp

as soon as possible

John Reed chose to disregard this advice

rather he chose to lead his party by some route, now unknown, to the Snake River

#### REMAINING ASTORIANS SEPARATE AT THE UMATILLA RIVER

After John Reed's departure the other three parties of Astoria trappers and traders

continued up the Columbia River:

- John Clarke to McKenzie's Post on the Clearwater River

- David Stuart and clerk Alexander Ross to Fort Okanogan

with Stuart continuing on to the She Whap Indians (near today's Kamloops)

#### AMERICAN PRIVATEER SHIP HARASSES BRITISH SHIPPING IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN

While communicating with Spanish officials in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

British Rear Admiral Manley Dixon discovered that the American privateer *Essex*

under Captain David Porter was operating in the Pacific Ocean  
he had captured fourteen British whaling ships as prizes

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY'S *ISAAC TODD* REACHES RIO DE JANEIRO

North West Fur Company merchant ship *Isaac Todd* under Captain Fraser Smith  
had been provided a British naval escort vessel to Rio de Janeiro

HMS *Phoebe* under British Royal Navy Captain James Hillyar accompanied the *Isaac Todd*  
Shaken by the activities of the American privateer Captain David Porter of the *Essex*  
British Rear Admiral Manley Dixon decided to dispatch two additional war ships  
to convoy the *Isaac Todd* to the mouth of the Columbia River

in addition to the *Phoebe*, HMS *Raccoon* and HMS *Cherub* were assigned to escort duty  
Captain Hillyar on HMS *Phoebe* led the four ship convoy

#### *ISAAC TODD* AND HER ROYAL NAVAL ESCORT DEPART FROM RIO DE JANEIRO

After a short stay to replenish supplies both ships sailed into the Atlantic Ocean  
as instructed, *Phoebe's* Captain James Hillyar opened his secret orders -- July 10, 1813

he learned that his mission was to **“render every assistance in your power to the British  
traders from Canada and to destroy and if possible totally annihilate any settlements which the  
Americans may have formed on the Columbia River or on the neighboring coasts”**<sup>61</sup>

after reading his orders Captain Hillyar requested that Nor'Wester partner John McDonald of Garth  
come aboard the *Phoebe* to serve as a representative of the North West Company  
in the event she arrived first at the Columbia River

North West Company partner Donald McTavish would remain on board the *Isaac Todd*

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY PARTNERS MEET AT FORT WILLIAM ON LAKE SUPERIOR

North West Company held its annual meeting of partners-in-the-field  
at its Fort William headquarters on Lake Superior -- July 18, 1813

Nor'Wester leaders decided to follow-up on partner Angus Shaw's message  
to his nephew John George McTavish regarding the arrival of a company supply ship  
and navy escort to the Columbia River with renewed action

Alexander Henry the Younger, Alexander Stuart and James Keith were ordered  
to lead the summer express across the Rocky Mountains with seventy-five Nor'Westers  
to augment the company forces already in the West  
in addition Alexander Henry the Younger was to locate a transport route

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<sup>61</sup> Barry M. Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810 - 1914*, P. 14.

from New Caledonia (British Columbia) via the Fraser River and Lake Okanogan to the Pacific just as though Columbia Department was already in British hands Nor'Westers' supply brigade brought out such items as 208 axes of different sizes, 3,000 thimbles, 335 brass and copper kettles, fifty bright new rifles and a quarter ton of ammunition, sacks of Chinese beads, 500 pounds of tobacco, 1,000 darning needles, 2,000 cheap rings, quantities of blankets, yard goods, shirts and wholesale foodstuffs ranging from rice, salt, dried salmon to molasses and vinegar

#### DAVID STUART AND ALEXANDER ROSS CONTINUE UP THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Traveling together both Astorians hurried up the Columbia River to Fort Okanogan previously established by David Stuart at the mouth of the Okanogan River David Stuart and his party stayed at Fort Okanogan for only two days after supplying the post with trade goods and ammunition Stuart left clerk Alexander Ross in charge of the post where he was to spend the (winter) and continued to the Thompson River operation among the She Whap Indians (near today's Kamloops, British Columbia) to close that operation

#### ASTORIA COMMANDER DUNCAN McDOUGALL TAKES A COMPANION

McDougall was now less concerned with managing affairs at Astoria but eager to assure security Commander Duncan McDougall sought the good will of the neighboring Chinook Indians by wooing the head-flattened, oil-anointed eldest daughter of crafty old Comcomly the tribe's one-eyed chief Comcomly demanded the high price of fifteen guns, fifteen blankets and assorted small trinkets McDougall took his companion -- July 20, 1813

Mrs. (Princess Choim) McDougall expressed a less than buoyant attitude toward her marital status looking out of the window of her home one day she saw a large hog that was rolling in the mud and basking in the sun

Choim called her husband to the scene and commented, **"You profess to be a Chief, but I see you hard at work every day, behind the counter, at the desk, and your time is so fully employed that you scarcely have time to eat your food, or to enjoy the society of your wife a moment."**

pointing to the hog she noted, **"See there, that is the true chief; he has no labors to perform like a slave, when hungry his food is served him; he fills himself and then lies down in the cool mud, under the influence of the warming rays of the sun, sleeps, and takes his comfort."**<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Laura B. Downey Bartlett. *Student History of the Northwest and the State of Washington*, P. 118.

### ISAAC TODD PROVES TO BE A SLOW SHIP

Leaving Rio de Janeiro North West Company merchant ship *Isaac Todd* proved to be very slow because of the added weight of twenty cannons that arrangements were made to rendezvous with *Phoebe*, *Raccoon* and *Cherub* off the coast of Chile *Isaac Todd* sailed as best she could on her own in a gale off the coast of South America she became separated from her British Navy escort she failed to arrive for an appointed rendezvous off the Juan Fernandez Islands, Chile in the South Pacific (she would arrive five months late)

While waiting for the *Isaac Todd*, British Royal Navy Captain James Hillyar of the *Phoebe* decided to transfer North West Company partner John McDonald of Garth, part of *Phoebe's* cargo and his orders to capture or destroy whatever American facility he found on the Columbia River before planting the British flag on the ruins to the *Raccoon's* Captain William Black

### JOHN REED'S EXPEDITION REACHES THE SNAKE RIVER

John Reed led his party composed of hunters Pierre Dorion and Pierre Delaunay and voyageurs Francis Landry, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte, Andre La Chapelle and Gilles Le Clerk Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor along with two American free trappers William Canning (or Cannon) and Alexander Carson also Marie Dorion and her two children traveled with the party into the Snake River country They reached the mouth of the Weiser River (Oregon) where it enters the Snake River -- August 1813 two American free trappers William Canning (or Cannon) and Alexander Carson set out on their own beaver hunt

### AN UNKNOWN SHIP ENTERS THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall was sitting with his wife Mrs. (Princess Choim) McDougall at their table when her brother, Gassacop, burst in he announced a sail was seen off the mouth of the Columbia -- about noon August 20, 1812 McDougall, thinking this might be the anticipated North West Company ship hurried to the river, jumped into a boat and ordered the hands to pull with all speed for the river's mouth of the river those who remained at Astoria watched the entrance to the river anxious to know if they would be greeting a friend or fighting an enemy anxiety became intense until an American flag was seen on the ship shouts of joy and cannon salutes thundered from the post Duncan McDougall was seen to go aboard the ship where he stayed until late afternoon Astorians along the river bank watched with straining eyes as the sun went down evening was near before the ship was seen to be the *Albatross* under Captain William Smith

just arrived from the Hawaiian Islands and carrying Wilson Price Hunt  
she came to anchor across the Columbia River from Astoria and fired a return salute  
Duncan McDougall came ashore accompanied by Wilson Price Hunt  
who was greeted like someone returning from the dead

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT LEARNS OF PLANS TO ABANDON ASTORIA

When Wilson Price Hunt learned of the decision of Duncan McDougall and Donald McKenzie  
to abandon the Pacific Fur Company enterprise he was extremely exasperated -- August 20, 1813  
but events had moved far beyond any possibility to oppose the decision  
Hunt's own experiences had been discouraging and the amount of John Jacob Astor's money  
that had been required to maintain the enterprise was far greater than Hunt thought acceptable  
little by little Hunt came to accept the partners' decision  
his only concern now was that Astor lose no more money  
(Hunt did not understand the vast amounts of money that Astor was willing to invest)

#### HUNT MAKES ARRANGEMENTS TO SAIL TO THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

There were a large numbers of furs at Astoria which needed to go to market  
and there were twenty-five Kanakas (Hawaiians) who needed to be returned to their homeland  
as had been agreed to in their contract with the Pacific Fur Company  
it was obvious a ship was necessary  
but *Albatross* was already under contract to carry sandalwood to Canton, China  
by way of the Marquesas Islands and the Hawaiian Islands  
she could not be used to carry Americans to a safe port on the Eastern seaboard  
Duncan McDougall agreed that Hunt would accompany the *Albatross* to the Sandwich Islands  
to deliver the Kanakas to their homeland  
Hunt would acquire another ship and return to Astoria by {January 1, 1814} if possible  
bringing supplies and provisions to the post for the voyage to the east coast  
if something happened to Hunt, it was proposed that Nor'Wester John George McTavish  
be allowed to hire all the Astorians the North West Company could afford to pay  
North West Company would be reimbursed these expenses from goods at Astoria  
it was further decided that these arrangements, if they became necessary,  
would be negotiated by Duncan McDougall

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT SAILS FOR THE MARQUEAS AND HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

Captain William Smith agreed to carry Wilson Price Hunt back to the Sandwich Islands  
where he could make arrangements for another ship to return to Astoria

while the *Albatross* proceeded on to the Marquesas Islands

Hunt was expected to sail back to the Columbia River with a new ship sometime in [January 1814]

Astorians could then take passage to the East coast

after filling the Pacific Fur Company contract for supplies with the Russians at New Archangel

However, disappointed so many times before, the Astorians had little confidence in this plan

an option was negotiated by Duncan McDougall and the others: **“Having already experienced so many unforeseen disasters in the prosecution of our plans and Human life being so uncertain, it is hereby agreed and concluded that Wilson Price Hunt draw three sets of exchange on John Jacob Astor of New York to the amount of \$20,000 to be left with Duncan McDougall in case of being disappointed in said Wilson Price Hunt’s return, to meet the demands of our people at St. Louis or elsewhere.”**<sup>63</sup>

once Hunt had sailed to Hawaii, McDougall was in full command of Astoria **“...to conclude any arrangements we may be able to make with whoever may come forward on the part of the North West Company.”**<sup>64</sup>

In an effort to save what he could, Hunt departed from Astoria on the *Albatross*

after a visit of only six days at Astoria -- August 26, 1813

bound for the Hawaiian Islands by way of the Marquesas Islands

to take home thirty-two Kanakas (Hawaiians) and find another ship for Wilson Price Hunt

#### JOHN REED’S PARTY CONTINUES UP THE SNAKE RIVER

John Reed, his nine Astorians along with Marie Dorion and her two children

and two independent American fur trappers reached a large Shoshone village on the Snake River

Less than a month after leaving the Columbia River

Reed’s party arrived at Caldron Linn -- September 1813

there the remaining contents of the two or three caches left by Wilson Price Hunt

that had not been disturbed were retrieved

Reed then led this party to the Malheur River area of the Snake River plains today’s eastern Oregon)

#### ALEXANDER ROSS REACHES FORT OKANOGAN

Alexander Ross expected to spend (winter) on the Okanogan River without rivals -- September 1813

he was surprised by the unannounced arrival of some seventy-five Nor’Westers headed to Astoria

with the summer supply brigade

they were led by Alexander Henry the Younger, John Stuart and James Keith

they had journeyed from North West Company headquarters at Fort William [July 1813]

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<sup>63</sup> James P. Rondo, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 286.

<sup>64</sup> James P. Rondo, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 286.

Nor'Westers carried copies of newspapers dated [June 1813]

that carried stories of American defeat after defeat to both the British and the Canadians  
Alexander Henry the Younger had succeeded in luring Astor's partner John Clarke  
who had closed McKenzie's Post on the Clearwater River  
into joining North West Company with promises of a quick promotion

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY SUPPLY BRIGADE REACHES COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT

Alexander Ross expected to spend (winter) on the Okanogan River without rivals -- September 1813  
he was surprised by the unannounced arrival of the summer supply brigade  
of some seventy-five Nor'Westers headed to Astoria  
they were led by Alexander Henry the Younger, John Stuart and James Keith  
and had journeyed from North West Company headquarters at Fort William

Nor'Westers carried copies of newspapers dated [June 1813]

that carried stories of American defeat after defeat to both the British and the Canadians

#### JOHN REED'S ASTORIANS CONSTRUCT A BUILDING ALONG THE MALHEUR RIVER

John Reed was instructed to trap and trade on the Snake River plains along the Malheur River  
Reed directed construction of a house along the Boise River as a (winter) shelter -- September 1813  
located between Bully Creek and Willow Creek (near today's Vale, Oregon)  
his party of Astorians was composed of French-Canadian voyageurs Francis Landry,  
Jean Baptiste Turcotte, Andre la Chapelle and Gilles Le Clerc  
hunters Pierre Delaunay and Pierre Dorion with his wife Marie and their two children  
and Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor  
while the others were out trapping Reed and one other man usually remained at the post  
with Marie Dorion and her sons Baptiste and Paul

Natives in the area had a reputation as being friendly

but when the Reed Party arrived they became troublesome

these Indians asked for guns and ammunition which Reed refused to provide  
because of two hostile acts committed by the natives:

- Andre La Chapelle had his great-coat stolen from him,
- an arrow was sunk into the flank of one of the horses

Reed's expedition was forced to relocate

as good judgment dictated they move from this location -- Astorians' house was abandoned  
(it was later burned by the natives)

#### JOHN REED AND HIS PARTY BUILD REED'S POST ON THE BOISE RIVER

John Reed led his six Astorians and three Kentuckians  
accompanied by Marie Dorion and her two children away from the Malheur River  
back up the Snake River to the mouth of the Boise River  
there Reed and his men worked with a will to build another house -- Reed's Post  
on the banks of the Snake River near the mouth of the Boise River  
(in the vicinity of present-day Caldwell, Idaho)

#### JOHN REED'S POST ALONG THE BOISE RIVER IS COMPETED

John Reed's Boise River post served as base for a (fall and winter hunt) on the Snake River plains  
it served as protection for the trappers, their trade goods and supplies  
his party of Astorians was composed of hunters Pierre Dorion and Pierre Delaunay  
voyageurs Francis Landry, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte, Andre La Chapelle and Gilles Le Clerc  
and Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor  
as usual Dorion was accompanied by his wife and two children Baptiste and Paul  
Parties of trappers were sent out to search for potential locations to establish remote trapping camps  
Pierre Delaunay who was by disposition sullen, mean and moody set out alone  
(he was not heard from again)  
Marie Dorion managed the base camp while the men were gone sometimes for days at a time  
she cooked and dressed pelts, made and mended clothing and took care of her two boys  
friendly Shoshone Indians often visited the Astorians at their post

#### DONALD "FATS" McKENZIE RETURNS TO ASTORIA

Donald McKenzie had led a party of four hunters, two clerks and six laborers to Wallace House  
at Champoeg in the Willamette Valley to acquire supplies for the Astorians remaining at Astoria  
this plan worked very well and McKenzie successfully hunted for food to sustain Astoria  
McKenzie set out from Champoeg with two clerks  
traveling down the Willamette River to the Columbia River -- October 2, 1813  
they continued down the Columbia toward Astoria

#### ASTORIANS AND NOR'WESTERS MAKE CAMP

Both the Astorians and the Nor'Westers made camp together that night -- October 5, 1813  
leaders of the two expeditions maintained a friendly atmosphere  
although the North West Company voyageurs were less polite  
they anticipated a British invasion of Astoria and the conquering of the Pacific Northwest  
during the evening Donald McKenzie met secretly with his clerks  
they decided to quietly break camp before daylight to rush to inform Duncan McDougall

McKenzie's plan failed the next morning when they were joined by the ever-alert McTavish accompanied by two North West Company clerks and eleven men  
this vanguard was to travel to Astoria leaving the remaining Nor'Westers behind  
to await orders and protect their large quantity of furs ready to be shipped to market  
with his scheme shattered Donald McKenzie and John George McTavish  
both set out down the Columbia River on their way to Astoria

#### NOR'WESTER JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH ARRIVES AT ASTORIA

John George McTavish with his two clerks and eleven voyageurs reached Astoria -- October 7, 1813  
so sudden an arrival of so many Nor'Westers stunned Duncan McDougall and the Astorians  
(McTavish had previously visited Astoria [April 1813] and had stayed several months  
awaiting the arrival of North West Company ship *Isaac Todd* and her military escort)  
this time they expected the North West Company merchant ship *Isaac Todd* and her escort ship  
to already be at the mouth of the Columbia River

Pacific Fur Company clerk Gabriel Franchere recorded the arrival of the Nor'Westers: **“Mr McTavish visited us and gave us a letter addressed to him by Mr A[ngus] Shaw, one of the agents of the North West Company, in which this gentleman informed him that the *Isaac Todd* had sailed last March [1813] from London in company with the English frigate *Phoebe*, which was coming under government orders for the express purpose of taking possession of our post, which had been represented to the Lords of the Admiralty as a colony established by the American government on the banks of the Columbia River”**<sup>65</sup>

John George McTavish's thirteen Nor'Westers set up camp outside the walls of Astoria  
under the Pacific Fur Company's guns where they raised the British colors  
McTavish and his men took on the airs of invaders  
some of the North West Company voyageurs could not help chuckling  
that soon the British would be in control of Astoria  
and the Americans would be driven out of the country

#### COMMANDER DUNCAN McDUGALL EXPLAINS THE SITUATION TO HIS ASTORIANS

Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall read the letter from Angus Shaw carried by McTavish  
Shaw was McDougall's uncle and a principal partner in the North West Company  
**“to take and destroy everything American on the northwest coast.”**<sup>66</sup>  
Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall believed this was a disaster for the Astorians

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<sup>65</sup> Gabriel Franchere, *Journal of a Voyage on the North West Coast of North America during the Years 1811, 1812, 1813 and 1814*, P. 129.

<sup>66</sup> Washington Irving, *Astoria*, P. 436.

as everything could be lost to the British

Astor's partners and employees were themselves almost all British subjects  
and former North West Company employees

even so, the Americans working at Astoria were greatly insulted  
by the British flag flying outside of their post

they were also disturbed by the offensive actions of the Nor'Westers  
these patriotic Americans were not frightened by the proposed arrival of British ships  
because they would have to anchor many miles from Astoria and any boats sent to invade  
could easily be destroyed by Astoria's cannons -- after all there was a war going on  
Astor's employees at Astoria wanted to nail the American colors to the flagpole  
but Pacific Fur Company Commander Duncan McDougall forbid the gesture

#### STATUS OF ASTORIA HAS CHANGED

With Pacific Fur Company Commander Wilson Price Hunt gone from Astoria once again  
Astor's partners at the post Duncan McDougall, Donald Mackenzie and John Clarke  
were in a predicament because the Pacific Fur Company had already been dissolved  
all that remained was the stock of trading goods, supplies, furs and the posts  
if the British war ships arrived it would not be necessary for the Nor'Westers  
to give the Americans anything at all for the Astorians' assets  
those Astorians remaining at the post had expected to wait behind their fortified walls  
and enjoy a quiet (winter) before leaving for St. Louis [July 1, 1814]  
these plans were now dashed by the arrival of Nor'Wester John George McTavish  
if the British war ships arrived the Nor'Westers would simply capture Astoria  
and take possession of all Pacific Fur Company assets and trading posts  
Commander Duncan McDougall was a man who always viewed the darkest side of any situation  
once again he was stampeded by the first hint of trouble

#### JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH MAKES AN OFFER TO BUY OUT THE PACIFIC FUR COMPANY

John George McTavish knew he could not stay for long in his exposed camp under the guns of Astoria  
he was low on supplies -- food shortages forced him to purchase provisions from the Astorians  
also the Nor'Westers were protected from the Indians by the guns and good will of the Astorians  
Nor'Wester John George McTavish approached the Duncan McDougall -- October 8, 1813  
McTavish felt the *Isaac Todd* and HMS *Phoebe* were due to arrive at any moment  
he made what he believed was a reasonable offer to John Jacob Astor's partners at Astoria  
he would buy all of the holdings of the Pacific Fur Company including Astoria,  
Fort Okanagan on the Columbia River, Fort Spokane on the Spokane River,

and small outposts on the Clearwater, Clark Fork, Kootenai and Thompson rivers  
everything from kitchen utensils and blacksmith tools, to furs and buildings  
at a price approximately ten per cent above cost  
salaries of the Pacific Fur Company employees would be paid and jobs provided  
for those men who decided to switch allegiance to the Nor'Westers  
McTavish's argument was simple: why risk death and destruction

#### ASTORIANS CONSIDER NOR'WESTER JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH'S PROPOSAL

Partners Donald Mackenzie and John Clarke empowered Astoria Commander Duncan McDougall  
to negotiate the terms of sale of the Pacific Fur Company  
in the event Wilson Price Hunt did not return from the Hawaiian Islands  
in time to save the post for Astor  
Duncan McDougall refused McTavish's offer and proposed terms better for the Astorians  
but not at a price high enough to satisfy Astor's other partners  
John George McTavish refused to negotiate with the Astorians -- October 8, 1813  
he insisted on his offer was the only proposal he would accept

#### REMAINDER OF JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH'S NOR'WESTERS ARRIVE AT ASTORIA

North West Company fleet of canoes from the confluence of the Walla Walla and Columbia rivers  
arrived at Astoria where they joined John George McTavish's camp outside the walls of Astoria  
Another round of negotiations was undertaken with the Nor'Westers assuming the role of victors  
Astorians watched the scene with indignation and impatience  
they were disgusted with the attitude of the Nor'Westers  
and with Duncan McDougall who they felt was both disloyal and spineless  
instead of remaining inside Astoria and receiving counter-offers  
he continually visited the Nor'Westers' camp outside the walls of Astoria

#### DUNCAN McDOUGALL BELIEVES THE SITUATION AT ASTORIA IS HOPELESS

Duncan McDougall convened a meeting of Astor's partners and clerks to discuss how to proceed  
in dealing with Nor'Wester John George McTavish -- October 9, 1813  
In spite of escalating complications they faced most of the Americans at Astoria  
and some of the French-Canadians (and many later students of history)  
felt the Astorians should have put up a fight  
counting their Chinook allies, the Astorians' force was at least as strong  
as their rivals who were short of food  
it was obvious the anticipated British warship could be easily evaded by loading their furs

into canoes and retreating to an unnavigable tributary of the Columbia River  
where a large British warship could not enter

#### ASTORIANS AND NOR'WESTERS COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING REGARDING ASTORIA

Duncan McDougall and Donald McKenzie were determined to abandon the Pacific Fur Company  
and cross the Rocky Mountains to St. Louis (they planned to depart July 1, 1814)

Both McDougall and McKenzie felt they needed to reach a quick decision  
to their minds the safest course was to sell out to the North West Company

McDougall told John George McTavish that much remained to be settled -- October 12, 1813  
there are two clues as to why the Astorians seriously considered the Nor'Westers' offer

Gabriel Franchere noted in his diary: **“Situating as we were expecting every day to see a warship arrive to deprive us of what little we had, we listened to those proposals and after several consultations set a price upon our furs and our remaining merchandise.”**<sup>67</sup>

Duncan McDougall in his will [1817] stated he hoped it might be known: **“...how much and how unjustly my character and reputation has suffered and been injured by the malicious and ungenerous conduct of some of my late associates in the later Pacific Fur Company -- And I here declare in the most solemn manner that I did every thing in my power to do the utmost justice to the trust and confidence reposed in me by John Jacob Astor....and the charge that devolved upon me in consequence of Wilson Price Hunt's absence, agreeable of and in conformity with the resolves of the Company, passed and signed by my associates and myself in the months of June, July, and August 1813, and the meaning and tenor of our agreement with aforementioned John Jacob Astor.”**<sup>68</sup>

#### BARGAINING CONTINUES THE NEXT DAY

Duncan McDougall and John George McTavish continued to negotiate -- October 13, 1813  
discussions quickly sank into a mire to accusations and protests

As was to be expected the main problem was the price

goods and furs had to be inventoried and priced prices and arrangements made for the employees

McDougall was willing to sell, but only at a high rate

he demanded full New York and Montreal prices -- McTavish demanded discounts

McTavish promptly left the post in a huff and returned to his camp outside the walls

#### DUNCAN McDOUGALL AND DONALD McKENZIE HIT ON A SCHEME

McDougall and McKenzie became so provoked by the superior attitude of John George McTavish  
that they devised a plan to bring matters to a head

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<sup>67</sup> James P. Rondo, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 288.

<sup>68</sup> James P. Rondo, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 289.

