JOHN WORK: A CHRONICLE OF HIS LIFE
AND A DIGEST OF HIS JOURNALS

by

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This is a chronicle of a man who was a furtrader, trapper, administrator and farmer on the Pacific coast. "To none of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers," wrote Bancroft, "is posterity more indebted than to John Work, whose journals of various expeditions, nowhere else mentioned, fill a gap in history." For 38 years, from 1825 to 1861, he lived on the coast, where he was concerned either directly or indirectly with almost every important development in the activities of the Company within the region.

Work was an Irishman, born about 1792 in County Donegal. He joined the Company as a writer when he was twenty-two years of age, so that he was older than many of his associates. In his contract, which is dated Stromness, June 15, 1814, he is described as fair in complexion and five feet seven inches tall. He spent the season of 1814-15 at York Factory as steward, but was then transferred to the neighboring Severn District, where he became second trader at Severn House. In 1818-19 he was promoted district master. Work was fitting into the Company nicely, since Nicholas Garry in 1821 described him as a "Most excellent young Man in Every Respect".


2 Rich, E.E., ed., The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, First Series 1825-38, Toronto, the Champlain Society, 1941. (hereafter referred to as H.B.S., IV) p. 356. Garry was sent out from England by the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company to carry out the 1821 coalition as smoothly as possible.
This was no mean tribute to win from so shrewd a judge of men.

The coalition of the Hudson's Bay and the North West companies in 1821, made little difference at first to John Work. He was ranked as a clerk and remained in the Severn District during 1821-22. Then he went to the adjoining Island Lake District where he remained until 1823, making his headquarters at Island Lake House. Little is known as yet of these early years but if his journals of Severn House and Island Lake House, which are now in the Hudson's Bay Archives in London, prove as illuminating as his later journals on the Pacific Coast have done, much new information may be added to an already fascinating career.

Work was transferred from the Island Lake District to that of the Columbia and left York Factory on July 18, 1823, to take up his new duties. He was to spend the rest of his life west of the Rockies, a life which was to be adventurous but hard, and at times extremely irksome. When Work entered the Hudson's Bay Company's service in 1814, the Company was engaged in murderous competition with the North Westers of Montreal. Until 1821 the servants of the rival companies engaged in cutthroat tactics and in raids on each others posts. Furs were trapped in and out of season, to the depletion of whole areas east of the Rockies. John Work had little contact with this strife in Severn, but he was now transferred to a district which had been explored and developed in large part as a result of this ruthless competition. The names of Simon

3 H. B. S., IV, p. 356.
Fraser, John Stuart, Daniel W. Harmon and David Thompson bulk large in this development of North West interests on the Pacific slope. For a while the Nor'Westers were threatened by American competition, but this ceased when Astoria was sold to the North West Company in 1813. The interests of the latter thereupon became paramount in Old Oregon. However, according to Frederick Merk, "Discipline among employees became lax; extravagance and waste crept into the conduct of the trade, a disease which spread even to the Oregon Country, ..." Meanwhile, the internecine strife between the Companies had reached its peak in the pitched battle of Seven Oaks at Red River in 1816. This affair involved both in costly litigation. Neither could stand the steady financial drain that such tactics involved.

Finally, in 1821, the long struggle was ended by an

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4 Simon Fraser became an articled clerk in the North West Company at the age of sixteen. In 1802, he became a bourgeois and in 1808 he followed the Fraser River to its mouth.

John Stuart entered the services of the North West Company in 1799. In 1805 he was sent west of the Rockies, and accompanied Simon Fraser in his descent of the Fraser River. He was placed in charge of New Caledonia in 1809 and left it in 1824. He entered the Hudson's Bay Company as Chief Factor in 1821 and retired in 1839.

Daniel W. Harmon was an American in the service of the North West Company. He spent the years from 1810 to 1819 in New Caledonia.

David Thompson is inseparably connected with the discovery and the exploration of the Far West. He was the first trained surveyor and cartographer of that area.

agreement resulting in coalition. In this merger the Hudson's Bay Company took over the trading posts and personnel of the North West Company and a new organization was formed by Royal Licence. This Licence granted the rights of exclusive trade to the Company for twenty-one years in British North America east of the Rockies, and in addition, the sole British rights of trade in the Oregon Country where equal right to the nationals of both Great Britain and the United States had been guaranteed by Treaty in 1818. George Simpson, who was of the same age as Work, was appointed Governor of the enlarged Northern Department in which the western districts of New Caledonia and the Columbia were included.

Simpson had first seen service with the Company in Athabasca in 1820-21. He was only twenty-nine but had already shown outstanding qualities of leadership. He was tireless in the execution of his duties. He could exercise tact but if necessary was utterly ruthless. He was to reduce the vast organization to the economical precision of a machine.

When Simpson sent Work to the Columbia, Hudson's Bay policy west of the Rockies was as yet in a state of flux. Between 1821-23, the new Governor had already with the vigor of a new broom, swept clean the greater part of the Northern


Department. New Caledonia and the Columbia had been left
to the last since the pressing problem had been the elimina-
tion of duplicate services in areas where the Companies had
been competitors.

The country to which Work was going had its problems
too, even if they were not of so pressing a nature. As Merk
suggests, "no solid foundation for authority existed there
since its sovereignty was still undetermined". In 1818 the
United States of America and Great Britain had concluded a
ten-year treaty of joint occupation which gave the nationals
of both the right to trade. The Hudson's Bay Company would
need strong leaders and capable subordinates who could control
this trade, who could maintain the law and order necessary for
its success and who could bring about the efficiency which
would be needed to overcome American competition. Other
problems existed beside these, making the value of future
trade in the Columbia field highly questionable. There had
been jealousy and bickering among the winter-partners. Lax
and wasteful methods had crept in, especially when the country
was new and rich and when petty economies did not seem to
matter. Referring to the Columbia, Simpson said,

...I feel that a very severe reflection is cast
on those who had the management of the Business,
as on looking at the prodigious expenses that have
been incurred and the means at their command, I
cannot help thinking that no economy has been
observed, that little exertion has been used and
that sound judgment has not been exercised but
that mismanagement and extravagance has been the
order of the day. 9

8 Merk, op. cit., p. xxi.
9 Ibid., p. xxv and p. 65.
Moreover, too many men were employed. No wonder the trade of the Company had admittedly been unprofitable and that the Governor and Committee had been prepared to give the area up. However, by 1828, the ten years of joint occupancy would run out and, presumably, the boundary line would be drawn. Therefore, the Company agreed,

...if by any improved arrangement the loss can be reduced to a small sum, it is worth a serious consideration, whether it may not be good policy to hold possession of that country, with a view of protecting the more valuable districts to the North of it....

Until such time as Simpson could visit the Columbia, nothing much could be done except to send out efficient men as new blood into the personnel. Among these were Samuel Black and Peter Skene Ogden, both old North Westers. In 1823, in the capacity of clerk assigned to Spokane House, John Work accompanied Ogden west from York Factory. With Simpson in 1824 came Dr. John McLoughlin to take over the Columbia

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10 Governor and Committee of Hudson's Bay Company to Simpson, London, February 27, 1822, in Merk, op. cit., p. 175.

11 Samuel Black and Peter Skene Ogden were both former Nor'Westers and had been left unprovided for at the coalition. Both were finally admitted to the Hudson's Bay Company as chief traders and served west of the Rockies. Black was placed in charge at Walla Walla and was later murdered by Indians at Kamloops. Ogden was placed first in charge of the Snake District and later in charge of coastal trade.

12 John McLoughlin became a physician in Lower Canada at the age of nineteen. He entered the services of the North West in 1803 and at the coalition became a chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company.
District where he remained in control until his resignation, which took effect in 1846. Later James Douglas was to follow. As Dr. Lamb has said,

...Simpson's success in checking the changes in personnel which had been the bane of the district is indicated by the fact that Ogden, Work, and Douglas all spent the rest of their long lives on the west side of the Rocky Mountains. 14

The first problem in which we find Work actively involved was that of choosing a new site to replace Fort George (Astoria). It was generally considered by the Hudson's Bay Company that the boundary line between British and American possessions would be settled finally as following the Columbia River. In that event Fort George, then used as Company headquarters, would be on the American side of the river. Moreover, the actual post had been returned by treaty to the Americans who might claim it at any time. It was clear that another site would have to be chosen on the opposite side of the river. Orders to this effect were issued to the Chief Factor in charge at Fort George by the Governor and Committee, who favored a fort as close to the sea as possible and mentioned Cape Disappointment as a probable site. While these instructions were travelling to the coast by the supply ship William

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13 James Douglas entered the North West Company in 1819, and joined the Hudson's Bay Company at coalition. He served in New Caledonia between 1825-30 then at Fort Vancouver where he became chief trader in 1835. In 1840 he became chief factor and became governor of Vancouver Island in 1851. He severed his connection with the Company and became Governor of British Columbia in 1858 and held this position until 1864.

14 H.B.S., IV, pp. xx-xi.


16 Merk, loc. cit.
and Ann, Governor Simpson left York Factory for the Pacific Coast. He directed Chief Factors Alexander Kennedy and John McLoughlin to search for a new site, which they finally selected on the north bank of the Columbia almost opposite the mouth of the Willamette River. This was nearly eighty miles from the sea, but still in navigable water. From March to May, 1825, John Work was busy superintending the moving of goods and chattels from Fort George to this new site upon which was built Fort Vancouver.

Simpson intended that Fort Vancouver only temporarily should succeed Fort George as the headquarters of the Columbia Department. He planned it as a secondary post, around which farming should spring up in order to make the posts on the Pacific as self-supporting as possible. This would obviate using valuable cargo space on the supply ships for provisions. The permanent headquarters, he felt, should be at or near the mouth of the Fraser River. Simpson had been brooding over this idea on his way west from York Factory and had broached it to Chief Trader James McMillan, whom he wished to lead an exploratory expedition. In his journal, the Gov-

17 Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy was appointed to the Columbia in 1822 in charge of Spokane House. He travelled east in the spring of 1825.


19 Merk, op. cit., p. 87 supra and n. 145.

20 James McMillan was a Nor'Wester who was appointed Chief Trader at the coalition of 1821. He accompanied Simpson on his first trip west in 1824 and explored the lower reaches of the Fraser. He established Fort Langley in 1827 and retired in 1839.

 Governor made the following entry: "Mr. Work I mean to take down to Fort George for the purpose of accompanying Mr. McMillan to Pugets Sound and Frazer's River". Whether his choice of John Work was on the basis of merit or merely to relieve Spokane of too many clerks has not been ascertained. However, Work's methodical journal, coupled with that of McMillan, gives a clear picture of the coast, Puget Sound and the lower reaches of the Fraser. The expedition was unable to go much beyond the future site of Fort Langley so that its knowledge of the canyon depended on hearsay evidence of the Indians. Apparently the experiences of Simon Fraser in 1808 were not well known. Incidentally, it was not until his second trip west in 1828, that Simpson gave up this idea of establishing the principal post on the Fraser. It was then that Fort Vancouver was moved nearer the river bank to make it more suitable to be a primary post and the heart of the Columbia.

Work's next charge was the task of moving Spokane House to Colvile, at Kettle Falls, in an attempt to solve the problem of provisioning. This problem of feeding the personnel at the posts worried Simpson considerably.

22 Merk, op. cit., p. 47.


24 H.B.S., IV, p. llix.
The good people of Spokane District and I believe of the interior of the Columbia generally have since its first establishment shewn an extraordinary predilection for European Provisions without once looking at or considering the enormous price it costs...such fare we cannot afford in the present times, it must therefore be discontinued and I do not see why one oz. of European stores or Provisions should be allowed on one side of the Mountain more than the other....

This opinion resulted in a policy that reduced the diet of such men as Work and Ogden, while on the trail, to salmon, venison, horse and dog. As a partial solution to the problem of provisioning came Simpson's decision to move Spokane House to Kettle Falls. Not only was the new site a good one for farming but it would obviate the expense and inconvenience of transporting goods sixty miles overland from the Columbia. It would be just as easy for Chief Trader John Warren Dease or John Work to supply the Kootenay and Flathead posts from the new site, and even easier if the Pend d'Oreille and Kootenay Rivers should prove navigable. It might make possible the abandonment of the post at Okanagan and so fit in with the plan of consolidating posts to cut down expenses. The new fort at Kettle Falls was named after Andrew Colvile, then a director and later the governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Work had originally been slated for the Umpqua expedition but some

25 Merk, op. cit., p. 47.

26 Chief Trader John Warren Dease was in charge of Nez Perce's in 1824 when Governor Simpson passed. See Merk, op. cit., p. 53. From there he was transferred to Spokane and then to Colvile. He died on the Columbia in 1830 en route back to Colvile from Fort Vancouver, where he and McLoughlin had had a quarrel.

27 Merk, op. cit., p. 135.
doubt had arisen as to his ability to handle it, so that he returned from Vancouver to the Colvile Area.

About the same time that Work was establishing Fort Colvile, a move had been made to expand the Company's activities in the Snake River country. John Lee Lewes, a chief trader in the Columbia District in 1822, had already written to Simpson about the possibilities of profitable trade in that area. An outfit had been sent into the Snake country in 1823 and in spite of trouble with the Blackfeet Indians, had brought back over 4,000 beaver. In the same year Peter Skene Ogden was dispatched to Spokane to organize a trapping expedition. He sent out Alexander Ross in 1824 who returned with 4,900 beaver. Now with the expectation that the Snake River region might become American territory in 1828, it was, in the opinion of the Governor and Committee, "very desirable that the hunters should get as much out of the Snake Country as possible for the next few years". Simpson must have been in two minds about this policy of ruthless exploitation. He knew the Hudson's Bay Company would get most of the furs, but he may have also had the hope that the area could be used as a


29 H.B.S., IV, p. xxi.

30 Alexander Ross was a clerk at Spokane House, (H.B.S., IV, p. xxii). According to Arthur S. Morton, Ross had been on his way east but Ogden brought him a letter from Simpson urging him to accept the leadership of a Snake River expedition. This induced him to return to Spokane. See Morton, Arthur S., op. cit., p. 715.

future source of furs to conserve, recuperate or take the place of trapped-out areas east of the Rockies. However, ruthless exploitation would have one advantage by providing a buffer against the penetration of American trappers north of the Columbia. Be it as it may, the Snake River area was heavily trapped by Hudson's Bay parties down to the end of 1832. Between 1824-1830 these expeditions were led by Ogden, who with his predecessor, Ross, trapped the country closely. It must be borne in mind, however, that the depletion of the country was not entirely due to the Company but was also caused by very close American competition. During most of this period Work was stationed at Colvile and his only contact with the Snake expeditions was the task of receiving some of their fur returns on his regular trading expeditions to the Company outpost at Flathead House. He succeeded Ogden in 1830, when the latter was transferred to the coastal trade, and headed the last full-fledged trapping expeditions into the Snake River country. Work came into the picture during the transition period between the change from trapping to trading parties. Beaver had become scarce. Competition with American traders was keen. "The operations of the Snake Expedition have been very unprofitable for several years past, and attended with a serious loss of life," wrote the Governor and Committee to McLoughlin in 1833; "we therefore, desire if not abandoned this year it may be broke up next summer". McLoughlin shared this view and ordered Work south to the Sacramento Valley.

32 H.B.S., IV, p. lxviii.

33 Governor and Committee to McLoughlin, December 4, 1853, in H.B.S., IV, p. xcv.
A colleague of his, Michel Laframboise, was sent south from the Umpqua River to hunt along the coast. Neither expedition was a success. Work brought back only 1,023 furs after a year in the field. Not only were beaver scarce but his whole party was overcome by malaria. Laframboise found the going so rough that he abandoned the coastal area, penetrated inland and joined Work's party on the lower Sacramento. These mark the end of the large old-style trapping expeditions, which were now changed into smaller trading parties. John Work was unconcerned with this change, for still following Ogden's footsteps, he was transferred to the coastal trade.

This was not a new field for the Company. As early as 1824 the Governor and Committee had written to George Simpson: "We observe your attention is devoted to the Columbia, we think the trade should be extended in the Snake Country, and also along the Coast to the Northward." In the same year Simpson himself had written to Andrew Colvile in a similar vein. Nor were these opinions confined to the heads of the Company, but were shared by its leaders in the field. "Few topics," says Dr. Lamb, "loom larger in McLoughlin's letters than his efforts to develop the coastal trade." In 1825, to

34 Michel Laframboise entered the service of the American Fur Company as voyageur and arrived by the Tonquin at the Columbia in 1811. After 1821 he was employed as an interpreter by the Hudson's Bay Company. He later acted as post master and led expeditions to the Umpqua and to the Sacramento. A post master was a sort of clerk who never rose any higher in the Company's service.

35 See H.B.S., IV, p. xci-xcii. Dr. Lamb discusses this change thoroughly.


37 H.B.S., IV, p. lxix.
Initiate matters, the annual supply vessel William and Ann, was sent north from the Columbia on reconnaissance. Directly, this voyage was not successful because of the timidity of the captain, but indirectly it seemed to show that six American vessels, which were encountered en route, apparently found the trade profitable.

For some time after this, nothing was done. A variety of circumstances caused the delay. The William and Ann was lost on the Columbia bar in 1829. The number of ships on the coast was inadequate and the available vessels were too small. Intermittent fever so incapacitated the staff at Fort Vancouver that able-bodied men were not procurable in sufficient numbers. Heavy competition from American ships in the Columbia prevented the contemplated expansion.

Other circumstances made it necessary to develop the coastal trade as soon as possible. The decline of the sea-otter was leading American maritime traders to deal in land skins. Since many of these furs originated in the interior, the Company began to fear for its inland trade. Moreover, the depot on the Columbia would have to be abandoned in favor of a post farther north, and since the Fraser River did not provide a navigable route to the interior, Simpson turned his attention farther north, where other navigable rivers were believed to exist. By November 1828, the Nass River had been selected as the location for a post which might serve both as a collection point for furs in the coastal area and as an outlet for New Caledonia. The Company realized that the Russian American Company was its competitor in these northern waters but it was hoped that an agreement between
these powerful organizations might drive out the sporadic
compensation by American ships. Overtures to the Russian
Company did not meet with success but the Hudson's Bay decided
to proceed with its plan. A Marine Department was created
which was placed under the authority of McLoughlin at Vancouver.
Three vessels were sent out from England. Two of these
were to form the nucleus of a coastwise fleet. An expedition
was now sent north but it was unsuccessful. Not until 1831,
when Peter Skene Ogden sailed in the Cadboro, was the new post,
Fort Simpson, founded on the Nass.

During the two years that followed, McLoughlin became
increasingly in favor of more posts and fewer vessels. Ship's
captains were often drunk and incompetent. Many refused to
cooperate with, or take orders from him. Moreover, ships were
easily lost in the foggy waters and rocky shores of this western coast. Posts, to McLoughlin, were tangible evidences of permanent control and had a greater effect on the Indians. Neither did these posts require so many men nor did they require men with a specialized training as ships did. So McLoughlin began building a series of forts intended to stretch northward to the Russian boundaries. By 1833 Fort McLoughlin on Milbanke Sound had been built, Fort Nisqually had been constructed on Puget Sound, and a site had been selected for a fort on the Stikine River. In the winter of the following year Work was appointed to succeed Ogden in this field.

Except for routine voyages aboard Company ships, Work
was to spend most of his time at Fort Simpson. This fort is

38 H.B.S., IV, p. xc
not to be confused with the one established by Ogden on the Nass River. The old fort had been right on the fishing grounds of the Indians but it was too far up winding channels to be easily accessible by sailing vessels. It was abandoned in the autumn of 1834. A new post begun that summer, was constructed on the southern side of the entrance to Portland Inlet. This site still controlled the Nass River down which furs might come from the interior. Moreover, it would attract the canoes of coastal Indians passing on their annual migration to and from the fishing grounds. At this fort, Work and his family were to spend nearly twenty years.

During this period of Work's career the Hudson's Bay Company had a double purpose in their coasting trade to the north. The first, was to drive out American competition. The second, was to open the way to the exploitation of the fur trade behind the Alaskan panhandle. It was with this twofold ambition that an agreement was reached with the Russian American Company at Hamburg on February 6, 1839. The Russian Company agreed to lease the coast, exclusive of the islands, between Cape Spencer and Mt. Fairweather, to the Hudson's Bay Company for all commercial purposes. The lease was to take effect on June 1, 1840, and to last for ten years. Rental was to be 2,000 otter skins delivered at Sitka on or before June 1st. The Russians also agreed to take 2,000 otter from the west of the mountains and 3,000 from the east at agreed prices. They were also to buy wheat and other provisions from the Hudson's

39 Morton, op. cit., p. 727.
Bay Company and to have the goods which they required at their posts shipped north in Hudson's Bay vessels. The last part of this agreement would give the Hudson's Bay a market for any excess farm produce raised at Fort Vancouver. It furnished the reason for the beginning of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company which was to be formed under the aegis of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Nisqually. The agreement killed the traffic carried on by American ships operating between Boston and the Alaskan coast. They had brought supplies to sell to the Russians and had tarried to trade with the Indians. Now that that former reason for coming had disappeared the latter was no longer profitable and American competition ceased entirely.

John Work at Fort Simpson, played no part in carrying out the new agreement. In May 1840, Chief Factor James Douglas arrived in Sitka to complete arrangements. He took over the Russian post at Stikine, leaving McLoughlin's son in charge, who was shortly to be murdered by his own men. Then Douglas went on to establish a new post--Fort Taku--some fifteen miles south of the Taku River, since no suitable spot could be found close to the river mouth or on the river itself.

The following year George Simpson came to the coast to make a personal inspection of all these northern arrangements. Of the new posts he did not approve. As Simpson saw it, a new situation had been brought about by the agreement

40 John McLoughlin, Junior, went with Douglas in 1840 to take over Fort Stikine, and was murdered in 1842 by his own men.
with the Russians. Not only could the expensive and dangerous liquor trade with the Indians be stopped, but, with the Americans gone and the Russians confined to their islands, operating expenses could be cut by scrapping some of the northern posts. "The trade of the coast," wrote Simpson, "cannot with any hope of making it a profitable business afford the maintenance of so many establishments as are now occupied... I am of opinion that the establishments of Fort McLoughlin, Stikine and Tacow might be abandoned without any injury to the trade...." The Governor discussed with Work at Fort Simpson, the possibility of the steamer Beaver taking over this trade, and if necessary supplementing her with schooners. By this means he believed that furs could be collected as the Indians gathered each year for the fishing. In view of the dangers and the delays of the Columbia Bar these same vessels could, in the off seasons, act as tenders to supply the remaining posts. It will be recalled that the supply ship William and Ann, and the Isabella, too, had been lost on this Bar. The brig Lama, carrying John Work north for the first time, had been delayed inside the Columbia Bar for nearly a month. This obstruction, said Simpson, was responsible for "deranging

41 Simpson to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, November 25, 1841, (partial copy in B.C. Archives in Annual Despatches to London, to 1849).

42 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, May 16, 1842 in Fort Simpson Correspondence outward Sept. 6, 1841-Oct. 11, 1844, (original in B.C. Archives).

43 Work, John, Journal No. 14, To the Northwest Coast December 11, 1834-June 30, 1835, (original in B.C. Archives) entries from January 2-22, 1834.
the best laid plans". The depot would have to be moved from the Columbia. On March 1, 1842, Simpson wrote to the Governor and Committee that "the southern end of Vancouver's island...appears to me the best situation for such an establishment as required".

Viewed in retrospect, this decision is not surprising. The Company had long been aware that a move from the Columbia must be made sooner or later. At first, hopes had been entertained that headquarters could be located on the Fraser River. This, it will be recalled, had been the reason for McMillan's exploration in the winter of 1824. Simpson did not completely abandon this hope until, by personal experience in 1828, he became convinced that the Fraser did not furnish a navigable route to the interior. About 1834, a move to the north was again mooted. In the following year the Governor and Committee suggested "Whidby's Island, Puget Sound", for it was already clear that American penetration would almost certainly make such a move necessary. William A. Slaum, made his glowing report on the agricultural possibilities of the Willamette Valley, which Work had admired so

44 Morton, op. cit., p. 730.

45 Loc. cit.

46 H.B.S., IV, p. cxxiv.


48 William A. Slaum visited Oregon in the interests of the United States government in 1836-1837, and made a lengthy report on the country and on the Hudson's Bay Company's holdings. This report is printed in the Oregon Historical Society quarterly, vol. 13, pp. 175-224.
much on his expedition to the Umpqua River in 1834. Americans were settling there in 1838. This American settlement would not destroy the fur trade but it must of necessity revive the boundary question. To all of these reasons for finding new headquarters farther north, was added the fact that constant outbreaks of fever convinced the authorities that the Fort Vancouver area was unhealthy. Simpson in writing to McLoughlin in June, 1836, proposed that Finlayson, Douglas or Work should accompany the schooner Cadboro on one of her voyages to the Gulf of Georgia in search of a new site. In 1837, Captain William H. McNeill explored the southern tip of Vancouver Island and reported favorably on it. In 1842 Douglas himself visited the Island and came again in 1843 to choose the site for a fort. Meanwhile, pursuant to Simpson's orders, Forts Taku, Stikine and McLoughlin were abandoned, and the property and many of the men were moved to the new Fort Victoria. Charles Ross from Fort McLoughlin was placed in


50 H.B.S., IV, p. cxxiv.


52 Sage, Walter N., Sir James Douglas and British Columbia, Toronto, The University of Toronto Press, 1930, p. 119. Captain William H. McNeill was an American citizen who joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1832 after it purchased his brig the Lama. His career was associated with the coastal trade. He became a chief trader in 1840 and chief factor in 1856.

53 Charles Ross joined the North West Company in 1818. He entered the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 and three years later was transferred to New Caledonia. In 1831 he became a chief trader.
charge, and from Fort Simpson came Roderick Finlayson, Work's future son-in-law, to assist him.

As time went on, Fort Victoria, which Work was to know so well, developed from a fur post into the centre of Hudson's Bay and colonial affairs on the Pacific Coast. From its establishment in 1843 to the year 1849 its story is the usual one of a trading post. Trade went on day after day, minor skirmishes arose with the Indians and were met successfully. Charles Ross, the first appointed head of the Fort, died in 1844 and was succeeded by his second-in-command, Roderick Finlayson. In 1845 Fort Victoria became a depot for the trade of the Northern Coast and for the Company's supply ships from England. By 1847 cleared land began to appear around the fort stockades; land on which cows grazed or wheat was grown.

In the meantime, momentous changes had been taking place on the Columbia. In 1845, McLoughlin sent in his resignation. This was prompted partly by age, partly by his disagreement with Governor Simpson over the policy of conducting coastal trade and partly by McLoughlin's indignation over Simpson's attitude toward the murder of his son, John McLoughlin, Jr., at Stikine in 1842. Beside the removal of McLoughlin from office, came the revival of the boundary question. In

54 Roderick Finlayson came to America in 1837 and entered the Hudson's Bay Company as a clerk. He came west in 1839 and was stationed as assistant at Forts Taku, Simpson, and Victoria. He was promoted to chief trader in 1850 and chief factor in 1859. From 1851 to 1863 he was a member of the Legislative Council of Vancouver Island.

55 Sage, op. cit., p. 131.
1846 a treaty was concluded between Great Britain and the United States by which the boundary was to be the 49th parallel of north latitude west to the sea and thence south and west around the southern tip of Vancouver Island. With the increasing American settlement in the Columbia basin, coupled with the fact that the area was now American territory, the Company's trade in Oregon was doomed, so in 1849, the depot was moved to Fort Victoria. John Work does not seem to have had much to do with effecting the change from the Columbia to Vancouver Island. He was still stationed at Fort Simpson but visited Victoria the year before the depot was moved, and was apparently fully aware of the influx of Americans into the Columbia.

In 1849, the colony of Vancouver Island was established and by Royal Grant on January 13, 1849, the Island was leased to the Company at an annual rent of seven shillings. In return the Company agreed to establish a settlement and to sell land for the purpose of colonization. All revenue from the land sales or from coal mines less a ten per cent profit to the Company, was to be applied toward the improvement of the colony. This grant was to last until 1859, when the Company's exclusive licence to trade with the Indians would expire.

Richard Blanshard was the first governor of the colony of Vancouver Island. He was a barrister who as a young man had travelled in the West Indies, in British Honduras and in India. His position as governor of Vancouver Island was his first post with the Colonial Office. He died in England in 1894, a comparatively wealthy man.
colony. He arrived in 1850 and stayed but a year for his position was not an enviable one. Blanshard felt "a sort of fifth wheel to the coach", because real power and authority rested in the Hudson's Bay Company and its Board of Management. When Blanshard left, James Douglas was appointed in his place, a position which he held in combination with his post as Chief Factor for the Company. In this dual capacity his position was difficult. At one time he was swayed by his office as Governor while at another he was inevitably influenced by his connection with the Company. He was faced at once with the problem of administration. Blanshard's instructions required him to set up a Legislative Council and from time to time call a general assembly. But he had done nothing to implement these instructions except to appoint a Council of three at the time of his resignation. Douglas was a senior member of the council and fell heir to it. He, however, enlarged it and proceeded to use it.

John Work was Douglas's second appointee to the Council. His duties had been bringing him more and more to Victoria and he seems to have spent only the summers of 1851 and 1852 at Fort Simpson. In 1853 he was appointed a member of the Board of Management of the Hudson's Bay Company and he and his family settled permanently on land which he bought at Hillside and began to farm.

58 Sage, op. cit., p. 167


60 This land was situated about one mile north of the Fort.
Later when Douglas was forced to call a representative assembly, Work agreed that the step was not a desirable one. It is to be suspected that a man of Douglas's autocratic nature would not welcome democratic institutions. John Work, however, believed in the principle of representative government but did not consider that local conditions warranted them. Neither of the two men felt that the population of Vancouver Island was sufficient to justify the existence of an assembly. But the orders of Henry Labouchere, then secretary of state, did not admit of any alternative. The British government wanted the assembly set up because of the approaching Parliamentary inquiry into the Hudson's Bay Company. On Vancouver Island four electoral districts were organized. Seven members were elected and on August 12, 1856, the first assembly west of the Great Lakes in British North America, met with due ceremony.

By this time the fur trade in the North West had passed its zenith and the period of gold mining was on the horizon. Work was the first to discover gold in British territory west of the Rockies. In 1850, while stationed at Fort Simpson, he received reports from the Indians about the presence of this precious metal on the Queen Charlotte Islands. The Una, one of the Company's vessels, visited the Islands and verified the reports, by actually discovering the site of a gold mine. The news soon leaked out and reached San Francisco where it caused some excitement. No less than six

61 Sage, op. cit., p. 189.

vessels were outfitted and set sail for Mitchell Harbor where the first vein had been discovered. No success attended these attempts and disheartened, the miners returned south almost immediately. One of these vessels, the schooner **Susan Sturgis**, was a little more persistent and made another trip in 1852. This expedition came into conflict with the Indians and was saved only through the efforts of Work at Fort Simpson. Throughout this period of gold fever, Governor Douglas had been anxious to prevent foreign miners from entering British territory over which the Company had an exclusive licence to trade. After repeated appeals to the home authorities, Douglas finally received a commission as Lieutenant-Governor of the Queen Charlotte Islands with authority to issue miner's licences and to enlist the support of constituted authority to enforce law and order, but not to exclude anyone.

Sometime in 1853, the exact date is not clear, Work moved to Fort Victoria, where he was to round out the remaining years of his life. Until the last he was a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company and a member of the Legislative Council. When he took up residence at Victoria he found little change had taken place in the ten years of its existence. Growth had been slow. It must be remembered that the little settlement still lay on the fringes of the world and was usually reached by a hazardous voyage around Cape Horn. There was comparatively little arable land, so that Vancouver Island could not compete with Oregon where a free grant of 640 acres was available for each settler. Land around Fort Victoria was not free. It sold at £1 an acre. These regulations were made not to
attract the "poor white" settler, but the man of substance who could buy not less than twenty acres at this price. The only people who could afford to come to Vancouver Island were not attracted by it. No adequate market existed for the settler. He could not compete in the markets of the United States, since heavy duties were levied on imports of timber, fish and agricultural produce. No customs duties produced public revenue for the struggling colony because it was thought to be desirable to keep provisions and stores at lowest prices in order to develop Victoria as a port of call. Her only revenue came from the sale of public land and the royalties from coal-mining.

When the gold rush to the Fraser mines started in 1858, Work saw Victoria become the chief port of entry. It is estimated that not less than 30,000 people arrived during the first year. A city of tents grew up. Land values soared. Wharves were built, water pipes were laid. Banks were started. The government was expanded to include five members on the Council and thirteen in the Assembly.

On the mainland, British authorities were wrestling with the problem of governing the mining camps. Finally it was decided to create a new crown colony named British Columbia, in which the Queen Charlotte Islands were to be included. On August 2, 1858, the new colony received its name. Vancouver Island was to remain a separate entity. James Douglas, who now severed his connection with the Hudson's Bay Company, became governor of both the island and mainland colonies. Control of the Hudson's Bay Company's affairs passed into the hands of
a Board of Management composed of Douglas's son-in-law, Alexander Grant Dallas, assisted by John Work and Dugald McTavish. Work held this position until his death in 1861.

The days which John Work spent on the Pacific Coast were interesting and momentous ones. For thirty-eight years he watched slow but sure progress and development. At the time of his arrival in 1823, Old Oregon was nothing but a wilderness inhabited by scattered tribes and dotted with fur trading posts. He watched these fur trading days rise to their zenith in the so-called empire of John McLoughlin, he saw them shift their centre from the Columbia to Fort Victoria and the northern coasts, and begin to wane. He saw the gradual encroachments of the American trapper and trader in the Columbia, and the onrush of the American settler into the fertile plains of the Willamette. The great gold deposits in California were found in an area he had trapped years before. "I know the place well," wrote Work "and was encamped on it some time...but no gold was thought of then." The boundary question which, long before, had delayed his construction of

63 Alexander Grant Dallas was sent out from London as the representative of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific Coast with headquarters at Victoria from 1857-1861. He was not a chief factor as often stated but a director of the Company.

64 Dugald McTavish entered the services of the Hudson's Bay Company as a clerk in 1833. Not until 1839 was he transferred to the Columbia. He became a chief trader in 1851.

65 Work to E. Ermatinger, Fort Victoria, November 9, 1848, (original in B.C. Archives).
Fort Colvile, was settled. On the American side in 1860 some 500,000 people lived in communities on the western slopes of the Rockies and a city such as San Francisco had been founded. He travelled aboard the Beaver, the first steamer on the coast. He was the first to discover gold on the Queen Charlotte Islands. He saw Victoria develop into a boom-town overnight, when the rush to the Fraser Gold mines started. A year after his death, Victoria, with a population of 6,000 people, was incorporated as a city. Only ten years later British Columbia ceased to be a crown colony and became a province of the Dominion of Canada.

CHAPTER II

Transcontinental Journey, 1825.

The great bulk of the information on John Work is to be found in his fifteen journals. The originals of these are in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia at Victoria, B.C. These journals were kept from day to day in the field. Usually when Work was resident at a post, he kept no personal journal. Naturally this leaves gaps in our record of his life—gaps which can only be completely filled by access to the post journals, most of which are inaccessibly filed in the Hudson's Bay Archives in London, England. It has therefore been necessary to try to piece in the gaps between the journals, as well as the period after them, by obtaining information from the few of Work's letters which are available and by references to him which are to be found in the records of his contemporaries.

The journals themselves were meticulously kept. They tell of the day-to-day travels, trials, hopes and disappointments of the fur traders. The keeping of them was compulsory and their contents were specified by Minutes of Council and were to embrace methods of trade, conduct and character of subordinates; climate, topography and vegetation of the country through which their writers passed. In reading these accounts one has the impression that they were written with a view to being used as guides for others who might follow the trails.

blazed by John Work and his companions. Not only are places and distances carefully noted, but at times directions are plotted in compass points, as in a ship's log. Work had the keen observing eye of a fur trader. Much that he saw was new and interesting, in this new and interesting world. As a consequence, his journals are veritable mines of information on fur trading practices, on the life and habits of the Indians and on the country through which he passed.

The fifteen journals in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia are not uniform in size. A few are written in the standard size of Hudson's Bay journals about 12½ by 8 inches, and others in half sheets folded once. A few of these volumes are leather-bound with rough hand-stitching. The ink used was apparently in powder or tablet form for the writing varies considerably in color and density. One of the volumes, the 12th, must have fallen into a pool of ink when it was half completed. Entries up to the accident are partially obliterated by the inkstain which extends in an arc across the bottom corner of the page. Most of this can be read with some difficulty, but transcribers often gave up the attempt. Curiously enough, the same transcribers failed to notice that after the accident occurred Work wrote around the inkstain but not through it. They interpreted the absence of faint lines through the blot as total obliteration and simply omitted the bottom quarter of the page.

Work has been accused of illiteracy in his journals. Quite the opposite of this is true. He had an extensive and varied vocabulary, ably fitted to express in interesting style
what he had to say. The accusation arises for four reasons. First, the fact that his writing is undoubtedly crabbed and many of his words were deliberately telescoped. It must be remembered that much of this writing must have been done at night while he was crouched half-frozen over a smoky fire clutching a pen in his stiffened fingers, or in the intense summer heat of the arid Snake River country, or in the mosquito-ridden fever camps of the Sacramento River. Secondly, he used words which are obsolete or obsolescent in use or form. This troubled the transcriber. Time and again he flavors his descriptions with "thicketty" woods through which he travelled in a "pour" of rain; or gazed upon a "jabble" of sea, lit by flashes of "lightening". Moreover, he used trade expressions current in those days, which were not familiar to or were unrecognized by those who have attempted to make transcripts of his work. The expression "apishamore" has been rendered variously; the more common guess being "appurtenances", "Marrons", "cabrie" and "pluis" seem to have utterly defeated editors of the Work Journals. Finally, Indian names and expressions proved difficult, not only because they are hard to trace, but because they were spelled phonetically by the individual. John Work was no exception to the rule that all

68 A saddle blanket made of buffalo calf-skin.

69 Wild horses.

70 Prong-horned antelope—but not "caribou" as frequently suggested.

71 An expression of price or value from "peaux", "plus", --a beaver skin.
May 1830

that man ended the story much, and telling the house out of the box, I have it not been for the day ended by those mysteries we must have seen on a little further to a few places which are guidance to be usual a little way.

Wednesday 31st June morning.

A horse which was dropp out of the box yesterday was seen shall this morning is that was only and another which had also stager in not found till 11 o'clock when staid and come at Fort Vancouver at 1 P.M. with the crew with 48 of en 30 being twelve of those made were not. The two that one the horse three last night and then we had to 8 in the morning or ten days ago. This road from distance is the money was at 4 o'clock till a filed to a fourth of the which is so much 54 feet at this.

From a Journal kept by

John Work
fur traders rendered these names as best they could in their journals. It is most unfortunate that transcriptions of Work's journals have been consistently bad. Whole sentences and even paragraphs have been omitted. Mistakes have been made or blanks left in places where even a small amount of knowledge of the background of the period should have furnished the key to the problem. As an inevitable consequence, where access to the original manuscripts was not possible, the printed versions of these journals suffer badly and are sometimes woefully inaccurate. Indeed it would appear that in no case was the text as printed, collated with the original. Consequently the preliminary work for the following study included an exhaustive check of the entire series of fifteen journals and the correction of all the worst errors in the transcripts deposited in the Provincial Archives at Victoria.

Work's first journal is divided into two parts. The first half deals with his initial voyage across the continent; the second with his journey from Spokane House to Fort George and thence up the river again, where he spent a summer superintending a party of Hudson's Bay employees for whom there was no summer employment and who had been sent up the Columbia to live off the Indians and the country. We have no means of knowing just why John Work was transferred to the Columbia. By inference, two reasons suggest themselves. First, that

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72 Work, John, Journals, (a) York Factory to Spokane House, July 18-October 28, 1823. (b) Columbia Valley Trading Expeditions, April 15-November 17, 1824. (hereafter referred to as Journals 1 (a) or 1 (b), ed., by Sage, W.N., in the Canadian Historical Association, Annual Report 1929, Ottawa, Department of Public Archives, 1930, pp. 21-29.
George Simpson had been carrying out a ruthless policy of economy in services elsewhere in the Northern Department, so that in 1821 he had come to the conclusion that he could dispense with two hundred and fifty men. Not all of these men could be classed as incompetent and many could be used elsewhere. Simpson was given very definite instructions on this score by the Governor and Committee, who wrote,

Great care and discrimination must be used in making this selection....Our object is to select the best men for the business...it may not be practicable to reduce the numbers so low at once without discharging deserving young men, and we think this should not be done. 74

John Work enjoyed a good reputation in the Company and the appointment of steady men to the Columbia was the one thing that Simpson could do until the status of that area could be settled.

On Tuesday July 18, 1823, John Work left York Factory for the Columbia District, where he was to spend the rest of his life. The expedition, the express, was a small one consisting of "two light canoes, four men in each". Peter Skene Ogden was in command and with him in the same canoe was John Lee Lewes, the latter bound for Cumberland House. The canoes pushed off from the Fort at one o'clock on a fine warm afternoon. This fine weather was to hold until the following

73 H.B.S., IV., p. xiii.
75 H.B.S., IV, p. xx.
76 Work, Journal 1(a), entry for July 18, 1823.
Monday. The air had been sultry and the travellers were plagued with mosquitoes both by day and night. However, Monday dawned cloudy and cold bringing welcome but only temporary relief, for it became warm and again sultry during the day. Unsettled weather followed, with thunder, lightning, "weighty" rain and head winds which meant long hours in the cramped space of the canoes, or tiresome waiting in camp for the weather to clear.

By following the usual route via the Hayes River they arrived at Oxford House a little before sunset on Wednesday July 23rd. They left again the next day to struggle forward against head winds and on the 26th were within five miles of Norway House. Ogden and Lewes took one man out of Work's canoe and went on ahead to reach the Fort before dark. Work camped where he was for the night and reached the Fort "a little after Sun Rising" the next morning, "some hours before any of the gentlemen got up". He spent the rest of the day writing letters while the men repaired the canoes.