Astorians closed the gates of their post and manned the bastions  
they trained the post's guns on John George McTavish's camp of Nor'Westers  
Astorians sent a message giving the Nor'Westers a choice  
close the sale in two hours or move to other quarters and get off Astor's property  
John George McTavish had no intention of retaliating to the threat  
as the post's defenses made such a venture foolhardy  
besides Duncan McDougall's recent marriage to Chief Comcomly's daughter  
made the Indians a strong possible ally to the Americans  
also, McTavish wanted to conclude the sale before (winter) arrived

#### ASTOR'S SUPPLY SHIP *LARK* APPROACHES THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

*Lark* approached the Hawaiian Islands but was not yet in sight of land as a gale sprang up  
which blew with tremendous violence buffeting the ship -- October 13, 1813  
mountains of water swept over the ship causing her to roll over on her side  
orders were given by Captain Samuel Northrup to cut away the masts  
but in the confusion the boats were also cut adrift and all of the hatch covers were removed  
as recalled by Captain Samuel Northrop, "**The Ship was almost keelout. Being destitute of  
experienced officers and a greate parte [sic] of the Crew young and unacquainted with any kind of  
Seaman Ship [sic], we ware [sic] in greate Confusion and disorder**"<sup>69</sup>

when the hulk was righted *Lark* was full of water with heavy seas washing over her  
she was kept afloat only by a number of casks of rum in the hold  
When the masts had been cut away and began floating the rigging held them close to the ship  
*Lark* lay on her side rolling in the heavy waves with masts and spars banging against her  
half drowned crewmen clung to the floating masts or stood on debris in water up to their waists  
being beaten against the ship by the sea and unable to escape  
one man was missing and was later found drowned under the forecastle (front deck)  
*Lark* filled with water until her superstructure alone was above water  
*Lark* eventually was righted but she was mostly under water  
she remained in this condition for four days and nights  
sailors dared not sleep for fear they would let go and be swept away  
the only dry place on the ship was the bowsprit and they took turns being tied to it  
for half an hour at a time -- this was the only opportunity for sleep  
Survivors using broken spars finally succeeded in building a make-shift platform  
that were pieced together into a deck out of reach of the waves

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<sup>69</sup> James P. Rondo, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 286.

so they could keep themselves dry and sleep comfortably

(this became a precarious perch for the crewmen for sixteen days)

*Lark's* first mate died at his post and was swept away by the surging ocean -- October 14, 1813

#### TALKS REGARDING OWNERSHIP OF ASTORIA AND THE OTHER POSTS CONTINUE

Still no supply ship *Isaac Todd* or British war ship were to be seen

uncertainty now began to afflict the Nor'Westers

suppose American ships had swept the sea clear of all British shipping

Both Astorians and Nor'Westers met again to settle accounts -- October 14, 1813

once again John George McTavish took on the role of conqueror

expecting the Americans to become the vanquished

once again North West Company proposals were received with indignation and impatience

by all of Astor's partners -- with the exception of Duncan McDougall

#### YET ANOTHER ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF ASTORIA OPENS

Donald McKenzie and John Clarke pointed out the Astorians' position was far from desperate

Astorians could hold out for their own terms in the negotiations

they were well housed and had ample provisions

they had sixty armed men with ammunition, boats

and everything necessary to defend themselves or to retreat if an enemy might appear

they could pack up the most valuable part of their property

and move to some place to hide -- or escape into the interior

Nor'Westers, on the other hand, were camped under the guns of the Astorians' post

they had little ammunition and few goods to trade with the Indians for provisions

they were so destitute they had to be fed from the Astorians' store of food

even as John George McTavish negotiated for the purchase of Pacific Fur Company assets

Nor'Wester McTavish proposed an interesting bargain to Astorian Duncan McDougall

McTavish offered to purchase necessary supplies from the Astorians for \$858 to be paid

in horses or any other goods acceptable to Astor's four partners the following (spring)

Duncan McDougall chose to ignore the facts pointed out by McKenzie and Clarke

he lowered his asking price to meet that proposed by Nor'Wester John George McTavish

in addition both sides also agreed that during the coming weeks

they would not compete against each other when trading with the natives

#### DUNCAN McDOUGALL AGREES TO JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH'S TERMS

Passage home for the Kanakas (Hawaiians) was the last item to be arranged

John George McTavish promised North West Company would pay their passage and wages  
each Kanaka was to receive a new gun, supplies of powder and three pounds of tobacco  
Negotiations were completed and an agreement was reached -- October 16, 1813

North West Company would take possession of the Pacific Fur Company's Astoria, Fort Spokane,  
Fort Okanogan their furs and merchandise for a little less than \$40,000

Pacific Fur Company had sold seventeen thousand pounds of beaver  
and two thousand other skins worth upwards of \$100,000

North West Company would provide safe passage to all who desired to leave the country  
and did not want to join with the Nor'Westers

back wages for the Astorians would be paid by the North West Company  
with that expense deducted from the price paid for Astoria

total cost to the North West Company was \$58,291.02

this was an absurd sum considering the advantages the North West Company was receiving:

- Russian trade alone was worth many times that amount;
  - Astor placed the value of his holdings at \$200,000:
    - in real value the furs alone were worth in excess of \$100,000,
    - additional goods purchased were worth at least another \$100,000
- in the way of business, North West Company claimed a £3,000 loss

McTavish and McDougall also agreed not to reveal news about the War of 1812

to the neighboring Indians or the common laborers until the British warship arrived

Control of Astoria was transferred from American to British hands

Pacific Fur Company ceased to exist as the British flag was unfurled above the post

Pacific Fur Company would receive payment -- North West Company would gain the post

North West Company now had the coastal port they had long desired

Duplicate copies of the Bill of Sale of Pacific Fur Company to the North West Company were written

## WRECKAGE OF THE *LARK* CLAIMS MORE VICTIMS

Two sailors, faint and exhausted were washed overboard -- October 17, 1813

but the waves threw their bodies back on the deck where they remained washing back and forth  
a ghastly vision for the survivors

supercargo Nicholas G. Odgen called to the men nearest the bodies to fasten them to wreck  
as a last horrible resource to ward off starvation if necessary

As the gale gradually subsided and the sea became calmer

sailors crawled feebly about the wreck clearing spars away -- October 17, 1813

anchors and cannons were thrown overboard and the bowsprit was rigged as a mast

waves continued to break over the *Lark* with such force the steersman had to be lashed to the helm

famine and thirst continued to take their toll on the men

these discomforts diminished when one Kanaka, an expert swimmer, was able to enter the cabin  
and bring out a few bottles of wine

subsequent trips into the cabin resulted in rum and a quarter cask of wine being delivered  
and a little raw pork was distributed among the sailors

#### TRANSFER OF ASTORIA TO THE NORTH WEST COMPANY IS COMPLETE

Duncan McDougall and his Astorians got down to the business of transferring Astoria  
to the North West Company -- October 18, 1813

clerks prepared inventories of goods and supplies

all the trade goods including blankets, knives, beads, cotton fabrics

and foodstuffs such as brandy, gin, flour and rice were identified and recorded

John Jacob Astor had invested \$400,000 -- most of the merchandise was gone

Duncan McDougall gave John George McTavish the keys to Astoria's storehouse -- October 22, 1813

in reality, whoever controlled the storehouse controlled the future of the region

John George McTavish and his Nor'Westers broke camp

and prepared to occupy their newly purchased post

(Throughout the rest of 1813 the Astorians and Nor'Westers shared a common life

they enjoyed a great deal of visiting and socializing as they waited for the British warship  
which Nor'Wester John George McTavish continually declared was expected daily)

#### SOME ASTORIANS ARE SUSPICIOUS REGARDING DUNCAN McDOUGALL'S INTENSTIONS

Duncan McDougall's motives were strongly questioned by Astor's other partners

who said he abused his position as commander and sacrificed the interest of Astor and his partners

in the promise or hope of personally advancing in the North West Company

McDougall, however, insisted he had made the best bargain possible for John Jacob Astor

with the British frigate expected in the very near future -- then all would have been lost

(in fact, Duncan McDougall became a partner in the North West Company

he received a share in the company and a handsome income)

In the end, Astor's partners agreed to terms unfavorable to Astor for several reasons:

- they had national ties with the other Scotsmen of the North West Company,
- there were personal conflicts among John Jacob Astor's partners,
- there was a general feeling that Astor had insulted them by ignoring them  
and would sacrifice them to the British

#### GAINS HAD BEEN MADE IN OREGON BY THE ASTORIANS BUT AT A HIGH COST

On the positive side:

- two parties, Wilson Price Hunt and Robert Stuart, had crossed the continent overland by routes far different than that used by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark;
- after two years on the Okanogan and Spokane rivers vast regions had been thoroughly explored as Astor's men took out 140 packs of furs they had become familiar with Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho and southern British Columbia;
- Willamette Valley had been opened to trappers and traders in the area of Champoege

On the negative side:

- John Jacob Astor had lost two ships -- *Tonquin* and *Lark*;
- altogether approximately sixty men had lost their lives:
  - twenty-seven with the *Tonquin*,
  - Snake River country claimed nine,
  - eight crossing the Columbia River bar with Captain Thorn,
  - the *Lark* took at least eight more,
  - five with Wilson Price Hunt on the overland journey,
  - three at Astoria,
  - (one final victim lost his life just as the Americans were leaving for home)

#### SEVERAL TRAPPING COMPANY EMPLOYEES BECAME PERMANENT SETTLERS OF OREGON

Fourteen Astorians of the Pacific Fur Company remained permanently in Oregon:

Louis L. Bonte, William Canning (Cannon), Alexander Carson, (Kanaka) John Coxe, Pierre Dorion, Marie Dorion, Jean Baptiste Dubreuil, Joseph Gervais, Michel Laframbois, Etienne Lucier, Jean McKay, Francois Payette, George Ramsey and "Sailor Jack"

Twenty North West Company men remained permanently in Oregon:

Andre Belanger, Alexis Bellant, Julian Bernier, Angus Bethune, Augustin Boisvert, Jean Baptiste Bouchard, Michel Boullard, Antoine Cayalle, Joseph Cire, Michel Cotenoir, Joseph Gailloux, William Henry, Francois Latour, Etienne Longtain, Louis Majeau, Joseph Mochcomau, Antoine Moineau, Thomas Ocanasawaret, Amable Quesnel and Charles Rondeau

#### REMAINS OF THE *LARK* MAKES SLOW PROGRESS UNDER A SCANTY SAIL

With the bowsprit jury-rigged as a mast the wreck of the *Lark* slowly drifted toward land for a week numerous sharks swam about the *Lark* patiently waiting for their prey

when the cook died he was thrown overboard and was instantly seized -- October 24, 1813

Crewmen came within sight of the island of Maui about ten miles away -- October 25, 1813

this happy event was cloaked with fear as the sailors knew that when the ship struck the beach  
it would be impossible to keep her from breaking up  
their only hope was the reach land in native canoes and protect the wreckage  
(for three more days they continued to drift within sight of the shore)

#### CREWMEN OF THE *LARK* SEE A CANOE APPROACHING

Sandwich Island natives came alongside the *Lark* and brought a supply of potatoes -- October 28, 1813  
*Lark's* second mate and a sailor went ashore in a of the canoe for water and provisions  
and to get help from the natives in towing the wreck into a harbor  
neither of the men returned nor was any assistance sent from shore

#### MORE NATIVES CANOES PADDLE OUT TO THE *LARK*

Ten or twelve canoes came alongside but they simply roamed around the wreck like the sharks  
they would give no help in towing the remains of the stricken ship to land -- October 29, 1813  
Wreckage of the *Lark* finally reached the shore of (Maui) where all of the remaining sailors  
were able to scramble to the safety of the beach -- however, at least eight men had perished  
all of the survivors were immediately surrounded by the natives and stripped almost naked

Wreckage of the *Lark* drifted ashore throughout the night

numerous casks of provisions floated on the tide

these were collected by the natives who wanted the iron hoops

members of the crew were not allowed to gather the contents or to go on board the wreck

When he got the opportunity supercargo Nicholas G. Odgen managed to slip away

and make his way to the island of Oahu where he made arrangements with the Hawaiian king  
to assist his unfortunate companions

however, the wreck of the *Lark* had to be given to the king

this demand was agreed to by Mr. Ogden

#### SOME OF JOHN REED'S MEN ESTABLISH A SMALLER OUTPOST

John Reed and his party of trappers accompanied by Marie Dorion and her two sons  
had settled into Reed's Post on Snake River near the mouth of the Boise River  
(in the vicinity of today's Caldwell, Idaho)

Pierre Dorion, Giles Le Clerc and Jacob Reznor traveled up the Boise River

about five days distance from Reed's Post to an area well stocked with beaver

they constructed a rude hut in this remote area and proceeded to work a beaver trap line

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT ARRIVES IN THE MARQUESAS ISLANDS

Hunt had only just arrived in the Marquesas Islands -- November 15, 1813

when the islands were visited by the America war ship *Essex* under Captain David Porter who had made a sweeping cruise of the Pacific Ocean

he brought with him a number of London whalers as prizes of war

Captain Porter gave Wilson Price Hunt alarming news that the British frigate *Phoebe*

was accompanying a British supply ship mounted with cannons to attack Astoria

this ship was sailing from Rio de Janeiro accompanied by sloops-of-war

*Cherub* and *Raccoon* bound for the mouth of the Columbia River

Wilson Price Hunt became very concerned about the safety of Astoria

he had been eager to remove all of the property there with as little loss as possible

now it appeared the whole venture would be captured by the British Navy

it would be impossible to charter a ship in the Hawaiian Islands

when word the invasion was delivered to the islanders by Captain Porter

Hunt offered to purchase one of the whaling ships brought in by Captain Porter

but the American captain demanded \$25,000-- an impossibly high price

Captain Porter did tell Hunt he would sail the *Essex* to Astoria if the situation was warranted

but Porter was not sure that action would ever be warranted

#### MORE NORTH WEST COMPANY MEN ARRIVE AT ASTORIA

North West Company partners Alexander Henry the Younger and Alexander Stewart accompanied by John Stuart, clerk James Keith and eighteen men of the Nor'Westers' supply brigade

traveling by canoe across the continent from Fort William on the shores of Lake Superior

arrived at Astoria -- November 15, 1813

John Stuart was the same explorer who had been with Simon Fraser

on the first waterborne voyage of the Tacoutche-Tesse (Fraser River)

Alexander Henry the Younger's party had been instructed to travel down the Columbia River

to assist Nor'Wester John George McTavish at Astoria

Alexander Henry was quite surprised to learn the *Isaac Todd* had not yet arrived

Pacific Fur Company clerk Gabriel Franchere recorded their arrival: "**They brought us some**

**Canadian newspapers, from which we learned that to date British arms had had the advantage. They also confirm the news that a frigate was to come to seize our former establishment and they even seemed surprised not to see the *Isaac Todd* in the roadstead.**"<sup>70</sup>

Alexander Henry the Younger found John Gorge McTavish and his party of Nor'Westers at Astoria

both the Nor'Westers and the Astorians were running low on trade goods

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<sup>70</sup> Gabriel Franchere, *Journal of a Voyage on the North West Coast of North America during the Years 1811, 1812, 1813 and 1814*, P. 131

Nor'Westers anxiously awaited the arrival of their supply ship and her armed escort  
all the time fearing the sudden appearance of an American warship

Meanwhile, the Astorians found themselves in limbo

it was impossible to estimate whether an American ship might reach the Columbia River  
anytime soon to carry them back to New York and it was too late in the fall  
to attempt to cross the Rocky Mountains

Nor'Westers had agreed that their former rivals could remain in their posts (until spring)  
when the overland route to the United States would be open

Nor'Westers hired several Astorian clerks and workers for their expanded operations

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT REMAINS STRANDED IN THE MARQUESAS ISLANDS

*Albatross* remained in the Marquesas Islands conducting business

while Wilson Price Hunt grew increasingly concerned and frustrated

*Albatross* finally set sail for the Hawaiian Islands -- November 23, 1813

Hunt continued to hope that John Jacob Astor had sent another supply ship  
that would stop in Hawaii to deliver him to Astoria

#### MYSTRY SHIP IS SIGHTED ENTERING BAKER BAY

Nervous Astorians and anxious Nor'Westers had been keeping a close eye  
on the mouth of the Columbia River for a ship

Confusion at Astoria became complete -- November 30, 1813

Joseph Ashton reported the vessel fired no signal guns and she was flying a white ensign  
this flag was used by both British and American ships

if she was American privateer she would bolster the American presence on the Columbia  
and what would be the status of North West Company's newly-acquired possession

if she was British where was her accompanying ship

Nor'Westers wondered how they would explain to the captain

that Astoria had been purchased and the ship's voyage was unnecessary

Whoever's ship she was bad weather kept her anchored isolated in Baker Bay

#### DUNCAN McDOUGALL AND JOHN GEORGE McTAVISH WORK OUT A PLAN

Duncan McDougall, who at least nominally remain in charge of Astoria,

launched a canoe manned by himself and former Astorians John Halsey, Joseph Ashton  
and several others -- mid-morning November 30, 1813

they paddled for the ship and were to tell the captain they were either American or British  
depending on the nationality of the ship

as an added precaution, Nor'Wester John George McTavish hastily filled two canoes with furs and supplies and scurried them to safety up the Columbia River out of sight behind Tongue Point three miles up the river there he waited for a signal from McDougall indicating the nationality of the ship if she was British all was well for the Nor'Westers if American McTavish would have a head start to carry the furs to the interior

#### CAPTAIN WILLIAM BLACK ANNOUNCES HIS ARRIVAL

*Raccoon*, *Cherub* and *Phoebe* provided a military escort for North West Company's *Isaac Todd* Captain William Black had orders to destroy any American settlements on the Pacific Coast *Raccoon* arrived ahead of the others

Captain Black dispatched an armed cutter to the fort to find a place to tie off

*Raccoon's* cutter had not proceeded very far when a large birchbark canoe approached carrying Duncan McDougall, chief agent of Astor's Pacific Fur Company

McDougall was ushered aboard the ship

Captain Black reported North West Company Partner John McDonald of Garth was aboard the *Raccoon* -- he was to take charge of Astoria for the North West Company also being carried as a passenger was the Kanaka (Hawaiian) John Coxe who had boarded the ship in London and had returned to Astoria because he was familiar with the Columbia River bar he acted as pilot

About 9:30 that night, the air was filled with songs, shouts and the splash of canoe paddles

John Halsey and several of the Astorians returned -- all were too drunk on wine to give details but they did identify the ship as the British sloop-of-war HMS *Raccoon* with twenty-six guns and 120 men commanded by Captain William Black and carrying North West Company partner John McDonald of Garth and John Coxe an old friend of the Astorians

*Raccoon's* mission and the location of the *Isaac Todd* remained unknown at the post

#### SAILORS ON THE RACCOON ANCHORED IN BAKER BAY WERE IN HIGH SPIRITS

North West Company agents had talked to the British sailors about vast amounts of contraband that would become theirs with the capture of Astoria

Nor'Wester John McDonald of Garth had kept up the excitement during the voyage

When they learned a war-like attack was impossible because Astoria was already British property by right of purchase their deep disappointment was obvious

Duncan McDougall who had sold Astoria to the North West Company

became so uncomfortable aboard the *Raccoon* that he was very happy to go ashore

## CHINOOK INDIANS ARE PREPARED TO STAND BY THEIR ASTORIA ALLIES

Chinook Chief Comcomly had seen the arrival of the “big war canoe” flying the British flag  
he knew of the war between the United State and Britain but did not know Astoria had been sold  
he thought the Astorians remained trading partners with the Chinooks because  
of the arrangement cemented by Duncan McDougall’s marriage to the chief’s daughter

## BAD WEATHER KEEPS THE *RACCOON* AWAY FROM ASTORIA’S WHARF

However, a longboat reached Astoria -- December 1, 1813  
in the longboat was North West Company Partner John McDonald of Garth  
and the first mate of the *Raccoon*  
both men were suffering from serious burns received in a cannon mishap  
John McDonald of Garth explained how the *Raccoon* had arrived at Astoria before the *Isaac Todd*

## CHINOOK CHIEF COMCOMLY COMES TO THE AID OF HIS FRIENDS

Duncan McDougall was busy making preparations for the arrival of Captain William Black  
this flurry of activity at Astoria which was not missed by Comcomly  
McDougall’s father-in-law, one-eyed Chinook Chief Comcomly, appeared in a canoe in full war dress  
accompanied by Chinook warriors painted and equipped in a warlike style -- December 5, 1813  
Comcomly was prepared to defend the Astorians from the British invaders  
in a long speech he professed great fondness for the Americans and he declared his intentions  
he offered 800 warriors to fight any British ship to come along  
Comcomly noted: **“King George has sent his great canoe to destroy the fort, and make slaves of all the inhabitants. Shall we suffer it? The Americans are the first white men that have fixed themselves in the land. They have treated us like brothers. Their great chief has taken my daughter to be his [wife]: we are, therefore, as one people.”**<sup>71</sup>

Comcomly offered to kill every one of King George’s men if they attempted to land  
he suggested the best approach was the ambush the new ship  
Comcomly’s son-in-law Duncan McDougall assured the Chinook chief  
that wholesale slaughter would not be necessary much to Comcomly’s shock and dismay  
he told the chief to lay down their weapons and wash off their war paint  
King George’s men would not harm the Americans or their Indian friends  
Comcomly was confused by the situation and it was only after repeated assurances  
that he said something to his warriors who shrugged and returned to their village

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<sup>71</sup> Washington Irving, *Astoria*, P. 442.

to lay down their weapons -- at least for the present

### CHIEF COMCOMLY CHANGES ALLIES

Rough weather continued to keep Captain William Black and his crew aboard the *Raccoon*  
Chief Comcomly was cagey enough to be aware of the new inferior position  
his son-in-law Duncan McDougall and his daughter shared  
Comcomly visited the ship and talked with Captain Black expressing his admiration  
for British ships and speaking contemptuously of the Americans  
Captain Black gave the chief an old British flag, a laced coat, a cocked hat and a sword  
as a token of friendship

### ASTORIA PASSES INTO THE HANDS OF THE BRITISH

Rough weather had kept the British sailors aboard the *Raccoon*  
finally, Astoria's little boat *Dolly* was able to ferry Captain William Black  
across the Columbia River with an escort of officers, sailors and marines  
Captain Black landed with a military flare at dusk -- December 12, 1813  
landing in the dark spared Captain Black the knowledge that Astoria  
was not a well armed post protecting the Columbia River  
which he had been prepared to destroy by bombardment if necessary  
he and his men stumbled profanely over rocks and driftwood and through puddles of rain water  
before they entered Astoria

Although Captain William Black knew Astoria now belonged to the North West Company  
he insisted on taking formal possession of the post -- December 12, 1813

he entered Astoria and organized a proper ceremony  
traders, military men, voyageurs and Kanakas assembled with their weapons  
around a newly constructed flagstaff in the square  
Captain Black took possession of Astoria in his Britannic Majesty King George III's name  
he lowered the Stars and Stripes and ran the British Union Jack up the flagpole  
in a dramatic gesture, Black smashed a bottle of Madeira (dessert wine) against the pole  
he changed the name of the post from Astoria to "Fort George" to show British ownership  
Black claimed the post and the surrounding country by right of wartime conquest  
three rounds of artillery and musket fire punctuated three cheers  
Indians who had offered to fight the British were present to witness  
cheers, toasts and artillery salutes by Nor'Westers and Astorians alike  
it was explained to them that this was a friendly transfer of ownership  
but they shook their heads grimly and considered their American friends defeated

Comcomly was heard to mutter the Americans had sold themselves into slavery without a fight  
the chief no longer took pride in being Duncan McDugall's father-in-law  
whenever he was asked about his son-in-law  
he replied that his daughter had made a mistake  
Kanaka John Coxe only recently returned from London stayed on at the now renamed Fort George  
with what remained of the original group of Astorians

#### NEXT MORNING REVEALED THE TRUTH ABOUT THE POST ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER

New arrivals looked at Astoria, now Fort George, in the light of day -- December 13, 1813

North West Company Governor John McDonald of Garth was disappointed

he saw **“only a few stores and barracks surrounded by a few imperfect stockades with two or three swivels mounted near the gate.”**<sup>72</sup>

Captain William Black was extremely shocked and unhappy with his prize

after hearing descriptions of the weapons he would have to employ to destroy Astoria

he had expected to find a place of importance

when he saw only stockades and bastions designed to defend against natives

he turned to Duncan McDougall and asked if this was the “real” fort

when told it was, he nearly doubled over with laughter: **“What, is this the fort I have heard so much of? Great God, I could batter it down with a four-pounder in two hours!”**<sup>73</sup>

When Captain Black learned the value of the furs that had passed from the Pacific Fur Company to the North West Company he was outraged and insisted on an inventory

he viewed the sale of the property as a clever act on the part of the Americans

since no prize remained for him to take

anger raged among the crew members -- all had been denied the spoils of war

they had hoped to confiscate the post's stores and furs as plunder

However, the mood lightened considerably when Comcomly sailed across the Columbia River to the trading post in full uniform flying the Union Jack

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT REACHES THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

Wilson Price Hunt had sailed on the *Albatross* from the Marquesas Islands

he arrived in the Hawaiian Islands -- December 20, 1813

where he expected to find a supply ship sent by John Jacob Astor

instead, he learned of the wreck of the *Lark* commanded by Captain Samuel Northrup

rushing to the island of Maui he picked up the survivors

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<sup>72</sup> James P. Ronda, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 296.

<sup>73</sup> James P. Ronda, *Astoria and Empire*, P. 296.