At noon on the 28th of July they embarked once more, proceeding part of the way under sail, but because of the heavily-laden canoes and the rough weather, they were forced to put ashore. Here, twenty miles from Norway House, they were delayed for a whole day by the rough water and the breaking surf of Lake Winnipeg. The next morning, preparations had been made for a very early start when it was discovered that one of the men had deserted. He had taken his blanket, bag and

77 Work, Journal 1(a), entry for July 20, 1823.
78 Ibid., entry for July 27, 1823.
79 Loc. cit.
some pemmican with the apparent intention of walking the long distance overland to Norway House. Some time was spent in an unsuccessful search for him, but in spite of this delay the expedition got under way at 4 A.M. and by sail and paddle "made a pretty good days work". By noon of July 31st they had crossed the dangerous waters of Lake Winnipeg and had passed up through Grand Rapids into the lake beyond, where they were delayed by high water and heavy wind. The delay caused by wind during the day encouraged them to start earlier in the morning when the weather was usually calm, so that on the first of August they were away by 2:30 A.M. This day they managed to get half way up Cedar Lake before the same conditions delayed them.

By this time, they had reached the lower waters of the Saskatchewan River where wind and wave would impede them less. Long days (from 2:15 A.M. to 9 P.M.) were spent in the canoes. Even at this, Work seems to have found them less trying than the previous days for he finds time to paint a vivid pen picture of the surrounding country.

We proceeded part of the day up the River through narrow channels formed by Islands where the water was very shallow and nearly choked up with mud. At the lower end of the River the shores and islands are very low, composed of soft mud or clay and covered with reeds & flags, and here and there some willows to the waters edge. A little farther up the river the banks continued still low and are entirely thickly clothed with willows, poplars, etc., they are sometimes so thick that it

would appear difficult to get through them. Some places there are a few poplar trees but not the appearance of a pine near the edge of the river. Considerable quantities of driftwood, Some of it of a large size in some places deposited along the shore. The banks on both sides of the river are very low and appear to have been overflowed in the spring. Where we encamped it was so soft & wet that a dry spot could scarcely be found to pitch the tent on. 81

They now left the main river and struck north through narrow channels densely covered with willow and pine and arrived at Cumberland House about 9 o'clock in the morning of Tuesday August 5th. Here Lewes and his servant left them. Ogden and his companions spent the day in overhauling their outfits, in getting in more provisions and finding another man to replace the deserter. It was not a pleasant day for it was the height of the fly season. Work complained, "We are like to be devoured with flies last night and to-day". 82

On Wednesday they did not start until 10 o'clock in the morning. Their next stop would be Ile à-la-Crosse, which they reached on the afternoon of Saturday, August 16th, by the usual brigade route which followed a chain of lakes, small rivers and portages north-west from Cumberland House to the Churchill River and thence west to Lac Ile à-la-Crosse. This section of the expedition was not without its difficulties--not of winds and waves this time--but of food. Out of the five bags of pemmican (that staple of fat and dried meat used by fur traders) two of the bags were found to be mouldy and the contents rotten. Work's day-by-day account reflects his anxiety and fear of a serious food shortage. They saw a deer

81 Work, Journal 1(a) entry for August 2, 1823.

82 Ibid., entry for August 5, 1823.
but failed to kill it. On another day, they came to an Indian encampment and traded a little half-dried meat. Again they saw two black bears but these got away. Every sign of game was anxiously noted. On Sunday, the 10th, more bad pemmican had to be discarded and Work at last mentioned the hitherto unexpressed concern over food. On Monday they tried and failed to get food from two bands of Chipewyan Indians. Two days later they overtook the west-bound Caledonia Brigade and got half a bag of pemmican from them. Work could now relax and admire the beautiful meadows and woods through which they were passing. They had enough food, but just enough, to last until their arrival at Ile à-la-Cross on the 16th of August. "The men's provisions were just finished," says Work.

So far the expedition had not been an easy one. The weather was unusually rainy and windy for that time of the year and the food problem had caused much anxiety. However, no time was lost beyond that required for preparation for the continuation of the westward journey. This was "the last Fort we will see till we come to the Rocky Mountain". The canoes were repaired and about four hundred pounds of dried meat taken on board. This supply would, it was estimated, last twelve men twelve days. We do not know if Ogden and Work saw James Douglas at Ile à-la-Crosse, but it is altogether probable Douglas was at the Fort at this time.

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83 Work, op. cit., entry for August 16, 1823.
84 Ibid., entry for August 17, 1823.
On Monday, August 18th, the expedition embarked a little after sunrise. They crossed the lake, entered and proceeded up the Beaver River which flows in an easterly and then northerly direction and enters Ile à-la-Crosse Lake on the eastern side. For a week they proceeded up the Beaver River. The going was hard, and the men had to resort to poles. As they ascended the river it became narrower and shallower. Meadowy banks gave way to low hills and patches of wood. The weather was cloudy and dark with "weighty" rain at night. The men were tiring, not only because of the long days, and the difficulties encountered in a narrow, stony river, but because of the food supply again. Their meat was tough and hard as shoe leather, by now the fat bits had all been picked out and only the worst pieces remained. The men could not eat enough to maintain their strength. Attempts had been made without much success, to augment their food supply on the route. A little venison had been secured from the Indians but even they complained of the scarcity of game.

On Tuesday, August 26th, they arrived at the Moose Portage to the north branch of the Saskatchewan. Here they expected to find a supply of provisions awaiting them. But there was no sign of whites having been at the Portage that season. The men's rations were cut to one meal a day. Work felt that there was very little chance of meeting with any Indian bands, and no chance of game since most of the woods had been destroyed by fire. The next cache was Five Islands, ten days travel if the water was favorable. In Ogden's opinion there was a grave possibility that since Moose Portage
was without food. Five Islands might be also, since both were supplied from Edmonton. Therefore, Ogden decided to send an expedition across Moose Portage on foot to Edmonton for supplies. John Work was to head this small party and detailed to it as guide was one of the expedition who had wintered several years in Saskatchewan and who was supposed to have some knowledge of the country.

Work and his party promptly lost their way. On Wednesday, August 27, they wandered aimlessly about, subsisting off a handful of berries and two small ducks which they had shot. On Thursday, they thought they had discovered a road but gave it up and floundered through the woods to the Saskatchewan River. Here they met two boys who told them of another track which they had difficulty finding. The weather was getting colder with a sharp morning frost. The next day they fell in with a herd of sixteen buffalo and killed a bull, keeping enough meat for two days. On Sunday, they lost the track again and did not find it until dusk. It had been raining all day and the men were numb with cold. That evening they ate the last of the buffalo meat. For two more days they stumbled through wet grass and bush, dining off two pigeons, five ducks and a muskrat. Finally on Wednesday, September 3rd they arrived at Edmonton late in the afternoon, tired and "wet to the haunches". They had been eight full days on the journey and Ogden had expected them to make the return trip in not more than ten. Work found that Indian wars had prevented provisions from being sent out and more-

86 Work, op. cit., entry for September 3, 1823.
over, none had been received at Edmonton so that food there was scarce also. He gathered together all available supplies at the post, three bags of pemmican, three bundles of dried meat. The provisions were to be sent down the Saskatchewan River by canoe to Dogrump Creek where they were to be met by horses. The horses could not only carry the bundles overland from there to Moose Portage, but could be killed, if necessary, to make up the deficiency in supplies.

It was not until four o'clock of the afternoon of September 9 that they reached Moose Portage, hacking their way through dense woods, then through burnt-over country and finally plunging into swamp. As it might be expected, the canoes were gone. The trip had taken fourteen days. Ogden, having waited two days over the expected ten, had left a letter for Work, and had moved up the river one half day's march, to an Indian encampment. Work was ordered to follow with all haste.

Work sent Ogden a note by Indian on horseback saying that he had arrived. Ogden replied that he would wait for Work and that the provisions the latter had secured plus those which the leader had himself got from the Indians would last until they reached Five Islands, which had been provisioned from Edmonton after all, "so that the horses will not be required for eating". It is interesting to note that no hint of censure of Ogden, no element of dissatisfaction or bitter complaint against conditions, has entered Work's journal up to this point.

87 Work, op. cit., entry for September 10, 1823.
John Work found that Ogden had been sick and was still very ill with chills and fever. To add to their difficulties—the river was very shallow—all were wading the river-bed stumbling over stones, dragging and tracking the canoes. On September 14th they arrived at the Portage to Red Deer Lake (Lac La Biche) from the upper end of the Beaver River. This was a portage of eight or nine miles in length. Everything had to be carried, canoes and all. Here at the portage they met some freemen and Indians who traded a little meat in return for tobacco. They were ready to embark on Lac La Biche the next day but were held back by wind until the afternoon. On the 16th they got across the Lake to Little Red Deer Lake and River which in turn led them to Great Red Deer, or the Athabasca River, which they reached about noon of the 18th and paddled up it until about 2 o’clock in the afternoon. Here they camped to repair the canoes which they had been gumming almost every day because of the damage suffered from stones and boulders in the shallow waters of the Little Red Deer River. Ogden was still ill with what must have been malaria. He had been suffering from chills and fever since they had left Moose Portage. Free for a day he would be attacked by it again, only to struggle on as best he could. What a welcome change was the deeper Athabasca River from the rocky streams of the past few weeks! On the 19th another problem resolved itself—a canoe arrived from

88 Freemen were the ex-servants of the fur companies who were no longer under indenture. They formed camps of their own or worked for the companies on a credit basis, paying their expenses at the end of an expedition.
McDonald of McLeod branch with five bags of pemmican and a bundle of dry meat. "They also brought the carcass of a moose which they killed a few days ago," says Work. Their problems in provisioning were over.

The river was too swift for paddling, but not too deep for poling, so that progress was rapid. Day by day as they proceeded, the appearance of the country changed. Poplars gave way to pines. Rapids were more frequently encountered and the current was swifter. It was amazing how much of this country had been burnt over. On the 22nd of September they camped at the mouth of the Pembina River. About noon, two days later, they arrived at Fort Assiniboine which was just in the process of being built. Here was the source of the food which had reached them on the 19th and which Work thought had come from McLeod Branch, which was still four day's journey up the river, "so that we were surprised at understanding that the buildings were here". Ogden and Work had thought that the Fort was to have been built at McLeod Branch.

After spending a day repairing their canoes, they left Fort Assiniboine about four o'clock in the afternoon of the 25th. The banks were getting steeper "rising abruptly from the Waters edge". Work observed a seam of coal in the river bank of an estimated two feet in thickness. On the 27th

89 It has not been possible to find out just which McDonald this is. It may be William McIntosh who was there in 1825 when Simpson passed on his return from the Pacific. cf. Ross, Alexander, The Fur Hunters of the Far West, London, Smith Elder and Company, 1855, vol. 2, p. 205.

90 Work, op. cit., entry for September 19, 1823.

91 Ibid., entry for September 24, 1823.

92 Ibid., entry for September 26, 1823.
they passed McLeod Branch in the evening after a long days march. More seams of coal had been noted along the banks of the river. On Wednesday, October the 1st, they caught their first glimpse of the mountains. The river was almost a perpetual rapid now and the men were very tired at night from poling all day. High banks ran perpendicular to the water's edge. The woods were dense and almost entirely of pine. The weather was growing colder with frosts almost every night and "snow towards morning". On Friday, October 3rd, they arrived at Rocky Mountain or Jasper House at 8 o'clock in the morning. This house, says Work, "...is built on a small Lake very shallow, and embosomed in the mountains whose peaks are rising up round about it on three sides". After spending that day in preparation, Ogden's party split into two groups. Work was to proceed with four men and twenty-two horses, carrying part of the provisions and baggage. Ogden embarked in the canoes with the remainder of the provisions. The object of taking the canoes was to assist the people who might be coming out in the spring. The trail was exceedingly rough for the horses so that it was not until the 6th of October that they reached William Henry's (old) House which is about fifty miles

93 Work, op. cit., entry for October 2, 1823.

94 Ibid., entry for October 3, 1823. This post was located where the Athabasca opens into Second or Burnt Lake. It was built by the N.W. Co., Merk, op. cit., p. 29, n. 66. See also Harvey, A.G., "The Mystery of Mount Robson" in the British Columbia Historical Quarterly, (hereafter called the B.C.H.Q.) vol., 1, p. 222.

95 Located where the Miette River enters the Athabasca, Merk, op. cit., pp. 31-32, n. 73.
above Jaspers House and the highest point of navigation for canoes on the Athabasca. Here he found that Ogden had already arrived with the canoes.

Work described this country through which he had passed on the 4th and 5th.

The course of the river [Athabasca] is nearly from S. to N. winding through the valley and the mountains rising abruptly on both sides not in one continued chain but here and there broken by a small valley or kind of fissure, out of which issues a small river or creek which contributes to increase the size of the main river. The woods climb in many places a considerable distance up the sides of the mountains, and often to the very summit of some of the lower ones which creates some surprise how they can grow as this appears to be nothing but bare rocks. The summits of the other peaks appear destitute of wood and vegetables of every kind, the higher ones covered here and there with snow and some of them appear buried in the clouds. 97

All goods were now transferred to packhorses. On October 8th, in the early afternoon the party reached Moose Encampment. The next four days they spent crossing the Portage at Athabasca Pass. The trail was exceedingly rough and difficult. It crossed and recrossed the river seeking out the easier of the two banks. It was encumbered by burned and fallen trees, by steep banks and swamps. On the afternoon of October 10 they crossed the height of land penetrating through a narrow valley enclosed by snow capped peaks. On the east

96 Merk, op. cit., p. 31. This does not agree with the account of Work's First Journal, by W.N. Sage in the Can.Hist. Association Annual Report, 1929, p. 26. Dr. Sage states that Ogden and Work left Jasper House after three day's rest and arrived at Henry House at little after sunrise. Actually they arrived at Jasper House on October 3rd, and left the next day. On October 6th, they reached the "little house" and left the canoes there. Ogden had gone by canoe and Work by pack-train. This "little house" is the William Henry's (old) House which is cited in Merk, op. cit., p. 32. Both Work and Simpson mention its position at the head of navigation.

97 Work, op. cit., entry for October 5, 1823.
side towered McGillivray's Rock named "in honor of Mr. W. McGillivray who was the head man of the N.W. Co." In the valley lay three small lakes—the first or easterly one emptying into the Athabasca, and the third into the Columbia. In spite of the difficulties of the route, Work expresses the opinion that the roads were in "unprecedented good order" and the river conveniently low. Finally at 10 o'clock on the morning of October 13th they reached the end of the Portage at Boat Encampment on the "Big Bend" of the Columbia River. Here they found that Chief Factor Kennedy and Alexander Ross with fourteen men had been waiting for them for twenty days.

No more time than necessary was spent in getting the canoes ready, in sending back the horses and in preparing for the last leg of their journey. They were ready by the 15th and embarked at 9 o'clock in the morning. Work noted with interest that bark canoes were not used on the Columbia by the Hudson's Bay but that there were wooden boats carrying eight men each and loaded with fifty-five pieces of goods. The boats, Work claims, could be carried over a portage by twelve men. They were about thirty feet long, five and a half foot beam, clinker built and pointed at both ends. Flat timbers of oak were bent to the desired shape to form the ribs. These were bolted to a flat keel at intervals of a foot.

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98 Work, op. cit., entry for October 10, 1823, attributing it by the prevailing legend to William McGillivray. It was named after Duncan McGillivray (cf., Morton, op. cit., pp. 467-8).

99 Work, op. cit., entry for October 12, 1823.

100 A piece weighs approximately ninety pounds, two of these constitute a normal portaging load (cf., Merk, op. cit., p. 11, n. 22)
Planks of cedar formed the outside skin and ran the full length of the boat. Nails were scarce and not used except at the ends of the craft to secure the planks to stem and stern pieces. The overlapping seams were well gummed to render the craft water tight. These boats were then propelled by paddles, not by oars. Kennedy and Ogden were in charge of one boat, Ross of the second, and Work the third.

Their journey down the Columbia was rapid and uneventful. On the 16th they passed the dreaded Dalles des Morts, which are some distance above the present city of Revelstoke. Work's fur trader's eye noted recent marks of beaver at different places. That evening they reached Upper Arrow Lake and camped for the night.

By the next evening they had pushed on to the lower end of the same lake. Here, Work has his first view, but certainly not his last, of the Pacific salmon. From the size he mentions (20-30 pounds each) they were spring salmon on their way up the river to spawn and die, their life cycle completed. Work did not care for their appearance for they must have shown the bruised and battered signs of their long journey—now spotted with grey fungus-growth, their silver sides flaming into red, their jaws hooked and mis-shapen.

"...They are remarkably fine," he said, "when they first enter the river....The natives are now splitting and drying these dead and dying fish for their winters provisions."


102 Work, op. cit., entry for October 17, 1823.
By Saturday, October 18, they had reached the lower end of the Lower Arrow Lake. Sunday evening found them encamped a little above Kettle Falls. Work had noticed the changing appearance of the country, the low or high banks, the presence of woods or barren lands, the kinds of trees, the typical fogs of late autumn to be found each morning on the river. On Monday they began the Portage at Kettle Falls. Everything had to be carried, both goods and boats. The country was of a dry appearance. Trees were fewer, the dense forests of the Upper Columbia had gone. For the first time he saw the typical dugout canoes of the coast Indian.

The express arrived at the junction of the Spokane River and the Columbia on Tuesday evening, October 21st. Five men and some horses were found at the Forks apparently awaiting their arrival. One of these men was sent posthaste on a sixty mile ride to Spokane House for more men and horses. The next morning Ross set out for Spokane. About noon, William Kittson arrived from Spokane with news of Indian troubles. Six of the freemen who had accompanied Finan McDonald to the Snake country, had been killed by a war party of Blackfeet Indians. Although this was a tragedy, not to be underestimated, it must be borne in mind that this

103. William Kittson served in the War of 1812 and entered the North West Company as clerk in 1817. He accompanied Ogden on the Snake expedition 1824-5. In 1826-9 he was in charge of Kootenay Post and in 1834 took care of the farming, stock-raising and fur trading at Nisqually.

104. Finan McDonald, clerk, was at Spokane House when Simpson passed in 1824. He was then sent to command an expedition into the Umpqua Valley. He had become a clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 and remained in the Columbia until his retirement in 1827.
expedition in spite of its misfortunes, brought out over 4,000 beaver from the Snake River area. It was to prove the great possibilities of that country, possibilities of which Governor Simpson was already convinced and anxious to exploit.

It was not until Friday October 24th that James Birnie arrived from Spokane with men and horses to handle the goods. On Saturday, Kennedy and Birnie left with the express for Fort George (Astoria). Ogden, who had been sent out with the purpose of replacing Kennedy at Spokane House, started for Spokane on horseback, accompanied by William Kittson and John Work. The latter two pushed on ahead and reached the fort at daylight after a hard ride through the night. Ogden arrived the next day with the men and the horses. Here Work was to remain until the next spring.

Spokane House was situated on the north bank of the main Spokane River a little above its junction with the Little Spokane. The Fort was the outfitting point for Snake River expeditions and had two outposts lying to the east—Flathead and Kootenay Houses. It was not a convenient spot,
being sixty miles by land from the Columbia at its junction of the Spokane River, and considerably north of the Snake River. But in the opinion of Alexander Ross at least, it was a lovely congenial spot with handsome buildings, a ballroom, a race track, good hunting, and last but not least, attractive women.

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CHAPTER III


Nothing is known of the life of John Work during that first winter of 1823-4 at Spokane House. No doubt it passed pleasantly enough. Morton suggests that he took "en facon du nord, a squaw of the same tribe" Spokane. His second journal began on Thursday, April 15, 1824. He left Spokane with Ogden and Finan McDonald with the fur brigade for Spokane Forks by packhorse, and thence by boat to Fort George. Kittson stayed behind in charge of the Fort. This first day was a short march and they stopped at 11 o'clock that morning to allow the horses to feed. On the 17th they arrived at the Forks at 10 o'clock in the morning. Here they found that seven men had come up from Okanagan to take down the boats so that embarkation proceeded apace. By one o'clock they were on their way down the Columbia.

Sunday, April 18th was Easter. It seems curious that Work should have noted this in his journal, until one recalls that most of his men were half-breeds from Eastern Canada and ardent Roman Catholics. But, notwithstanding the day, they embarked early and arrived at Okanagan in the evening. On the way, one of the many near-accidents occurred which he describes laconically, "At the rapid below the Dalls, the boat in which I was was driven ashore, and filled but she was not broken...." His concern was not for himself but for the furs since he remarks "...the greater part of the packs were wet".

110 Morton, op. cit., p. 713.

111 Work, Journal 1 (b), entry for April 18, 1824.
The next day was spent in drying these wet furs and in waiting for the boats from Fort George. On Tuesday 20th, Work recorded that the boats had still not arrived and then his journal broke off until May 1st. Sometime between April 20th and May 1st the boats had arrived and had been packed.

On May 1st, 1824, the fur brigade, consisting of seven boats, and sixty-three men left Okanagan for Walla Walla (Nez Perces). Spring was well advanced and Work had time to notice that shrubs and plants along the banks were in full flower. By starting at midnight on May 3rd, they arrived at Walla Walla at 9 o'clock in the morning. They were now in a level country with few hills and few trees and of a general sandy appearance. The 4th of May was spent in packing the Walla Walla returns with the rest of the baggage. John Warren Dease embarked with them.

On the 5th they started for Fort George but were held up by heavy wind which roughened the broad Columbia and partially blinded them with drifting sand. They made camp early in the evening and stayed ashore until Friday, May 7th. Once more they embarked but were forced ashore by wind at about 10 in the morning. A horse was purchased from the Indians and butchered for food. Even wood for their fires had to be bought from the natives. On Saturday they reached what Work called the Chutes where a Portage had to be made.

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112 Walla Walla was situated a few miles below the confluence of the Snake River at the forks of a small stream which flows into the Columbia from the south.

113 The Celilo Falls, the first of a series of obstructions in the Columbia which continue for fourteen miles and were known as the "Dalles". This includes Celilo Falls, the Little and the Great Dalles.
By May the 10th they had passed the Little and the Great Dalles where the river twists between huge basalt blocks. The last was an awe-inspiring sight to the travellers, here, "the river is confined to a narrow span bordered on each side by steep rocks between which the water rushes with great violence and forms numerous whirlpools which would inevitably swallow any boat that would venture among them." Here Work was pleased to find that the countryside was again growing green and on the hillsides appeared oaks, pine and poplars. They secured a number of salmon from the Indians who were peacefully dipping them out of the eddies with scoop nets. After dark, the wind abated and the expedition continued for a short time only. Again the wind came up so they landed to camp until daylight. At dawn they proceeded once more down the river and that afternoon reached the Cascades. Here the baggage had to be carried but the boats could be lowered by ropes down the current. Below this obstruction the river widened out and the current became less swift.

On May 12th they camped just below the junction of the Columbia and the Willamette Rivers. Here Work procured a sturgeon from the Indians and remarked on the attractive appearance of the surrounding country. He noticed also the tides which run up the river some ninety miles. To make up for lost time, they paddled all that night and arrived at

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114 Work, op. cit., entry for May 10, 1824.

115 The Cascades of the Columbia where the river breaks through the Cascade Mountains.
Fort George at 8 o'clock in the morning of the 13th.

The Establishment of Fort George is a large pile of buildings covering about an acre of ground well stockaded and protected by Bastions or Blockhouses, having two Eighteen Pounders mounted in front and altogether an air or appearance of Grandeur & consequence which does not become and is not at all suitable to an Indian Trading Post. 117

This is Governor Simpson's rather uncomplimentary description.

On May 14th and 15th they were busy discharging the furs. The following day Work received instructions to take a party of men up the river in order to feed them by trading articles with the Indians for the necessary provisions which would consist very largely of salmon, fresh and dried, and possibly some sturgeon. The annual supply ship had not yet arrived from England and supplies were short at the depot.

It must be remembered, also, that the Columbia district was not yet organized by Simpson to supply its own requirements in food. Moreover, it would be inconvenient and a nuisance to have so many men idle about the post. With Francis N. 118 Annance, Work left the fort at noon on the 17th of May. They were to go as far as the Cascades if food could not be secured at a nearer distance. They were furnished with a number of small articles for trade including tobacco, axes, hooks, rings,

116 The present site of the city of Astoria on the south bank of the Columbia about 14 miles from the river's mouth.

117 Merk, op. cit., p. 65.

118 Francis Noel Annance entered the employ of the North West Company in 1820 and became clerk and interpreter for the Hudson's Bay after coalition. He was one of McMillan's party to explore the Fraser in 1824. He was a member of the expedition which established Fort Langley in 1827, and retired in 1834.
files, knives, beads and lastly a little ammunition. The last mentioned was not to be used in trade unless provisions could not be secured otherwise. The Hudson's Bay Company had no wish to supply the Indians with the means of violence which might be directed toward themselves or which might stir up inter-tribal wars. A supply of flour and grease was given out to the men to last for the few days before contact could be made with the Indians.

The next two days they proceeded up the river calling at each village with varying success. It was the beginning of the season and the salmon had not yet started to run in quantity. Through superstition, some of the Indians cooked all their salmon, so that in some places all Work could buy was roasted fish. In many places, the prices asked were beyond what Work was prepared to pay, or the Indians demanded rum, ammunition or shirts which Work was not prepared to trade.

John Work was extremely interested in the Indian method of trapping the salmon in the lower part of the Columbia and wrote as follows:

The Indians where we encamped were employed catching salmon with some nets, the time selected is from half ebb to half flood tide. Their nets are made in the same manner as those used in Europe with wood floats and stone sinkers. These Indians manage one of these apparently 60 to 80 fathoms long. They roast all the fish they catch and what are not required for immediate use, is broken fine and placed in little sacks over the fire to dry. It is afterwards mixed with oil and preserved for a future occasion. The houses of the Indians are generally well stocked with mats, baskets, some very ingeniously worked, and a variety of troughs, platters and other vessels of wood, numbers of them are in the shape of hogs and other animals, the hog seems to be preferred.
By the 20th they were in the neighborhood of the Cowlitz River which flows into the Columbia from the north side. The surroundings were lovely, "beautiful plains... spotted with clumps of trees like a gentlemen's lawn". Prices of fish were still exorbitant so that the party decided to push on to the Cascades where they arrived on the 26th of May. It is typical of the methodical and cautious John Work that on the previous evening he "encamped about 4 o'clock, for the purpose of arranging our articles of trade and arms".

Here, fish were fairly plentiful and cheap, but the water was rising fast and the salmon were more difficult to take in high water. At the Cascades, the method of fishing differed from that used on the lower river. Wrote Work:

The Indians take the salmon in scoop nets, for this purpose they construct a stage projecting from the shore out over a shoot in the river, on this stage the Indian seats himself and with the net fixed on a hoop at the end of a long pole keeps continually dragging the river still putting the net in above and sweeping it down the stream where it meets the salmon which are struggling up the current. Fishing in this manner appears to be a laborious exercise.鲑

Salmon were now becoming so plentiful that Work began to reduce the price paid for them. Certainly his party was fed with little cost; an estimated three shillings and two pence per day feeding a total of thirty-five men, two clerks and twelve women. One wonders where the women came

119 Work, op. cit., entry for May 19, 1824.
120 Ibid., entry for May 21, 1824.
121 Ibid., entry for May 25, 1824.
122 Ibid., entry for May 27, 1824.
from until it is realized that many of the men had their wives with them on most expeditions. Moreover, the Indians were willing to loan their women to the expedition for a consideration. "As usual," Work says, "some women arrived in the evening for the purpose of hiring themselves to the people for the night." The men traded tobacco which was sold them from the stores, and even their buttons for these women, until it was estimated that only two dozen buttons were left in camp.

On June 3rd, news arrived from the Fort that the supply vessel had not yet arrived, so that the men must continue to exist among the Indian villages on their diet of salmon for a while yet. The steady diet of fish was beginning to pall on them so that they refused to eat part of a sturgeon which they had in camp. Moreover, the waters of the Columbia were rising rapidly because the snow in the mountains was melting. Work was afraid lest this should cut down the salmon supply. On the 11th of June he gave out a little ammunition to the men to see if they could find any game as a change to the endless salmon as well as to ensure them against a possible food shortage. The hunters were not successful. On the 14th, seven more men arrived from the Fort to join the party. They brought a few trade goods with them but no tobacco, the commodity which the Indians desired most. No news yet of the ship had been received.

The party were encamped near an Indian burial ground

123 Work, op. cit., entry for May 29, 1824.
which Work describes as follows,

The Indians here deposit their dead in houses prepared for this purpose, principal characters seem to have houses allotted for themselves or at least for the use of one family only, where the corpse is laid on the ground covered up with bark or mats and the house well closed up. Less pains seem to have been taken with the common people, the body is wrapt up in a mat or some articles of old clothing and thrown into a house promiscuously with the putrid bodies of those who have gone before it, without any covering of earth or boards, and the house so badly closed that it may be said to be left open, so that there is nothing to prevent animals from preying on the dead bodies. Children when they die are wrapt up in a mat or some other covering and laid up in the branches of trees without any covering except perhaps a board over or under them on the branches. The bodies of slaves I understand, are not allowed to be deposited among free people but are thrown indifferently in the woods.

The 20th of June marked a minor tragedy in Work's life. An Indian had sold them about eight pounds of venison, a part of which they had had for dinner. A dog stole the rest that night. "This," Work laments, "is the only meat we have received since the day after we left the Fort." However, a few days later the party enjoyed venison again when an Indian brought in four deer. Salmon began to get really scarce and after waiting for a while, Work decided to retreat down the river hoping that the Indians who caught fish by seine would have a plentiful supply. Hunting parties were sent out along the river bank but without success. On the 29th the party was reduced to purchasing six dogs at an

124 Work, op. cit., entry for June 19, 1824.
125 Ibid., entry for June 20, 1824.
Indian village for the people’s breakfast. Here their difficulties were complicated by the arrival of another eight men to join the party. The newcomers reported that salmon were also scarce in the lower reaches of the river. Work was in a quandary. More dogs could, of course, be purchased at the village. Finally he decided to make a flying visit to the Fort to procure more trade goods and to check on the salmon supply in the lower river himself. He was back again at 10 o’clock on the morning of July 3rd. He had confirmed the men’s story of the few salmon below. With the water falling again, he decided to push upstream again to the Cascades in the hope that salmon would be plentiful there. His hopes were fortunately realized so that the next few days proceeded uneventfully.

On the 11th of July, Work wrote to Thomas McKay at Walla Walla and to Kittson at Spokane to announce that the ship had as yet not arrived off the Columbia. It was not until the 17th that he received orders from Chief Factor Kennedy at Fort George to have the men back at the Fort by the 24th of July because the Inland Brigade would start by the 1st of August if the ship did not arrive before that time. On the 24th of July, fulfilling orders, he arrived back at the Fort in order to get ready to proceed to the Interior.

126 Thomas McKay was the son of John McLoughlin’s wife by a previous union with Alexander McKay, a former Nor’Wester who lost his life in the massacre of the Tonquin. Thomas entered the North West Company as a clerk in 1814. After coalition he continued in the Columbia in the employ of the Hudson’s Bay Company. He went with McMillan to the Fraser in 1824, he served in the Umpqua expedition in 1828. For a while he settled in the Willamette Valley and then rejoined the Company and spent a great deal of time in the Snake River country. He died in 1850.
These men had been two and a half months living on fish. All this time they were idle. Here was a practice which had been fairly common in pre-coalition days in the West. It was a practice which was to cease with the advent of Governor Simpson to whom it was a sample of the flagrant extravagances in the Columbia Department. What did the men do with their days? Work tells us what they did with their nights. It is a great compliment to the officers and to the Company that serious trouble was avoided in their relations among themselves and with the Indians. Would it have been more practical if Work had made some arrangement whereby his men could have done the fishing? This might have annoyed the Indians but it would have given the men something to do. It would have ensured the party a regular supply, and quantities of salmon might have been dried not only for themselves but for the post at Fort George.

As usual when staying at a post, Work made no more entries in his journal until his departure which took place this time on the 2nd of August. He stated that he had been occupied since the 24th of July in getting the Brigade ready. On the 2nd, the junior gentlemen, Finan McDonald, F.N. Annance and John Work set out with six loaded boats, with crews of nine men per boat, comprising the Brigade. As usual they camped but a few miles from the Fort where the men were given what is called the regale, which is a pint of rum and some bread & pork per man. This was the customary procedure and, "in a short time the greater part of the men were drunk and began to quarrel, when several battles ensued, & the after-

127 Work, op. cit., entry for August 2, 1824.
part of the day was spent drinking and fighting. The next morning the senior gentlemen were paddled the few miles to the encampment from the Fort, where they had spent the night in peace and quiet, these were Dease, Ogden and McLeod. Chief Factor Kennedy came to see them off. On the 6th, they arrived at the Cascades and passed them without difficulty. The voyage so far had been uneventful. Work's canoe had suffered minor injury against a stone. The wind had been too light to make much use of the sails. On the 11th they arrived at Walla Walla before breakfast where the Brigade remained for the day. At daylight the boats were under way again but Work left them to proceed to Spokane by horseback with letters.

He set out the next morning (August 13th) with two Nez Percés Indians as guides. Their route lay in a northwesterly direction across the Snake River and over stony and dusty country. It was very hot and Work suffered considerably in the three days' march through the plains. He was glad to get into the wooded country around Spokane and to arrive at the Fort which he reached at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of August 16th. Here occurs Work's first confession of fatigue in his journals, "I was tired after my ride," he wrote.

He remained at the Fort until the following weekend. "Nothing material occurred." News arrived in the person of Finan McDonald that the Brigade had arrived at Spokane Forks, so that preparations were made immediately to round up

128 Work, op. cit., entry for August 2, 1824.
129 Ibid., entry for August 16, 1824.
130 Ibid., entry for August 22, 1824.
the necessary horses to bring up the supplies from the boats. Work set out on Tuesday, August 24th, with some Indians and one hundred horses. They arrived at the Forks on Wednesday and on Thursday started back with the property for Spokane House. It was not until Sunday, August 29th that the loaded pack-train arrived at the Fort. Ogden, who had ridden ahead, arrived the day before.

On Monday, Finan McDonald and John Work set off on a trading expedition to the Flathead Country. This was Work's first expedition into that field. Their route led them by horseback to the Pend d'Oreille River which they reached on September 1st. The horses were sent back to the Fort and the party proceeded by canoes which had been cached at this point. That same day they proceeded up the Pend d'Oreille River and encamped just below Pend d'Oreille Lake. The next day saw them through the Lake into the river beyond. In the forenoon of September 4th they arrived at their destination, an Indian camp, where the natives had been waiting for them for more than a month.

Trading commenced immediately and was completed the next day at noon. The party obtained six hundred and fifty beaver, thirty bales of dry provisions (mostly buffalo meat), some buffalo robes, dressed skins and apishamores. Four tribes were there—Flatheads, Kootenais, Pend d'Oreilles and Piegans, trade was largely restricted to the first two mentioned.

That same afternoon they began their return trip and arrived back at the Portage below Pend d'Oreille Lake on
Tuesday, September 7th. Two men were sent off to Spokane to procure horses and arrived with them the following Friday. They also brought news that the long-expected supply ship Vigilant had arrived at Fort George on the 24th of August, nearly a month after the Brigade left for the Interior. The next day, Saturday September 11th, the party started back for the Fort about noon and got as far as the Coeur d'Alene Plain. On the 12th, McDonald and Work came on ahead of the party and arrived at Spokane House in the evening.

At Spokane it was decided to proceed without delay to Fort George "for supplies of Ammunition, Arms and Tobacco". Ogden and Work set out on the 13th leaving Kittson and McDonald at Spokane. They arrived at the Forks in the morning of Tuesday, September 14th, where boats and men, for which Ogden had arranged, awaited them. As soon as the pack horses arrived the boats were loaded (two boats and twenty-nine men) and they started down the Columbia. They put in to Okanagan the next day and arrived at Walla Walla on Friday. Here a horse was killed for food and a supply of corn taken aboard. At the Cascades one of the boats and its equipment was lost as they "lined" it down the river, "...It was absolutely smashed to atoms," wrote Work. "Kettles, axes, poles, etc., together with several of the men's capots, hats & blankets that remained in the boat were totally lost. Two men narrowly escaped being drowned by clinging to a fishing stage that

131 Merk, op. cit., p. 43, n. 95.

132 Work, op. cit., entry for Sunday, September 13, 1824.
was near the place." A canoe was hired from the Indians to replace the lost craft. Fortunately no furs were lost since they had all been carried across the Portage.

After paddling all Sunday night they arrived at Fort George about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The men were fatigued because of their forced march. The laconic entries in his Journal for the next two days tell their own story.

**Tuesday, Sept. 21st.** The men received their regale and are enjoying themselves.

**Wednesday, Sept. 22nd.** Little business done as the men are still enjoying themselves.

However, all pleasant things must end so on Tuesday, September 28th, Work again proceeded to Tongue Point and camped for the first night on the return journey. By Friday he was back at the Cascades. On Thursday, October 7th he arrived at Walla Walla and delivered the goods intended for that place. Again Work was sent overland to Spokane with letters while Ogden proceeded up the river with the brigade. Work arrived a "little after sunrising" and on the following day started out with two men and forty horses to meet the boats at the Forks. He was waiting there when Ogden arrived with them on the morning of October 20th, "21 days from Fort George which is reckoned an expeditious journey with loaded boats". The reason for their haste is fairly obvious. No sooner had the property been sent on to Spokane when the

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133 Work, op. cit., entry for September 19, 1824.
134 Tongue Point was just above Fort George and the usual spot for the regale.
135 Work, op. cit., entry for October 14, 1824.
136 Ibid., entry for October 20, 1824.
Express arrived (Wednesday, October 27th, 1824) bringing Governor Simpson, Dr. John McLoughlin and James McMillan from York Factory who were accompanied by J.W. Dease and Thomas McKay who presumably had met them at Boat Encampment.
CHAPTER IV

With McMillan to the Fraser River, 1824.

Work did not return to the Fort but stayed at Spokane Forks while the Governor, McLoughlin, and McMillan, accompanied by Ogden rode off to visit Spokane House. This was Simpson's first western inspection trip. He was intent on reform and was not willing to take anybody's word on the state of affairs in the west, not even Ogden's.

He [Ogden] represents the Country to be in a state of Peace and quietness and the Company affairs going on as usual which is not saying a great deal as if my information is correct the Columbia Department from the Day of its Origin to the present hour has been neglected, shamefully mismanaged and a scene of the most wasteful extravagance and the most unfortunate dissention. It is high time the system should be changed.... 137

With this in view, Simpson made a number of plans while at Spokane House. First, he objected to the Snake River Expeditions lying idle at Flathead Post all the winter. Simpson felt that since this was a trapping and not a trading expedition, that the best season for trapping was lost when the hunters did not venture out into the field until February each year. Not only did the members of the expedition quarrel and fight during this idle season but they also consumed their ammunition and their supplies to such an extent that they had to have "a second outfit which they cannot afford to pay for". Therefore, the Governor proposed that the Snake River Expedition should proceed to its hunting grounds as

137 Merk, op. cit., p. 43.
138 Ibid., p. 45.
soon after the first of November as possible, swing south and west if necessary through Northern California and out by way of the Umpqua and Willamette to Fort George so that their furs could be shipped to London by the annual supply ship. This plan would have the manifest advantage of avoiding the long haul by Brigade from Spokane down the Columbia to Fort George. "This is the inception of Ogden's four historic Snake Country Expeditions which opened up the unexplored wilderness of the northern Great Basin in the years 1824-9". The second plan which the Governor entertained was that of making the posts as self-sufficient as possible. Not only would this involve subsisting off the fish of the rivers and the game of the forests but it would introduce the practice of farming as well. Simpson makes this last point perfectly clear. "It has been said," he states, "that Farming is no branch of the Fur Trade but I consider that every pursuit tending to lighten the Expense of the Trade is a branch thereof." "...I mean to send some Garden and Field seed across next Season to be tried at Spokane House...." We know that this intention was carried out, not at Spokane House, but at Colvile which was to replace it.

The third idea had been simmering in the Governor's mind for some time. He had already broached it to McMillan on his westward journey. This was the exploration of the Fraser River mouth with the view to establishing a post there.

139 Merk, op. cit., p. 46, n. 102.
140 Ibid., p. 50.
141 Ibid., p. 49.
which should take the place of Fort George as the headquarters of the Columbia District. Simpson had originally intended to outfit this expedition at Okanagan and send it in a circular route from Okanagan to the Thompson, then down the Fraser to its mouth and thence by sea to the Columbia. He decided that the necessary provisions and equipment were beyond the abilities of Okanagan to supply so that the expedition must outfit at Fort George and reverse its route. It seems a pity that this original plan was not followed since it might have cleared up the uncertainty surrounding the navigability of the Fraser Canyon which existed in Simpson's mind until his second expedition westward. McMillan, who was placed in charge of the expedition, did not complete the last important leg of this journey, that of exploring the Fraser Canyon above the Harrison River and especially above the present town of Hope. John Work was ordered by Simpson to accompany him south to Fort George to become a member of McMillan's expedition.

On Saturday, October 30th, Governor Simpson arrived back at the Forks from Spokane House, ready to continue his inspection westward. Ogden accompanied him from the Fort. The next morning at 10 o'clock Simpson and his party started for Okanagan and Ogden returned to Spokane House. The voyage down the Columbia was uneventful. They arrived at Okanagan on Monday, November 1st, and left again the next day. On the 4th they arrived at Walla Walla "a little after Sunrising".

142 See Chapter I, pp. 8-9.

143 Merk, op. cit., p. 47 and Work, op. cit., entry for October 28, 1824.

144 Work, op. cit., entry for November 4, 1824.
Three days later they crossed the Portage at the Cascades and arrived at Fort George in the evening of the next day, November 8th.

The entries in Work's journal now become irregular for a few days. But on Wednesday, November 17th, Work writes,

Preparations have been making for some days past to send off an Expedition to the North-Ward for the purpose of ascertaining the situation of the entrance of the Frasers River, & the possibility of navigating the coast in small boats. Frasers River & about its entrance are also to be examined if it can be accomplished. It is understood from report that these are the principle objects of the undertaking. The party are to consist of Mr. Jas. McMillan who commands the Expedition; Mr. Thos. McKay, Mr. F.N. Annance and Myself and 35 men. The Journey is to be performed in small boats, 3 in number. Everything is now prepared to start to morrow. 145

The second Journal of John Work states that the expedition left Fort George at 1:15 P.M. on Thursday November 18th and reached the Portage in Baker's Bay which they used to avoid doubling Cape Disappointment in their boats. Kennedy accompanied them to this point. The next day they commenced in a "weighty rain" to carry the canoes and baggage across the Portage. They had about a mile portage to a little lake


and thence down a creek too narrow to float the boats. By pushing and pulling their boats through willow patches and across swamps on Saturday they finally completed the Portage to Shoalwater Bay (Work calls it Grey's Bay). Here the little creek became deep enough to launch their craft, on a flood tide. On the 21st they crossed to the East side of the Bay. Work charted his progress from point to point and noted directions and distances in his journal as in a ship's log. When they reached the point at the northern end of the bay they found the sea too rough to permit them rounding it in their small boats. The only alternative was to make a portage of nearly two miles across the point. Here the labor of carrying did not end as the party found that the surf was still too great to risk launching their small craft. Monday, 22nd was spent in laboriously pulling the boats along the edge of the woods about one quarter to one half a mile from shore.