Wilson Price Hunt purchased the merchant brig *Pedler* for \$10,000 using John Jacob Astor's money  
Hunt placed Captain Northrup formerly of the *Lark* in command of the ship

#### DUNCAN McDOUGALL BECOMES A NORTH WEST COMPANY PARTNER

McDougall signed a secret agreement with John George McTavish making the former Astorian  
a partner in the North West Company -- December 23, 1813

McDougall told his new associates all he knew of John Jacob Astor's plans  
he even made copies of Astor's business letters for them to read

#### SEVERAL EMPLOYEES OF BOTH COMPANIES BECAME FREE TRAPPERS

Former Astorians John Day, William Canning (or Cannon), and Alexander Carson  
worked together as free trappers along the Willamette River  
as did former North West Company employee Registre Bellaire  
they had ended their relationship with their former employers -- winter of 1813-1814

#### LORD SELKIRK'S COLONISTS RETURN ONCE AGAIN TO FORT DAER

(An inadequate harvest forced Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's Red River colonists  
to travel back to Fort Daer [located near today's Pembina, North Dakota -- autumn 1813])

Snow fell thickly and lay in heavy drifts and buffalo migrated to better grazing regions

North West Company sold the Hudson's Bay Company colonists a few provisions  
at the same time Nor'Westers encouraged local Indians to harass the colonists

Fort Daer provided only extreme poverty -- many cases of frostbite were recorded  
starving bodies were wrapped only in rags before (spring 1814) arrived

Red River Colony Governor Miles Macdonell had led his colonists well in spite of the harsh winter  
however he was determined to assert his authority under Lord Selkirk's grant to establish a colony  
he was inclined to be stubborn and arrogant in his dealings with the North West Company

#### HMS *RACCOON* SAILS AWAY FROM FORT GEORGE (ASTORIA)

As the rainy month of December 1813 wore away with no sign  
of the North West Company supply ship *Isaac Todd*, Captain William Black lost patience  
satisfied his duty was completed he sailed out of the Columbia River -- January 1, 1814  
(actually, he had done his country a great disservice) by capturing a property  
that was already British

Fort George was left in the possession of North West Company  
which already owned the post, furs, supplies and trade goods

## NORTH WEST COMPANY RELATIONS WITH THE COLUMBIA RIVER NATIVES IS TENUOUS

North West Company had not developed any relationships with the Columbia River Indians because the company's employees were focused on acquiring the Pacific Fur Company's posts supplies, trade goods and employees

Indians along the Columbia River were aware their native enemies in the interior were being armed and equipped by Nor'Westers while they were being passed by as trade brigades traveled up and down the river

Indians living along the rapids and falls of the Columbia Cascades had long charged a toll to pass through their country -- North West Company felt no need to pay theft of trade goods along the portage routes was a well-developed source of Indian income

## REMNANTS OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY SUPPLY BRIGADE LEAVES FORT GEORGE

Two canoes loaded with fifteen people led by Alexander Stuart and James Keith set out from Fort George -- January 3, 1814

they carried seventeen packs of pelt each, dispatches, fifty guns, ammunition and other trade goods to the interior posts up the Columbia River

Stuart was to remain at Spokane House

Keith was to continue on to Kootanae House

## MORALE IS LOW AT FORT GEORGE

Victory over the Astorians brought no satisfaction to those Nor'Westers who remained in the Columbia Department -- morale collapsed completely

After watching the overland brigade paddle up the Columbia River

Alexander Henry the Younger, the North West Company partner left in charge of Fort George, lamented to his journal. **"Here we are at the mercy of chance on a barbarous coast, among**

**natives more inclined to murder us for our property than to assist us."**<sup>74</sup>

Henry, like his men, hated everything about Fort George

## ODD DISCOVERY ALONG AN OREGON BEACH

From earliest remembrance beeswax has been found buried deep in the sand on Nehalem Beach much of the wax was originally in blocks weighing about twenty pounds

each block was stamped with initials *I.H.S.* and *I.H.N.*

suggesting it was bound for West coast Catholic missions in California in fact, the Spanish ship *San Jose* had disappeared [June 1769]

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<sup>74</sup> David Lavender, *Land of Giants*, P. 107.

When Alexander Henry the Younger arrived as a leader of the North West Company Spring Brigade he first saw the beeswax and recorded the event in his journal -- 1814  
he wrote that Indians said it was from a Spanish ship whose crew had been killed by natives

#### GOVERNOR MILES MACDONELL EXERTS HIS AUTHORITY OVER RED RIVER COLONISTS

Red River Colony Governor Macdonell generated intense hostility among the traders and Metis he issued a proclamation announcing it was unlawful for any person who dealt in furs to remove from the Red River Colony supplies of meat, fish, grain, or vegetables unless a special license had been granted to the supplying agent -- January 8, 1814 punishment would be meted out to those who offended this official order  
Governor Macdonell's goal was to keep a supply of food in the colony for use by the settlers he was, however, issuing a challenge to the fur traders and Metis since his policy meant they had no right to conduct business with one another

Once Governor Macdonell published his edict he did not hesitate to enforce it information was received at Red River Colony that North West Company had stored a quantity of provisions in their trading post at the mouth of the Souris River it was clear they meant to send food supplies to trappers elsewhere in defiance of the decree  
Governor Miles Macdonell decided on strong action his secretary, John Spencer, was ordered to go to the Souris River in the capacity of sheriff accompanied by a strong guard to deliver a warrant when Spencer drew near the North West Company fort he found the gate closed he ordered his men to batter the gate in with their hatchets they obeyed and entered the fort taking charge of the contents of the storehouse six hundred bags of pemmican were seized and carried away

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY BRIGADE STOPS AT THE COLUMBIA RIVER CASCADES

Nor'Westers' supply brigade led by Alexander Stuart and James Keith camped at the Columbia River Cascades between the Long Narrows and the Short Narrows they were attacked by Wishram Indians at the Short Narrows who attempted to seize some of the property being carried along the portage route as tribute when the members of the supply brigade fled from the Cascades they left behind everything they were transporting including fifty guns and ammunition  
Nor'Westers' brigade returned to Fort George where they arrived -- January 9, 1814 they reported they had gone as far as the Short Narrows there they were ambushed by Indians on the north side of the Columbia River during the skirmish shots and arrows were exchanged

before both sides retreated two Indians were dead and one Nor'Wester was badly wounded

#### MARIE DORION REMAINS ALONE AT THE WINTER HUT KNOWN AS REED'S POST

Twenty-one year old Marie Dorion who with her sons Baptiste and Paul were members of John Reed's trapping expedition

they remained at the winter hunt (in the vicinity of present-day Caldwell, Idaho) while expedition leader John Reed, Marie's husband Pierre, Francis Landry, Jean-Baptiste Turcotte, Andre La Chapelle, Gilles Le Clerc and Kentuckians Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Reznor were out tending trap lines in the vicinity of the Snake River

One evening a friendly Shoshone Indian stopped by the hut -- around January 10, 1814 excitedly he told Marie that bad Indians called Dog-Ribs

had burned the abandoned the Oregon house built on the Weiser River they were now approaching the rude camp up the Boise River where her husband, Gilles Le Clerc and Jacob Reznor had established a trap line these bad Indians were dancing and singing war songs with murderous intent

Marie knew the Astorians had to be warned of the impending danger

she took a horse and her children ages five and two

and set off for her husband's camp to warn them of the impending danger

because the poor trail was covered with snow she lost her way in the night

but found cover before they all froze to death

(since the date of January 10 is only approximate it is possible only to estimate the other dates of the adventures of Marie Dorion and her two sons)

#### MARIE DORION CONTINES TO SEARCH FOR THE TRAPPING CAMP OF HER HUSBAND

Marie set out once again with her two sons -- early in the morning January 11, 1814

on the second day of her search for the trapping camp she saw heavy smoke ahead

thinking it might be an Indian village, she again took cover before they all froze to death

there they spent that night and all of the next day

#### MARIE DORION REACHES THE REMOTE TRAPPING CAMP

After fighting through mountainous snow for two bone-chilling nights

she came within view of the trappers' hut -- late evening January 12, 1814

she observed a lone man a short distance from the small building staggering as though deathly ill this man turned out to be Giles Le Clerc scalped and weak from the loss of blood

he told Marie all three trappers had been attacked while working their traps that morning

Pierre Dorion and Jacob Reznor did not survive

Le Clerc barely had the strength to deliver this information before he collapsed on the ground  
Although the trappers' hut was still standing Marie did not go into it because a noise nearby startled her  
she thought it had been made by the hostile Indians

however, what appeared to be bad luck actually turned out to be good luck

because the noise that she heard was made by horses once owned by the Dog-Rib Indians  
Marie Dorion knew with a war party in the area her only chance to survive was to flee immediately  
with great difficulty she caught two of the Indians' horses and put them to use

being as strong as most men she hoisted Giles Le Clerc onto one of the captured horses

after putting her boys on the other horse she told her older son Baptiste

to hold the reins of the horse carrying Le Clerc

mounting the horse ridden by her sons

she led the "string" into the woods so they would not be readily seen

under the cover of the brush she set out for John Reed's post

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY SENDS AN EXPEDITION TO RETRIEVE THEIR LOST GOODS

Immediately all of the North West Company men as well as Astorians at Fort George

who could be spared were assembled

sixty-nine men led by Alexander Henry the Younger laboriously paddled up the Columbia

in an armada of seven canoes to collect trade goods stolen at the Short Narrows

Alexander Henry the Younger led his expedition up the Columbia River in a violent storm

howling wind and rain held up their departure until 11:00 A.M. January 13, 1814

Before arriving at the site of the attack Alexander Henry sought the advice

of various friendly Indian village leaders living along the Columbia River

Chinook Chief Comcomly suggested the Nor'Westers kill all of the offending Indians

(probably with an eye toward acquiring their prime location at the Cascades)

Coalpo, headman of the Clatsop people, offered much the same advice

however, his wife, a woman of high birth and of some importance, was more helpful

she pointed out the Wishram Indians usually demanded blood vengeance

for the murder of any of their villagers -- but they might accept compensation

for the death of the two Indians killed at the portage skirmish instead

next chief to be consulted was Casino the leader of the Willamette people

he knew about the attack on Stuart's party as Alexander Henry the Younger reported: **"He informed us that the principal instigator of that affair was a [Wishram Indian] chief called Canook, of the Cathlathlaly village [located on the north side of the Columbia River] .... This fellow, it seems on seeing our party of two canoes only passing up river, formed a plan to pillage them. He assembled the**

**warriors of the two villages below and made a long speech, telling them that we never traded anything of consequence with them, but took our property further up, to our enemies, the Nez Perces, and that here was a favorable opportunity to better themselves. They agreed, and all went armed up to the [Wishram] Cathlayackty village [on the south side of the Columbia River] where the harangue was repeated. That village also joined the party and...they all came down to meet our people at the portage on the S[outh], with Canook as their war chief.”<sup>75</sup>**

Casino had more advice for the Nor’Westers

he pointed out that he had relatives living in the village that had attacked the brigade

thus he also could demand blood vengeance for the killings of the two natives

instead, he agreed to join the expedition and negotiate with the Wishram village chiefs

Alexander Henry the Younger was now aware of how closely knit the family relations of villagers living along the Columbia River really were

it would be necessary to use peaceful steps to avoid making the Willamettes and other Indians hostile toward the North West Company

Casino and his sister-in-law Coalpo’s wife both were hired to act as mediators

After several hours of hard labor the expedition put ashore on the north side of the Columbia River preparations for any encounter were made

#### PROGRESS IS SLOW UP THE COLUMBIA RIVER FOR THE NOR’WESTERS EXPEDITION

Alexander Henry the Younger reported in his journal -- January 14, 1814

**“...gale all night. At 6 A.M. we embarked. Our progress was slow....”**

cold weather impeded their progress up the Columbia River

twice the Nor’Westers were driven to the river bank to build fires for warmth

they crossed to the south side of the Columbia and used a line to tow their canoes upriver

Alexander Henry reported that he saw a village of seven houses across the river -- January 14

**“At ten we came nearly abreast of the Loto [Wishram Indian] village, where we saw the natives running into a low point of wood at the upper end of their village. They seemed to be in a great hurry and confusion.... We did not land, but desired Casino to assure them of our pacific [peaceful] disposition. After some time a chief came to the edge of the woods and made a long speech with many gestures, as if violently agitated.”**

An old woman was the first person who venture down to the canoes shortly followed by a man

Alexander Henry purchased sixteen dogs for food

his expedition returned to the south side of the Columbia and built fires to warm themselves

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<sup>75</sup> Alexander Henry and David Thompson, *Exploration and adventure among the Indians on the Red, Saskatchewan, Missouri and Columbia Rivers*, P. 798.

Returning to the Loto village Henry continued in his journal: "... [We] **demanded the guns and kettles** [be returned]. ...**A long parley was held.... They delivered to us nine loaded guns.**"<sup>76</sup>

it was hoped the peaceful nature of this encounter would convince the hostile villagers that the Nor'Westers were not seeking revenge

Alexander Henry noted: "**At 1 P.M. we continued our voyage... and soon came in sight of the second village, which is that of the Cathlathlaly tribe**" [on the north side of the Columbia River]

women, children and old men, it could be seen, were scattered in the woods

this was a sure sign the warriors were ready to fight

warriors were seen stationed on the hill and behind the trees and rocks

from the upper end of the village along the portage route as far as could be seen

Nor'Westers landed their canoes and watched as six Indians in a canoe arrived at the village

they were singing their war songs and were met by an old woman on the river bank

she was singing and dancing a war song

Coalpo's wife reported she was relative of one of the Indians shot in the skirmish

these gestures proved the natives did not believe the Nor'Westers' expedition was peaceful

Alexander Henry was very concerned about confronting the Indians but he felt he had no other choice

Nor'Westers crossed to the south side of the Columbia River leaving Casino to negotiate

Indians left the woods and assembled at a large house where a long parley was held

Henry noted: "...**Casino had made a short speech to them. The natives ... assemble[d] at Canook's house, where a long parley was held, with the result that Casino came back to us with four loaded guns, and thirty armed men accompanied him.**"<sup>77</sup>

Casino and thirty villagers, including Canook the war chief, warily crossed the Columbia River

Nor'Westers remained in their canoes and invited the Indians to sit on the beach

Indians remained very suspicious -- they all had their bows bent and arrows at the ready

a pipe was filled for them and the Nor'Westers demonstrated friendship

Canook smoked and came down to the waters edge but he was very wary

Nor'Westers crossed to Strawberry Island where a defensive position was built and guards posted

Henry recorded: "**We loaded our guns and put everything in order to pass up the rapids along Strawberry Island. ...We feared that, on our pushing over to the village, they would shoot at us in desperation, and thus oblige us to fire upon them -- a thing we ardently wished to avoid.**"<sup>78</sup>

Casino, who returned from the village, arrived on the island with two more guns

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<sup>76</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 96.

<sup>77</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 97.

<sup>78</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 97.

## MAURADING INDIANS REMAIN IN THE AREA WITH MARIE DORION

After three days of cold terrifying travel Marie saw a number of Indians on horseback traveling in an easterly direction -- January 14, 1814

she immediately dismounted with her children and helped Giles Le Clerc dismount they all concealed themselves

Fortunately they avoided being seen by the Indians

when she was sure they were once again safe they again set out

but had to proceed using the utmost caution

jolting of Giles Le Clerc's horse dislodged him from the animal's back

Le Clerc fell heavily on the ground and the impact opened his wounds

this fall, coupled with his injuries, made it impossible for him to travel further

that night they slept without a fire or water -- Marie kept her children warm in her arms

before morning Giles La Clerc died -- January 14

Marie covered his body with brush and snow

following this crude burial she put her children on the horses

Marie and her two boys set out for John Reed's post once again

## MARIE DORION REACHES JOHN REED'S POST

Marie Dorion and her two sons set out once again with the dawn -- January 15, 1814

after hours of travel they reached John Reed's post which was deserted

all around was the blood of a furious massacre

old Edward Robinson and his inseparable companion John Hoback lay dismembered

further up the Boise River lay John Reed in like condition

all had been murdered, scalped and cut to pieces

they had suffered every type of mutilation and indignity that could be conjured up

Marie, concerned for the safety of her two boys, hurried into the sheltering woods

where they spent a lonely, frightened, cold and hungry night with fresh terrors gripping her

## NOR'WESTERS PORTAGE THROUGH THE LONG NARROWS

Alexander Henry the Younger led his expedition to the Cathlathlaly village

on the north side of the Columbia River through an incessant rain -- 8:00 A.M. January 15, 1814

there they traded for nine dogs and a horse to be used as food

they remained for about three hours before beginning the portage along the Long Narrows

two of the three canoes filled with their provisions were almost lost in the effort

Nor'Westers next crossed to the south side of the Columbia River to portage the Short Narrows

this was where the skirmish had taken place

several armed Indians were seen on the river bank and in the woods

this portage is only 600 paces long but over very huge rough rocks

only one canoe remained to be carried across the portage but it was very weak and could break

Casino requested permission to go to Cathlayackty village on the south side of the Columbia

his relatives lived there and he could demand the stolen property be returned

this plan was agreed to and Casino set off across the Columbia River

When the Nor'Westers reached the east end of the portage they found kettles, hoops and staves

and a quantity of gunpowder laying in the sand

Alexander Henry walked to the village which stood in the woods some distance from the river

he noted: **"At 2 P.M. we went up to the Cathlayackty village [on the south side of the Columbia River] by land... we found on the beach Casino with seven natives who delivered to us one gun, a few kettles and two cotton shirts.... Nothing more being expected by fair means, we crossed the river to the other Cathlayackty village, consisting of eight houses...."**<sup>79</sup>

all of the Indians at Cathlayaokg village were inside with the exception of an old woman

she was singing, dancing and crying on the river bank

Henry reported in his journal: **"We landed Casino who parleyed with them while we went in search of a camp on an [Strawberry] island about half a mile above the village, telling him to bring to the kettles and guns to us there."**<sup>80</sup>

During this conference between Casino and the villagers the Nor'Wester continued upriver

to an island about half a mile above the village where Casino informed the villagers

they were to bring the guns, kettles and other stolen goods

Nor'Westers made camp for the night

Indians, probably slaves, came into the Nor'Westers' camp

they delivered a small cotton cloth torn into pieces

this was to say the Indians had returned some of the property

the rest would be delivered when the murderers were surrendered to be killed

in the North West Company camp this gesture led to confusion as to how to proceed

whenever the Wishram Indians brought a few items into the camp

they put themselves in the control of the Nor'Westers

some of the Nor'Westers wanted to hang the Indians at once

others wanted to continue negotiating

Clatsop Chief Coalpo was opposed to hanging the envoys

but instead proposed inviting the Wishrams to parley

and then seize them as hostages to exchange for the property

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<sup>79</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 98.

<sup>80</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 98.

this was the plan finally adopted

Nor'Westers remained in their camp and watched as four canoes loaded with baggage  
crossed over from the village on the north to the village on the south side of the Columbia River  
they began to believe Casino was playing a double role by serving both sides

however, he arrived in camp bringing sixteen Indians, five guns, a few kettles, rifle balls  
some dried salmon and a other odds and ends with him

Heavy rain hit again that night as guards remained vigilant

#### MARIE DORION PREPARES TO FLEE FROM THE THREAT OF THE MAURADING INDIANS

Marie Dorion remembered a large store of fish had been cached nearby -- morning January 16, 1814

she left her boys behind wrapped warmly in her buffalo robe and set out alone

she scouted the area for unfriendly Indians and decided to delay her search until night

she returned to her boys and lit a fire despite the risk of being seen

because she and her children were freezing

After darkness, she put out the fire and rolled her boys in the buffalo robe

then she went to the trappers' hut and ransacked it for food, coverings and weapons

she found some deer hides and a great deal of fish scattered about

she soon gathered up the hides and as much of the fish as she could carry

she returned to her children who were nearly frozen and were weak from hunger

despite the danger of discovery, she made a fire and cooked some of the fish

they had their first meal in three days -- January 16

That night she went back to the hut and gathered another load of fish

her exertions caused her to collapse from exhaustion and she was unable to move for three days

#### ALEXANDER HENRY'S EXPEDITION ARRIVES AT THE NEXT CASCADES VILLAGE

Morning was bright and clear with a hard frost and ice on the ponds -- January 16, 1814

Nor'Westers proceeded to the Cathlayaokg village (on the north side of the Columbia River)

where everything was quiet with the exception of the old woman lamenting her relative's death

Alexander Henry the Younger walked into the village where there were only a few men -- well-armed

an arrangement to buy horses was made

Canook, the war chief of the Cathlathlaly village, arrived in Cathlayaokg on horseback

he was accompanied by seven men from below the Short Narrows

other armed men were seen behind the houses of the village

by the time the horses arrived twenty armed men could be seen

when the first horse was shot fifty armed men came into view and took up defensive positions

Nor'Westers learned the Wishram Indians had not been intimidated

in fact, Canook proposed a counter demand:

when the whites had surrendered the killers of the two villagers

all of the stolen property would be returned

Alexander Henry intended to seize Canook but the chief remained out of reach among his companions

three horse were butchered and the Nor'Westers paddled to the south side of the Columbia River

landing Alexander Henry walked to Cathlayackty in the woods some distance from the river

he walked into the home of the old, very respectable looking portly chief

who received the Nor'Westers with great civility -- but no stolen goods were collected

After leaving the chief, Henry made camp at the Short Narrows where the scuffle had taken place

Casino arrived with a few more kettles and requested to sleep in the village that night

to enable him to find more of the stolen goods -- his request was granted

Coalpo's wife provided Alexander Henry information regarding Casino's treachery

he had offered her a bribe to join him in his efforts to deceive the Nor'Westers

she startled the Nor'Westers by declaring she also was a blood relative

of one of the Indians who had been killed at the portage

now the Clatsops like the Willamettes could demand payment for the dead natives

or extract vengeance for the killings

Indians long the Columbia River were obviously more interrelated than could have been imagined

revenge taken on the villagers who stole the goods could result in reprisals by united natives

North West Company employees at Fort George could not risk this possibility

as they were dependent on the Columbia River Indians for trade and provisions

#### ALEXANDER HENRY THE YOUNGER TAKES A HOSTAGE

Alexander Henry began to move his Nor'Westers and their baggage over the Short Narrows portage

as a few Indians watched but remained at a distance and unarmed -- 7:00 A.M. January 17, 1814

two horses and a dog were purchased

Casino was put on shore as the Nor'Westers crossed to Strawberry Island and their old camp

two old women stood on the river bank near the village

each holding a stick about five feet long singing, crying and dancing

Nor'Westers received several visitors at their camp

Alexander Henry reported: **“At noon Casio came over in a canoe accompanied by a [Wishram] chief, a boy, and a woman.... Three men ... were ordered to seize [the chief]. Casino explain[ed] to the prisoner our intention of keeping him until our property was returned; that not only the guns and kettles were wanted, but every article they had taken from us; ...and [we] were ready to fight if**

**necessary. We then called out to the Indians that we were ready for peace or war, as they thought fit....”<sup>81</sup>**

Nor’Westers prepared for battle by buying old horses and eighteen dogs for use as food when they were supplied for several days the Nor’Westers announced their intention to punish the offending Indians with death and burning their villages if the warriors did not return the guns and kettles - no mention of the other goods stolen was made because the guns were the most significant items lost

Changing strategy Alexander Henry the Younger decided to try to frighten the Wishram Indians he made a great show of the number of traders present and they fired their guns across the river to demonstrate it was possible to reach the Indians even across the river however they were very careful not to hit anyone he then called out to the Indians that he were ready for either peace or war it was up to the Indians to decide

horsemen could be seen riding at full speed to the villages above and below the rapids This ploy appeared to work as two of the wives of the hostage arrived with three guns and thirteen kettles while the village remained quiet

Twelve armed Indians arrived in the village from below the narrows and two canoes with armed men -- about 5:00

Prisoner’s two wives again came over with nine more guns and a few additional articles they held a long conference with the prisoner during which they all sobbed and cried Nor’Westers gave the Indians two days to deliver the remainder of the stolen goods before they would take the hostage with them out to sea

#### ALEXANDER HENRY THE YOUNGER WAITS FOR THE STOLEN GOOD TO BE RETURNED

Both the prisoner and Casino scolded the villagers for not delivering the stolen articles fast enough the same two women continued to deliver a few trifling goods -- January 18, 1814 it was reported that all of the stolen goods in the village had been surrendered it would be necessary to convince the surrounding villagers to cooperate After about three days at the Cascades supplies were running low for the Nor’Westers but the Indians stopped selling horses and dogs to them now food became a problem for Alexander Henry the Younger During a long conference it became obvious no further deliveries of goods would be forthcoming Indian riders were seen traveling to the neighboring villages

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<sup>81</sup> W. Storrs Lee, *Washington State*, P. 99-100.