On Tuesday they decided to adopt the Indian practice of poling and lining the boats along the shore just inside the surf to avoid the labor of carrying. Some of the men were ordered into the boats with poles and others were set to work pulling with ropes along the beach. It was a wet and cold task—the men "were wet to the middle". To make matters worse, one of the men developed blood poisoning from an infected foot.

The next day, the party abandoned the route along the outer beaches and pushed through thick woods to Gray's Harbor. The labor involved must have been strenuous and

148 Work, Journal 2, entry for Tuesday, November 23, 1824.

disagreeable in the extreme. They pushed a mile and a half through thick woods and through a continuation of swamps where the men carrying their packs were often over their knees in water and mud. The sick man was getting worse. The swelling was extending up his leg and black spots were appearing on his foot. He had to be carried all that day.

By now they had come a distance of 10 miles by laborious portaging. The usual November weather on the coast prevailed, day after day had brought heavy rain and strong westerly winds. The party had been eking out their limited provisions by the numerous ducks and geese which inhabit coastal waters during this season.

On Thursday, the 25th all the boats were got across the Portage and they proceeded into the Bay. It was again windy and wet so the men were soaked to the skin. Reaching the head of the Bay, the next morning they paddled up the tortuous Chehalis River in a general easterly direction for about eighteen miles. Navigation was easy for the current was slack and the river was deep. To their astonishment they found that the Indians, who in this area were quite accustomed to white men, were decidedly hostile. Later investigations show that one of Concomly's sons Cassicus, had spread the rumor that this was a punitive expedition, but as Work writes, some presents of tobacco soon "dismissed all appearance of hostility".

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150 Cassicus, eldest son of Concomly, Chief of the Chinooks. This son was known as the Prince of Wales.

151 Work, Journal No. 2, entry for Friday, November 26, 1824.
This must have been an easy day since Work's entry in his journal is so long. He had been passing Indian villages for two days now and noted the number of houses in each village. He apparently realized or was informed that these were the typical community houses of the coast Indians for he estimated their inhabitants at a considerable number. His description is vivid, interesting and informative.

These peoples houses are constructed of planks set on end & neatly fastened at the top, those on the ends lengthening towards the middle to form the proper pitch, the roofs are covered with planks the seams between which are filled with moss, a span is left open all the way along the ridge which serves the double purpose of letting out the smoke & admitting the light. About these habitations is a complete sink of filth and nastiness at this wet season it is a complete mire mixed with the offal of fish & dirt of every kind renders it surprising that human beings can reside among it. 152

Until the afternoon, Saturday was another wet day. It was even too wet to bother with fires so that the expedition continued upstream without interruption until four o'clock making a distance of between twenty and twenty-four miles. The current of the river was now fairly strong so that the men had to resort to poles. They passed more Indian villages, 153 even more filthy, so that the "stench was most offensive", but the inhabitants were not unfriendly, as they had been before.

On Sunday, November 28th, they had pushed on upstream about ten miles to a little river flowing into the

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152 Work, op. cit., entry for November 26, 1824.
153 Ibid., entry for November 27, 1824.
Chehalis from the north. This was then called and still bears the name of the Black River. For five or six miles this stream was deep and slow and fairly easily penetrable. Later on however, it became swift and often very shallow so that the boats were dragged up it with considerable difficulty. By Monday, they had gone another nine miles up the same river, paddling through slow deep water and then scrambling through shallows, willows and over obstructions of driftwood. The woods changed from poplar and oak to pine. Work's trained eyes saw and noted marks of beaver along the route. The next day they made arrangements to send back the man who was ill with blood poisoning. His leg and foot had broken out so badly that all hope of his recovery on the expedition was abandoned. Completing these arrangements, cost them another day so that it was Thursday December 2nd before they were on their way again. As they neared the headwaters of the Black River the stream became choked with willows and trees. Time and again they had to carry the goods and chop a path through the tangles for their boats. By nightfall they had gone only five miles but it was enough to bring them close to the little lake out of which the river flowed. This lake (Black Lake) they reached and crossed on Friday. A portage of 8,000 yards lay between Black Lake and Puget's Sound over which the boats and goods had to be carried. Here, an Indian trail already existed which was wide enough to transport the goods, but a wider path had to be cut out for the boats. Work had his first encounter with "an evergreen shrub called by the Chinooks Sallall [salal], that cutting a road through them for the boats is a tedious and laborious
task". He was struck by his first sight of Douglas firs. 
"I measured some of them, one of the largest was upwards of 155 
5 fathoms in circumference another 28 feet round."

By Monday December 6th the last of the boats were 156 
over the Portage at Eld Inlet and the voyage down Puget Sound began. They embarked at nine o'clock and set out along the South East shore, carefully charting distances and directions. Work noted the many islands and inlets which were typical. He saw plenty of mussels on the rocks and although he observed the shells of oysters and cockles he did not think of digging for them. A starfish was apparently new to him, for he wrote,

Another kind of fish of a curious shape was also in plenty. This is a shapeless animal with 5 long toes joined together in the middle, it seems to be in a torpid state and scarcely to move, it is covered with a crust or hard skin of a reddish color. 157

That day they passed the mouth of the Nisqually River.

On Tuesday they travelled a total of thirty-five miles. En route, they engaged three Indians (two men and a woman) of the Snohomish tribe to go with them as interpreters. One of the three claimed to understand "the language of the Coweechins which is the name of the tribe at the entrance of 158 
what is supposed to be Frasers River". The following day they saw the snow-capped peaks of Mt. Baker, Mt. Rainier and Mt. St. Helens in the distance.

154 Work, op. cit., entry for December 4, 1824. 
155 Loc. cit. 
157 Work, op. cit., entry for December 6, 1824. 
158 Ibid., entry for December 7, 1824.
By Friday, December 10th, they were getting near the entrance to Puget's Sound. The shores were rockier and bolder with less earth and with stunted, twisted trees at the water's edge. For some days they had passed villages of the Skagit Indians in every sheltered bay along their route. These Indians were friendly and brought good reports of elk and beaver. On Saturday they saw what Mr. T.C. Elliott identifies as Orcas and San Juan islands in the distance and what may have been the hills of Vancouver Island beyond them again. Finally, they landed in Semiahmoo Bay which is easily recognizable by another of Work's graphic descriptions. "The shore still continues high & steep but instead of rocks are composed of clay & wooded to the water's edge...." This is obviously the shoreline from White Rock around to Crescent Beach through Ocean Park.

For two days the party waited for the weather to abate in order to cross to Point Roberts, the Indians having told them that this point formed the southern side of the entrance to the Fraser River. On Monday, December 13th, they attempted the passage across to Point Roberts and gave it up. Instead they proceeded along the eastern shore past Crescent Beach to the Nicomekl River up which they ascended some seven miles. "The reason of proceeding up the little River," Work states, "was the Indians representing that by making a portage there was a road this way into the Coweekin River, but they said it was very bad and seemed most desirous to go

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160 Work, op. cit., entry for December 11, 1824.
by the point." It was bad, but Work was consoled by the plentiful signs of beaver along the river bank.

The next day it rained heavily after a considerable spell of fair weather. The expedition could get no further up the river so they commenced portaging and got about half way across. According to Mr. T.C. Elliott, they were now on Langley Prairie which Work describes as rich and fertile with the remains of a luxurious crop of grass and ferns lying on the ground.

On Wednesday they completed the five mile Portage. Something new among the Indians caught Work's eye: "their blankets are of their own manufacture & made of hair or coarse wool, over which they wear a kind of short cloak made of the bark of the cedar tree,..." in poncho style. The expedition was late getting started the next morning after waiting for three of the party who had been hunting elk. About eleven o'clock they embarked and paddled down the Salmon River to its junction with the Fraser, which they reached about one o'clock. "At this place," writes Work, "it is a fine looking River at least 1,000 yards wide, as wide as the Columbia at Oak Point....From the size and appearance of the River there is no doubt in our minds but that it is Frazer's."

On Friday and Saturday, they explored up the river

161 Work, op. cit., entry for December 13, 1824.
163 Work, op. cit., entry for December 15, 1824.
164 Ibid., entry for December 16, 1824.
as far as Hatzie Slough and saw the Cheam Peaks in the
distance. Here they were visited by Indians from a
village a little farther up the river who gave them unduly
optimistic information respecting the Fraser above that
point, representing the river as being navigable through
the Canyon to Kamloops. A letter was given to these Indians
to forward to Thompson River.

McMillan decided that it was not necessary to
proceed any farther upstream. On Saturday afternoon they
began their journey to the mouth of the Fraser. As they
proceeded down the river they carefully charted and describ­
ed their route from point to point and island to island.
They passed the site of New Westminster down to a point
opposite Tilbury Island where they camped. Work was still
looking for traces of contacts between the natives and
Europeans and carefully estimating opportunities for trade.

On Monday, December 20th, they paddled out of the
river mouth and saw Point Grey to the north. The boats now
turned southward and rounded Point Roberts. For five days
they retraced their steps without incident and reached the
Portage to the Black River at 10 o'clock on Christmas Day.
Work made no mention of this as a special day in his journal
which recorded only the toil of getting the boats and baggage
across the wet and miry trail. Near noon of the next day they
had embarked on Black Lake, all crowded into two boats, be-

166 Ibid., p. 222, n. 56.
cause one of them had been left behind at a nearby Indian village. The purpose of leaving the boat, apart from the possibility that future parties would find it readily available, becomes clear in reading the entry in Work's journal for Monday December 27th. McMillan, John Work, Laframboise the interpreter, accompanied by six men planned to try to find a route overland to the Cowlitz River and thence to the Fort by water. The rest of the party, now easily accommodated in the two boats, would return by the old route.

According to Mr. T.C. Elliott, the party divided near Grand Mound prairie and for two days proceeded south by horseback. The route they followed was over a well-marked Indian trail which followed closely the present line of the Northern Pacific Railroad through Centralia, Chehalis and on to the Cowlitz River near Toledo, where the Cowlitz Farm of the Company was to be located. Although well-defined, the road was mixed in quality. Sometimes it was firm and level, then wet, muddy and slippery, often obstructed by branches and fallen trees which the Indians did not bother to remove, or else it was blocked by swollen rivers or streams. As usual, Work made careful comment on the country through which they passed--its trees and bushes, the quality of the soil, its plains and its hills. This is the discovery of the Cowlitz Portage which became an established Hudson's Bay route from the Columbia to Fort Nisqually.

168 Ibid., p. 227, n. 68.
They arrived at the Cowlitz River late on the morning of Wednesday the 29th of December. No time was lost in hiring an Indian canoe to take them to the Fort. By 7 o'clock that evening they reached the Columbia River. By dint of paddling hard all that night they reached Fort George at 10 o'clock Thursday morning. Altogether the expedition had been away a month and a half. Most of the time had been spent on the outward journey since only ten days of the total time had been used on the return trip which had been favored by better weather with less wind and rain than the journey north.

Governor Simpson was pleased and satisfied with the expedition which he stated had been accomplished not only to the credit of McMillan but "to my utmost satisfaction". He was undoubtedly impressed with the reports of the country. Puget Sound afforded a sheltered and safe anchorage. The Indians were friendly and appeared pleased at the thought of the whites settling amongst them. Moreover, the area was well populated and should offer a considerable scope for trade. Deer, elk and beaver were abundant. The Fraser River was reported to be navigable for twenty miles by vessels of one hundred tons, and in the first forty miles of its course not one shoal or rapid was encountered. The mouth of the river was reported to be obstructed by sand bars through which

169 Mørk, op. cit., p. 118.
170 Ibid., pp. 114-118.
clear channels existed with depths of three to seven fathoms. The land on either side of the river appeared to be rich and fertile and the river itself would provide ample supplies of salmon and sturgeon. Simpson goes on to state that the Indians reported that the River as far up as the Thompson River was a "fine large bold stream and not barred by dangerous rapids or falls". No report could have been more encouraging to Simpson's desire to remove headquarters to some spot farther north—a spot which would be in British territory, easily accessible from the sea, capable of agricultural development, and with easy contact with the interior posts.

Unfortunately many of these items proved to be far from the truth. The hopeful report of the middle river was absolutely untrue. It is a pity that winter conditions made it impossible for McMillan to carry out his orders by exploring these middle reaches. Simpson apparently left the Columbia with the hope that the Fraser River would provide a highway from New Caledonia to the Sea. As the beginning of this project Fort Langley was built in 1827-8 and McMillan was placed in charge. It became a secondary post. Simpson's letter to the Foreign Office in 1826 shows that he had been disillusioned regarding the Fraser River. When Simpson

171 Merk, op. cit., p. 117

172 See Reid, Robie L., "Early Days at Old Fort Langley", in British Columbia Historical Quarterly, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 71-85.

returned to the Pacific in 1828-9 he came by way of the Peace and Fraser rivers and saw the impossibility of using the Fraser as a convenient outlet for New Caledonia. For these reasons the route from the interior posts came to follow the Fraser south to Alexandria, then by pack horse trail by way of Fort Thompson (Kamloops) to Okanagan and thence by boat down the Columbia.
With the decision to move the main depot of the Columbia Department to the Fraser River came the expected abandonment of Fort George. It is to be remembered that it was on the south side of the river. The site had been returned to the Americans in 1818 and could be occupied by them at any time. It was therefore decided to establish a post farther up the river on its northern bank (if the Columbia was to become the boundary between American and British property). This new fort was to be a secondary one only. The spot selected, called Belle Vue Point, was almost opposite the mouth of the Willamette River and about a mile and a quarter from the water's edge. The area was suitable for cultivation so that it fitted in with Simpson's idea of making the forts self-sufficient in provisions. Moreover, the site was not too far up the river to be out of navigable water for small vessels. Work was begun on it immediately and must have been nearly complete before Governor Simpson returned to York Factory in the spring of 1825. Simpson visited the new post on March 18th and 19th of that year and named the place Fort Vancouver with due ceremony and a bottle of rum.

174 Merk, op. cit., p. 124.

175 When the proposed Fraser River route to New Caledonia was found impracticable, Fort Vancouver had to be continued as a base, so it was relocated nearer the water's edge, 1828-29.
John Work must have been present at the ceremony and may have been engaged in building the Fort. It has not been possible to obtain any information about Work between the time of his return from the Fraser on December 29, 1824 and the 21st of March 1825 when his next journal begins. If we may deduce anything from his usual practice of discontinuing his journals while resident at a post, it seems clear that he was either at Fort George or at the site of the new post as suggested.

His third journal opens two days after Simpson left Fort Vancouver on his eastward journey. He was under orders to make himself useful in the moving of goods from Fort George to Fort Vancouver, until the Brigade left for the interior when he was to accompany it to Spokane. Work left Fort Vancouver in the Otter with four Hawaiians for Fort George to assist in moving equipment to the new site. They reached Fort George at 7 o'clock in the evening of the 23rd after running aground and having to wait for the tide. The next day the Otter was loaded and sent up the River, Work remaining behind to check stores and finish accounts. On Sunday, March 27th he arrived back at Fort Vancouver with

176 Conjecture only; but it is apparent that he was at Fort Vancouver when Simpson christened it and must have come up from Fort George with Simpson or have been already present at Fort Vancouver.

177 Work, John, Journal, March 21-May 14, 1825 (hereafter referred to as Journal 3).

178 The usual references make no mention of this vessel, which must have been a small sailing ship.

179 Work calls them Owyhees in the common spelling of the time. The practice of using these islanders was quite common with the Hudson's Bay Company. They were known also as Kanakas.
some Indians in a canoe. Then, Friday April 1st, he set out again and arrived at Fort George at midnight, spending Saturday packing furs and stores. He was not back at Fort Vancouver until the 13th of April. The return trip had been difficult. The weather was bad with constant rain and wind. Some of the boats were old and rotten. One fell to pieces as it was being loaded. As a result, Work spent a full three days drying the furs on his return to Fort Vancouver.

It was not until Wednesday, May 11th, that Work started again for Fort George so the usual gap occurs in his journal up to this date. In the meantime, the annual supply ship from England, the William and Ann, had arrived with David Douglas, the celebrated botanist and Dr. Scouler, acting surgeon of the vessel, on board. Dr. McLoughlin made a special trip to Fort George to take these men to Fort Vancouver. Douglas and Scouler were to accompany Work back to Fort George where the former was to spend the rest of the month collecting and the latter was to rejoin his ship for a northward expedition. Work's party arrived at Fort George

180 David Douglas spent the next two years on the Columbia. In 1827 he travelled overland to Hudson Bay and thence to England. He returned to the Pacific in 1829 and was accidentally killed in the Hawaiian Islands, 1834.

181 Dr. Scouler had been professor of Natural History at Glasgow and was recommended as surgeon to the William and Ann to carry out his researches. His journal is in the Oregon Historical Society Quarterly, vol. 6, pp. 54-76, 159-205, 276-289.

on Thursday evening. The next day was spent in loading the Otter and the five boats which had come down from Fort Vancouver. On the 14th (Saturday) they were ready to return but heavy rain delayed them until the next morning when they got under way with a load of powder and pigs.

Again for lack of positive information we must assume that John Work remained at Fort Vancouver until the latter part of June. He was then assigned to the Brigade for the interior which carried the fall and winter outfits to the various posts. Chief Trader John McLeod was in charge. This appointment checks with the decisions in George Simpson's journal in which the Governor had originally intended Work and Thomas McKay to take charge of the Umpqua Expedition. Simpson felt that Work did not have the experience necessary for such an important post so that Finan McDonald was to replace Work who was to return with the Brigade to Spokane where he was to remain in temporary command "until the arrival of some Commissioned Gentlemen from the other side".

The expedition composed of thirty-two men in five boats embarked in the morning of Tuesday June 21, 1825 in a drizzling rain. The brigade was under armed convoy of twelve additional men until it passed the Cascades and the Celilo

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183 Stationed at Thompson River at Kamloops and given leave of absence for the following season. See H.B.S., III, pages 84 and 102.

184 Merk, op. cit., p. 135.

185 Loc. cit.
Falls of the Columbia. David Douglas accompanied the expedition as far as the convoy went. While there had been no trouble with the Indians there were possibilities of raids upon the expensive outfits at the portages where the natives had collected for fishing. Work indicates a certain wariness in his journal by remarking frequently that the Indians although present in numbers, were peaceable and quiet.

By Saturday, June 25th, they had successfully passed the Falls and encamped a little below John Day's River. Here, they stopped to gum the boats and here their escort left them. On the 29th, they arrived at Walla Walla. The weather after the first day had been fair and getting hotter—here the heat was oppressive, with occasional storms of thunder and "lightening".

The following day was spent in separating the outfits belonging to different posts, since now part would be kept at Walla Walla, part would go on by boat to Spokane Forks and Okanagan and from thence by pack horse to New Caledonia and to Spokane House respectively. The next task was to secure pack horses by trade from the Indians. Since not enough (150) could be obtained locally, a horse trading expedition was organized to procure these up the Snake River. John Warren Dease was in command, accompanied by Work and 186 another clerk named Thomas Dears. With them went twenty-eight men. The two boats they had were very lightly-laden

186 Thomas Dears entered the Hudson's Bay Company service as a clerk in 1817. After serving at York Factory, Island Lake and other posts he was appointed to the Columbia River. From thence he went to New Caledonia until he retired in 1836.
and the men well-armed. They embarked on Saturday July 1st in the early afternoon.

By Friday July 15th they had been working their way slowly up the Snake River stopping at each lodge, smoking and trading for horses, and getting a few each day. Work claimed that the Indians were not too eager to part with them and then would sell only young ones which were fit for food and not for packing. However, they did succeed in getting a number of suitable animals which were reported to be larger and better as they proceeded upstream. The weather was exceedingly hot, and the country dry parched and barren. Mosquitoes were troublesome and interfered with their rest at night. This day (Friday) they reached the Clearwater River where Lewiston, Idaho now stands. Here they were visited by upwards of two hundred Indians. "...They are very quiet and peaceable so far," comments Work in an ominous tone.

On the next two days, trading was brisk and more horses were secured so that by now they had traded a total of one hundred and twelve animals, six of which had been killed accidently or slaughtered for food. They were still forty-four short of the required number but their trade goods had run out so that on Monday July 18th, trading was wound up.

J.W. Dease and the clerk, Dears, apparently returned downstream to Walla Walla in the canoes, since Work mentions

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188 Work, John, Journal, June 21, 1825-June 12, 1826 (hereafter referred to as Journal 4) entry for July 15, 1825.
in his journal that he was left with six men and an Indian
guide to take the hundred and six horses overland to
Okanagan and Spokane. Work proceeded north on the regular
Indian trail which follows the present boundary line between
Washington and Idaho. Work was bound for Spokane to,

...consult with Mr. Birnie as to the practicability of getting all the property etc. removed at once to the Kettle Falls so that the whole may be there by the time the boats arrive, by which means the trading parties to the Flat Heads and Kootanies could be sent off immediately and meet the Indians at a proper season or at least as easily as possible, while the remainder of the people, when two establishments are not to be kept up, could be advantageously employed at the building of the new Establishment. 190

This is the first reference to the proposed removal of Spokane House to a new site, Fort Colvile, at Kettle Falls. More about the change will be said later. For this purpose Work had got permission to take eleven pack horses and two saddle horses from those now in his care, all Dease would allow him. This is the first time that John Work allows himself to grumble in black and white. He wanted more horses, having only eight already at Spokane. He also wanted the help of Thomas Dears, but Chief Trader Dease would not allow this since the former was needed to assist with the boats of the Brigade from Walla Walla to Okanagan. "He [McLeod] certainly needed no assistance to conduct three boats well manned when little danger is to be apprehended from the Indians," grumbles Work in his journal. If his plans proved practicable then Work planned to proceed to Okanagan to receive the

190 Work, Journal 4, entry for July 18, 1825.
191 Loc. cit.
Spokane and Rocky Mountain outfits and then to accompany the boats back to Kettle Falls.