Winter storms accompanied by a driving rain hit in the evening

#### NOR'WESTERS REMAIN IN THEIR CAMP ON STRAWBERRY ISLAND

A few more articles were delivered to Alexander Henry the Younger -- morning January 19, 1814  
but nothing more appeared to be coming

Nor'Westers loaded their canoes and prepared to depart much to the concern of their prisoner  
his wives delivered a few more items and begged the Nor'Westers to wait one more day

this was agreed to with the understanding that all of the stolen goods must be returned

Casino was sent to the Cathlayackty village to ask his relatives to deliver what they could

as was Coalpo's wife -- both were offered a bale of trade goods if everything was returned

Camp was broken and the Nor'Westers drifted to the lower end of Strawberry Island

where a new camp was made at a pleasant spot as the Nor'Westers waited to see what resulted

When Casnio arrived at the village was immediately surrounded by armed Indians

he made a long speech and began walking upstream along the river bank followed by sixteen men

Indians conducted a series of meeting in their village

Alexander Henry fired a brass cannon and several sky rockets to harass them

#### MARIE DORION AND HER CHILDREN FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES

After she had recovered from her three days of exhaustion Marie packed the fish  
and a small quantity of beaver meat on the two horses

she placed her sons Baptiste and Paul each atop load -- January 19, 1814

Taking the reins of one horse she led the two horses toward distant Astoria and safety

she would have to cross the Snake River which she most likely swam despite the intense cold

#### NOR'WESTS REMAIN IN CAMP

Both of the prisoner's wives again came into camp with a few trifling articles

they said there was nothing more to be found -- January 20, 1814

they had even sold a slave to Canook to purchase the stolen beads he possessed

there was no hope of receiving more

During a meeting the Wishram Indians asked if the Nor'Westers

were going to provide any compensation for the two natives killed in the skirmish at the rapids

Alexander Henry decided to present the remainder of the stolen goods as compensation

even though the Indians had been the aggressors

in this way the family members of the slain men were compensated, war was avoided

and efforts could be undertaken to enhance interracial relationships

## ALEXANDER HENRY THE YOUNGER RETURNS TO FORT GEORGE

Henry concluded his journal entries regarding this incident -- January 21, 1814

**“There being no hope of recovering anything more, we prepared to depart.”<sup>82</sup>**

Nor’Westers embarked from Strawberry Island -- 9:00 A.M.

they dropped down to the Loto Village with the prisoner

the Nor’Westers were accompanied by a canoe carrying his two wives, children and relatives

When the Loto Village was reached no one was to be seen

only two houses had smoke rising from them and the others appeared abandoned

with their doors were barricaded

Casino and Coalpo’s wife went up to the houses

soon armed men were seen coming from the woods in every direction

Alexander Henry and his men stood on the beach and attempted to convince the Indians

to give up more of the stolen goods -- with very limited success

Alexander Henry berated the prisoner and this message was loudly repeated by Casino to the villagers

Henry gave the prisoner two blankets and a few other articles including a North West Company flag

and placed him on the beach much to the joy of his family and relatives

he was instantly taken to the houses and the Nor’Westers pushed off

as pleased to be on their way home as the Indians were to be rid their troublesome visitors

## WILSON PRICE HUNT SAILS FROM THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

Captain Samuel Northrup, formerly of the ill-fate *Lark*, was still in the Sandwich Islands

when Wilson Price Hunt arrived from the Marquesas Islands [December 20, 1813]

Hunt purchased the ship *Pedler* and put Captain Northrup in command

*Pedler* set sail from Oahu bound for Astoria -- January 22, 1814

with the intention of removing all of the Pacific Fur Company property as quickly as possible

to be taken to the Russian-America Company’s New Archangel (Alaska)

to prevent it from being captured by the British Navy

then he would take the Pacific Fur Company Kanakas back to the Sandwich Islands

and the other employees on to New York

## MARIE DORION MAKES CAMP TO WAIT OUT THE WINTER

Marie and her sons Baptiste and Paul traveled away from the death and desolation that was Reed’s post

for a week they traveled only at night as she led the two animals through the snow

more concerned for her children than for herself she occasionally built a fire to warm them

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<sup>82</sup> W. Storrs Lee. *Washington State*, P. 100.

At length they reached the Blue Mountains near the upper Walla Walla River  
she pushed on following the river in a northwesterly direction  
until one of the horses could no longer continue  
faced with this serious dilemma Marie stopped and made camp in a wild lonely ravine  
beside a spring in the Blue Mountains -- January 26, 1814  
this became her place of winter refuge (near present-day La Grande, Oregon)

Marie proceeded to kill both animals

she lit a fire and smoked the meat so there would be no waste  
she hung the meat in a tree for use as their winter food

Marie constructed a tepee from a buffalo robe and three deer skins, pine bark and cedar branches  
she added the horse hides to the hut

she then packed snow around the crude habitation for additional warmth  
her only tool was a knife whose blade was used to butcher the animals, scrape the hides, cut poles,  
peel bark and cut all of the fuel she used during her nearly two month stay with her two sons  
(best estimate is from approximately January 26 to March 23, 1814)

#### UNKNOWN SHIP IS SITED AT FORT GEORGE

Alexander Henry the Younger, the North West Company partner in charge of Fort George,  
was standing at on post's stockade platform -- February 28, 1814  
he spotted two Indians waving at a distant object  
moments later an Indian women at the gate of the post told Henry  
that a ship had been seen outside the Columbia River bar

This news raced through Fort George

soon dozens of traders ran down to the shore for a closer look

Alexander Henry the Younger walked down to Point George hoping to identify the ship  
three shots were fired by the post's cannon

but no response came from the ship and her colors remained unknown  
they even set signal fires to get the ship's attention but to no avail

As darkness came on everyone at the fort wondered about the ship's origin

she was a brig with black sides and a white bottom but she displayed no flag

however her lines convinced some at the post that she was an American privateer  
some of the traders even bet hats and furs on her nationality

Nor'Westers feared an attack and made preparations to defend their post

#### MYSTERY SHIP IS IDENTIFIED AS THE *PEDLER*

Chinook Indians brought positive identification of the ship as the chartered American brig *Pedler*

they reported she was carrying Wilson Price Hunt  
Hunt sent a letter from the ship to his fellow Pacific Fur Company employees  
at Fort George (which Hunt believed was still Astoria) -- evening of March 1, 1814  
he noted that while searching for a ship in Owyhee (Oahu)  
he had learned of the wreck of John Jacob Astor's supply ship *Lark*  
rushing to Maui he had picked up the survivors

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT ARRIVES AT FORT GEORGE (ASTORIA)

Wilson Price Hunt learned that instead of abandoning Astoria as had been planned  
Astor's remaining partners had sold the post and its contents to the North West Company  
Hunt was surprised to learn that Astoria was now under the British flag  
worried about his own safety, Hunt asked for a meeting aboard the *Pedler*  
Duncan McDougall, who was already making arrangements to join the North West Company,  
refused to meet with Wilson Price Hunt aboard the *Pedler* but a delegation was sent  
John McDonald of Garth, Thomas McKay and Donald Stuart  
visited with Hunt aboard the *Pedler* -- March 2, 1814  
details of the sale of the post were explained to John Jacob Astor's partner

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT GOES ASHORE TO FORT GEORGE

Talks began between Hunt and the Nor'Westers at the post -- March 4, 1814  
Hunt challenged the values placed on various goods and provisions  
but his real effort was to lure as many Pacific Fur Company employees as possible  
away from North West Company employment  
Nor'Westers worked equally hard to maintain their expanded work force  
by the end of the day, four of Astor's former clerks had agreed to rejoin with Hunt  
Wilson Price Hunt returned to the *Pedler* where he remained for several days  
Discussions resumed at Fort George -- March 8  
Hunt insisted the trade goods had been sold too cheaply  
heated talks and broken agreements were exchanged day after day  
finally both sides confirmed the agreed-to terms -- March 20, 1814

#### ASTOR'S EMPLOYEES DECIDE WHETHER TO STAY OR LEAVE THE REGION

John Jacob Astor's employees who wished to go home were allowed passage to Canada  
with the North West Company to be reimbursed from the proceeds of the sale of Astoria  
others were taken into the service of the North West Company  
Most of Astor's old partners accepted positions with the North West Company

Duncan McDougall was the key man in the transaction to sell Astoria  
he soon became North West Company partner  
he remained at Fort George and served the Canadian company as Chief Trader  
although this was a demotion from the position with which Astor had honored him  
this situation aroused suspicions he may have been disloyal to Astor all along  
two of Astor's partners remained in his service

(Robert Stuart and Ramsay Crooks were already in St. Louis

both served Astor in the Great Lakes region after their return from the Pacific coast)

Many of Astor's clerks and laborers went with the new owner and became Nor'Westers  
twenty former Astorians remained in the Columbia Department to impact the history of the region  
Duncan McDougall, Ross Cox, Alexander Ross, John Day and Donald McClennan  
were among those who entered North West Company's service  
twelve former Astorians retired and settled in the middle of the Willamette Valley  
William Canning (Cannon), Alexander Carson, Marie Dorion, Joseph Gervais,  
Thomas McKay, Louis I. LeBonte, Michel Laframbose, Etienne Lucier, Sailor Jack,  
Baptiste Dorion, Jean Baptiste Dubrieul and Jean Baptiste Desportes McKay  
all married Indian women and lived by hunting, fishing and trapping  
three other Astorians stayed on at Fort George but did not settle in the Willamette Valley  
John Coxe, Francois Payette and George Ramsay  
three of the Astorians died soon after the sale of the post

#### JOHN REED'S PARTY HAD TO BE BROUGHT BACK TO ASTORIA

(It was not known at Fort George that John Reed's expedition into the Snake River region  
no longer existed)

Since John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company had been sold to the North West Company  
it was not necessary for Astorians to hike across the continent to return to the East  
as had been planned the year before

Astor's former partners decided to send out messengers to announce the situation  
to John Reed and his trappers who had been preparing to supply those trekking East

#### MARIE DORION SETS OUT ONCE AGAIN FOR ASTORIA

Marie Dorion and her sons six years old Baptiste and three year old Paul had remained safely hidden  
in an encampment (since the end of January)

because by this time the food was nearly all gone -- around March 23, 1814

her decision to move may have hinged on the lack of provisions  
another decisive factor may have been a break in the weather

Marie packed the remainder of her provisions and carried them on her back -- March 1814  
as she led her helpless three and five year old children across a ridge of the Blue Mountains  
but she became snow blind the second day out and was incapacitated for three days  
When she regained her sight Marie set out once again  
she and her two children reached the Walla Walla River and she spent the remainder of the month  
following downriver toward the mouth -- the confluence with the Columbia River  
they must have walked a pitifully few number of miles because of their weary condition  
she had to carry the children much of the way

#### BRIG *PEDLER* LEAVES FORT GEORGE WITH SEVERAL ASTORIANS ABOARD

John Jacob Astor's leased ship was loaded with supplies and Wilson Price Hunt -- April 1, 1814  
Hunt left Fort George bound first to New Archangel, Russian-America (Sitka, Alaska)  
then back down the coast to California, Mexico and on to the Eastern Seaboard and New York  
Hunt took several Pacific Fur Company clerks and employees who had elected to go home by sea  
Bad weather forced the *Pedler* to remain inside the Columbia River bar overnight  
*Pedler* cleared the bar of the Columbia River -- April 2, 1814

#### ALEXANDER ROSS LEADS THE NOR'WESTERS' BRIGADE FROM FORT GEORGE

Former Astorian Alexander Ross now with North West Company led ten canoes  
up the Columbia River to Athabasca Pass on their way to Montreal -- April 4, 1814  
Ross escorted the Pacific Fur Company partners, clerks and laborers who wished to return to the East  
John George McTavish traveled to Montreal to make his report to company headquarters  
Donald "Fats" McKenzie, David Stuart, John Clarke, Gabriel Franchere and others accompanied  
in all ninety men in ten canoes began the journey to Montreal  
Alexander Ross also carried orders to pick up the John Reed's trapping party  
somewhere on the Snake River plains

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY MEN REMAINING AT FORT GEORGE SETTLE IN

Alexander Henry the Younger remained the partner in charge of Fort George  
he stood with his remaining men and watched the brigade paddle up the Columbia River  
Henry authorized two chief traders who took up their duties  
Duncan McDougall, the former Astorian who had been a leader in the transaction to sell Astoria,  
became a North West Company partner and was named chief trader  
although this was a demotion from the position with which Astor had honored him  
McDougall's acceptance of any position with the North West Company  
aroused suspicions that he may have been disloyal to Astor all along

McDougall's father-in-law, Chief Comcomly also was not especially happy  
with his change to a lower in status

James Keith also was made a chief trader at Fort George -- 1814-[1818]

#### MARIE DORION AND HER CHILDREN CONTINUE THEIR INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

Marie Dorion and her sons Baptiste and Paul had little to eat as they descended the Walla Walla River  
in an effort to reach the Columbia River and possible help from trappers traveling that river  
After fifteen days of walking through the Blue Mountains they reached the plains -- April 7, 1814  
they suffered intense hardships due to lack of food

there had been little to eat for the past week and nothing at all to eat for the last two days

Marie saw smoke in the distance

she left her children wrapped in a buffalo robe and set out in an effort to reach a friendly village

she was too exhausted to walk and was only scarcely able to crawl

occasionally she slept -- which was nature's way of recouping her strength

#### WALLA WALLA INDIANS CARE FOR MARIE DORION AND HER CHILDREN

Marie Dorion dragged herself into a camp of Walla Walla Indians -- noon April 8, 1814

these Indians proved to be friendly and she was treated kindly by them

she told them where her children could be found and immediately a search party went out

they found it easy to follow the trail made by her body as she had dragged herself along

Marie's two sons, Baptiste and Paul, were brought into the village that night

Marie was overjoyed to learn they were still alive

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY'S *ISAAC TODD* FINALLY ARRIVES AT FORT GEORGE (ASTORIA)

*Isaac Todd* was the slow-moving North West Company merchant vessel armed with twenty cannons  
under the command of Captain Fraser Smith

she arrived at Fort George and anchored at Baker Bay -- April 17, 1814

she found the Union Jack flying over the former Fort Astoria now rechristened Fort George

*Isaac Todd* carried everything necessary for trade throughout the entire Columbia Department

in addition to trade goods and supplies, she brought additional men

who were added to those already employed by North West Company

this provided a force sufficient to occupy the entire region

*Isaac Todd* also brought four head Spanish cattle from California -- two bulls and two heifers

Most significantly aboard the *Isaac Todd* was the new head of the Columbia Department

irascible old Donald McTavish -- a poorer choice could hardly have been made

(he is not to be confused with John George McTavish who was then returning to Montreal)

Governor Donald McTavish was a partner in the North West Company  
he had been lured from retirement in England with the offer of this choice position

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY GOVERNOR DONALD McTAVISH BRINGS A COMPANION

Governor Donald McTavish was determined to bring with him aboard the *Isaac Todd*

what he considered to be the comforts of civilization

among them an ample supply of hard liquor

and a white mistress -- Jane Barnes<sup>83</sup>

she was a lively, flaxen-hair, blue-eyed, rosy cheeked barmaid from Portsmouth, England

she was the first white woman to arrive in the Pacific Northwest

she had taken passage to see the world -- under the protection of Donald McTavish

McTavish made every effort to save her from the boredom of a long ocean voyage

#### JANES BARNES IS AN IMMEDIATE ATTRACTION AT FORT GEORGE

Jane Barnes brought an extravagant wardrobe with her to the Pacific coast

one day her hair would be decorated with feathers and flowers

the next day her hair would be placed in braids with no enhancements

each costume she donned excited wonder and admiration

Indians flocked to the white woman -- the first they had ever seen

she and her wardrobe were a constant wonder to them

Jane appears to have relished the attention of the trappers and traders

she ruled Fort George as a "First Lady" might, commanding attention wherever she went

she was known to stroll through the fort in her finery

dinnertime usually found her promenading along the sandy banks of the Columbia River

because of the attention she drew from whites and Indians alike

Governor Donald McTavish could be found walking with her to provide protection

Astorians' little schooner *Dolly* named originally for John Jacob Astor's wife,

was promptly rechristened by Governor Donald McTavish as the *Jane*

#### MARIE DORION AND HE CHILDREN CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY TO ASTORIA

Marie, her sons Baptiste and Paul gratefully rested in the Walla Walla camp for nearly two weeks

after which time she insisted on going to the Columbia River

where she hoped to meet white traders traveling down the river

friendly Walla Walla Indians who had rescued the family

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<sup>83</sup> Note: Jane Burns in Alexander Henry's journal; Jane Barnes in Ross Cox's account.

took them to the Columbia -- about April 22, 1814

#### NOR'WESTER'S EASTERN BRIGADE REACHS THE WALLA WALLA RIVER

Nor'Wester Alexander Ross and his brigade accompanied by Astorians returning East reached the mouth of the Walla Walla River three hundred miles upriver from Fort George, members of the North West Company's brigade saw three canoes putting out from shore they were surprised to hear a child calling out *Arretez donc, Arretez donc!*  
French for stop, stop!

Alexander Ross stopped his flotilla of canoes until the strangers could reach them to their surprise they recognized who had hailed them

Marie Dorion, the wife of Pierre Dorion, and their two children, Baptiste and Paul they had been brought here by friendly Walla Walla Indians only a few days before in fact, Ross had been assigned the responsibility of finding Clerk John Reed and his trapping party which included Marie and her children

#### MARIE DORION IS REUNITED WITH WHITE TRADERS ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Nor'Westers and Astorians listened in awe to the tale Marie recounted using French and sign language of the loss of her husband, Pierre Dorion, and the rest of the John Reed party her listeners were horrified to learn that all of the trapping party except herself and two sons had been cruelly slaughtered this attack appeared to be entirely unprovoked some Astorians believed it was the act of a roving band of Blackfoot Indians others ascribed the attack, perhaps more accurately, to the tribe of Nez Perce Indians acting in revenge for the hanging of one of their people by John Clarke

Alexander Ross and Gabriel Franchere were both present while Marie told her story they wrote what she told them in their journals

both reported their amazement that Marie and her children had survived

Ross invited Marie to join North West Company's brigade

and return to her own people in the East but Madame Dorion declined

no augment would deter her from her plan to return to Astoria (Fort George)

so the members of the North West Company brigade boarded their canoes

and continued on their way as she bade them good-bye

Marie Dorion eventually made her return to Fort George with her tale of terror

officials there did not offer any special reward to her for the survival skills she demonstrated under conditions that killed nine men

## “MADAM” MARIE ALOE (IOWA) DORION BECAME A DEEPLY RESPECTED WOMAN

Marie Dorion settled on French Prairie in Oregon’s fertile Willamette Valley with her children where her white neighbors called her **“an impressive and admirable woman”**<sup>84</sup> she was often referred to by the title “Madam”

Madam Marie Dorion moved north to Fort Okanogan and married again this time to Louis Joseph Vagnier (or Vanier) probably in a tribal ceremony [1818] her first daughter, Marguerite, was born [1820 or 1821] before her husband was killed by natives

Marie’s third marriage was to Jean Baptiste Toupin [about 1824] who was an interpreter at Fort Nez Percés at the time she bore two more children, Francois and Marianne, before this marriage was solemnized by Father Francis Norbert Blanchet [July 19, 1841] he gave her the tile “Marie Aloe” (Iowa -- in honor of her tribe) (Francois Toupin’s descendants are still living in Oregon)

Madam Marie Aloe (Iowa) died at French Prairie [September 5, 1850]

she was the only woman member of the Astor Expedition that had traveled overland from St. Louis, Missouri to what became Astoria, Oregon [1811–1812] caring for two babies and giving birth to a third who died during the journey several historical sites along the Walla Walla River commemorate Marie Dorian as the “Madonna of the old Oregon Trail”

according to an article written by Harriet D. Munnick for *The Mountain Series*: **“She is buried ‘under the steeple’ of the original log church at St. Louis [Oregon]. When a frame church was built a few rods further to the west some years later, the exact site of her grave was lost; a nearby marker indicated only the general area where she lies.”**

being buried “under the steeple” in the Catholic cemetery was an honor and sign of reverence given to this Indian woman by her community and church

When the original church burned down [1880] and the current church was built, the location of Marie Dorion’s grave was forgotten (and remains unknown to this day) it was only when the church register was translated from French into English, many years after the original church had burned down that it was learned Madam Marie Aloe (Iowa) was buried there

## JANE BARNES CAUSES A DIPLOMATIC RIFT AT FORT GEORGE

Jane Barnes, left to her own devices, caused a great deal of controversy at Fort George

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<sup>84</sup> National Women’s History Museum

which led to a diplomatic rift -- this made her presence at the post a liability  
Chief Comcomly's son Cassakas visited Fort George one day dressed in his finest costume  
with his face painted red and body reeking of whale oil

he told Ms. Barnes if she would become his wife

he would send a hundred choice sea otter skins to her relatives

he would never ask her to carry wood, dig roots, or do other manual labor

she would rule over his other four wives

she could wear her own clothes

he would allow her as many pipes of tobacco a day as she wished

when he was rejected Cassakas plotted to abduct Jane Barnes during one of her riverside strolls

it became necessary to restrict her walks to the neighborhood of the Fort George

and always with a protector

#### LORD SELKIRK'S COLONISTS ONCE AGAIN TRAVEL TO THE RED RIVER

After spending their second harsh (winter) at Fort Daer (located near today's Pembina, North Dakota)

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's colonists traveled north to the Red River -- spring 1814

they resolved never again to set foot within the gates of Fort Daer

where hardships and suffering had been overwhelming

Lord Selkirk's Hudson's Bay Company Red River Colony (later Winnipeg, Manitoba) was located  
directly across the main North West Company supply route

North West Company voyageurs could be cut off from their Montreal supplies

#### NORTHWEST COMPANY GOVERNOR DONALD McTAVISH MUST VISIT OTHER POSTS

Governor Donald McTavish was required to visit outposts as part of his duties

McTavish was forced to ask Alexander Henry the Younger to serve as "associate protector"

for Jane Barnes while the governor traveled throughout the region

Jane, accepting Alexander Henry's offer for protection

while Governor McTavish was away she made herself at home in Henry's living quarters

Irritable and grouchy old Governor McTavish returned from a trip to the outlying posts

to discover Jane Barnes preferred to be protected by Alexander Henry

a natural amount of jealousy ensued

after a few sharp words Governor McTavish contented himself

with a Chinook consort incongruously known as "Mrs. Clapp"

#### DR. JOHN McLOUGHLIN RISES IN THE NORTH WEST COMPANY

(Dr. McLoughlin's success as a trader and leader of men were recognized by his superiors

which allowed him to successfully rise in the ranks of the North West Company [1811]

his first son, Joseph, was born to a Chipewyan Indian woman that year

whether they had been legally married is still unknown

John McLoughlin married Marguerite Wadon McKay [1812]

she was the Metis daughter of a Swiss trader and Cree Indian mother

and the widow of Alexander McKay who had been lost with the *Tonquin*

Marguerite was thirty-five, eight years older than he was, when McLoughlin met her

she was the mother of Thomas McKay

who was fourteen when the *Tonquin* disaster took his father

Dr. McLoughlin next was given the title Chief Trader at Fort William on Lake Superior

North West Company's headquarters at Thunder Bay)

Dr. John McLoughlin was granted a full partnership in the North West Company -- 1814

after eighteen years in the fur trade he was placed in charge of one of four company departments

(fur trading regions)

#### FORT WILLIAM ON LAKE SUPERIOR WAS THE NOR'WESTERS' INTERIOR HEADQUARTERS

Fort William was a good sized village and the heart and soul of the North West Company

located on Lake Superior's Thunder Bay -- it had been named in honor of William McGillivray

the chief director of the North West Company

in addition to being the company's headquarters the post served as supply depot,

starting point for supply brigades and fur depository

from [May to September] a flotilla of boats and canoes would arrive from Lachine, Quebec

carrying goods to be sent inland to barter for furs

these boats would then set out on their homeward journey to Fort William

carrying pelts collected from far and near

every summer North West Company partners-in-the field arrived to meet in Fort William

with two or three principal partners who arrived from Montreal

#### HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY IS FORCED TO CHANGES ITS BUSINESS OPERATION

Over the years Hudson's Bay Company has succumbed to the ills of old age

it had grown overconfidence in its own power and prestige

it suffered from indolence and a loss of vitality

By contrast North West Company had youth, vigor, aggression and an obvious competitive spirit

competition with North West Company forced Hudson's Bay Company to change

its system of trade and establish posts in the interior

rather than waiting for the Indians to come to them

## WILSON PRICE HUNT ARRIVES AT NEW ARCHANGEL ABOARD THE *PEDLER*

Wilson Price Hunt arrived at New Archangel (Sitka) Russian-America (Alaska) aboard the brig *Pedler* under the command of Captain Samuel Northrup Astorian clerk Russell Farnham had been assigned to carry Pacific Fur Company records and the proceeds of the sale of Astoria to John Jacob Astor's New York office Farnham was dropped off at New Archangel (Farnham took the ship *Forester* to Kamchatka, Russia and traveled across Siberia on foot to St. Petersburg, Russia and Copenhagen, Denmark before sailing on to New York City this journey took almost three years to complete) (*Pedler* carrying Wilson Price Hunt and the other Astorians sailed for California, Mexico and on to New York City)

## UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATES WITH GREAT BRITAIN TO END THE WAR

Negotiations continued in Ghent, Belgium to conclude United States and British hostilities Congress was unaware of events on the Columbia River federal administration officials instructed its peace commissioners to keep Astoria in mind when discussing term of peace with Great Britain John Jacob Astor had his own representative present in Ghent he was eager to learn what could be, and finally what was, to be done about Astoria Secretary of State James Monroe wrote instructions expressing that the British had no right to any territory whatever on the Pacific coast he asserted: **“On no pretext can the British Government set up a claim to territory south of the northern boundary of the United States.”**<sup>85</sup>

U.S. Congress also passed a law that forbid any British or Canadian business interests to trade with the Native Americans of the Missouri River Basin -- 1814

## DOUBLE TRAGEDY ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER

North West Company Governor Donald McTavish and Alexander Henry the Younger were intent on transporting goods from the *Isaac Todd* to Fort George together they put out from the fort with a crew of six in a small single-sailed, split-cedar boat from the *Isaac Todd* ballasted with stones heavy surf was running -- legend adds, perhaps unjustifiably, that both men were inebriated *Isaac Todd's* boat swamped and capsized at five o'clock on the windy afternoon -- May 22, 1814

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<sup>85</sup> American State Papers, III, P. 731.

only one of the hands managed to swim to shore

loss of Governor Donald McTavish and Alexander Henry the Younger

was a double tragedy for Jane Barnes

Alexander Henry left a narrative of his exploits: *The Journal of Alexander Henry, Jr.*

which covered his wanderings as a fur trader from [1799] to the closing of Astor's outpost

(this is one of the most important documents in Pacific Northwest history today)

Doctor Swan, who had arrived at Fort George aboard the *Isaac Todd*, offered his services as protector as did almost all of the men at the post -- but Jane Barnes showed little interest

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY'S FORT GEORGE IS DESCRIBED

Fort George was visited by free-lance shipper Captain Peter Corney -- July 7, 1814

he noted: **"The North West Company's Establishment lies about seven miles from Point Adams, on the south side of the river, above a small bay, where ships are in great safety out of the strength of the tide. There is a very good wharf with a crane for landing or shipping goods. The settlement is a square of about two hundred yards, surrounded by pickets about fifteen feet high, and protected by two bastions, one on the southwest and the other on the northeast corner. Each of these bastions mounts eight guns, four and six pounders; and three are loopholes for musketry. The grand entrance is through a large double gate on the north side above which there is a platform for the sentry to walk; on this are several swivels [guns] mounted.**

**"As you enter the fort, or square, there is a two-story house, with two long eighteen-pounders in front of it on the south side; on the east is a range of low buildings where the clerks have their apartments, and in the same row stands the grand hall where the gentlemen assemble to dinner, etc. The houses for the men are on the same side and behind the two-story or governor's house. In the southwest corner is the magazine well secured; along the west side stands a range of stores, tailor's shop and Indian trading shop; in the southeast corner the blacksmith's and cooper's shops, and on the northeast corner a granary for the corn. In the northwest corner stands a very high flagstaff, erected by the crew of the *Columbia*. The whole of the settlers here do not exceed 150 men, most of whom keep Indian women, who live inside of the fort with them. Nearly all the settlers are Canadians. The clerks and partners are Scotch....**

**"The Company have a train of posts from the Columbia River to the Rocky or Stony Mountains, and from thence to Montreal. All the furs that are collected on the west side of these mountains are brought to the Columbia, and sent from thence to China; and all that are collected on the east side are sent to Montreal and from thence to England...."<sup>86</sup>**

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<sup>86</sup> W. Storrs Lee. *Washington State*, P. 104-105.