On July 20th they reached the fork in the trail and Work turned off to Spokane while the others proceeded to Okanagan. He arrived at Spokane House at 7 o'clock in the evening and found everybody well. He found also that Birnie had been very active all summer in packing furs, trading-goods, stores and sundries into "pieces" for transporting to Kettle Falls. He had also collected more horses than Work had anticipated, altogether a total of twenty-four. Since each "piece" weighed about ninety pounds a considerable number of trips would be necessary. Work was still annoyed at Dease's refusal to loan him Thomas Dears. It was necessary that Work proceed to Okanagan to superintend the boats proceeding to Kettle Falls. He would like to have had Birnie or Dears start with the horses to transport the goods to Kettle Falls overland. Unfortunately, there was now no one to leave in charge of the remaining supplies at Spokane House.

Work also received a note from Governor Simpson which was awaiting him at Spokane House. This letter left Work with definite duties to perform. He was to be in charge of abandoning Spokane House, of the removal of all goods and supplies to Kettle Falls where the new post was to be built under his direction. The Kootenay and the Pend d'Oreille rivers were to be examined with a view to sending out the Kootenay and Flathead outfits by water rather than by pack horse. Horses were to be gathered for the New Caledonia outfit. Both Birnie and Dears were to be under his command.
Governor Simpson had first thought of Kettle Falls as a possible alternative to Spokane House when he passed the Falls on October 26th, 1824. The soil was reasonably good for agriculture. Fish could be collected in any quantity at the rapids. Moreover, the sixty mile pack horse trail from Spokane Forks could be avoided and the Kootenay and Flathead posts supplied by river from Kettle Falls if the rivers flowing past these posts proved to be navigable, or if not, by horse just as easily as from Spokane. On his return eastward the next spring Simpson had a consultation with Kennedy, McMillan, McDonald and Ross on the subject. Only one objection was foreseen, that the Indians at Spokane might be offended at the loss of a post in their district. This objection was not enough to oversway the advantages gained. A few days later Simpson himself made arrangements with the Indian Chief at Kettle Falls and personally selected a site:

...a beautiful point on the South side about 4ths of a Mile above the Portage where there is abundance of fine Timber and the situation eligible in every point of view. An excellent Farm can be made at this place where as much Grain and potatoes may be raised as could feed all the Natives of the Columbia and a sufficient number of Cattle and Hogs to supply his Majestys Navy with Beef and Pork....I have taken the liberty of naming it Fort Colvile....

Work delayed leaving Spokane for Okanagan until

192 Merk, op. cit., p. 42.

193 Ibid., p. 134.

194 Ibid., p. 139, Andrew Colville was a director and later a governor of the Hudson's Bay Company.
Saturday July 23rd, when he set out accompanied by a man and an Indian and "drove on at a round pace all day". They arrived at the Columbia the next day, gave the horses an opportunity to rest and the day following got all of them safely across the river to Okanagan. No sooner had Work arrived at Okanagan than further difficulties impeded him. These were contained in a letter from Peter Skene Ogden who was in charge of the Snake Country trappers that season. Ogden reported that twenty-three of his freemen, fourteen with their furs, traps and horses, deserted to an American party of William Ashley's then led by a Johnson Gardner. It had been originally planned by Simpson that Ogden would return by way of the Willamette River, but Ogden sent word that he intended coming out by way of Walla Walla. Therefore, all the Snake River outfit had been sent to the latter place. Now plans had to be changed because Work discovered by opening Ogden's despatch that the remainder of Ogden's party intended coming out by the Flathead post. In Work's opinion, all of his time would therefore be spent in transporting the Snake outfit from Walla Walla to Spokane House if the Snake Country business was to be carried on. This might prevent the abandoning of Spokane that fall. Dears was sent to Walla Walla post haste with this information and with Ogden's letter, from whence it would be delivered to McLoughlin at


196 H.B.S., IV, p. lxi. An example of the onset of American competition. William Ashley recruited the first of his trading parties in 1822. (See H.B.S., IV, p. 34, n. 2, for further details.)
Vancouver. The Indian who brought the letter was dispatched to Spokane House requesting Birnie to send horses to the Forks to take in the Snake outfit.

On Thursday, August 4th, the boats from Okanagan arrived at Spokane Forks. The journey had been difficult, because the water was high and although the craft were only two thirds loaded, they were laden down with passengers. The boats were discharged immediately, just as the horses arrived from Spokane House. The rest of the day was spent in dividing and packing the goods. On the following day one boat (the other two were laid up at the Forks) set out for Kettle Falls and the Rocky Mountains. Instructions were left for the seven men in the boat to remain at the Falls until the 20th of September and, using the tools with which they were provided, to start construction on Fort Colvile. Work went with the horses to Spokane House where he arrived on Sunday August 7th.

The next day, losing no time, Work began to get together the Flathead outfit. In the meantime, Dears arrived from Walla Walla. On the 9th, the outfit started for the Flathead post. Work followed them the following day and at the same time dispatched Dears to superintend the building of Fort Colvile. The expedition followed the same route as Work had done the previous summer and arrived at Pend d'Oreille River on the 11th of August where the cached canoes were found. These had to be regummed, paddles and poles had to be made also since the Indians had stolen all of them. It was not until noon of the following day that the expedition was on its way. Winds delayed their crossing Lake Pend d'Oreille
but by Monday the 15th they arrived at Thompson Falls on Clark's Fork where Kittson from Ogden's party awaited Work with thirty-eight packs of furs.

On the following day trading commenced and continued until the 17th when the furs were packed ready for transport. The trade was less than the previous year by about one hundred and twenty beaver which Work blamed on the fact that many of the Kootenay Indians had bone back to their own lands without waiting to trade. Dressed skins and leather were particularly scarce, but the quantity of dried meat was just double. Before he returned, Work made arrangements to forward letters and certain articles to Ogden.

Their return journey down the River and across the Lake was slow. The canoes were overloaded. Rapids had to be run with half cargoes. For awhile the lake was too rough to cross. However, by the 20th they reached the Portage and sent three men to the Fort for the horses. The remainder of the men were put to drying the bales which were wet from the leaky and overladen canoes. Some of the articles left over from trading were cached in the woods to save taking them back to the Fort. Three days later the men arrived back with all of the Company's horses and some others which Birnie had secured from the Indians. There were still too few animals until an Indian arrived in the evening with seven more. On the 24th they loaded the horses and began

198 H.B.S., IV, p. 27, n. 4.
their way across the Portage to Spokane. The horses were weak and the journey slow. On the next day Kittson and Work left the Brigade and set out ahead for the Fort where they arrived at 4 o'clock. Here they found that two of Dease's men had arrived with twenty-six horses for the use of the Snake country expedition and with dispatches from Fort Vancouver. These dispatches instructed Work to bring half of the Snake outfit from Walla Walla to Spokane House. However, Work felt apprehensive lest this should be so much waste effort should Ogden return by Walla Walla and not by Spokane. He, therefore, decided to delay any action until the 1st of October, hoping to have in the meanwhile more definite information concerning Ogden's movements. Time was to prove that Work was right in his decision since Ogden did return by way of Walla Walla and not by Spokane.

Now for a time Work was occupied in routine operations around Spokane House. Kittson was sent to the Kootenay country for the furs which he and Work failed to get from the Indians on the trading expedition which they had just completed. Nine men were sent to Kettle Falls with tools to help with the building of Fort Colvile.

On the last day of August, John Work set out for Kettle Falls on horseback where he arrived at noon the next day. To his disappointment little progress had been made in the construction of the Fort. Seven men had been employed since August 13th and had only secured and squared thirty-

199 Work, Journal 4, entry for September 26, 1825. His route is the same which Work followed later (cf., Journals 8 and 9 in B.C. Archives).
seven logs. Dears, who had been sent to take charge, excused himself and the men on the grounds that "two of them are at present ill with the venereal and fit to do very little, one of them does nothing". The only bright spot in the whole picture was that a good stock of provisions, dry fish and berries, had been traded.

With the arrival of Work, matters began to move a little more briskly. A pit was dug for whip-sawing lumber. A two-wheeled rack was completed to cart logs and timber wherever they were needed. But Work found to his dismay that there was not a sufficiency of timber available close at hand to finish even the store. He describes the site of Colville as lying in a horseshoe-shaped niche or valley on the south side of the river. This niche, about two miles in depth and three miles in length along the river bank, was surrounded by steep hills on three sides. The Fort itself was to be built on a sandy ridge about six hundred yards from the river front. The nearest available wood supply was about three quarters of a mile away. The easiest plan he felt, was to cut timber up the river and raft it to the Fort. He stayed at Colville until Sunday September 4th and returned to Spokane. Before he left, he reported fifteen of the men fit for work and engaged on various tasks, some sawing, some preparing a frame for the store and some squaring timber. He felt reasonably sure that the store might be completed so that goods

200 Work, op. cit., entry for September 1, 1825.

201 The present site of the town of Colville (notice change of spelling) is about ten miles distant, up the Colville River which flows into the Columbia near Kettle Falls.
could be safely deposited there that fall. The potatoes which Birnie had planted by order of Governor Simpson were coming up well.

Just after his arrival back at Spokane three of Ogden's freemen drifted in, they had no communication from Ogden except notes specifying the state of their accounts. Work turned the men back without any advances in goods beyond a little ammunition in the hopes that they would rejoin Ogden whose party was only fifteen strong and who was in a dangerous country. Kittson returned on the 6th of September from his trading expedition to the Kootenay. He had been reasonably successful and reported that the Indians would like a post built on their lands. He does not state how far he penetrated into their country.

On the 17th of September letters arrived from Dr. McLoughlin directing John Work to stop construction on the buildings at Kettle Falls since the site selected was on the south side of the Columbia. Obviously the boundary question had reared its head again. Meanwhile, Work and Kittson set out for Colvile to meet and to send on the eastbound express. After this task was attended to, Work turned his attention to the buildings, and found again that progress had been exceedingly slow. Not a stick of the house was up and the timber not even ready. Logs had been squared to the wrong size. Saws had been improperly sharpened. "Certainly there is little work done for the number of men & time they were employed."

202 Work, op. cit., entry for September 17, 1825.
203 Ibid., entry for September 19, 1825.
The order to cease construction was given but Work left
directions with Thomas Dears to keep the men going a few
days longer to get the timber for the storehouse ready to
put up in the spring in case another site was not found. Work,
himself, expressed the opinion that there was no other spot at
Kettle Falls on either side of the Columbia, where a fort
could be built.

Dr. McLoughlin was very concerned with the fact that
1828 was drawing nigh when the ten year interval of the joint
occupancy of Oregon would be over and the boundary line
between British and American territory would be finally decid­
ed upon. It is not quite clear exactly when McLoughlin ordered the construction of Fort Colville to proceed once more. Mr.
T.C. Elliott states that McLoughlin visited the site in the
summer of 1826 and the fort was built as previously arranged.
In December 1825, Governor J.H. Pelly wrote to the Honorable
George Canning, Foreign Minister, suggesting that the boundary line be drawn "Southward along the height of Land to the
Place where Lewis and Clarke crossed the Mountains, said to be in Lat. 46°42 thence Westerly along the Lewis's River, until it falls into the Columbia..." Simpson knew of this suggestion and felt it was the line which would be accepted. He sent a copy of the letter to McLoughlin, probably during the year 1826 since the Doctor replied in March, 1827. This

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proposed boundary would run far to the south of Colvile so that its position on the south side of the Columbia would not matter. When the transfer from Spokane to Colvile did take place in 1826 the place was far from complete. In July 1827, Simpson wrote to Chief Trader Dease, who was then in charge,

We regret you have not gone on with the Buildings and improvements at Fort Colvile, and beg that they may be continued as if no such nation as America existed—there is no probability of a boundary line being determined for many years....207

On October 1st, Dears and his men arrived from Kettle Falls. They brought their tools and baggage with them. Dears reported that the potatoes had been dug and stored. From the six kegs which were planted thirteen had been gathered, and as Simpson directed, all of these were stored for seed for the next year. The frames for the store were ready to assemble and about one half of the "filling up" pieces ready.

Until the express arrived the men were busily employed getting ready for the winter. Logs for boat lumber had to be collected and sawn. Firewood had to be collected. Corrals had to be built for the horses. Houses had to be repaired against the winter cold and neatly whitewashed. Charcoal pits were to be dug, filled with wood and fired. Kittson, Dears and a party with fifty horses were to be sent to Walla Walla

207 Simpson to J.W. Dease, July 9, 1827, quoted in H.B.S., IV., p. lvi.

208 Upright frames were assembled and erected. Transversely between these frames were the filling-up pieces. The photographs of Fort Victoria at the Archives in Victoria, B.C. show this method of construction.

209 Charcoal was used in quantity by the blacksmith in absence of coal.
with some of Ogden's supplies which the Brigade had brought up. Later Kittson was to return to Spokane.

The sending of Dears to meet Ogden interfered with the Governor's request that the former be sent to examine the navigability of Pend d'Oreille River from its junction with the Columbia. Kittson was unable to go because of a foot injury which would prevent him walking any distance. Birnie, the only other available man, pleaded his inexperience in a small canoe and demanded at least four men to accompany him. Since these could not be spared, the expedition was postponed until the next season. Work remarks, quite logically, that since the Fort could not be moved to Colville that winter, the old route overland was just as preferable. On the 19th of October Kittson arrived back at Walla Walla, bringing letters from McLoughlin and Dease. The former indicated his intention of visiting Spokane to meet the express, but he did not get further than Walla Walla.

Four extra men arrived with Kittson and were employed packing saddles cords and apishamores for New Caledonia. These were to be shipped from Spokane Forks to Okanagan by the express. On the 31st of October, Chief Trader Alexander R. McLeod and Francis Ermatinger arrived from the Forks with the express.

210 Alexander Roderick McLeod entered the service of the North West Company in 1802. In 1825 he was moved to Fort Vancouver and took part in an expedition against the Clallam Indians in 1828. He was later stationed at Fort Simpson, and went to Canada on furlough in 1839 and died in 1840. Francis Ermatinger joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1818, with his brother Edward. He spent most of his fur trading days on the Pacific coast and was promoted to Chief Trader in 1841. He retired from the Company in 1853 and died at St. Thomas in 1868.
Samuel Black and Edward Ermatinger remained behind with the boats. Work sent a letter by McLeod to Dease at Walla Walla reminding him that it would be necessary to come as soon as possible to his new command at Spokane in order to get the Flathead outfit away before the freeze-over.

On Tuesday, November 8th, Kittson who had returned from Walla Walla sent off nine horses with a small outfit for Spokane Forks where he with five men were to embark in a canoe or small boat (something which they could portage) up the Columbia to the Kootenay River. They were to proceed up the Kootenay to the Falls where they were to build a post about twenty-five miles below the old fort. This route was taken by Simpson's orders to avoid the use of horses. Although it was late in the year, it was hoped that Kittson would arrive before the ice set in.

For some days Work had been getting together the outfit for the Flatheads. On November 12th he received word from Dease that the latter could not leave Walla Walla until Ogden arrived, and that he (Work) must take in the Flathead outfit and leave Birnie in charge of Spokane. Two days later Work set out with twenty weak and lean horses and eight men over the seventy-five mile portage to the Pend d'Oreille.

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Edward Ermatinger with his brother Francis was apprenticed to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1818. He remained in the service for only ten years and then retired to St. Thomas, in Upper Canada.

Near Troy, Lincoln County, Montana. The old fort referred to stood opposite Jennings, Montana. Identified by Elliott, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 178, n. 82.
River. They reached the end of the Portage on Thursday, November 17th. The men were set to gumming the canoes and collecting or making paddles and poles. The horses as usual were sent back with the Indians. Work decided to take three canoes instead of four. This change with the help of an Indian who was going up the river, would give him three men per canoe instead of two and so make for extra speed. By this means they reached the upper end of Pend d'Oreille Lake at 4 o'clock the next afternoon. By Wednesday the 23rd, they reached Thompson Falls where Work had been twice before and where he had met Kittson earlier that year. Just above the Falls they dug up a cache of powder and shot. The bags containing the shot and the rings on the powder keg, were all rotted away. The methodical Work remarks,

Property hidden this way ought to have wood all round it on every side so that the earth could not touch it, otherwise it will in a very short time be rotten and spoiled. 213

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On Thursday, November 24th, they reached the Fort at 11 o'clock in the morning. It was a scene of desolation. The houses were all standing, but doors and windows were gone. Even the floors had been torn up by Indians in search of small treasures. Some of the broken parts were burned. However, by nightfall temporary repairs had been effected and the goods stored. Word was sent out to the Indians that they were ready

213 Work, op. cit., entry for November 23, 1825.

Trading began on the 26th and went on briskly into the 27th. Work remarks that the Indians complain that hard bargains are being driven "as is the case still when a stranger arrives among them" but as proof that this was a pose, they were really well pleased. Most of these Indians were Pend d'Oreilles so that word was sent off to the Flatheads to get them to come in. On the 29th a small party of the latter arrived. A Kootenay Indian arrived with the information that a band of that tribe intended to visit the post. Although he was not anxious to encourage them to come to Flathead House because of the fact that Kittson should be establishing a fort in their own country, Work deemed it advisable in view of the lateness of the season, to allow them to come this time. While he was waiting for these Indians, Work had the men employed fitting squares of scraped skin to form windows, placing mats on the roof to keep out the wet and sorting bales of meat.

On the next day Work methodically listed the skins traded and the articles given for them. The goods received from the Indians consisted of a total of 312 beaver, a number of otter, and muskrats. Beside this there was a wide variety of other things, deer skins, parchment, leather cords, saddles and apishamores, dried and fresh meat, roots, buffalo horns, hair bridles and even two dogs.

Equally interesting are the goods given in trade

215 Work, op. cit., entry for November 26, 1825.
for these articles. More interesting still are the efforts of transcribers to identify these. Awls, axes, hawk's bells, beads of all kinds, files, gun-worms, strounds, thimbles and vermilion, were used in trade.

On December 3rd, Kittson arrived with his supplies. He had gone up the Columbia to the Kootenay River and found the river so difficult that in his opinion, Governor Simpson's scheme would have to be abandoned. He then returned to Spokane intending to reach the Kootenay by the Portage from Pend d'Oreille Lake north to Bonner's Ferry on the Kootenay River. This was called the Au Platte Portage. At Spokane he found that he could not obtain horses strong enough to perform the journey, so he set out to follow Work by the usual route. He had sent a man overland to ask the Kootenay Indians to come in to the Flathead Post. Work regretted that much of the season's hunt in beaver would be lost since no method of getting into the Kootenay existed now except by pack horse and the horses available were too weak and lean. "The Governor was certainly misinformed regarding the navigation when he ordered the Kootany [sic] supplies to be sent by water," he wrote.

On Tuesday December 6th Work dispatched two canoes to Spokane. One with furs and one with provisions for the Fort since Spokane had been running short of food when he left.

216 An "eyed dag" or knife was rendered as a "one eyed dog". "Strouds" was given as "strands", "hawk's bells" was given up, or given as "hawk balls".

217 Work, op. cit., entry for December 3, 1825.
These men were to return before freeze-up if possible. Work was uneasy about sending out the bulk of the provisions which he had traded lest it leave him short at Flathead House, especially if the Flathead Indians, who were reported on their way, were themselves short of dried meat and have none to trade. Fortunately, a party of Nez Perce's arrived with 97 buffalo tongues and about 665 pounds of dried meat.

From the Indian bands, Work learned a little of their love of pomp and ceremony. A certain chief arrived with his people and fired a salute near the Fort. Not knowing their customs, Work omitted to fire a salute in return. The chief was a little put out, and Work hastened to placate him with the promise that the Fort would fire a salute as he departed. "I understand," wrote Work, "it is pleasing to the Indians to receive this mark of respect. As the expense is but trifling we intend returning their salutes when they arrive in future." It was by these small gestures as well as in larger matters of policy that the Hudson's Bay Company kept the friendliness and respect of the Indians.

On the 13th the long-awaited Kootenay band, comprising some eighty Indians, arrived and a brisk trade started. Work was very pleased with the quantity and price of the goods which were traded. He secured more beaver than he had already traded on this expedition, 701 skins. On Wednesday the 14th, C. McKay arrived from Ogden with furs.

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218 Work, op. cit., entry for December 9, 1825.

219 C. McKay is not identified. This is not Thomas McKay who was with Ogden at this time. It may have been a freeman belonging to Ogden's party.
He had only four lean horses so that part of the carrying had to be done by four freemen who were in disgrace with Ogden and who would have to be punished. When these packs were opened and examined they were found to contain 744 large and 298 small beaver and 15 otter. Work remarked that they were inferior in quality and size.

On Saturday the Flathead band finally arrived on horseback, singing, firing guns and with a flag waving. The men Work had sent to Spokane also returned with the supplies he had requested but, unfortunately brought no tobacco, which was much in demand for trading purposes and as presents to the Indians. They brought the news that Dease expected them back at Spokane not later than the 5th of April in order to meet the express at the Forks. Work remarked succinctly "Without injuring the trade we cannot reach Spokan so early as our Indians will not have arrived with their spring hunts". In spite of the fact that the next day was Sunday, the trading with the Flatheads was carried out. It was less in furs and meat than Work had expected. These Indians had spent the most of the summer hunting buffalo so that they had fewer furs, and since they did not intend buffalo hunting that winter because of the weakness of their horses, they had kept much of the meat for their own use. However, Work hoped that this would mean that they would have more beaver to trade in the spring—an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

Preparations were made to send back much of this

220 Work, op. cit., entry for December 17, 1825.
trade as well as the Snake River returns to Spokane. Letters were written to Dease, informing him of conditions at the Flatheads and again asking for more tobacco for the spring trade. The expedition, consisting of two canoes manned by five men, started out for Spokane House on December 22nd, three days before Christmas, hoping to get as far as the rapids before ice interfered with their progress.

Christmas Day 1825, was itself typical at a fur post. Trading and the usual routine were carried on. Work records "the 2 men here had a dram, and were served out extra each a 221 ration of fresh meat, a tongue & a quart of Flour". This was their Christmas feast, on a cloudy raw day while masses of ice ran thick down the river.

The days following Christmas were colder than before so that Work was worried about the return of the men he had sent to Spokane. Six inches of snow fell. However, the men arrived back safely on December 31st. They brought half a roll of tobacco and a half gross of awls for trading. It was an expeditious journey, and made just in time, since ice conditions on the return journey made them abandon their canoes at Thompson Falls. The expedition brought a letter requesting that Kittson or Work visit Spokane.

January 1st, 1826, New Year's Day, was celebrated a little more extensively than Christmas had been.

...Each of the men got an extra rations of 6 lb. fresh venison, 2 lbs. backfat, 1 Buffalo tongue, 1 pint of Flour and 1 pint of Rum. At daylight they ushered in the new year with a volley of

221 Work, op. cit., entry for December 25, 1825.
musketry, when they were treated with 4 glasses each of Rum, cakes & a pipe of Tobacco. With this and the pint given to each of them they soon contrived to get nearly all pretty drunk. 222

But to Work's surprise, "they appeared to pass the day comfortably enjoying themselves, without quarreling". 223

Work decided that he should be the one to visit Spokane in accordance with the request of Dease. Leaving Kittson, in charge he set out on Wednesday January 4th. He had decided, because of river conditions, to take a few furs and eight men. They reached Thompson Falls at 10 o'clock in the morning and changed their canoe for a better one from those left by the men on the way up. Taking the usual route by river and portage they reached Spokane House. It had been a hard trip. Rough water held them back for a whole day at Lake Pend d'Oreille. All the portages were deep with snow so that the men stumbled and fell over concealed rocks and roots. Through wooded areas the snow was deep and not firm enough to bear their weight as they ploughed through it on foot. On the 8th, they secured a horse (no saddle) and rode turn about, but wrote Work "...he [the horse] being very poor was a most fatiguing job to ride any distance...." 224

At Spokane Work found Dease and his people well. He stayed there until January 14th, when he began his return journey. No hint appears in Work's journal as to the reason for the visit, but future remarks show that Work did not

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222 Work, op. cit., entry for January 1, 1826. New Year's Day was always celebrated more than Christmas. Was this due to the Scottish influence among the furtraders?

223 Loc cit.

224 Work, op. cit., entry for January 8, 1826.
consider it to be very important. He arrived back at the Flatheads on the evening of January 20th after much the same sort of disagreeable trip as he had had on the way down. He found that nothing of importance had happened during his absence and that Kittson and his men were well. Little trading had been done except in fresh venison which was plentiful and which would conserve their supplies of dried meat and fat.

For some time after his return to Flathead House daily affairs were of a routine nature. Some of his men were employed making pemmican by building a trough in which lean dried meat was pounded into shreds. Others were melting fat to mix with this shredded meat. Still others were employed getting out wood for canoes. McKay was sent up river with a group of men to live off the country but found the river too low and the Indians short of provisions so that he was forced to return. At this point in his Journal, Work made the first mention of his wife, when he was obliged to deal forcibly with one of his men for being too free with her. This same man deserted a few days later.

On February 13th an Indian arrived from Spokane with orders from Dease to return there to make out the annual account of that place. Work felt this was not only an imposition but also it was forcing him to carry out a task which others on the spot could do equally well. He protested bitterly in his Journal,

As I had a particular wish to see the years

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225 Work, op. cit., entry for February 4, 1826. This may be Josette Legacé, a woman of Spokane, who became his wife.
transaction of this Post finished so that I might be able to make some observations on it, that perhaps might have been useful, I certainly do not much like this trip, and think Mr. Dease might have made more judicious arrangements, especially when it is only to make out the Accounts. 226

However, there was nothing to do except to carry out orders. Work did not leave Flathead House until a full week later, the time being occupied by preparations and by the arrival of a few Indians who came early for the spring trade. Moreover, the river was still frozen over in a good many places, and Work was at a loss how to obey Dease’s orders. Dease wanted Work to bring two men who could only be spared if some of the furs and dried meat were taken with them instead of leaving it all until later when the whole outfit was brought in. This might prove to be an impossible task because of ice conditions. Dease’s suggestion of bringing horses was hopeless because the snow was too deep. Finally, Work considered that a journey by foot would be too tedious. McKay was sent to investigate the river and on the basis of this investigation, Work decided to start by canoe. He left for Spokane on Monday, February 20th. The going was exceedingly bad. River portages were frequent but the ice was too weak to carry the canoes over, so that the men had to resort to stumbling along the shores. For a while Work considered sending the frail craft back and going on by himself on foot. On Tuesday,

226 Work, op. cit., entry for February 13, 1826—see H.B.S., IV, p. 30, for the substantial profits of the Flathead Post under Work’s supervision (£2654 12s 7d) (McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, September 1, 1826, sec. 16)
after smashing their way with great damage to the canoes through two spots which were frozen over, they reached Stony Island Portage. Here, the snow was three feet deep. The previous night one of the men stole Work's gun and powder-horn and deserted. Fear over their perils at the Flathead had completely unnerved him. On Wednesday they got safely across Lake Pend d'Oreille and fortunately met no more ice obstructions, although the ice showed signs of having just broken up. On Thursday, February 23rd, Work sent four men back with the canoe, leaving one man to guard the goods which would be taken across the portage by pack-horse as usual. He started out on foot for Spokane House in company with the other man and an Indian. Nearly all day they stumbled through snow which was three to four feet deep, until at an Indian camp they were able to secure three pairs of small and inferior snow-shoes. They had no water except melted snow and only one small axe with which to cut firewood. On Work's mind lay the problem of transporting the outfit across to Spokane when the snow lay so deep. On Saturday, February 25th they reached the plains where there was less snow. At the south end of these plains it became shallow enough to permit them to discard their snow-shoes. On Sunday at eleven o'clock in the morning the three men arrived at Spokane House.

From Saturday, February 27th to the 6th of March, the entries in Work's journal are very short. They consist mainly of weather reports and show the snow was melting away very slowly before the impatient eyes of the men at the Fort. Work himself was busy with the accounts. The others were
helping with the furs for the brigade to Vancouver. On Tuesday, March 7th, Birnie set out for Spokane Forks with a pack train of eighty horses laden with furs. There he was to remain in charge of them and send the horses back for a second load. The train arrived back on the 12th and set out again on the 19th with the rest of the property and the women and children.

Spokane House was finally being abandoned. "This marks the end of Spokane House as a trading post," writes Mr. T.C. Elliott. On Sunday March 19th, John Work observed that "There is very little property of any kind now remaining". A few days later the blacksmith was busy stripping all hinges and iron work from the fort, in final preparations for abandonment. Reports began coming in now from Flathead House. Kittson's letters dated March 9th reported the spring trading completed and excellent in provisions traded but lower returns than expected in furs. McKay had succeeded in making a trip down to the Portage with the horses—an appalling journey in three feet of snow. For five days he was without fodder for the animals. Kittson planned to follow by canoe.

To collect all the Flathead outfit, seventy horses were dispatched across the Portage on the 28th of March. These arrived back on the 5th of April. Goods were opened, examined, dried and repacked. Two days later under Work's leadership

228 Work, op. cit., entry for March 19, 1826.
the last pack train set out for Spokane Forks. Dease and Kittson caught up with him a day later and all three arrived at the Forks that same evening, Saturday, April 8th.

There is no regret hinted in Work's Journal at leaving Spokane. The dominant note in it during these days is the impatience at the long winter. The 16th of March was the first day of spring said Work. How anxiously had he awaited it as he recorded protest after protest against the wintry days! He was not too busy with moving, to record on the last day of March, "The ground about the fort is getting quite green, and the bushes are putting forth their leaves and some small plants flowering".

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229 Work, op. cit., entry for March 31, 1826.
CHAPTER VI

Fort Colvile 1826-1830.

From 1826 to 1830 John Work's life centred around the new fort at Colvile. It is not to be inferred that he was there all or even most of the time, for he was constantly on the move in the district of which Colvile was the centre. Seasonally, he had trips to make to Flathead House, to the Snake River for horses for the New Caledonia Brigade, or south to Fort Vancouver with the Spring brigade to meet the annual supply boat.

We left John Work at Spokane Forks helping to load the Spokane outfit for Vancouver. He was there when the eastbound express arrived with Chief Trader John McLeod, Francis Ermatinger and David Douglas the botanist. They had with them the nucleus of Colvile's stock farm—three pigs and three young cows—animals to which Work was to become closely but not fondly attached. Douglas and Work had already met the previous year when the former arrived from England. Douglas recorded in his diary, "I met here Mr. John Work, with whom I was acquainted last year, and who sent me a few seeds from the interior last November, and furnished me with some valuable information about the plants and mountain sheep in the neighborhood".

From Spokane Forks, horses were sent to Kamloops


to meet the Caledonia outfit, and a number of people were dispatched to Colvile with tools and seed potatoes to commence farming. On Tuesday April 18th, Work, accompanied by Francis Ermatinger set out for Okanagan and arrived there on the next day with a boatload of furs, apishamores and other supplies. Chief Trader Annance left for Vancouver.

On April 20th Work was left in charge at Okanagan until the main brigade went down to the coast. There are no more entries in his journal until Thursday, June 1st, 1826. No doubt he kept the journals of the post during that period. It was then that he endeared himself to David Douglas by catching and preserving "a large female grouse and a male black rock-grouse". On June 2, 1826, Chief Factor William Connolly arrived from New Caledonia to be followed the day after, by the New Caledonia Brigade consisting of sixty loaded horses. Pierre Pambrun and James Douglas were in charge of the pack train. On Wednesday June 7th the Brigade set out for Vancouver under the command of Connolly. Dease, D. Douglas, and Kittson were among the passengers, having arrived from Colvile in the interim. The rest consisted of Pambrun, James Douglas and John Work. Altogether six boats started from Okanagan, leaving Francis Ermatinger in charge

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233 Chief Factor Connolly was in charge of New Caledonia from 1824 to 1831 and father-in-law to Sir James Douglas.

234 Pierre Pambrun entered the services of the Hudson's Bay Company as a clerk in 1815. He was transferred to New Caledonia in 1825 and came to the Columbia District in 1831. He became Chief Trader in 1839.
of that place. They arrived at Walla Walla without incident, in the evening of June 8th, where they stopped overnight. David Douglas and Kittson remained there. Three days later on June 12th, the Brigade arrived at Fort Vancouver, to find that the supply ship had been there for nearly two weeks.

They were at Fort Vancouver for approximately three weeks, sorting and preparing furs for the outbound ship and receiving supplies for the interior brigade. This eastbound Brigade left the Fort at 1 o'clock on the afternoon of July 4, 1826. It consisted of nine boats manned by six men each. Chief Factor Connolly was in command. With him were A. McDonald, J. Douglas, F. Annance, J. Cortin, and John Work as passengers, besides some women and children. The brigade carried cargoes for the newly erected post at Colvile, for Kamloops, for Walla Walla, and for New Caledonia.

By July 9th, following the usual route up the Columbia, they had reached and partly portaged the Dalles. All the way the water had been high and the going hard. An abundance of salmon was obtainable, but the presence of salmon implied the presence of many Indians so that a careful watch was kept and a square was formed at night. On the way they encountered F. McDonald, T. McKay and T. Dears in company.
with David Douglas, on their way south from Walla Walla with a part of the furs of the Snake Expedition. Finan McDonald and Douglas joined the party which arrived at Walla Walla about noon on Friday, July 14th. The journey had not been entirely without incident since Archibald McDonald's boat was damaged twice and one of his men so lamed that he had returned to Vancouver with the party conveying the Snake River returns. The river had been high and the current swift but that difficulty had been offset by strong westerly winds which provided a good sailing wind up the broader reaches of the river.

On July 15th and 16th, the usual task went forward of collecting horses from the Indians to be sent to Okanagan to carry the outfit from that place to New Caledonia. Due to some difficulties with the natives only seven or eight were secured. This meant that a horse trading expedition would have to be sent up the Snake River. Archibald McDonald was placed in command, with John Work who had been on a similar expedition the previous year, as his second-in-command. The flotilla were to push on up the Columbia. Work after securing the horses was to proceed overland with them. James Douglas was to branch off with those required at Okanagan and Work to proceed with the rest to Colvile for the Flathead expedition.

238 D. Douglas in his journal (p.64) states that the party was commanded by Archibald McDonald and John Work. Connolly states that the party was headed by A. McDonald, Work, Douglas and Annance. This would seem to indicate that Archibald McDonald was in command (cf., Letter by W. Connolly to Gov., C.F's. and C.T's., Walla Walla, July 18, 1826 in McLeod, John, Correspondence inward, July 1826-February 1827.) (original in Dominion Archives, transcript in B.C. Archives)
The party was a considerable one. It consisted of A. McDonald, J. Douglas, F. Annance, an interpreter and Indian Chief Charlie and twenty-eight men. "Mr. D. Douglas accompanied us to make collections of plants," wrote Work. The expedition left Walla Walla on July 17th. No trading was done until the 22nd when they secured eight horses. The Indians were unwilling to part with the animals so their prices were far too high. The whole party was generally disgruntled. The weather was hot (94° to 95° in the shade). Salmon were so scarce that Work wrote, "Since we left the fort we have not got in one day a sufficiency for a days rations for the people". The next day was even hotter but now horses were being secured so the discomforts of the weather became of secondary importance. Each day saw a few added, now four, then six, then down to two, but an ever growing band was watched each night near their camp.

On Thursday July 27th, they arrived at Chief Charlie's lodge near the junction of the Snake and the Clearwater and proceeded on to the forks where some two hundred Indians were encamped. The usual exchange of presents ensued—two horses for tobacco and "mixed liquor". But, observed Work with chagrin, "We are under the necessity of accepting their presents in order to please the chiefs though we have to give a present in return which makes the horses much dearer in general than were we to trade them." By the next day they traded thirty-

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239 Work, Journal 5, entry for July 17, 1826.
240 Work, op. cit., entry for July 20, 1826.
241 "Mixed" or "Indian" liquor was a mixture of rum with water, not diluted to decrease its strength but to increase its quantity and the giver's apparent generosity.
seven horses from this same band and were running out of trade goods, especially the ever-popular blankets and beads. On Sunday, July 30th, occurred one of those quarrels which might have brought disaster on the whole party, or at least the loss of all their horses. Apparently one of the men had a sore finger and was attended by an Indian woman who passed for a "medical character". The treatment brought no relief but the woman applied to the interpreter for payment and was refused. Charlie, the chief, took up the cudgels for the woman and a scuffle ensued. This scramble was broken up summarily by Work. Charlie now took this opportunity to demand tobacco, which he got. Becoming bolder, he demanded still more tobacco and some ammunition. The second demand was refused and Work sent for a council of the chiefs. One of the chiefs came alone, but Charlie arrived with his whole party and surrounded the Hudson's Bay camp with guns. The moment was tense but Work was equal to the occasion by out-facing the Indian with the threat that if he wanted a fight he could have it. The threat worked and Charlie agreed to accept some tobacco as a present. Trading continued and the necessary horses, seventy-seven in all, were secured.

On Monday, July 31st, the party divided. Archibald McDonald with most of the men, took the two boats back to Walla Walla. Work, Finan McDonald (who had come with two horses from Walla Walla a few days before) James Douglas,

243 Ibid., entry for July 30, 1826.
David Douglas and six men set out with the horses. On Thursday, August 3rd, they passed the abandoned site of Spokane House on the opposite side of the Spokane River. They were too far to the east but Work observed that James Douglas who was to take fifty-nine of the horses to Okanagan would have less chance of losing the trail from Spokane House to the Columbia opposite Okanagan. Here, Work with twenty horses crossed the Spokane River and proceeded on to Colville. David Douglas went with him. For the latter it had been an interesting but rough adventure; he was not yet inured to water "from stagnant pools full of lizards, frogs, water snakes...." They arrived at Colville on Friday, August 4th where they were met by Dease.

While he was waiting for Kittson to arrive by boat from Walla Walla with the outfit, Work had a few days to observe affairs around the post. With the exception of the potatoes, the crops were not doing well. The soil appeared too dry. The horses, cattle and pigs were thriving but the prospects of dried-out pastures faced them too. On Sunday he visited the Kettle Falls and described the scene:

...where the Indians are fishing, they are now taking about 1000 salmon daily. They have a kind of basket about 10 feet long 3 wide and 4 deep of a square form suspended at a cascade in the fall where the water rushes over a rock, the salmon in attempting to ascend the fall leap into the basket, they appear to leap 10 or 12 feet high. When the basket is full the fish are taken out. A few are also taken with scoop nets & speared. 245


245 Work, op. cit., entry for August 6, 1826.
The following day Kittson arrived at the lower end of the Kettle Falls Portage. The horses which Work had brought were sent to bring the property to the Fort where it was examined and found correct. Between the 9th and 12th of August there are no entries in Work's journals, but it is to be supposed that the newly arrived goods were being sorted and stored and that preparations were being made for the annual summer expedition to the Flathead Indians which Work and Kittson were to undertake. Meanwhile, disquieting rumors had come through from the Pend d'Oreille country that American competition had pushed westward thus far and that the Flathead Indians did not care whether or not the Hudson's Bay expedition was sent that year. Work stated that he did not place much credence on the report.

The expedition to the Flathead Indians set out on Wednesday August 16th. Since Colvile had now become the distributing point for the Flatheads the old route by way of the Skeetsho Portage from Spokane was abandoned. Simpson's plans of using the Pend d'Oreille River as a water route were not used because the lower reaches of that river had not yet been explored. A temporary route had to be found. This lay roughly south and east by pack horse to the Pend d'Oreille River some distance below the lake, and hence by canoe to the old route. Work and Kittson had seven men with them and planned to pick up six more who had been hacking a horsetrail through the woods. All but one man was going to the Flatheads. This one person was dispatched to the Kootenais to tell them to come to trade at Lake Pend d'Oreille on Work's return to
that point.

After a three day's march they arrived at the Pend d'Oreille River. The route over the Portage had been easy the first day through an open and lightly wooded country. Excerpts from Work's journal show how difficult it became later. "The woods very thicketty..." he wrote, "the country very rugged, a continual succession of hills...." Later on he spoke of the road as "...intersected by a number of small brooks and deep gullies.... It would be needless to attempt this portage in the spring when the snow is on the ground as it would be impracticable with horses" 246. Finding only one canoe at the Indian encampment on the river, Work sent men ahead to the end of the Skeetsho Portage for those cached there. On Saturday, August 19th, these people arrived at the Skeetsho Portage. The canoes were there but in such bad shape that it took most of Sunday effecting repairs even of a temporary nature.

On Monday Work learned that a party of American traders had forestalled them but that they had only tobacco with which to trade. Some of Ogden's deserters of 1825 were reported with them. Near Flathead House were fifty lodges of Indians under four chiefs, including La Bruche, an old friend of previous years. Much smoking and talking went on, especially discussion of the American party. On Friday, August 24th, the chiefs issued orders to their followers to proceed at once to the Hudson's Bay Camp to trade. Bartering went on

246 Work, op. cit., entry for August 17, 1826.
247 Loc. cit.
briskly that day and the next morning. Then the goods were collected and Work embarked again down river, after making arrangements for the trade that fall and after quashing a rumour that this was the last trading expedition of the Hudson's Bay Company since the Americans were to get the country. News of the boundary question had spread even to the tribes. Work also applied to the natives to bring in any deserters. Trade was light that summer.

On Sunday, August 27th, they found the Kootenay Indians awaiting them at Kootenay Portage. Once more they talked and smoked. The Indians frankly admitted that they did not care to make this journey and would prefer as promised, to have a fort on their lands. Trade was good. Four hundred beaver were taken and a considerable number of smaller furs and dressed skins. Work returned with these to Colvile, having sent Kittson to the Kootenay lodges to collect other furs which they reported having left behind because of the leanness of their horses. Besides this errand, Kittson was to send these furs back by his men to the Pend d'Oreille River, and to proceed down the Kootenay to re-examine it to its junction with the Columbia. Work arrived back at Colvile on August 29th. Kittson's men arrived four days later from the Kootenay Portage. He had made a profitable trade in leather and had gone on as ordered to examine the Kootenay.