## NORTH WEST COMPANY PARTNERS MEET AT FORT WILLIAM

North West Company partners-in-the-field met for their annual western rendezvous

held at the Nor'Westers' Fort William headquarters on Lake Superior -- July 11, 1814

Company partners debated several issues of primary concern to the company:

- removal of the Pacific Fur Company from the Columbia Department was discussed

minutes of this meeting read: **"...the first Business introduced was the transactions in the Columbia last Winter & Fall,... no material objection was made to the terms on which the Purchase from the Pacific Fur Company had been made, except as to the Payments, the near period at which they are fixed being considered highly advantageous to the concern.... The Advantages derived from the Arrangement were deemed considerable, by means of it the Posts were supplied for the Winter...and it greatly facilitated the getting out of the Country our Competitors the American Fur Company."**<sup>87</sup>

•plans were made to develop a much desired sea approach to the Pacific coast: **"If a favourable connection could be made with an American House -- it was the general opinion -- it should be adopted for facilitating the Business in China"**<sup>88</sup>

- Hudson's Bay Company's Red River Colony had reached a critical juncture

Nor'Westers' their hope that Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's colony

would languish and die failed -- instead, the Red River Colony was flourishing

and with strength the colonists were becoming aggressive

bitter animosity was expressed against Lord Selkirk and the Hudson's Bay Company

something must be done to crush this troublesome settlement

partners decided to persuade as many Red River Colony settlers as possible

to desert the colony -- then arouse the Indians against those who remained

notice was sent to the Hudson's Bay Company to leave the area of the Red River;

Two North West Company partners-in-the-field were sent to deal with the Red River Colony settlers

Duncan Cameron was a sinister character and the more resourceful of the two Nor'Wester agents

he was a born actor -- he decided to visit the settlers to deceive them

Alexander Macdonell, a very crafty character, exerted some influence over the local Indians

he decided to attract a band of natives to the colony to create panic among the settlers

shortly after the meeting at Fort William Cameron and Macdonell started for the Red River

when they arrived at North West Company's Fort Gibraltar half a mile from Red River Colony

they split up

Duncan Cameron made his appearance at North West Company's Fort Gibraltar

with considerable pomp he presented himself

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<sup>87</sup> Oscar Osburn Winther, *The Old Oregon Country: A History of Frontier Trade, Transportation and Travel*, P. 36.

<sup>88</sup> Oscar Osburn Winther, *The Old Oregon Country: A History of Frontier Trade, Transportation and Travel*, P. 36.

as Captain Duncan Cameron of the Voyageur Corps  
(although the Voyageur Corps had been disbanded the year before)  
Alexander Macdonell set out to stir up the Indians against the colony

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR LEARNS OF THE LOSS OF HIS PACIFIC ENTERPRISE

North West Company's ten canoe brigade led by former Astorian Alexander Ross  
arrived at Montreal -- late August 1814  
delivering Nor'Wester John George McTavish and Astorians Donald "Fats" McKenzie,  
David Stuart, John Clarke, Gabriel Franchere and others  
John Jacob Astor learned the worst -- he had lost Astoria and the Pacific Fur Company ceased to exist  
Astor blamed Duncan McDougall and Donald McKenzie for the loss of his property  
he refused to give up the Pacific Fur Company as lost to the North West Company  
most of North West posts were actually on American soil  
as represented by the claims of the Louisiana Purchase and Lewis and Clark Expedition  
Astor was determined to resume the enterprise at the first opportunity

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY HAS A MONOPOLY IN THE COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT

North West Company owned a chain of posts across Canada from Montreal to Fort George  
Fort George served as the company's Columbia Department headquarters  
annual meetings of the Columbia Department partners-in-the-field were held at Fort George  
to plan trapping and trading operations and to make assignments

North West Company overland express brigades imported supplies and exported furs annually  
Interior posts in the Columbia Department belonging to the North West Company included:

- Fort Alexander on the south bank of the Winnipeg River;
- Fort Okanogan on the Okanogan River;  
Alexander Ross at Fort Okanogan worked the area to the north as far as 300 miles;
- Fort Thompson at the confluence of the North and South Thompson River (Kamloops, B.C.);
- Kootanae House on the Kootenai River;
- Spokane House on the Spokane River;

trapping and trading expeditions also ventured into the Snake River Country  
Nor'Westers and former Pacific Fur Company employees both  
encouraged the natives to be unfriendly with the other  
because of this competition prices for furs elevated which served the Indians well  
for the next three years trade was poor for the North West Company along the Columbia River  
due in no small way to the harsh treatment the Indians had received at their hands

## WILSON PRICE HUNT IS DETAINED IN CALIFORNIA BY SPANISH AUTHORITIES

Wilson Price Hunt sailed with Captain Samuel Northrup on the merchant ship *Pedler* they arrived in Spanish California from New Archangel (Sitka) Russia-America (Alaska) Hunt was detained by the Spanish authorities in California for illegal trading and was forced to remain in California -- August-September 1814

## JANE BARNES APPEARS TO HAVE BECOME SOMETHING OF A PROBLEM

Death of her two "protectors," Governor Donald McTavish and Alexander Henry the Younger, complicated Jane Barnes' life at Fort George  
Governor Donald McTavish was replaced as Governor for North West Company by Chief Trader James Keith who concluded that Jane Barnes' continued presence at Fort George would hinder operations -- she was asked to leave by James Keith  
Jane Barnes she took passage to Canton, China on the *Isaac Todd* -- September 1814

## DONALD "FATS" MCKENZIE MEETS WITH JOHN JACOB ASTOR

Donald McKenzie traveled from Montreal to meet with John Jacob Astor in New York to convey papers connected with the negotiations to sell Astoria -- September 27, 1814  
McKenzie also sought employment -- this time with the Astor's American Fur Company operating in the Great Lakes region of the United States  
Astor declined to reemploy McKenzie as the businessman believed Mackenzie and his associates had accepted too low a price for the Astoria post  
Having failed to secure reemployment the former Nor'Wester and Astorian went to Canada where both North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company attempted to lure him into service

## WILSON PRICE HUNT CONTINUES HIS WORK FOR JOHN JACOB ASTOR

After being released by the Spanish authorities in California  
Wilson Price Hunt accompanied Captain Samuel Northrup and the *Pedler* back to Russian-America (Alaska) where they arrived -- October 1814

## JANE BARNES ARRIVES IN CANTON, CHINA

While in Canton Jane Barnes found Captain Anthony Robson of the merchant brig *Columbia* more to her liking than Captain Fraser Smith of the *Isaac Todd*  
she lived magnificently in Canton at expense of the East India Company and Captain Robson  
(Jane traveled with the *Columbia* from Canton, China back to Portsmouth, England  
in England she married Captain Anthony Robson  
as a captain's wife she visited the Columbia River on a trade mission again [1818])

with their two children  
she continued to sail with her husband as he ran trade routes between Britain and South America  
she appeared in Montreal several years later where she attempted to collect  
an annuity promised to North West Company Governor Donald McTavish  
instead, North West Company billed the East India Company  
for the expenses she incurred while she traveled about the world  
Jane Barnes was far more liberated, discriminating and independent than was usual for her time,  
she entered the completely male-dominated world of the fur traders  
and earned the titles: “Oregon’s First Lady” and “First White Woman in Oregon”)

#### DAVID THOMPSON DRAWS A PRELIMINARY MAP OF HIS EXPLORATIONS

North West Company geographer David Thompson completed his preliminary map of the region  
from Sault Ste. Marie to the Pacific Ocean between the 45<sup>th</sup> and the 60<sup>th</sup> parallels  
Thompson gathered together the data he had collected during his thousands of miles of surveys  
he was the first person to map many of the features of present-day southern Manitoba  
and the region near the headwaters of the Mississippi River  
this was a collection of primary source material surpassed that of any other scientific explorer  
and he combined his own findings with information from other sources  
including other sources inevitably led to errors on the map  
Thompson, based on native accounts, included the fictitious Caledonia River  
supposedly located south of the Fraser River and flowing into Puget Sound  
Thompson’s original effort does not appear to have survived  
(but there is a similar map by him in the possession of the Public Archives of Ontario)  
David Thompson regarded his map or maps drawn in [1811]-1814 as preliminary drafts  
most of the names were handwritten, not printed  
(he later corrected the Caledonia River and other errors  
when he drew another, more accurate map of the west for the North West Company)

#### TREATY OF GHENT IS SIGNED BY THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN

Treaty of Ghent which ended the War of 1812  
was signed at Ghent, Belgium -- December 24, 1814  
In this treaty American expansionist’s interests were well-served in the treaty  
some of the results achieved on the battlefield were reversed: **“All territory, places, and  
possessions whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the war, ...[should] be restored  
[to the original owner] without delay....”**  
When the Treaty of Ghent was signed Fort George (Astoria) and the adjacent country

was to be returned the United States and John Jacob Astor  
Less well defined was the relationship of Indians with the government of the United States  
(several treaties of allegiance and land transfer between the Indians and the United States  
were imposed on the natives to open the way to American expansion and settlement)

Some significant issues failed to be addressed at all by the Treaty of Ghent:

- certain boundary disputes between Canada and the United States  
would later be referred to arbitration commissions;
- both United States and British governments agreed to use their best efforts  
to abolish the international slave trade -- but slavery itself in America was not considered

#### LORD SELKIRK BECOMES CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF HIS COLONY

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk received news that North West Company  
was plotting against the settlers of Red River Colony -- early in 1815  
filled with anxiety Lord Selkirk petitioned the British secretary for war asking for protection  
his request was granted and Canadian Lieutenant-Governor Sir Gordon Drummond  
was ordered to look into the matter  
Drummond decided not to grant protection to Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony

#### UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IMPOSES NEW POLICIES ON THE INDIANS

War of 1812 had caused violent disturbances and frequent dislocations of Native Americans  
in both the Northwest and Southwest  
Indian troubles in Ohio Valley ended as the United States imposed its dominance over the tribes  
newly opened land offices sold public land at \$1.25 an acre  
"Ohio fever" spread through New England as people streamed over mountains  
to a land of rich soil, mild climate and the promise of opportunity  
across the Atlantic Ocean, especially in England, Ireland and Germany,  
thousands of immigrants boarded ship for America  
forest became fields, fields became villages and towns and towns became cities

#### CHRISTIANITY REACHES THE SHOSHONE INDIANS

Many of the Hudson's Bay Company employees were eastern Indians  
descended from converts made by Catholic priests in French Canada  
two Christian Iroquois, for example, settled among the Shoshone people of (western Montana)  
they conducted missionary work among the uninstructed Indians  
Sometime between [1812] and [1820] a band of twenty-four Iroquois Indians led by Ignace La Mousse  
went among the Shoshone Indians of (Montana) -- 1815

Ignace La Mousse (“Big Ignace” or “Old Ignace”) was in the employ of Hudson’s Bay Company  
he had been education at the Jesuit Catholic Caughnawaga Mission near Montreal  
Old Ignace was a zealous teacher of the Christian faith

Ignace La Mousse was held in great esteem by the Shoshone Indians

**“It was not long until Old Ignace acquired an ascendancy and great influence over the tribe, which he wielded for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his adopted brethren. Often would he speak to them of the Catholic religion, its teachings, its prayers, and its rites, the conclusions of his discourses being always the same; namely, the advantages and the necessity of having Black Robes or Catholic missionaries among them by whom they would be instructed and taught the way to heaven.”<sup>89</sup>**

through intermarriage these Iroquois became members of the Shoshone band  
Shoshone Indians developed a desire for Canadian Catholic priests, “black robes”  
of whom they had been told

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY FAILS TO ESTABLISH A TRADE LINK WITH CHINA

North West Company’s effort to develop sea trade from the Northwest Coast to Asia  
was blocked by the powerful East India Company and South Seas Company

both businesses enjoyed British monopolies on trade

East India Company in China

South Seas Company along the Pacific coast

even holding a port on the Pacific coast had brought the Nor’Westers little tangible gain

all efforts on the part of the North West Company to reach an agreement

with the British government to enter the China trade failed

North West Company was refused the opportunity to carry Chinese goods

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY CONTRACTS WITH AN AMERICAN COMPANY

In desperation the North West Company leaders finally were forced to resort to subterfuge

they made arrangements with J. and T.H. Perkins Company of Boston

to supply their Pacific coast posts and carry furs to China -- 1815

this Boston firm was free of restrictions placed on British trade

as an American company they could carry goods at will to all ports of the world

that had been approved by the United States’ government

J. and T.H. Perkins Company undertook to carry annual North West Company supplies to Fort George

where the supplies were exchanged for Columbia Department pelts to be taken to Canton

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<sup>89</sup> Father Lawrence Benedict Palladino, *Indian and White in the Northwest; A History of Catholicity in Montana*, P. 9.

in China the furs were traded for Chinese goods to be taken back to Massachusetts  
for marketing or for transshipment to London

North West Company furs moved to the Asian market rather than to Europe  
on their first voyage to Canton Fort George pelts sold for \$101,000 on the Canton market  
these were exchanged for teas and other Asian goods to be taken back to Boston  
where they were sold at a great profit or were transported on to London for sale there  
On the surface it appeared profits were high for the North West Company  
but when Chinese, American and London port charges were figured in the balance sagged

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR WANTED TO REVIVE HIS BUSINESS ON THE PACIFIC COAST

With the conclusion of War of 1812 and the signing of the Treaty of Ghent  
that demanded the return of captured property to its original owner

John Jacob Astor saw a favorable opportunity for his trapping and trading enterprise  
however, North West Company held the Columbia River, its tributaries and trading posts  
and conducted trade throughout the region in defiance of the laws of Congress  
to remove them would be very difficult as the Nor'Westers were well armed and skilled  
company wars between North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company  
showed what could be expected in a commercial fight in the lawless wilderness

John Jacob Astor applied to the U.S. government to restore his property on the Columbia River  
he stated that if possession was returned to him he would resume trapping operations

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY PLOT AGAINST THE RED RIVER COLONY HAS SOME SUCCESS

North West Company morale suffered from the life-and-death struggle being waged  
east of the Rocky Mountains with Hudson's Bay Company's Red River Colony  
owned by Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk

"Captain" Duncan Cameron of the (disbanded) Voyageur Corps left the Nor'Westers' Fort Gibraltar  
he crossed the Red River to the colony where he made an effort to befriend the colonists  
he said he had heard news from the interior that a body of Indians would raid them in the spring  
he invited some of the colonists to dine with him several evenings -- he always fed them well  
all the while sympathizing with their intolerable living conditions  
he implied Lord Selkirk had abandoned them but he would gladly act as their deliverer  
if they would throw themselves on the mercy of the North West Company  
signs of wavering allegiance among the colonists were soon evident

Meanwhile Cameron's colleague in the North West Company plot, Alexander Macdonell,  
was not succeeding in his efforts to incite the local Indians against the colony -- May 1815  
he could recruit only a handful of Plains Indians but they were brave only when they were drunk

when their chief visited the Red River Colony and informed Governor Miles Macdonell they intended the colonists no ill -- Nor'Wester Alexander Macdonell gave up the plot

#### “CAPTAIN” DUNCAN CAMERON TRIES A NEW PLAN TO HARASS RED RIVER COLONY

Finding it impossible to arouse the Indians to raid the Red River settlement

North West Company agent “Captain” Duncan Cameron adopted other methods to entice disloyalty colonists deserting the colony increased in number every day

Nor'Westers joined by deserters made camp a short distance down the Red River near the North West Company's Fort Gibraltar

“Captain” Cameron's recruits were drilled to instill some level of military discipline

they were furnished with loaded muskets and ammunition by the North West Company

Cameron's men were marched toward the Red River Colony governor's house -- June 11, 1815

James White, the surgeon of the colony, was walking by the governor's house

as a puff of grey smoke came from where the Nor'Westers were hidden -- the shot went wide then colony storekeeper John Bourke heard a bullet whiz past his head

Colonists grabbed their weapons and returned the Nor'Westers' fire

they were at a disadvantage in the exchange of volleys however

as their adversaries remained hidden from view

when the Nor'Westers left, four colonists had been wounded

Captain Duncan Cameron, continuing his strategy to create disloyalty,

now said that his main object was to capture Governor Miles Macdonell for North West Company

if this were accomplished he would leave the Red River settlers in peace

to safeguard the colony Governor Macdonell voluntarily surrendered himself to the Nor'Westers

Cameron was jubilant -- with the loyal settlers almost defenseless and the governor his prisoner

Cameron could dictate his own terms

Duncan Cameron issued an explicit command that the settlers must leave the Red River without delay

most of the colonists decided to obey the order and their exodus began under Cameron's direction

about one hundred forty colonists, including women and children, departed

they traveled in North West Company canoes 400 miles to the north to safety

at Hudson's Bay Company's Norway House at the northern end of Lake Winnipeg

Red River Colony Governor Miles Macdonell was arrested and taken to Montreal for trial

this was the location of North West Company's headquarters and home of the managing partners

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY AGENT ALEXANDER MACDONELL RAIDS RED RIVER COLONY

Nor'Westers' agent Alexander Macdonell dealt with the forty or fifty colonists who refused to leave

muskets were brought into play; horses and cattle belonging to the settlers were spirited away

several of the colonists were placed under arrest on trumped-up charges  
Harassment of Red River Colony culminated in a raid led by Alexander Macdonell  
and Metis leader Cuthbert Grant -- June 25, 1815

settlers, though barely one-half the strength of the raiders, resolved to make a stand  
they placed themselves under the command of Hudson's Bay Company's John McLeod  
colonists took what shelter they could find and prepared for battle  
advancing Metis hesitated and halted in dismay when faced with the courage of the defenders  
John McLeod remembered an unused cannon at a small Hudson's Bay Company post  
he sent two men to bring the weapon to the colonists' position  
this was soon done and heavy cart chains were cut into sections for use as shot  
when a raking volley of chain shot was fired the attackers galloped out of range  
but the colonists were at the end of their resources -- they decided to quit the colony  
they followed the other colonists to Hudson's Bay Company's Norway House  
Alexander Macdonell and the Metis under Cuthbert Grant burned Red River Colony to the ground

#### RED RIVER COLONY APPEARES TO BE AT AN END

After three years of self-sacrifice the effort seemed to have been wasted as Red River Colony was gone  
but Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk had received the alarming news of events  
Lord Selkirk's recruiter Colin Robertson had met Hudson's Bay Company leaders in London [1814]  
(after recruiting colonists in Scotland for Lord Selkirk

Robertson had been employed by Hudson's Bay Company  
although he had previously worked for North West Company  
he knew the value of voyageurs in traveling through the Canadian frontier)  
Robertson was authorized to raise a large force to protect and expand the Red River Colony  
160 voyagers and three former Nor'Westers in sixteen canoes left Montreal  
and sped to the defense of the colony  
en route Robertson met Red River colonists who were fleeing to Montreal for safety  
Robertson inspired the settlers to return once again to the Red River  
Colin Robertson led his party to Hudson's Bay Company's Norway House  
where many of the colonists had sought refuge  
When Robertson's band of voyagers and returning colonists reached the Red River they were surprised  
to see their crops had suffered little damage

#### ASTORIA'S OWNERSHIP REMAINS IN DISPUTE

Sale of Astoria to the North West Company and the and capture of Astoria by the British navy  
did not mean in any sense that Americans were yielding their claim to Oregon to the British

British government replied that the Treaty of Ghent did not apply to Astoria

as that was a private business venture located on soil

to which the United States had no recognized claim of sovereignty

Astoria had been transferred to a Canadian Company by sale and purchase -- not by seizure

Secretary of State James Monroe retorted that the actions of Captain Black of the *Raccoon*

in running up the Union Jack and announcing that he was taking possession of the country

constituted seizure and the property must be returned

Astoria (or Fort George), itself, was a prize of questionable value

by hacking at the forest the inhabitants had managed to clear some two hundred acres

but only twenty acres were able to be farmed

however, seeing the prospect of victory, John Jacob Astor proposed that the United States

establish a military post on the Columbia, manned with fifty soldiers

and that Astor himself be given a commission as a lieutenant

this was a stronger step than Secretary of State James Monroe was prepared to take

nor was President Madison interested in protecting a commercial enterprise

in the wilderness using the American military

United States government asked the British government to restore Astoria under the Treaty of Ghent

since it had been captured by Captain William Black of the *Raccoon*

the post thus must be returned -- July 18, 1815

Article One of the treaty stated that **“all territory, places, and possessions, whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the War, or which may be taken after the signing of the Treaty,...shall be restored without delay.”**

in fact, the unnecessary ceremony staged by British Captain William Black

technically placed Astoria under the authority of Article One

had the post simply changed hands as a result of a legitimate sale,

America would have had little or no grounds for the demanded return of the post

(even so, two years elapsed before any action was taken)

#### DAVID THOMPSON BECOMES A SURVEYOR FOR THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

With an end to the War of 1812 and the signing of the Treaty of Ghent

it became necessary to establish an official international boundary

between the United States and Canada from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean -- 1815

David Thompson and his family moved from Terrebonne (near Montreal)

to Glengarry County, Ontario where he took a position with the British Boundary Commission

which was established to define and map the international boundary

between Upper Canada and the United States from St. Regis, Quebec

to the Northwest angle of Lake of the Woods

(located in parts of today's Canadian provinces of Ontario and Manitoba  
and the U.S. state of Minnesota)

Retired Nor'Wester Thompson surveyed the Ontario section of the U.S.-Canadian boundary  
a task he accomplished in ten months

driving himself and his entourage through sub-zero blizzards by dog sled

covering 4,000 miles of mostly uncharted territory

and earning the respect of North West Company partner Alexander Mackenzie

who had previously forged routes to the Arctic and Pacific oceans [1789 and 1792]

Thompson's trips "should have taken two years" Mackenzie marveled

David Thompson continued to work for the British representative to the Boundary Commission  
for eleven years -- 1815-[1826]

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY BUSINESS ETHICS DECLINED TO A LEVEL OF SAVAGRY

Competition between North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company traders

continued to decline as competition grew more intense

North West Company cheated Indians with an unmatched viciousness

Indians were generally outfitted a year in advance

they might be given a blanket, a cheap gun, a little powder and shot

for which they were charged with \$40 or \$50 debt to the North West Company

at the end of the season, the Indian's catch was supposed to liquidate his debt

but seldom did

North West Company was more violent and ruthless than any other organization  
which did business in North America

it lied, committed murder and starved its enemies

it cheated the Indians and their own men with an unmatched viciousness

North West Company not only charged outrageous prices but cheated in quality and quantity

liquor became the standard method for enticing natives to surrender their furs

rum, with proof as low as 4% would be diluted 50-75% with water

then measured out to Indians

(Indian quickly caught on to the trick of diluting the rum

an Indian would take a small amount in his mouth and spit it into the campfire

if it flared up it was "fire-water" and acceptable for trade)

North West Company even cheated its own men

once the interior was reached, rum which cost \$1 a gallon in Montreal

was sold to employees at \$8 a quart

“Company store” system of exploitation was practiced full scale

company prices were trebled and quadrupled

illiterate voyageurs were encouraged to buy finery

which were charged against his annual wages that averaged only £40 a year

North West Company used its own money system

company money corresponded in name to Canadian coins -- but were half the value

uneducated voyageurs could neither add nor subtract

the employee, thinking in Canadian money, became hopelessly confused

money itself represented a huge profit for the company

personal violence as well as general violence were common occurrences

duels, arrests, counter-arrests, kidnappings and ambushes were frequent

Hudson’s Bay Company trading posts were attacked and pillaged

at other times, Hudson’s Bay Company men were starved for a few days

until they became “reasonable” and joined the North West Company

these tactics caused the death of half the men engaged by Hudson’s Bay Company

in the Athabasca Region

#### MORE NEW RECRUITS ARRIVE TO REBUILD RED RIVER COLONY

About ninety new recruits enlisted by Lord Selkirk arrived from Scotland -- October 1815

with them was retired British army Captain Robert Semple

Hudson’s Bay Company had appointed him governor-in-chief not just of the Red River Colony

but of all of the company’s interior trading posts as well

Semple was an honest and courageous man but he lacked patience and diplomacy

another important arrival was church elder James Sutherland

who had been authorized by the Church of Scotland to baptize and perform marriages

Colonists constructed their new houses on the plain known as Frog Plain

and reached toward an elevated plateau

a few homes appear to have been built on the plateau itself

Governor Robert Semple’s two-story house and the buildings near it

were surrounded by a strong palisade

this grouping became known as Fort Douglas (now Winnipeg’s Point Douglas)

#### RED RIVER COLONY AGAIN SUFFERS THE AFFECT OF COMPANY RIVALRY

North West Company employees at Fort Gibraltar were not pleased with the return of the colony

sinister “Captain” Duncan Cameron returned to Fort Gibraltar from Fort William

where he had attended the headquarters meeting of North West Company partners-in-the-field  
Hudson's Bay Company employee Colin Robertson was distressed by Cameron's return  
Robertson decided to take immediate and radical action -- the capture of Fort Gibraltar  
Colin Robertson's surprise raid was successful -- October 15, 1815  
property belonging to the colonists during the Nor'Westers [June] raid was recovered  
Hudson's Bay Company's trade goods were recovered  
several of Fort Gibraltar's cannons were removed  
"Captain" Duncan Cameron was taken prisoner but being a smooth talker  
he made promises of his future good behavior and was soon released  
Robertson then traveled across the Red River to begin the rebuilding of the Red River Colony  
there he spent the (autumn) fending off threats from the North West Company  
In spite of their hard work and determination to acquire food, colonists were once again forced  
to (winter) at Fort Daer on the Pembina River (North Dakota)  
under the leadership of Governor Robert Semple  
rumors abounded at Fort Daer  
Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's settlers became disturbed when they heard  
large numbers of Metis were gathering to attack the colony [in the spring]

#### LORD SELKIRK TRAVELS TO CANADA

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk decided his Red River Colony needed his personal attention  
he, his wife Lady Selkirk and their three children sailed from Scotland to New York  
he learned of the overthrow of his colony where they arrived in America -- November 15, 1815  
Lord Selkirk quickly set out for Montreal where he acquired eye-witness accounts of the tragic events  
that Nor'Westers Duncan Cameron and Alexander Macdonell had undertaken  
one of Lord Selkirk's eyewitnesses was Governor Miles McDonnell who was being held prisoner  
by North West Company officers as he awaited trial (these charges were later dropped)  
Lord Selkirk pled for military assistance from the Canadian government to protect his colony  
he requested judicial magistrates at Montreal and York (today's Toronto)  
gather information in support of his request

#### LORD SELKIRK ATTEMPTS TO ENCOURAGE HIS SETTLERS

Hudson's Bay Company's Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk wintered in Montreal -- 1815-1816  
where he busily made preparations to travel to his Red River Colony [in the spring]  
Lord Selkirk wrote several letters to his colonists  
explaining he had recently arrived on North America and was gathering a force to assist them  
these letters were dispatched by a courier to be delivered to the colonists

North West Company leaders learned of the courier and ordered him waylaid and his dispatches taken  
this was done and the packet of letters were diverted  
to North West Company headquarters at Fort William

#### HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY CHANGES ITS METHOD OF OPERATION

Hudson's Bay Company procedure called for establishing a trading post visited by Indians  
who provided pelts to the trader in exchange for a large variety of trade goods  
Because of attacks on its posts and employees Hudson's Bay Company leaders  
decided to send a trapping expedition into the Athabasca District -- winter 1815-1816  
they hired Colin Robertson and John Clarke, a former Nor'Wester, to acquire men  
and lead them to Lake Winnipeg where they would gather supplies for the venture

Robertson left the expedition at Lake Winnipeg to travel to Fort Daer  
to lead the Red River colonists staying at the fort back to the Red River Colony  
Former Astorian John Clarke led a large party of Hudson's Bay Company trappers  
into Athabasca District but they had a terrible winter -- 1815-1816

North West Company men attacked the party and robbed them of a large quantity of goods  
Indians encouraged by Nor'Westers refused to supply the Hudson's Bay Company trappers  
when Hudson's Bay Company men were caught and encircled by Nor'Westers in Athabasca  
eighteen of them starved to death because their rivals would neither feed them  
nor permit the Indians to sell to them  
about fifty of the others were kept without food for two or three days  
before they took an oath they would leave and not return

North West Company, by contrast, claimed the expedition had not been properly supplied  
and the deaths were therefore the fault of the Hudson's Bay Company

North West Company had stopped the spread of their rival

Hudson's Bay Company did not have five full packs of pelts in the whole Athabasca Department  
none of the four trading establishment lasted through the winter  
as they were either seized or plundered  
half of the party was dead or had left the district to avoid starvation -- winter 1815

#### RED RIVER COLONISTS ATTACK NORTH WEST COMPANY'S FORT GIBRALTAR

Hudson's Bay Company Robert Semple led his colonists from Fort Daer back to the Red River  
In response to the rumors of Metis preparing to attack the Red River Colony and its Fort Douglas  
Semple again attacked Fort Gibraltar across the Red River from Fort Douglas -- March 17, 1816  
sinister Duncan Cameron was again taken prisoner but this he was not released  
Hudson's Bay Company employee Colin Robertson escorted "Captain" Cameron to England

(there a trial found it impossible to convict him of any crime and he was released  
Cameron later sued Lord Selkirk for illegal detention and won £3,000 in damages)

#### VIOLENCE ERRUPTS IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

North West Company trapping party of ten men killed a Multnomah chief  
when he demanded tribute for safe passage around the Clackamas rapids on the Willamette River  
in the skirmish that followed two of the trappers were wounded  
North West Company Chief Trader James Keith dispatched twenty-five men to restore peace  
but the natives refused the compensation offered for the loss of their chief  
North West Company men departed by canoe downriver back to Fort George  
during the voyage one of the men in the party was wounded in a night attack

#### RED RIVER COLONISTS DESTROY FORT GIBRALTAR

About one hundred settlers returned to Red River Colony from Norway House  
more than 400 miles away -- April 1816  
Robert Semple replaced the imprisoned Miles Macdonell as governor of Red River Colony  
but he did not appear to assumed his duties at once  
After Colin Robertson had departed with "Captain" Duncan Cameron as his prisoner  
Hudson's Bay Company's Governor Semple decided to dismantle Fort Gibraltar  
which was owned by the North West Company to eliminate the fort a rallying point  
for Nor'Westers and Metis trappers  
thirty Hudson's Bay Company men were sent to tear down Fort Gibraltar -- end of May  
they dismantled the encircling surrounding wall and built a raft to carry salvaged items  
to Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Douglas in the Red River Colony for use there  
When this was done Red River Colony Sheriff Alexander Macdonell  
seized North West Company's Pembina House (located in today's North Dakota)  
military stores were taken to Fort Douglas  
prisoners from Pembina House were released on their promise of good behavior  
and the post was returned to North West Company

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY METIS RETALIATE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF FORT GIBRALTAR

Matters along the Red River were now ripe for a collision  
hotheaded North West Company Metis free trappers struck first  
Hudson's Bay Company employee Pierre Pambrun was authorized to lead a party of men in five boats  
to carry twenty-two bales of furs and six hundred bags of pemmican to a safer location

They were attacked by an armed force of forty-nine Nor'Westers led by Metis Cuthbert Grant  
all of the Hudson's Bay Company men were taken captive -- May 12, 1816  
Events rapidly escalated into an inevitable battle

#### NOR'WESTERS GATHER METIS TRAPPERS TO ATTACK BRANDON HOUSE

Pierre Pambrun and his captured men, boats, furs and pemmican were taken down the Red River  
toward Red River Colony by North West Company agent Alexander Macdonell  
they were accompanied by Metis on horseback led by Cuthbert Grant -- end of May  
additional Metis were recruited as they proceeded in the direction of the settlement  
until there was a force of about seventy Nor'Westers and Metis  
Cuthbert Grant captured Hudson's Bay Company's Brandon House  
located along the Assiniboine River (in today's Winnipeg, Manitoba)  
Grant stripped the post of all of its stores

#### LORD SELKIRK COMPLETES PREPARATIONS TO COME TO THE AID OF HIS COLONY

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk staying in Montreal hoped to reach his colony in time  
he had been appointed justice of the peace for Upper Canada and the Indian Territories  
by the Canadian government  
he was provided one non-commissioned officer and six men to assure his personal protection  
Although Lord Selkirk had been denied military troops by the Canadian authorities  
he had recruited a new contingent of settlers for his Red River Colony  
these were trained Swiss mercenaries, disciplined and experienced on many battlefields  
whose units had been disbanded at the close of the War of 1812  
four officers and eighty professional soldiers entered the service of Lord Selkirk

#### LORD SELKIRK LEADS HIS SETTLER/SOLDIERS OUT OF MONTREAL

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk set out up the St. Lawrence River  
for his Red River Colony -- June 4, 1816  
He led about one hundred discharged soldiers and Hudson's Bay Company colonists  
as they set out to stiffen the defense of his settlement  
they stopped en route to recruit at least twenty additional military veterans  
Lord Selkirk reached Lake Ontario and skirted the north shore  
until they reached York, the capital of Upper Canada (Ontario)  
It was common knowledge among the Nor'Westers that Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk  
was on his way to his Red River Colony with a body of armed men  
and that his route would pass near North West Company headquarters at Fort William

there was evidence that a plot to seize or kill Lord Selkirk had been considered some weeks before Lord Selkirk and his party arrived at the Canadian military post on Drummond Island (Michigan) where he learned of efforts by the North West Company arouse the Indians against his colony and also of efforts by a trapper named Grant to intercept a messenger carrying Lord Selkirk's dispatches to his colony

#### NOR'WESTERS PREPARE FOR WAR

Competition between North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company exploded beyond all sanity bloodshed, debauchery of the Indians, and frantic stripping of the country of every possible fur-bearing animal became an integral parts of the struggle for supremacy North West Company partners had resolved to finally uproot Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's colony from the banks of the Red River After his successful attack on Hudson's Bay Company's Brandon House Cuthbert Grant continued to lead his force of about seventy Nor'Westers and Metis toward Red River Colony when they arrived at the southern tip of Lake Winnipeg Grant set up a crude fort and placed two swivel guns inside -- June 16, 1816

#### RED RIVER COLONY'S FORT DOUGLAS IS ATTACKED BY NOR'WESTERS

Nor'Wester agent Alexander Macdonell continued his preparations to attack Red River Colony he had accumulated about 120 Nor'Westers, Metis and Indians all well-armed and mounted when this force was ready to march Macdonell turned them over to Metis Cuthbert Grant Macdonell did not wish to take part in the upcoming raid himself Settlers at Red River Colony had prepared for the obvious danger they faced Fort Douglas was strengthened and guards were posted around the clock however, Governor Robert Semple did not seem to take the situation very seriously he finished preparations to depart for Hudson's Bay Company's York Factory on business Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's colonists were warned by two Cree Indians -- June 17, 1816 who announced there would be an attack on the Red River Colony in two days

#### RED RIVER COLONISTS COME UNDER ATTACK

Cuthbert Grant led a party of about sixty Metis on horseback as they attempted to carry provisions past the Red River colony -- 5:00 P.M. June 19, 1816 they plundered some outlying posts on the Assiniboine River then stopped at a place called Seven Oaks near the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Douglas Red River Colony Governor Robert Semple gathered twenty men and rode out to meet them

en route he was met by a number of colonists running toward Fort Douglas shouting in fear  
after an attempt to discuss concerns with the Nor'Westers failed  
one of Semple's colonists was sent back to bring up a cannon  
and any men who could be spared from Fort Douglas  
Governor Semple waited for reinforcements and the cannon -- but he became impatient  
he ordered his men to advance on the Nor'Westers who were concealed behind a stand of trees  
as the colonists advanced the Nor'Westers dressed as Indians galloped out  
they were well equipped with guns, knives, bows and arrows and spears  
In the skirmish Governor Semple was wounded in the thigh and his men gathered around him  
Nor'Westers surrounded the now helpless colonists and opened fire  
most of Semple's men fell at the first volley as those remaining cried out for mercy  
all but six of Governor Semple's men were killed by Cuthbert Grant's Nor'Westers  
who suffered only man killed and one wounded  
this became known as the Seven Oaks Massacre

#### COLONISTS REMAINING AT RED RIVER COLONY ARE ALLOWED TO DEPART

North West Company employee Metis Cuthbert Grant and twenty men entered Fort Douglas  
what followed became a reign of terror as arson was committed and barns were destroyed  
Grant agreed to allow the women, children and surviving colonists to evacuate -- June 20, 1816  
however, they were forced to surrender all public property and most of their private property  
two hundred evicted colonists set out in canoes down the Red River  
once again disaster had overtaken Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's colonists

#### COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT IS IMPACTED BY THE COMPANY WAR

North West Company's Columbia Department (Oregon) lay far from the actual conflict  
between the Nor'Westers and Hudson's Bay Company  
but repercussions inevitably reached across the mountains  
fur trappers and traders who were displaced from their assignments by conflicts  
or who were in trouble with the law for their part in the battles  
often found their way to the Columbia Department to escape arrest and punishment  
company warfare kept the best of the voyageurs east of the Continental Divide  
in their place the Northwest Company's Columbia Department  
received more and more undesirables  
Discipline crumbled in the Columbia Department and extravagance became endemic  
Iroquois and Abenaki Indians from the St. Lawrence River region arrived  
undependable at best, these trigger-happy Eastern Indians perceived

the lack of discipline and control and responded in kind  
their wanton horse stealing and raping so inflamed the local natives  
of the Willamette region to the south and the Cowlitz Indians to the north  
that both rich valleys had to be abandoned for the next few seasons

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY POLICY REGARDING COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT CHANGES

Although battles were raging between the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company  
North West Company headquarters post at Fort William on Lake Superior,  
continued to demand results from the Columbia Department

North West Company changed its policy -- 1816

partners in Montreal believed coastal trade was only marking time as retired trappers  
in the Columbia Department were absorbing all of the profits with their leisurely life style

Columbia Department was divided into two administrative districts

region West of Rockies became known as "New Caledonia"

(north-central portions of present-day British Columbia)

this division was to get supplies from Fort George instead of from the East

"Western Division" was instructed to extend to the south toward California

strong trapping parties were to range through the country rather than living at the posts

#### DONALD "FATS" MCKENZIE IS HIRED BY THE NORTH WEST COMPANY

North West Company startled the former Astorian Donald McKenzie

by offering the then princely salary of five hundred pounds a year

to see what he could do about increasing the Columbia Department's inland trade

this price was more than he could turn down

he was again going to Fort George (Astoria) -- this time as governor

#### LORD SELKIRK LEARNS OF THE DISASTER THAT BESET HIS COLONY

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk led his colonist/soldiers from Drummond Island  
to the town of Sault Ste. Marie (Ontario)

only a few miles out of town he encountered two canoes

in one of these was Red River Colony Governor Miles Macdonell

who had been released from arrest in Montreal

for the first time Lord Selkirk learned of the massacre of Governor Robert Semple

and his men at Seven Oaks

and of the eviction of his settlers from his colony by North West Company employees

Lord Selkirk wrote a letter to recently-appointed Governor of Canada Sir John Sherbrooke to explain

that he was forced to act -- or allow a daring and vicious crime to go unpunished -- July 29, 1816

#### LORD SELKIRK LEADS HIS SOLDIER-SETTLERS TO FORT WILLIAM

Lord Selkirk acted on his own authority

he had a force of military veterans large enough to enter Nor'Westers' Fort William headquarters but he was in a difficult position

he had been appointed justice of the peace for Upper Canada and the Indian Territories

but it did not seem proper to try lawbreakers who were attacking his personal interests

Lord Selkirk requested two Canadian magistrates to accompany him to Fort William

both declined as Fort William was a North West Company town in every regard

Selkirk reported his request in writing to Governor-General of Canada John Sherbrooke

Lord Selkirk diverted his private army to North West Company headquarters at Fort William

he divided his contingent into two forces

he led one division speedily toward Fort William

his second division of soldier-settlers advanced more slowly

Lord Selkirk reached the islands that block the approach to Lake Superior's Thunder Bay

he entered the bay and ascended the Kaministikwia River for about half a mile -- early August 1816

there he built a temporary camp across the river from Fort William

most of the wintering partners had departed except those bound for Red River, Winnipeg River and Lake Superior who were there with their outfits

#### LORD SELKIRK CATCHES THE NOR'WESTERS OFF GUARD

Lord Selkirk was reinforced by his slower moving second contingent of men -- August 12, 1816

Lord Selkirk wrote a letter to North West Company Chief Director William McGillivray

to ask why Hudson's Bay Company men were being held prisoner

he demanded their immediate release

several of the prisoners were released and allowed to go to Lord Selkirk's camp

Acting as a justice of the peace for Upper Canada and the Indian Territories

Lord Selkirk held court and heard evidence from the released prisoners

he quickly acquired enough information that he felt justified to bring legal action against some of the Nor'Westers at Fort William

#### LORD SELKIRK ORDERS WILLIAM MCGILLIVRAY ARRESTED

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk sent two men as constables with a warrant

to arrest North West Company Chief Director William McGillivray -- August 13, 1816

these constables were accompanied by nine fully armed soldier-settlers

McGillivray was found writing a letter in his room

he read the warrant and commented that he was prepared to accompany them

he only requested that two North West Company partner Kenneth McKenzie

and Fort William Chief Trader Dr. John McLoughlin be allowed to go along to post bail

all three Nor'Westers were taken to Lord Selkirk's camp

When Lord Selkirk was informed the prisoners were in his power he acted imprudently:

- he seized Fort William and confiscated North West Company furs for his own benefit  
(North West Company later claimed that there were goods worth £8,000  
and six hundred packs of furs valued at £60,000 which Selkirk held at Fort William);
- he released the prisoners being held in custody by the North West Company;
- he investigated the events along the Red River and took depositions from witnesses;
- he refused bail for William McGillivray and wrote indictments against McKenzie and McLoughlin  
he ordered the two North West Company partners also be held;
- Lord Selkirk next wrote orders to arrest all of the other partners remaining in Fort William  
both constables were dispatched accompanied by twenty-five soldiers who served as escorts

#### ALL OF THE NORTH WEST COMPANY PARTNERS AT FORT WILLIAM ARE ARRESTED

Siding with Lord Selkirk, arrest warrants were issued by the Canadian government

for all North West Company partners for their part in what became known as the Pemmican War

When constables arrived at Fort William they faced many French-Canadians, Metis and Indians

who had gathered at the entrance to the post

Lord Selkirk's constables saw two North West Company partners and apprehended them

John McDonald, a third partner, was found but he put up a strong show of resistance

some Nor'Westers attempted to close the gate to Fort William as the constables struggled to enter

when a shout for support went up from one of the constables the twenty-five soldiers advanced  
in spite of the angry crowd, Lord Selkirk's men entered the gates of Fort William

six North West Company partners were arrested: Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser,

John McDonald, Kenneth McKenzie, Allan McDonald and Hugh McGillis

when they were marched away two soldiers remained

to search the papers of those who had been arrested

Lord Selkirk's actions probably did not cause more bloodshed because North West Company

was reluctant to clash with the professional soldiers he had employed

#### HOLDING THE PRISONERS WAS A PROBLEM FOR LORD SELKIRK

When Lord Selkirk finished his examination of the new prisoners it was late -- August 13, 1816

he arranged that they should return to their quarters at Fort William for the night

with the understanding they would behave properly and do nothing hostile toward their captors  
In the morning a search of Fort William showed that many papers had been burned  
word was delivered to Lord Selkirk that guns and ammunition had been removed during the night  
Lord Selkirk issued another warrant authorizing a search for weapons  
fifty or more guns were found hidden in a barn under a pile of hay  
eight barrels of gunpowder were found recently hidden in a swamp not far from the fort  
nine North West Company partners were again taken as prisoners  
Lord Selkirk moved his tents to the ground near Fort William  
he ordered Fort William occupied by his soldiers  
most of the French-Canadians, Metis and Indians employed by the North West Company  
were ordered to leave the fort and cross to the other side of the river  
their canoes were confiscated

Lord Selkirk conducted a hearing  
he decided all nine company officials should be taken to York (today's Toronto) for trial  
North West Company Chief Director William McGillivray, Alexander Mackenzie,  
Simon Fraser, John McDonald, Kenneth McKenzie, Allan McDonald and Hugh McGillis,  
Kenneth McKenzie and Fort William Chef Trader Dr. John McLoughlin

#### BRINGING THE NORTH WEST COMPANY OFFICIALS TO TRIAL IS DIFFICULT

Three canoes were provisioned to deliver the nine Nor'Westers across Lake Superior  
to York (today's Toronto) for trial -- August 18, 1816  
they were guarded by a contingent of Lord Selkirk's soldiers  
Indians regularly employed by North West Company were hired as voyagers and guides

#### LORD SELKIRK PUNISHES NORTH WEST COMPANY

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk held Fort William in his power  
he sent his soldiers out to capture four nearby North West Company trading posts  
he sent other soldiers to the Red River area to restore order and assist the return of his colonists  
Fort Douglas was retaken from the North West Company

#### TRAGEDY STRIKES THOSE DELIVERING NORTH WEST COMPANY PARTNERS TO TRIAL

Three canoes carrying the nine company partners under guard to York (Toronto)  
stopped for dinner -- 1:00 P.M. August 26, 1816  
while they were eating a heavy westerly breeze sprang up  
but they were on the leeward side of an island and did not notice its full strength  
even so, the lieutenant in charge of the guards had misgivings

he asked North West Company partner and expert canoeman William McGillivray's advice  
McGillivray believed they could continue if the voyageurs were careful  
voyageurs disagreed and advised staying on the island -- this advice was ignored  
Soon after setting out on the river a heavy squall hit the canoes which began taking on water  
when the lead canoe turned toward an island the other two followed  
quickly the lead canoe became swamped and capsized in rough water near the island  
other canoes were too heavily laden to be of assistance  
they paddled to shore, partially unloaded and returned to help their struggling friends  
in spite of the most heroic efforts nine of the twenty-one people in the canoe drowned  
including North West Company partner Kenneth McKenzie  
Chief Trader Dr. John McLoughlin was dragged ashore unconscious  
fable says the experience turned his great halo of silken hair snow white  
(probably the change came more naturally)  
but whatever the cause, the premature graying contributed no little bit  
to the patriarchal reputation that gradually began to grow up around the man  
For their part in the Pemmican War none of the north West Company partners were found guilty

#### FORT OKANOGAN IS REBUILT

Ross Cox replaced the original driftwood buildings of Fort Okanogan with a strong fort

he stated in his book *Adventures On The Columbia River, Including The Narrative Of A Residence Of Six Years On The Western Side Of The Rocky Mountains, Among Various Tribes Of Indians Hitherto Unknown*: **"Before the month of September we had erected a new dwelling-house for the person in charge, containing four excellent rooms and a large dining hall, two good houses for the men and a spacious store for the furs and merchandise, to which was attached a shop for trading with the natives. The whole was surrounded by strong palisades fifteen feet high and flanked by two bastions. Each bastion had, in its lower story, a light brass four-pounder; and in the upper, loopholes were left for the use of musketry.... The point of land on which the fort is built is formed by the junction of the Oakinagan [sic] river with the Columbia."**<sup>90</sup>

Fort Okanogan was an important storage depot and horse rendezvous

which served as the gateway to Fort Thompson (Kamloops) and New Caledonia -- August 26, 1816

#### EIGHT NORTH WEST COMPANY OFFICIALS FACE A JUDGE IN YORK

After the tragic accident another canoe was procured at Sault Ste Marie

to deliver the now eight North West Company officials to trial

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<sup>90</sup> George W. Fuller, *A History of the Pacific Northwest*, P. 120.

they arrive in York (Toronto) -- September 3, 1816

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's lieutenant charged with guarding the partners sought out the attorney-general to take the proper legal steps, but found that he was absent  
Meanwhile in an effort to go before a judge and prove they were being detained illegally his eight prisoners applied for a writ of habeas corpus  
when they appeared in court Lord Selkirk's soldiers were ordered to take the prisoners to Montreal that is, to take them to the home of the North West Company where they would be supported by powerful influences

#### EIGHT NORTH WEST COMPANY OFFICIALS ARE DELIVERED TO MONTREAL FOR TRIAL

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk's soldiers delivered eight North West Company officials to the North West Company headquarters town of Montreal where the company was all-powerful  
Trials of the Nor'Westers began in an Upper Canada courtroom -- September 10, 1816  
North West Company principal partner William McGillivray was acquitted in court (perhaps because Judge Reid was married to McGillivray's sister)  
seven other North West Company officials delivered by Lord Selkirk's soldiers were immediately tried and acquitted in less than an hour  
however, North West Company Chief Trader Dr. John McLoughlin was disheartened by the experience and by the mutually ruinous violence which brought his employers to the edge of bankruptcy

#### RESULTS OF THE CONTINUING COMPANY WARS

So many people died in the encounters between the rival fur trading companies that British political leaders became aroused  
British Government virtually ordered an end to hostilities and threatened official intervention including the possibility of revoking of the charters of both North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company -- this forced the rival companies to meet to unit the two rivals into a single company

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY CHIEF TRADER DR. JOHN McLOUGHLIN SEEKS PEACE

Nor'Wester Dr. John McLoughlin spearheaded a drive to talk peace with the Hudson's Bay Company  
North West Company wintering partners listened to him they gave him their proxy votes to carry to London  
Fort William Chief Trader Dr. McLoughlin traveled to London to represent the North West Company in negotiations with Hudson's Bay Company  
according to legend, in London he was a dominant figure in working out details of a merger

actually his voice was seldom heard but his leadership talents were recognized  
Officers of Hudson's Bay Company also quickly recognized Dr. McLouglin's merits

#### DONALD MCKENZIE RETURNS TO FORT GEORGE (ASTORIA)

Chief Trader James Keith remained the senior North West Company partner in charge of Fort George  
he was placed in charge of New Caledonia -- fall 1816  
he also managed shipping to China and general outfitting of trapping brigades into the interior  
Donald McKenzie was placed in charge of New Caledonia's interior trade  
it was strange reunion when McKenzie arrived at Fort George (Astoria) -- 1816  
he met with jealousy and suspicion from resident traders -- especially Chief Trade James Keith  
who placed every obstacle in his way

#### DONALD "FATS" MCKENZIE DEVELOPS TRADING IN THE SNAKE RIVER REGION

Exploitation of the Snake River Country was an assignment specifically given to Donald McKenzie  
McKenzie developed a plan of splitting the Columbia Department into inland and coastal districts  
this idea would water down the prestige of Chief Trader James Keith  
and would drain manpower and goods from Fort George  
However McKenzie was a proven and able leader in every respect  
patiently he listened to the objections of James Keith and the other Nor'Westers  
then he organized groups of trappers into brigades  
(whom McKenzie believed would work harder than the natives to secure many more furs)  
McKenzie took the men from Fort George that Chief Trader James Keith gave him  
this was, in fact, a dismaying gang of Iroquois, Sandwich Islanders and castoff voyageurs  
McKenzie spent two years -- 1816-[1818]  
reassessing the country he had once considered to be profitless  
Donald McKenzie was firm and just in his treatment of the Indians, but at the same time, friendly  
since he was the chief of the white traders he acted toward the Indians as a chief  
he did not treat the natives as inferior people -- he would not bully or cheat them  
along the way he sought the good will of the thieving natives of the portages  
and carefully appeased the hostility of the more distant Nez Perce and Shoshones  
he followed their customs in many ways so the Indians came to trust him  
he was so respected that he could go among the natives unarmed  
but he kept his traders well-armed and disciplined -- just in case  
McKenzie spent his time at Fort George, Spokane House  
and the North West Company headquarters at Fort William on Lake Superior  
Donald McKenzie ruled the interior country and built up a large trade with the Indians

he provided valuable service to the North West Company  
by developing a rich trade in (today's southern Idaho)

#### WILSON PRICE HUNT RETURNS TO NEW YORK CITY

(After trading with the natives in Russian-America, *Pedler* was impounded by Russian authorities  
for illegally trading with the Indians [July 1815]

Wilson Price Hunt left New Archangel [Sitka] Russian-America [Alaska]  
on the *Pedler* [November 1815]

he arrived in the Hawaiian Islands [on December 12, 1815]  
after a short visit he continued on the Canton, China

Wilson Price Hunt accompanied Captain Samuel Northrup and the ship *Pedler* left Canton  
they around Africa's Cape Horn to return to John Jacob Astor

*Pedler* sailed into New York City after circling the globe -- October 16, 1816

Hunt's story would make the front page of the New York City newspapers  
Americans displayed a remarkable amount of interest in the exploits of men like Wilson Price Hunt  
and the members of the Pacific Fur Company

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY PUBLISHES DAVID THOMPSON'S ORIGINAL MAP

This map, which showed the fictitious Caledonia River south of the Fraser River,  
was published in a North West Company pamphlet without David Thompson's permission -- 1816  
although a more accurate map had been produced by Thompson

This map became a prime source of other maps for about twenty years after that  
all of them showing the same error

(It was unfortunate that David Thompson was not successful in his many attempts  
to get his more accurate map published during his lifetime

his incorrect maps later formed the basis for a map of western Canada  
that was published for settlers' use in [1857]

it became the basic map of the West for almost another fifty years)

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY'S DONALD MCKENZIE JOURNEYS TO FORT WILLIAM

Donald McKenzie started from Fort George bound for Fort William on Lake Superior -- late fall 1816  
at the Cascades of the Columbia River he found the river choked with ice

he was compelled to stay in the villages of natives until the ice broke up  
during this time he was treated as a chief

when the ice broke he continued his journey up the Columbia River

## LORD SELKIRK TRAVELS FROM FORT WILLIAM TO HIS RED RIVER COLONY

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk in the Red River Colony

spoke to a large gathering of his settlers at the Red River Colony -- 1817

in view of the hardships they had endured he provided additional land free of dues  
to reward his soldiers he gave them land on both sides of the Red River

not far from Fort Douglas in case they were needed to put down trouble

he encouraged the settlers to build roads, construct bridges and build flour mills

he began a parish of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland for the Red River Colony

Lord Selkirk's religion was deep-seated

and he was resolved to make provisions for worship

## NORTH WEST COMPANY'S DONALD "FATS" MCKENZIE ARRIVES AT FORT WILLIAM

Donald McKenzie arrived at the North West Company headquarters

at Fort William at Thunder Bay on Lake Superior -- 1817

During his first year as leader of the New Caledonia interior trade

he reported out a larger catch of furs of better quality than ever before but competition

between the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company dramatically increased

## BRITISH GOVERNMENT BECOMES INVOLVED IN THE COMPANY WARS IN CANADA

Hostilities in the fur country were being considered in England

Secretary of State Lord Bathurst thought the home government should take action

he sent an official notice to Governor of Canada Sir John Sherbrooke

instructing him to deal with the situation

all forts, building and property involved in the conflict

should be restored to their rightful owners

When Sherbrooke received this dispatch -- February 1817

he selected two military officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Bachellor Coltman and Major John Fletcher

to go to the Indian Territories to arbitrate the issues causing dissension

## MANUEL LISA'S BAD REPUTATION FORCES HIS RESIGNATION AS INDIAN AGENT

Manuel Lisa had acted as Indian Agent for the United State since the end of the War of 1812

he resigned his commission in a letter to Louisiana Territorial Governor General William Clark

in his letter Lisa analyzed his strengths: **"But I have had some success as a trader; and this gives rise to many reports. Manuel must cheat the government, and Manuel must cheat the Indians, otherwise Manuel could not bring down every summer so many boats loaded with rich furs.**

**“Good, My accounts with the government will show whether I receive anything out of which to cheat it. A poor five hundred dollars, as sub-agent salary, does not buy the tobacco which I annually give to those who call me father.**

**“Cheat the Indians! The respect and friendship which they have for me, the security of my possessions in the heart of their country respond to this charge, and declare with voices louder than the tongues of men that it cannot be true.**

**“But Manuel gets so much rich fur!**

**“Well, I will explain how I get it. First, I put into my operations great activity; I go a great distance, while some are considering whether they will start today or tomorrow. I impose upon myself great privations; then months in a year I am buried in the forest; at a vast distance from my own house. I appear as the benefactor, and not as the pillager, of the Indians. I carried among them the seed of the large pompion [pumpkin], from which I have seen in their possession the fruit weighing 160 pounds. Also the large bean, the potato, the turnip; and these vegetables now make a comfortable part of their subsistence, and this year I have promised to carry the plough. Besides, my blacksmiths work incessantly for them, charging nothing. I lend them traps, only demanding preference in their trade. My establishments are the refuge of the weak and of the old men no longer able to follow their lodges; and by these means I have acquired the confidence and friendship of these nations, and the consequent choice of their trade.”<sup>91</sup>**

Manuel Lisa returned to the fur trade-- 1817

he journeyed up and down the Missouri River running his fur trapping and trading operation  
each of Manuel Lisa's seasonal trips carried supplies into the wilderness, brought out furs  
and drove another wedge in the process of opening the wilderness

(after many years of controversial fur trade life

Manuel Lisa died near St. Louis, Missouri [August 1820])

#### EFFORT TO REESTABLISH PEACE WITH THE NATIVES IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Former Astorian now Nor'Wester Alexander Ross led a force of forty-five North West Company men  
in an attempt to pacify the Multnomah Indians

Ross brought with him a large quantity of tobacco -- a precious commodity

Camps were established along the Willamette River

Multnomahs camped along the east bank of the river just below Willamette Falls

North West Company men supported by two field pieces camped on the west bank

After three days of peaceful attempts, Ross met with Chief Kesno

calumet (peace pipe) was smoked, a flag offered, tributes and restitutions were given and received

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<sup>91</sup> Gordon Speck, *Northwest Explorations*, P. 265.

an Indian slave was given to Ross but was returned  
although Ross appreciated the meaning of the gesture  
North West Company was given permission to travel on the Willamette River  
and portage around the falls -- however, they were forbidden to take salmon at the falls  
After his return to Fort George Alexander Ross was sent  
to the post on the Thompson River (Kamloops) for a year

#### CANADIAN MILITARY OFFICERS ARRIVE AT RED RIVER COLONY

Canadian Commissioners Lieutenant-Colonel Bachellor Coltman and Major John Fletcher  
led forty men of the 37<sup>th</sup> Regiment from Sault Ste Marie [May 1817]  
Coltman arrived at Red River Colony first -- July 5, 1817  
he met with Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk  
while in Montreal Coltman had formed the opinion that Lord Selkirk was a domineering autocrat  
after meet his lordship and evaluating the situation  
he believed Selkirk was neither irrational nor self-seeking  
Coltman was impressed with Lord Selkirk's evident attempt to avoid violation of the laws  
he advised the accusations against Lord Selkirk should not be brought into the courts  
at the same time he imposed bail of £10,000  
to appear in Upper Canada (Ontario) for trial  
Commissioners Coltman's and Fletcher's report to the Canadian governor-general  
was a carefully prepared impartial statement of events  
as a result, both Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company blamed the report  
for not giving the full facts of the case

#### LORD SELKIRK PURCHASES THE TITLE TO SOME INDIAN LAND

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk had gained the respect of the Indians  
who gave him the unusual name of the "Silver Chief"  
To avoid future disputes Lord Selkirk was anxious to buy  
their ancient title to the land along the Red and Assiniboine rivers  
he gathered the local Cree and Saulteaux chiefs together at Fort Douglas  
natives leaders gave eloquent speeches and stated they would give up a portion of their land  
on either side of the Red River upstream from its mouth as far as the Red Lake River  
(now Grand Forks, North Dakota) and on either side of the Assiniboine River  
to its junction with the Muskrat River  
Lord Selkirk concluded a treaty after distributing presents -- July 18, 1817  
it was stipulated that one hundred pounds of good tobacco should be given annually to each nation

## LORD SELKIRK LEAVES THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT

Having firmly established his colony, Lord Selkirk left his settlement and journeyed south he traveled through the unorganized lands of the Louisiana Purchase belonging to the United States and reached St. Louis on the Mississippi River before continuing on to Washington City, Albany, New York and the New England states he arrived at the Canadian province of Upper Canada (Ontario) where he discovered agents of the North West Company had laid plans to attack him in the courts four charges were filed against him regarding his activities at Fort William he was ordered to appear at Sandwich, a judicial center on the Detroit River

When Lord Selkirk arrived at Sandwich one of the charges was quickly dropped all of the other three charges were held over until witnesses could arrive Lord Selkirk was released on £350 bail and the case was moved to Montreal headquarters city for the North West Company

## DONALD MCKENZIE RETURNS TO FORT GEORGE

Nor'Wester Donald "Fats" McKenzie traveled with the returning supply brigade going from Fort William on Lake Superior back to Fort George -- 1817 McKenzie had administered North West Company's New Caledonia interior trade for year without any casualties or bloodshed and had increased the amount and value of pelts delivered but a lot of manual labor was needed at Fort George also the fort could not rely entirely on food supplies brought in by ship crops had to be planted to feed the employees there two hundred acres of land had been cleared but only a fraction of that planted -- 1817

## OWNERSHIP OF THE PACIFIC COAST REMAINS UNDER DISPUTE

At one time or another five nations claimed the Pacific Northwest:

- Spain had claimed the Pacific coast from California to Russian-America but she relinquished her claim under the Nootka Treaty as part of the Nootka Agreement [January 11, 1794];
- France had claimed all land west of the Mississippi River she was eliminated by the Louisiana Purchase [April 30, 1803];
- Russia maintained a claim to the same area once claimed by Spain from Russian-American in the north to Spanish-America (California) to the south Fort Ross on the Russian River (Sacramento, California) had been constructed to demonstrate their claim;
- United States continued to claim the West by right of discovery, exploration and settlement;

- Britain continued to claim the West by rights of discovery, exploration, settlement and treaty

United States and Great Britain attempted to establish a boundary in the Pacific Northwest but no agreement could be reached

both nations claimed the land from the California boundary (42° north latitude) to the Alaska boundary claimed by Russia (54°-40' north latitude)

#### STEPS ARE TAKEN TO RESOLVE THE OWNERSHIP OF FORT GEORGE (ASTORIA)

Representatives of the United States and Great Britain were again at the conference table attempting to compromise issues not addressed in the [1814] Treaty of Ghent specifically the ownership of the major trading post at the mouth of the Columbia River operated by the Canadian North West Company but claimed by American John Jacob Astor

John Jacob Astor managed after four years to get the United States government to send a man-of-war to Astoria to retrieve his property

United States government notified the British government of its intent to reoccupy the fort

United States government notified the British government of its intent to reoccupy the fort

#### AMERICAN TAKES ACTION TO RE-ACQUIRE ASTORIA

American sloop-of-war *Ontario* under Captain James Biddle was dispatched by the United States government to sail around Cape Horn to the Columbia River

*Ontario* carried American Commissioner J.B. Prevost who was sent to Fort George as a special agent by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams

Prevost was ordered to the Columbia River “...to assert there the claim of sovereignty in the name and on behalf of the United States by some symbolical or other appropriate mode of setting up a claim to national authority and dominion”

Commissioner Prevost left the *Ontario* at Valparaiso, Chile -- 1817 where he awaited transportation to the mouth of the Columbia River

#### BRITISH RESPONSE TO CAPTAIN BIDDLE’S ORDERS

Charles Bagot, British Minister at Washington, learned about the orders given to Captain James Biddle instructing him to repossess Astoria

Bagot protested to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams

Astoria was not one of the “**places and possessions**” referred to in the Treaty of Ghent the fort had been purchased by British subjects before the arrival of HMS *Raccoon* nor was the Columbia valley “**territory...taken...during the war**”

it was rather a region that had “**early taken possession of in His Majesty’s name**, [by Lieutenant Broughton of the George Vancouver expedition] **and that it had long since been considered to form a part of His Majesty’s dominions.**”<sup>92</sup>

#### BRITISH GOVERNMENT DID NOT AGREE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHARLES BAGOT

British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh disagreed with his British Minister at Washington City as the British secretary found reasons of policy under the Treaty of Ghent for conceding Astoria to the United States

however, the British Foreign Secretary refused to concede the American claim to the whole region British Foreign Secretary Castlereagh offered to restore the Columbia River post to the United States and submit the question of title to the country as a whole to arbitration

#### UNITED STATES RESPONDS TO THE CLAIMS OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN MINISTRY

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams accepted the offer to restore Astoria to John Jacob Astor but refused the offer to arbitrate the boundary between Canada and the United States

however, America was obviously in a weak position to push the boundary line to the north thus the question of international boundary for Oregon remained unresolved

#### NOR’WESTER DAVID THOMPSON IS HIRED TO DRAW THE INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY

Retired Nor’Wester David Thompson was appointed to the British commission that was established to define and map the boundary between Canada and the United States

he surveyed the region from St. Regis, Quebec to the Northwest angle of Lake of the Woods which is a lake that occupies parts of Canada’s provinces of Ontario and Manitoba and the state of Minnesota

North West Company hurried him off to identify the location of the new boundary

he accomplished the task in ten months

driving himself and his entourage through sub-zero blizzards by dog sled covering 4,000 miles of mostly uncharted territory

and earning the respect of even North West Company partner Alexander Mackenzie

who had previously forged routes from Lake Athabasca to the Pacific and Arctic oceans Thompson’s efforts “**should have taken two years**”<sup>93</sup> Mackenzie marveled

David Thompson spent nine years as the British representative to the commission -- 1817-[1826]

(tragically David Thompson and his work was almost completely ignored by history interest did spark for a brief period during the Oregon dispute of the [mid-1840s])

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<sup>92</sup> The Westminster Review, Volume 45, P. 437.

<sup>93</sup> Pritt J. Vesilind, *National Geographic*, May 1996, Vol. 189 Issue 5, P. 112.

but waned quickly when ownership of Oregon once again came under dispute)

#### AMERICA'S EXPANSION WEST WAS OF LITTLE POLITICAL INTEREST

United States government demonstrated little real interest in the Pacific Northwest

presidents of the United States during that time were from the South or the Atlantic seaboard  
they were not especially concerned with the Far West

Congress was dominated by Southerners who were focused on slavery

South Carolina U.S. Senator John C. Calhoun usually led the South's senators

he was single-minded on the issue of slavery -- especially in expanding westward

Massachusetts Congressman Daniel Webster spoke for New England manufacturers  
who dominated political power in the Northeastern states

they were focused on protecting business interests through the use of protective tariffs  
expansion of the nation to the West was not on their political agenda

Kentucky Congressman Henry Clay was interested in nationalism and expansion

but even he did not apply those ideals to the "Westmost West"

Secretary of War Southerner John C. Calhoun had an ambitious defense plan in mind -- 1818

he called for military posts extending from the Great Lakes to the upper Missouri River

his underlying idea was to control the Indians in the region

and to provide protection to the American fur trade there from British incursions

but he had no interest in the West coast of North America

or even beyond the Rocky Mountains

#### PRESIDENT JAMES MONROE WANTS BETTER RELATIONS WITH GREAT BRITAIN

President James Monroe had served as Secretary of State during the War before his [1816] election

in an effort to improve American-British relations he had negotiated the Rush-Bagot Treaty  
that resolved one of the border disputes held over from the War of 1812

Rush-Bagot Treaty was named after acting-Secretary of State Richard Rush

and British Minister to the United States Charles Bagot

when ratified by the United States Senate -- April 16, 1818

it demilitarized the Great Lakes by limiting the number of ships and cannons

either nation could have on Lake Chaplain and Lake Ontario

#### LORD SELKIRK'S MEN ARE BROUGHT TO TRIAL IN MONTREAL

North West Company agents had filed charges against Hudson's Bay Company employees

including Lord Selkirk's colonial recruiter Colin Robertson

who were charged with willful destruction of North West Company's Fort Gibraltar [1815]

trials began Montreal but the jury refused to convict the defendants -- May 1818

#### PETER SKENE OGDEN ARRIVES IN COLUMBIA DISTRICT

Peter Skene (sometimes Skeene, Skein or Skeen) Ogden was a modest, courageous and durable employee of North West Company -- 1818

Peter Skene Ogden was born in [1794] the son of Sarah (Hanson) Ogden and her husband Canadian Chief Justice Isaac Ogden of Quebec

little was recorded regarding his education other than the fact he was well-schooled he was tutored in law by a local ministers but showed little interest

he signed a seven year apprenticeship as a clerk with the North West Company [1809]

Ogden was assigned to a trading post on the prairies north of the Saskatchewan River

where he systematically harassed rival traders from the Hudson's Bay Company

his bullying tactics included slashing his rivals' clothes, smashing their fingers with sticks and slapping their faces -- always in an ever-expanding pattern of intimidation

he took a Cree Indian woman as his common-law wife and they had a son

Ogden crossed the line between physical assaults which had become a commonplace in the trade war, and killing which was not, when he became involved in the well-documented murder

of an Indian who insisted on trading with the Hudson's Bay Company house rather than with Ogden [1816]

Ogden was charged with murder and the North West Company

moved him the Columbia District in an attempt to avoid any further confrontations with the Hudson's Bay Company

When Peter Skene Ogden arrived at Fort George many Nor'Westers remarked on his intelligence and keen sense of humor while others noted his profanity, difficult disposition and brawling ways

#### TROUBLE FOLLOWS PETER SKENE OGDEN TO THE COLUMBIA DISTRICT

Peter Skene Ogden began work for the North West Company at Astoria

he was asked to negotiate a solution to a dispute

between a group of Iroquois Indian trappers and a band of Cowlitz Indians

accompanied by the Iroquois, Ogden traveled up the Columbia River

to the Cowlitz village but the Iroquois were not interested in mediation

they massacred a dozen men, women and children as Ogden helplessly watched

when he finally got the situation under control Ogden convinced the Cowlitz chief

that Astoria would provide safety for the villagers

but when he escorted the refugees downstream to the fort,

Nor'Westers inside the post mistakenly opened fire on the new arrivals

relations between the Cowlitz people and the fur company became hostile  
and Peter Skene Ogden learned a hard lesson about leadership

#### DONALD McKENZIE EXPANDS NORTH WEST COMPANY OPERATIONS IN NEW CALIDONIA

After two years of trapping in the wilderness, McKenzie returned down the Columbia River  
with a plan that brought howls of outrage

from tradition bound Chief Trader James Keith at Fort George -- June 5, 1818  
since the inland natives could not be persuaded to trap

Donald "Fats" McKenzie had determined to take his own hunters into the field,  
this was a revolutionary procedure which although sporadically tried  
had never become standard policy for any responsible fur company  
furthermore, McKenzie proposed to establish as a base of operations a new post  
at the mouth of the Walla Walla River surrounded by very unfriendly inland natives

#### CHIEF TRADER JAMES KEITH REACTS TO DONALD McKENZIE'S PLAN

Chief Trader James Keith believed the plan to place white trappers in the field  
and to build a post among hostile Pacific natives seemed impossible or insane  
yet Donald McKenzie had the authority to carry out his idea  
in fact, new orders to that effect had just arrived

from North West Company headquarters at Fort William  
North West Company leaders demanded a new central depot for their interior trading posts  
be built among the Nez Perce Indians in the interior

With monumental bad form, Keith reluctantly handed over forty men to McKenzie

#### SITE FOR NORTH WEST COMPANY'S FORT NEZ PERCES SELECTED

North West Company employees spent a good deal of time searching for a location in the interior  
that would combine efficient transportation facilities, friendly Indians  
and a reliable supply of beaver

Fort Okanogan had not proven to be up to the task

Donald McKenzie declared Spokane House to be an expensive luxury

McKenzie and forty men journeyed up the Columbia River from Fort George  
they camped beside the river near the mouth of the Walla Walla River

McKenzie selected this site for Fort Nez Perces -- July 11, 1818

it was to be located to be on a treeless plain overlooking a broad curve  
of the sun-struck green-shimmering Columbia River near the junction of Walla Walla River  
(near the location of today's Wallula, Washington)

essentially all company exports and supplies passed through the Columbia Gorge  
this location protected the route -- Fort Nez Perces was the most important post in the interior  
fur trade headquartered here focused on the Snake River watershed and central Rocky Mountains,  
it provided the opportunity to trap in the territories of Shoshone and Nez Perce Indians,  
and enabled the North West Company to reduce the fighting among the natives  
this was a gathering place for natives and proved to be a favorable location  
however, where McKenzie was to build was, in fact,  
located among the Walla Wallas and Cayuse natives -- not the Nez Perce  
(later the name of the post was changed to Fort Walla Walla)

#### ALEXANDER ROSS SERVES AS CHIEF TRADER AT FORT NEZ PERCES

Fort Nez Perces was established by the North West Company as outfitting and trading post  
Alexander Ross was assigned to the position of Chief Trader of Fort Nez Perces

among his employees were twenty-five French-Canadians, thirty-eight Iroquois Indians  
and thirty-two Kanakas (Hawaiians)

(Ross was very successful at his new assignment

he met and traded with as many as 10,000 Indians in [1819] alone)

Alexander Ross arrived at the site for the new post from Fort Kamloops on the Thompson River

he wrote of the difficulties involved with construction: **“We were in an unfriendly land with a gigantic task on our hands. In the whole country, this spot was the hardest! Nevertheless the region had to be made safe for the fur trade, the friendship of the natives secured, buildings made, furs collected, and new territories added. This was a big program, and we did not dare see obstacles ahead. Our orders were to occupy the position, so on the dreaded spot we took our stand to run every risk, and brave every danger.”**<sup>94</sup>

#### FORT NEZ PERCES IS CONSTRUCTED AT THE MOUTH OF THE WALLA WALLA RIVER

Nor'Westers cut trees growing upstream, these were tied together

and floated them down to the building site

this was some of the earliest “boom” logging (where log rafts are floated) in the Northwest

Fort Nez Perces was a most strongly fortified post when it was constructed -- July 1818

it was built with a double palisade unique among North West Company posts

it had a 200-foot-square wall twenty feet high and six inches thick

blockhouses were placed at each of the corners in which cannon were mounted

a water tower for use against a fire attack was located in each blockhouse

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<sup>94</sup> James A. Crutchfield, *It Happened in Washington*, P. 20.

a second defensive inner wall twelve feet high made of sawed timbers  
surrounded a storehouse and dwellings  
Indians admitted for trade were required to carry on negotiations  
through a wicker window in an inside wall  
except for special councils Indians were not allowed inside

Completed post was described by Alexander Ross: **“The whole establishment was surrounded by a palisade made of ponderous planks of timber twenty feet long, two and half feet broad, and six inches thick. The outside of this wall was made very smooth to keep the enemy from climbing it. Built on the top of the palisade was a range of balustrades, [a protecting wall made of planks put close together in the form of a railing] four feet high which served the double purpose of ramparts [walls] and loopholes [used to fire rifles through]. On the inside, a strong gallery five feet wide, extended all around. Sentinels on guard paced back and forth along this gallery.... At each corner, where a strong bastion or blockhouse was built, was a reservoir that held two hundred gallons of water as a security against fire, the thing we dreaded most in the plots of natives. Inside the wall were built ranges of storehouses, and cabins for the hands. In front of these buildings was another wall twelve feet high, with portholes and slip doors, which separated the buildings from the open square inside.... The outer gate was cleverly made to open and shut by pulley, and two double doors secured the entrance.”**<sup>95</sup>

Weapons were formidable

four cannons, ten swivel guns, sixty muskets, twenty pikes, and a box of hand grenades  
for added precaution Ross recalled, **“all trading was done through a hole in the wall of the trading shop, we standing on the inside, and the natives on the outside.”**<sup>96</sup>

Even at that, Iroquois Indians plotted against Donald Mackenzie  
they attacked him one night but he was saved

by **“...some of the Canadians and faithful Owhyhees [Hawaiians] ....”**

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY MAINTAINS A CHAIN OF TRADING POSTS

Despite efforts by the U.S. Congress to prohibit trading on American soil

British and Canadian trading efforts continued to conduct trade without interruption or interference  
North West Company's Columbia District posts included Fort George on the Columbia River,  
Spokane House on the Spokane River,  
Fort Okanogan on the Okanogan River,  
Fort Thompson at the confluence of the North and South Thompson rivers (Kamloops, B.C.)  
Fort Alexander on the south bank of the Winnipeg River,

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<sup>95</sup> James A. Crutchfield, *It Happened in Washington*, P. 21.

<sup>96</sup> James A. Crutchfield, *It Happened in Washington*, P. 22.

Fort Nez Perces on the Columbia River near the mouth of the Walla Walla River  
also trapping and trading expeditions ventured into Snake River country

#### U.S. COMMISSIONER J.B. PREVOST RESUMES HIS JOURNEY TO FORT GEORGE

Vice-Admiral Sir Richard King commanded the British fleet assigned to the East Indies Station  
Admiral King was assigned the task of providing transportation to Fort George  
for United States Commissioner J.B. Prevost so a ceremony could be held  
to deliver North West Company's Fort George back to its ordinal owner, John Jacob Astor  
Captain Sheriff, the senior officer of the British ships in the Pacific Ocean  
was ordered to provide a witness to the surrender of Fort George on the Columbia River  
Captain Sheriff learned of U.S. Commissioner J.B. Prevost's presence in Valparaiso, Chile  
Captain Sheriff extended the courtesy of providing Prevost transportation to the Columbia River  
aboard H.M.S. frigate *Blossom* under Captain F. Hickey -- Prevost accepted the offer  
*Blossom* sailed from Valparaiso, Chile -- July 12, 1818  
Commissioner Prevost was fully empowered to receive possession of Fort George  
to be returned to John Jacob Astor as Astoria

#### LORD SELKIRK ASKS FOR CATHOLIC PRIESTS TO SERVE HIS RED RIVER COLONISTS

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk was interested in bringing Catholic priests to his colony  
to address the ongoing war between the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company  
Lord Selkirk requested Joseph-Octave Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, send missionaries  
Bishop Plessis created the Catholic District of the North West  
permission for Catholic priests to travel to the Red River Colony  
had to be secured from the North West Company which was Anglican (Church of England)  
however, permission was granted  
Father Joseph-Norbert Provencher together with Father Severe Dumolin  
and seminarian Guillaume Etienne Edge arrived at Fort Douglas to establish a mission  
east of the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers  
when the priests arrived in Red River Colony they made quite an impression -- July 16 1818  
Father Provencher stood six foot four inches in his flowing robes and weighed 300 pounds  
their mission was to convert the Indians to Christianity  
and to "morally improve" delinquent French-Canadians  
they were to also to educate the young, and assist in colonization  
but any involvement in the company wars was to be strictly avoided  
in the first two weeks the clerics performed seventy-two baptisms  
many of these were the Indian women French-Canadians had taken as wives

## LORD SELKIRK APPEARS IN AN UPPER CANADA COURT TO ANSWER TO CHARGES

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk appeared in York (Toronto), Upper Canada to face charges regarding his actions at North West Company headquarters at Fort William -- September 1818  
Chief Justice Dummer Powel presided

During the investigation by the grand jury no witnesses appeared  
members of the grand jury complained that Provincial Attorney General John Beverley Robinson was interfering with their deliberations -- they refused to present an indictment  
Chief Justice Powell waited two days for the grand jury to complete its work  
when no verdict was forthcoming he imposed bail and adjourned the case  
Lord Selkirk's case was never reopened

## FUR TRADING COMPANY WARS CONTINUE

Red River colony was not the only scene of violence between North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company as their rivalry spread

Hudson's Bay Company made a persistent effort to expand its area of influence to the Athabasca region which was beyond the company's charter  
they asserted that being British subjects they had as much right as anyone to trade in that region

North West Company had no charter rights at all but was determined they would not tamely submit to the loss of their virtual monopoly in the Athabasca trade

North West Company's harassment of Hudson's Bay Company resulted in vast profits

Nor'Westers brought nearly four hundred and thirty packs out of Athabasca -- 1818  
while the Hudson's Bay Company's men under did not take out a single pack

Both Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company conducted raids and skirmishes on their rival

Fort Weddeburn (first built by Hudson's Bay Company in 1815) was rebuilt to provide competition to the Nor'Westers' Fort Chipewyan -- 1818

men under Colin Robertson appeared in force at North West Company's Fort Chipewyan

Great Slave Lake region was the scene of fighting as was the Mackenzie River Department and the region around the Peace River

## NORTH WEST COMPANY'S DONALD McKENZIE RESHAPES THE FUR INDUSTRY

Donald McKenzie's great contribution to trapping was the invention of the brigade system which revolutionized the western fur trade

Before McKenzie the fur trade had been based on the trading post to which the Indian trappers brought their pelts for exchange

because Nez Perce Indians were reluctant to do this work,  
McKenzie decided to form parties of company employees to go into the field to trap  
rather than establish posts and trapping camps  
these trapping brigades would carry their own supplies and equipment on pack horses,  
trappers would be accompanied by their women and children  
and be free to follow the beaver wherever supplies were greatest  
brigades provided mobility and flexibility  
they removed from Indian Country the tempting target of a well-stocked trading post  
it also removed a symbol of the advancing white civilization from the view  
of increasingly concerned Indians

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY'S DONALD McKENZIE LEADS HIS TRAPPING BRIGADE

After putting Alexander Ross in charge of Fort Nez Perces

Donald McKenzie moved his trapping operation deep into the Snake River country -- fall 1818  
he pushed his brigade of fifty-five men equipped with 300 beaver traps and 195 horses  
across the Blue Mountains, down the Snake River to the Bear River  
as far as the hairpin bend in southern Idaho and on to the headwaters of the Snake River

To help maintain discipline and to convince suspicious local Indians of his peaceful intent,

McKenzie took along with the brigade the families of many of his men

this meant more mouths to feed and more horses to worry about

children had to be provided for -- many were even born on the long marches  
but in compensation the wives set up the lodges, attended to the domestic chores  
and dressed the furs leaving the men free to fan out along the streams,  
each armed with six beaver traps

as long as the majority of the hunters produced beaver, the camp remained stationary  
otherwise down came the lodges and on went the cavalcade to the next valley

if the Indians they met chose to trade that was fine -- there were goods for that

but now the main dependence for the company was on the trapping brigade itself

After settling the main party along the Snake River under the charge of Michael Bourbon

McKenzie led half a dozen scouts northward to the sources of the Snake River

they carried a large stock of merchandise, but no provisions as they lived off the land  
traveling often on snowshoes, they reexamined the Jackson Hole and Teton country

McKenzie had first seen [in 1811] after leaving Wilson Price Hunt's Overland Expedition

Using the brigade system from 1818 to [1821]

Donald McKenzie probed for furs deep in the Snake Country  
reaching almost as far south as the Great Salt Lake

## BRITISH AND AMERICAN WAR SHIPS REACH THE COLUMBIA RIVER

After picking up United States Commissioner J.B. Prevost in Valparaiso, Chile

British Royal Navy frigate *Blossom* under Captain F. Hickey

arrived at Fort George -- October 1, 1818

Commissioner J.B. Prevost, unlike British Captain William Black before him, found

a strongly fortified post that served North West Company as the headquarters of New Caledonia

Nor'Westers had managed to clear some two hundred acres, **“20 of which is planted to potatoes for use of the gentlemen. They have twelve head of cattle, with some pigs and goats imported from California. The stock does not increase for want of proper care. Wolves often carry off goats and pigs.”**<sup>97</sup>

U.S. Commissioner J.B. Prevost was graciously received

by North West Company Chief Trader James Keith

Commissioner Prevost assured James Keith North West Company would retain actual possession and could continue to occupy and protect the post -- if the post was returned to the United States

## CEREMONY TO RETURN FORT GEORGE TO THE UNITED STATES AS ASTORIA

American Captain James Biddle had sailed his sloop-of-war *Ontario* from Valparaiso, Chile

up the West coast of the Americas under orders to reoccupy Astoria or Fort George

*Ontario* arrived at Fort George -- October 6, 1818

she was the first United States naval vessel to enter the Columbia River

An appropriate ceremony to retake possession of the post for America was held -- October 6, 1818

Commissioner for the United States J.B. Prevost

signed an act restoring Astoria (Fort George) to the United States

representing Great Britain's government was Captain F. Hickey of H.M.S. *Blossom*

and James Keith of the North West Company

both signed the act of acceptance

U.S. Captain James Biddle enacted the order to repossess Astoria

it seems to have been a good natured affair

Commissioner Prevost, Captain F. Hickey and Chief Trader Keith

watched as Captain Biddle lowered the British Union Jack down the flagpole

and watched the United States stars and stripes to up

Captain Biddle for good measure also claimed both sides of the Columbia River

in the name of the United States

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<sup>97</sup> David Lavender, *Land of Giants*, P. 108.

these were the first official acts of the United States government to assert title to the Northwest  
Americans believed the act was in conformity to the Treaty of Ghent  
in restoring ownership of the property to John Jacob Astor  
Placards declaring the surrender of Fort George to the Americans  
were placed on either side of the entrance to the Columbia River on Cape Disappointment (north)  
and on Point Adams (south) -- these were soon removed by the Indians

#### FORT GEORGE IS NOW ONCE AGAIN ASTORIA

Canadian North West Company continued as the sole operators of the fort,  
now once again trading under the name Astoria  
This post was now quite powerfully built  
it consisted of a strong stockade of fir logs twelve feet high  
that enclosed a parallelogram 150 feet by 250 feet  
within it were shops, store houses and powder magazines  
on the walls were two eighteen-pound cannon, two six-pound cannon and seven swivel guns

#### JOHN JACOB ASTOR ABANDONS THE PACIFIC TRADE

Astoria had been returned to John Jacob Astor -- if only as a formality  
by this time North West Company trappers were too firmly established for Americans to compete  
Great Britain controlled all of the Pacific coast trade for the next twenty years  
and virtually ruled New Caledonia

Astor made no move to reoccupy the post

he abandoned his Pacific Fur Company and leased Astoria to the North West Company  
commercially Astoria was a failure -- but politically it was a great success

Astor had kept alive United States' claim to the Northwest

Although Astor's Pacific Fur Company had dissolved his American Fur Company had expanded  
it now included the upper Missouri River area, upper Mississippi Valley and the Rocky Mountains  
several former Pacific Fur Company employees were involved in the American Fur Company  
Wilson Price Hunt, Robert Stuart, and Ramsay Crooks  
were employed in highly responsible positions

#### LORD SELKIRK BRINGS CHARGES IN THE ONGOING COMPANY WARS

Montreal was the location of courts empowered to deal with offences in the Indian Territories  
Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk stood before a Montreal judge  
to charge six North West Company partners including Alexander Mackenzie and Simon Fraser  
for various crimes against the settlers of the Red River Colony [1815 and 1816]

including being principals or accessories in the murder of  
Red River Colony Governor Robert Semple  
evidence given regarding the Seven Oaks Massacre [June 19, 1816]  
was especially compelling

Results of these trials were disheartening for Lord Selkirk

of the various people who were accused not one was found guilty

this may not have been surprising given the importance of the North West Company  
to the Canadian economy and livelihoods of Canadian citizens

(after the trial Lord Selkirk returned to England where he enticed a friend

to bring the matter of the company wars before the House of Commons

all papers regarding the company wars were gathered and published as the *Blue Book of 1819*

this was a valuable official source of information regarding the disturbances

that had centered around Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony)

(Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk remained vitally interested in the Red River Colony  
for the remainder of his life

but poor health caused him to seek a temperate climate in the south of France

where he died [April 8, 1820] at Pau, France in the Pyrenees Mountains foothills

Lord Selkirk's character has been both lauded and vilified

while he was a man of dreams, his vision was born out by history

he demonstrated the Canadian prairie was valuable far beyond its furbearing animals

his worst fault was his unfailing belief that Hudson's Bay Company was completely virtuous

and that North West Company was perpetually cast in the role of villain

had his Hudson's Bay Company Red River Colony settlers met the Nor'Westers halfway

suffering and hardships might have been avoided entirely

Lord Selkirk's only son, Dunbar James Douglas, inherited the family title

when he died [1885] the line of Selkirk became extinct)

## BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA REMAINS UNCLEAR

British claims were based on:

- voyage of Captain James Cook [1778];
- Nootka Sound Treaty where Spain gave up exclusive right to the area [1790];
- explorations of Captain George Vancouver 1792]; and Sir Alexander Mackenzie [1793]  
who ascended part of the Fraser River;
- establishment of Fort McLeod by North West Company [1805];
- first settlement in the Oregon interior (Spokane House);
- fur-trading activities of the Hudson's Bay Company

which amalgamated all British and Canadian fur-trading operations 1821

America's claims were based on:

- explorations of Captain Robert Gray [1792];
- Lewis and Clark expedition [1804-06];
- fur-trading post at Astoria [1811];
- rights to the Pacific coast north of the 42nd parallel under treaty with Spain  
and to the coast south of 54°40', under treaty with Russia;
- actual occupation by American settlers at Astoria and other trading posts

#### UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN SIGN THE TREATY OF 1818

President James Monroe's efforts to better relations with Britain resulted in a second agreement  
(after the Rush-Bagot Agreement to become effective [April 1818])

Treaty of 1818 (Anglo-American Convention in London) was signed -- October 20, 1818

it identified the international boundary between the U.S. and Canada along the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel  
from the Lake of the Woods (Minnesota) to the Rocky Mountains (Montana)

this important issue had remained unresolved since the [1814] Treaty of Ghent

Treaty of 1818 marked the last loss of territory by Britain in what is the Continental United States

Great Britain gave up all of Rupert's Land south of 49° North latitude

including all of the Red river Colony south of that latitude

United States ceded the northernmost edge of the Missouri Territory north of the 49°

Neither Great Britain nor the United States admitted the other nation

owned the Pacific coast nor could they agree on a boundary in that region

Convention of 1818, however, was an admission by Great Britain that the United States

had some claim to the region although neither country accepted responsibility

for providing law and order

#### TREATY OF 1818 CALLS FOR JOINT OCCUPATION OF "OREGON COUNTRY"

Treaty of 1818's Joint Occupation agreement professed to safeguard the rights of other nations

but neither Spain or Russia had formally yielded their respective claims to the Pacific coast

and the claims of Native Americans were completely ignored

Article III of the Treaty of 1818 provided for Joint Occupation West of the Rocky Mountains

for the next ten years in the region that was known to Americans as "Oregon Country"

and to the British and Canadians as the "Columbia District"

which included the southern portion of New Caledonia

(Oregon Country included present-day Washington, Oregon, Idaho

and portions of Montana, Wyoming and British Columbia

Article III stated in part: “...any country that may be claimed by either party on the northwest coast of America, westward of the Stony [Rocky] Mountains, shall, together with its harbors, bays, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, be free and open, for the terms of ten years...to the vessels, citizens, and subjects of the two Powers....this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim, which either of the two high contracting parties may have to any part of the said country....”

Article III was, in fact, an agreement to disagree

no provision was made by either country to form a government in the Pacific Northwest

this agreement’s logic was clear in Great Britain, but was less well accepted in the U.S.

Treaty of 1818 was all that was needed to activate anew burst of public spirit

for American occupation of the West

#### UNITED STATES IS ALSO HOLDS TALKS WITH SPAIN

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and Spanish diplomat Luis de Onis y Gonzalez-Vara

met to resolve the questions of boundaries between the United States and Mexico

purchase of East and West Florida by America was one of the topics discussed

also an international boundary needed to be drawn for the Louisiana Purchase

which was broadly the land between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains

•Adams demanded Spain agree to withdraw her claim of land from the Rockies to the Pacific

Americans insisted they held Spain’s right to first exploration north of 42° north

since the Columbia River with its source in the high latitudes

was discovered, explored and first occupied by Americans

#### ALEXANDER ANDREYEVICH BARANOV OF THE RUSSIAN AMERICAN COMPANY IS FIRED

Alexander Baranov had been the head of the Russian-America Company for twenty-eight years

he overcame tremendous obstacles to become successful in the (Alaskan) frontier

he was faced with serious problems of hostile Native Americans

who were able to purchase firearms from other traders

his base colony was made up of criminals from Siberia

and natives who were little more than slaves

his colony was short on manpower and food and racked with disease

In addition to establishing trading centers and presiding over vast expanses of territory,

Baranov was credited with organizing native Alaskan hunters to expand their range

to include even the coast of California

he also advocated more educational opportunities for native Alaskans

under his leadership schools were created and frontier communities became less isolated

Baranov began to rely more and more on American traders, including John Jacob Astor,  
who sent in food and items to trade with the Indians and took out cargoes of fur  
rumors sprang up that Baranov had secretly siphoned money to American banks in his own name  
but a subsequent financial audit disproved the rumors  
he had been scrupulously honest regarding his personal wealth  
not one penny was misappropriated  
not one scrap of evidence of graft or corruption was ever presented

After nineteen years in Russian-America, Baranov requested a replacement  
Baranov was arbitrarily removed from office by the Russian-America  
he was cast off without reward or consideration when he was no longer useful to the company  
he was forced to beg his passage home -- November 1818

Baranov sailed back to Russia by heading south and then sailing around Africa's Cape of Good Hope  
(unfortunately, Alexander Baranov became very ill on the journey  
he died in Java [today's Indonesia on April 28, 1819]  
he was buried at sea far from both his native and his adopted lands)

#### PETER SKENE OGDEN IS PLACED IN CHARGE OF SPOKANE HOUSE

Possibly to remove Ogden from the volatile situation he had created at Astoria  
he was assigned to take charge of Spokane House -- winter of 1818-1819  
at about this time he took as his wife a Spokane Indian-Metis Julia Rivet  
having left his Cree wife and his first child along the Saskatchewan River

Peter Skene Ogden led fur brigades from Fort Spokane  
and opened to the public much of Idaho, Utah and Northern California  
Julia traveled throughout the West with Ogden and their children

#### DONALD MCKENZIE CONTINUES TO TRAP THROUGH THE WINTER

Donald "Fats" McKenzie shifted camps and trapped throughout a large region -- winter 1818-1819  
this was a vast departure from the usual practice of establish trading post and trapping camps  
Alexander Ross and Daniel Potts led a trading party to within sight of the Teton Range (Wyoming)  
they apparent saw some of the thermal geysers (in what is today Yellowstone National Park)

Once, when the huge McKenzie and three of his men were alone in one of the camps,  
a band of Shoshone Indians started to swarm across the whites' inadequate defenses  
McKenzie rolled out a keg of gunpowder and lit a spill as a demonstration  
he then threatened to blow them all up, himself included -- he bluffed the Indians off  
on another occasion two Sandwich Islanders were killed by Indians beside a steam  
(near what is now the southern part of Idaho-Oregon boundary)

McKenzie gave the river the name it still bears, Owyhee (an early spelling of Hawaii)  
As winter pressed on, one of McKenzie's Iroquois Indians, Oskonoton, returned to Fort Nez Percés  
when he arrived alone and exhausted Oskonoton said twenty-five men were given permission  
to hunt and trap a small river where a band of Shoshone Indians appeared  
McKenzie's trappers joined the natives -- all except Oskonoton  
Oskonoton carried no news of the main party since he had lost contact  
but he described how rich the region was in furs

#### ADAMS-ONIS TREATY IS SIGNED BY THE UNITED STATES AND SPAIN

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and Spanish diplomat Luis de Onís y González-Vara  
signed the Adams-Onís Treaty -- February 22, 1819

Spain relinquished her claims to Oregon Country north of 42° north  
United States acquired Florida at no cost to the U.S.

except the assumption of some \$5 million in claims by U.S. citizens against Spain  
in return for Florida the U.S. gave up all claims to Texas under the Louisiana Purchase  
this treaty also defined the Western limits of Louisiana Purchase

Mexico would also keep the vast region of New Mexico

(all of present-day California and New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Arizona  
and sections of Wyoming and Colorado)

Russia's concerns regarding her claim to the Pacific Northwest was not addressed at this time  
(Russia will continue her claim on the Pacific Northwest into the [1820s])

Neither the United States Senate nor the Republic of Mexico  
ratified the Adams-Onís Treaty until [1831]

leaving possession of the Pacific Northwest in grave doubt (for nine years)

#### CONGRESS ENACTS THE FIRST APPROPRIATION TO "CIVILIZE" THE INDIANS

Christian missionaries serving the Indians along the East coast and in the Mississippi River region  
had long urged an expenditure of government money to "civilize" the Indians

Congress appropriated \$10,000 to be made available through mission societies  
to undertake the task of bringing Christianity to the Native Americans -- March 3, 1819  
although a small amount of money it stimulated powerful interest in missionary activity  
although most Americans were not motivated to contribute to solve Indian problems  
this appropriation did serve as seed money for the more concerned activists

#### AMERICANS FEAR BRITISH CONTROL OF THE FUR TRAPPING INDUSTRY

To counter the British efforts to expand fur trapping into regions claimed by the United States

Secretary of War John C. Calhoun sought to establish army garrisons  
on the upper Missouri and Mississippi rivers -- 1819

Colonel Henry Atkinson commanded one division of the US Army Western Department  
on the Missouri River headquartered at St. Louis

Atkinson's effort to establish a fort at the mouth of the Yellowstone River proved too ambitious  
as steamboats and other logistical problems could not provide the scheduled serves  
required to supply a post that far up the Missouri River  
blunted by the breakdown of and other logistical failings

Colonel Atkinson settled for a post, Fort Atkinson, far down the Missouri River  
at Council Bluffs forty miles above the mouth of the Platte River  
even so, the presence of American troops facing the British from the edge of the Indian Country  
gave heart to St. Louis entrepreneurs

#### HAWAIIAN ISLANDS SEE A MAJOR CHANGE OCCUR

Hawaiian King Kamehameha (I) had unified the islands under his control  
he developed a unifying legal systems for all of the islands in his domain  
he took several steps to ensure the islands would remain united even after his death:

- he used products he collected in taxes to promote trade with Europe and the United States;
- under his law elderly people, woman, and children who were noncombatants in war  
were provided safety -- this saved thousands of lives during Kamehameha's battles;
- foreigners could not buy land in the Hawaiian Islands which assured independence  
even as many of the other islands of the Pacific fell to the colonial powers  
(Hawaii remained independent until annexed by the United States in 1898)

Kamehameha spent his time after [1812] at Kamakahonu -- a compound he built in Kailua-Kona  
(now the site of the King Kamehameha Beach Hotel)

King Kamehameha (also known as Kamehameha the Great) died -- May 8, 1819  
Liholiho (Kamehameha II) ascended the throne

#### NORTH WEST COMPANY'S DONALD McKENZIE REPORTS TO FORT NEZ PERCES

After a period of great anxiety regarding the safety of Donald "Fats" McKenzie's expedition  
he and six men returned to Fort Nez Perces -- July 1819

he confirmed Oskonoton's story that nineteen of his men  
had joined a band of Shoshone Indians and deserted

McKenzie had stayed in the Snake River area  
after several adventures and narrow escapes he had succeeded  
in uniting only a few of his the scattered hunting parties

McKenzie reported he had taken the opportunity to investigate the navigation possibilities of the lower Snake River -- then cut restlessly southward to the Boise River  
he and his men had traveled 600 miles on snowshoes in Blue Mountains  
this had been a gigantic effort, but it was reported McKenzie was scarcely winded  
McKenzie had delivered an unusually large and valuable catch  
this confirmed the value of his decision to build Fort Nez Perces  
for skeptical North West Company partners  
Snake country expeditions from Fort Nez Perces became an annual affair  
(they regularly produced a large portion of company's entire fur export  
west of the Rocky Mountains)

#### PROTESTANT MISSIONAIRES SAIL TO THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent their first missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands to provide training in Christianity to the natives  
Congregational minister Hiram Bingham and his new bride Sybil (Mosley) Bingham accompanied by Asa and Lucy (Goodale) Thurston sailed out of Boston -- October 23, 1819  
(they traveled aboard the brig *Thaddeus* for five months  
before arriving at the heathen village of Kilua, Oahu where they were met  
by almost naked villagers shouting and playing on the beach much to the disgust of the righteous and proper intruders [April 2, 1820])