249 Kootenay Landing on Lake Pend d'Oreille.
River. Kittson arrived at the Fort on September 9th. Although Work's journal does not record his opinion of the Kootenay, it would be safe to assume that his report told of the impossibility of using it as a route to the Kootenay country.

During this time Work had been busy, hurrying on the building which was not yet complete, getting out the inventory and preparing for the east-bound Express which was due to arrive any day. The Express arrived and left Sunday, September 10th with Finan McDonald and family, Dr. McLoughlin's family and Dease and his family. On Wednesday the 13th, Dease came back with his family. He reported that the boat was overloaded and that he had left behind some important papers. Leaving his family at Colvile, he hurried after the Express.

That winter John Work was in charge of Fort Colvile. After the Express had gone he prepared an expedition to examine the lower reaches of the Pend d'Oreille River. He planned to conduct this personally and to start on the 17th of September. However, the Journal breaks off on the 15th two days before his scheduled departure. At least something was successful at Colvile for he records as the last entry,

250 According to Dr. Sage, these families had come up from Vancouver with the annual brigade. (cf., Sage, op. cit., p. 40) This being the case they had been at Colvile all summer, McLoughlin's family turned back at Athabasca. (H.B.S., IV, p. xcviii)

251 H.B.S., IV, p. 357 and J.W. Dease to John McLeod, Colvile, April 14, 1827 in McLeod, Correspondence inward, p. 95.
"One of the sows had five young pigs last night".

If Work did make this expedition to examine the navigability of the Pend d'Oreille River no mention has been found of it in his journals or his letters.

Not a great deal is known of Work's activities from September 15, 1826 to May 20, 1828, when his next journal starts. It is known that he spent most of his time at Fort Colvile. He was there when David Douglas, the botanist passed on his journey east with the annual express in April, 1827. Here, Douglas reports that "We were most cordially welcomed by my old and kind friends, Messrs. Dease and Work". Work's simple generosity earned thanks for another kindness which he did for Douglas by procuring for him a "nightcap of hair and wool of that animal [the antelope] netted by an Indian girl, and a pair of inferior snowshoes called bear's paws," --souvenirs of the country. That year farming was started in earnest at Colvile. Twenty acres of ground were under cultivation and yielded well. Two hundred bushels of barley and two thousand bushels of potatoes were produced. Simpson's ambition that the forts should be independent in food was nearly realized, since Work wrote, "In another year if things go well Colville [sic] will be independant of

252 Work, op. cit., entry for September 15, 1826.

253 Work, John, Journal, May 20-August 15, 1828 (hereafter referred to as Journal 6)

254 Douglas, David, Journal, p. 246. Dease had just come in from the Flathead Post where he was making his headquarters. Work had been left in charge of Fort Colvile.

255 Ibid., p. 249.
the Indians for provisions". He spent the winter of 1827-8 at Colvile and wrote his old friend Edward Ermatinger in January. The livestock was doing well, he reported, especially the pigs, but his own health had been troubling him. "I have been for a month past tormented with sore eyes which rendered me nearly blind" he went on "I am getting better but my sight still so weak that it is a great effort for me to write this." This weakness was to increase with the years rather than to diminish. During that same year, 1828, he suffered from quinsy from which he had scarcely recovered when he was attacked by a bull. "The effect of whose blows," wrote John Tod, "he is never likely to get the better...." However, Work did recover and carry on with his tasks. He was still at Colvile when the eastbound Express passed on April 11, 1828. The next month he prepared for a trip to the coast with the Fur Brigade.

He left Colvile in the afternoon of Tuesday, May 20th, 1828 with six boats for Okanagan, carrying furs and leather for Vancouver and three live pigs for New Caledonia. The

256 Work to McLeod, Colvile, March 25, 1828 in McLeod, Correspondence inward, p. 110.

257 Loc. cit.

258 Work to Ermatinger, Colvile, January 2, 1828, (original in B.C. Archives)

259 Tod to E. Ermatinger, McLeod's Lake, Feb. 14, 1829 in Papers of Edward Ermatinger, 1826-1845, p. 9, (transcript in B.C. Archives)

boats, being undermanned, were damaged on rocks but none of the cargo was injured. On Thursday they arrived at Okanagan before breakfast, having resumed their journey at day break. The cargoes were examined and found in good condition. It had been a quicker trip than usual with the water in ideal condition for travelling, being neither too high nor too low. Friday, the 23rd, was spent in gumming extra boats for the trip to Vancouver. These were in bad shape having been left out of the water and having been so long in the hot sun that the pitch had been melted out of the seams completely.

Chief Factor Connolly did not arrive from New Caledonia until Monday May 26th and his party the next day—two days behind the expected time. On Tuesday, immediately after the arrival of the New Caledonia brigade, cargoes were gathered for nine boats and everything put in train for an early start the next day. "Two horses were killed" wrote Work, 261 "and given to the people with some barley for a regale."

A start was made between 7 and 8 o'clock the next morning. The Brigade was under the command of Connolly, and included Thomas Dears, Francis Ermatinger and John Work. They carried about 33 pieces of furs and leather per boat. A new innovation had been introduced into the Brigade, oars were now being used instead of paddles. In the opinion of Work, "oars are far superior to paddles, the men do more work with greater ease". That same day they reached the long and

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261 Work, Journal 6, entry for May 27, 1828.
262 Ibid., entry for May 28, 1828.
dangerous Priest’s Rapids in the Columbia above Walla Walla. On the 29th all the boats but one reached Walla Walla, where some leather, apishamores, saddles and gum were left for Ogden, and the Nez Perce furs taken aboard.

In the meantime, news was brought that the boat which had been delayed the previous day had met disaster at Priest’s Rapid. It had struck a rock, three men were drowned and much of the cargo probably lost. Ermatinger and Dears were dispatched by water to recover the bodies and as much of the cargo as possible. Work started the next morning by horseback up the river for the same purpose, hoping to arrive as soon as the boat. However, he was forced to turn back since a storm blew up and it was impossible to swim the horses to the far side of the river near where the accident had occurred. Sunday, June 1st, Ermatinger and Dears arrived back, having found all the furs. Some leather, gum and castoreum were lost. None of the bodies was recovered. They decided to give up the search and leave for Vancouver in the morning.

The first day past Walla Walla they ran down the Columbia nearly to John Day’s River where they were delayed nearly two days by wind. Consequently they did not reach the Dalles until Thursday, June 5th and finally arrived at Vancouver on the following Saturday evening. Until June 11th, work was employed at Fort Vancouver, opening, examining and drying the bales of furs. Then his journal breaks off until July 23rd, a lapse of over a month.

He was at Fort Vancouver when a punitive expedition was undertaken against the Clallams to avenge the murder of
Alexander McKenzie clerk, and three men on Lummi Island where they were encamped while returning from Fort Langley to Fort Vancouver. "During all this time," wrote Work, "I kept pretty well aloof, except volunteering to be of the war party and my services were not accepted, but I was employed with Mr. G. [Connolly] packing the furs."

On Wednesday, July 23, 1828, the Inland Brigade left Fort Vancouver. It consisted of nine boats, and fifty-four men. In command was Connolly assisted by Ermatinger, Yale, Dears and John Work. The boats were heavily laden. On Thursday, the following day, they reached the Cascades. The river was very low and the lining of the boats up the rapids very dangerous and difficult. One of the ropes broke and a boat was nearly lost. Plenty of salmon were being taken at the Cascades but the Indians were not willing to trade with the whites. The expedition against the Clallams placed the Hudson's Bay men under the ban of a superstition that those who had been at war, would on eating the salmon, stop the salmon supply. It is interesting to note that Connolly with Hudson's Bay Company tact, respected this superstition, and passed on up the river without trying to force a sale from the natives. On Friday, July 25th, they reached the second

263 See Morton, op. cit., p. 720, ff., for account.

264 Work to E. Ermatinger, Colvile, March 28, 1829, (original in B.C. Archives).

265 James Murray Yale was then a clerk. He was appointed to the command of Fort Langley in 1833. He became Chief Trader in 1844.
great series of obstructions in the Columbia, the Dalles, where they secured plenty of salmon and spent the day portaging the goods across the Falls. Here they met Ogden on his way to Vancouver. The Brigade arrived at Walla Walla on the last day of July, the men exhausted with poling and ill with severe colds. From Walla Walla six sickles were sent overland to Kittson at Colville to harvest the grain in the fields around the fort. The crops this year must have prospered since Kittson reported that they bore a fine appearance. Yale and Ermatinger left the boats to undertake the task Work had done so often—herding horses overland to Okanagan for the New Caledonia outfit.

On Friday, August 1, 1828, after discarding one boat, the Brigade left Walla Walla for Okanagan. Two of the men were sick and the boats as deeply laden as when they had left Vancouver. The river was low and the men resorted to poling against the current. The next day, as they neared Priest's Rapid, they learned that the remains of one of the men drowned last spring had been found and buried by the Indians. Another had been buried at Walla Walla. All day Sunday, the Brigade endured the back-breaking work of poling against these Rapids. In the evening they encamped a few miles above them. Work spoke of seeing with astonishment Ermatinger and Yale camping just across the river with their horses. No explanation is given for this in his Journal, but it is apparent that he had expected the two would be nearly to Okanagan by this time. For another four days they struggled on up the Columbia poling every foot of their way. The men's hands were
blistered and raw, some were even unfit to work. Friday, August 8th, brought a wind, not a cool breeze, but a good sail wind to relieve them from the endless task of poling. "The Wind though warm was a great relief from the scorching heat we experienced these days past," wrote the patient Work. The next morning Connolly and Work left the Brigade, by means of two horses which had met the Brigade the previous evening. They arrived at Okanagan that same morning. By Sunday August 10th, all of the boats had arrived.

At Okanagan, Work separated the pieces for Colvile from the rest of the outfit, and with a dozen passengers, including the women and children of some of the freemen, started on Monday for Colvile. Friday they camped close to their destination. At this point, the sixth of Work's journals breaks off. However, it may be safely presumed that they reached Colvile the next day, Thursday, August 15, 1828.

That winter Work was again stationed at Colvile. Bancroft states that Work made a trip to New Caledonia in 1828 but no verification has been found for this statement. It is to be assumed that since Dease was at the Flathead that John Work carried on the usual routine at Colvile; preparing for the eastbound express, packing the Flathead

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266 Work, op. cit., entry for August 8, 1828.

267 Bancroft states that he made a trip to New Caledonia in 1828 cites Allans Rem., MS., 19, as his source; but no verification has been found for this statement. See Bancroft, H.H., History of the Northwest Coast, San Francisco, A.L. Bancroft and Company 1884, p. 498.
outfit and making preparations for the long winter months. He was there in March 1829 when Governor Simpson passed on his way east. It is to be assumed also, although no journal has been found to cover the expedition, that he accompanied the fur-brigade to Fort Vancouver the next summer (1829). That he met the New Caledonia fur-brigade at Okanagan we know from John Tod who accompanied Connolly from New Caledonia that year. "The latter [Work] received me on my arrival at Okanogan," wrote Tod, "with as much benevolence in his countenance as he would have shown to a messenger from the regions of the blessed with glad tidings of great joy." Two more clues supporting this contention are contained in a letter he wrote to his old friend Edward Ermatinger in the spring of 1830. "Our last summers excursion against the Clatsops," wrote Work, "terminated better than the Clallam one of the year before, Mr. Connolly was General, Mr. Black 2nd, beside a number of us subalterns, rank not determined." This statement refers to an expedition undertaken against the Clatsop Indians near Cape Adams, the southern promontory at the mouth of the Columbia. The annual vessel the William and Ann had been wrecked on the treacherous bar of the Columbia and the crew drowned. Word got to Dr. McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver that the surviv-

268 Work to E. Ermatinger, Colvile, March 28, 1829 and postscript dated April 10, (original in B.C. Archives).

269 John Tod to Edward Ermatinger, New Caledonia, February 18, 1830 in Ermatinger Papers, (transcript in B.C. Archives) pp. 11-12.

270 Work to Edward Ermatinger, Flat Heads, March 19, 1830, (original in B.C. Archives).
ors had been murdered and the vessel's goods looted. When the fur brigade arrived at Vancouver that summer, Chief Factor Connolly was appointed to head an expedition to punish these Indians. In his letter to Ermatinger, Work went on to describe what followed:

I need not trouble you with the details, it could be of little interest, suffice it to say, that the savages, (probably made braver by rum of which they had plenty) though perhaps not over half our numbers opened a brisk fire upon us as we approached the shore, but on our landing their courage forsook them and they fled, eventually three of their chiefs were killed and lost their heads, their village was burnt down and their canoes and everything else that could be found destroyed. 272

It was rough justice, but it had its results. The Indians came to know that the Hudson's Bay came amongst them peacefully for their furs, and that the lives and property of Company servants must be respected. Work did not care for his baptism of fire "...It is very well," he wrote "to sing 'O for the life of a soldier' and laugh and talk about these affairs, but trust me my friend it is no jest being engaged in them..." 273

Work returned to Colvile with the Brigade to find that Dease had been taken ill, so ill that he had to go to Vancouver where he arrived September 5, 1829. Work was given command of the Colvile District and took up his headquarters

272 Work to Edward Ermatinger, Flat Heads, March 19, 1830, (original in B.C. Archives).
273 Loc. cit.
274 H.B.S., III, p. 434.
at the Flatheads where he was stationed when he wrote Edward Ermatinger in March, 1830. Work stated in the same letter that it had been intended by the Council that he was to go below (Vancouver) but that he had started for the Flatheads before the Express arrived with these orders. He, therefore, had wintered at the latter place leaving Francis Heron in charge at Colvile. It was not an unwelcome change. "...I am rid of the farm and pigs a circumstance I by no means regret I assure you...." he wrote.

He must have left Flathead House immediately after the letter to Ermatinger was written—in all probability to bring out the winter and spring trade of furs from the post—since he was at Colvile during the last days of April. On Friday, April 30th, 1830 he left Colvile with five men and thirty-five horses for Walla Walla and Fort Vancouver. The party followed the valley of the Colvile and across to the source of Chimakine which flows into the Spokane River. They reached the Spokane River in the afternoon of May 2nd, and spent the rest of the day crossing the stream. Three days later they reached the Snake River at the mouth of the Palouse. On the way they had been delayed by lost horses and by the fact that the animals were in such poor condition that seven

275 H.B.S., IV, p. 357.

276 Work to E. Ermatinger, Flat Heads, March 19, 1830, (original in B.C. Archives).

277 Francis Heron was a native of county Donegal, Ireland. He entered the services of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1812. Not until 1829 did he come to the Columbia District where he was stationed at Colvile until 1835. He received his commission as chief trader in 1828 and retired in 1839.

278 Work, loc. cit.
or eight hours march was all that they could do in a day. On the 7th and 8th of May they swam the horses over the Snake River and brought the goods over by Indian canoe. Sunday, May 9th, they arrived at Walla Walla with but one horse missing from the train. According to Mr. T.C. Elliott the route which they followed became the regular wagon route between Colvile and Walla Walla.

It is suggested in the biographical sketch of John Work in McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters that in this expedition he took out the returns of trade to Fort Vancouver in the spring of 1830. In his journal or letters there is no evidence to prove that this expedition was any more than an expedition to bring horses to Fort Vancouver and possibly to explore a land route from Walla Walla down the Columbia. Certainly from Work's description, no expedition had forced its way through that wilderness before. If the expedition had been part of the annual brigade it was a small one consisting of only fifty horses. Some seventy horses were required for the spring returns from Flathead alone, and these returns which Work would carry were presumably, those of the whole Colvile District which included Flathead House. Secondly,  


280 H.B.S., IV, p. 357.

281 Work, John, Journal, April 30-May 31, 1830 (hereafter referred to as Journal 7).

neither on leaving Colvile, nor on leaving Walla Walla, nor on arrival at Fort Vancouver, does Work give an inventory of the fur, leather and accessories carried. This had been done in all preceding and following journals. This omission could mean that this expedition was not bringing out the returns. Two possibilities remain. One, that the horses were being brought to Fort Vancouver for a specific purpose, perhaps for use in the Umpqua expedition or to augment a pack train across the Cowlitz Portage to Puget Sound now that Fort Langley was completed. Finally, there is the possibility that a land route along the Columbia was being mooted as an alternative to the easier but somewhat hazardous river route.

At Walla Walla, the party was delayed three days until May 12th. Here, Work intended to swim his thirty-four horses and another sixteen which he had secured from Samuel Black, across the Columbia to the north bank. Due to wind and waves in the river this could not be attempted until the 12th when the hazardous passage was made.

From May 12th until the 27th, Work's days are dated correctly but are incorrectly named. On Tuesday [Thursday] May 15th, the men were on the river at daylight and collected the horses except one which had been borrowed temporarily by an Indian "who prefers riding to walking". For a day or two

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283 May 12, 1830 was a Wednesday. In Work's Journal 7, the next day, May 13th, is called Tuesday; May 14th, is Wednesday and so on until Thursday May 27th, when he corrects himself. Any day given alone in this period will be stated as given, plus the bracketed correction.

the road was good. The weather was rainy but cool and therefore easier for travelling. By the 15th, they had got down as far as John Day's River. Now the road began to get rougher. In places it was rocky and hard on the unshod horses. In other spots they ploughed through sand. Work found it necessary to halt for three hours in the middle of the day in order to rest his jaded and ill-conditioned beasts. The next day they turned inland "to avoid the dalles and chutes where numbers of Indians are collected at this season, and likewise for a better road as that along the river is very hilly and stoney". Avoid the Indians they did, but not the hills and stones which were just as bad until they reached a level plain where the going was easier. However, with the increasing heat the horses were jaded and worn. Below the Dalles they again came down to the river hoping to follow along its banks. The high water made this impracticable so that the party turned back to the benches high above the river. Here they stopped to engage a guide who gave them to understand that the interior road would take them to Fort Vancouver in four days. Another report came in that some freemen had come up from Vancouver by horse in three days to this point. Little did Work realize that his own conservative estimate of six days would be stretched to more than twice that number.

On the 18th of May, they secured their guide and made a long days march to the foot of Mount St. Helens. Here,
Work was given to understand he was on the Great Cayuse war road. But sometimes he had an Indian road and sometimes none. His dissatisfaction was great. The way was difficult and the distance they had come was short, in spite of great effort. Hills, gullies and small rivers abounded. The woods were very "thicketty" and there was considerable snow on the ground. The fine plain which the road was supposed to lie through, had not yet appeared. Moreover, the Indian guide who spoke of three days to the Fort, now babbled of eight or ten. Work planned to regain the Columbia if conditions did not soon improve.

The next day the road appeared somewhat better. It lay through open woods and level country patterned with grass and flowers. In the morning they crossed the White Salmon River which empties into the Columbia between the Dalles and the Cascades. That night they encamped at a fork in the trail. Their guide, with one of Work's men, went some distance along the left branch, which was represented as not the best trail, but the one more free from snow, in the mountains through which they must pass.

May 20th they spent in camp to allow the horses to feed, since grass might be scarce or absent on the higher levels and no fodder was carried for the animals. They made an early start on the 21st and were over the dreaded mountains by midday, the crossing having not been nearly so bad as anticipated. They camped just past the height of land in the early afternoon in order to search for a horse which had

strayed from the path. Work viewed the magnificent panorama spread out at his feet. Mountains and valleys could be seen as far as the eye could reach. To mar the prospect, he could also see the country through which they must pass on the morrow, a barren desolation of burnt woods.

As they proceeded, Work found that this time his fears had not been unfounded:

The country we passed through this forenoon is dreadfully bad a considerable portion of it burnt woods immense trees fallen in every direction, and several deep ravines to cross very steep both for the horses to ascend and descend, besides the wood are thicketty & large fallen trees so numerous that we could scarcely get our way found through it, there is no road through this space, the road by which we crossed the mountain went in another direction and was lost. 289

In the afternoon the track improved a little but was still barred by deadfalls. That night they camped where there was hardly a mouthful of grass for the poor jaded animals whose hardships had been increased by an extremely hot day.

May 23rd was a similar day of scrambling over burnt and fallen timber. Work ends this day by the eloquent entry 

"...No grass for the horses." The next day they spent scrambling along the banks of an unknown river. That evening, they had covered only five or six miles but men and horses were exhausted. At night the horses were allowed to roam unguarded

288 These are the names which Work gives, but Mr. T.C. Elliott (op. cit., O.H.Q., vol. 10, p. 306, n. 1,2 and 3) claims that Work mixed them up by naming, Mt. St.Helens for Mt.Adams; Mt. Rainier for Mt. St.Helens; Mt.Baker for Mt.Rainier.


290 Ibid., entry for Friday [Sunday] May 23, 1830.
for the few leaves and blades of grass that they might pick up. Work was desperately afraid that they might get so weak that they would die on the trail. A ray of hope appeared in the person of a new Indian guide who claimed to know the country.

Sunday [Tuesday] May 25th, it rained all day. The road was still bad but less difficult than the previous days. One of the horses gave up and rather than delay, Work had him killed for food. The meat was bad but provisions were running short. That night all the men were wet to the skin and once again but little grass was to be found for the horses. The next day was fine, but the bushes and trees were still dripping with moisture through which Work and his party continued their arduous journey. Another horse collapsed, but rather than lose it, an Indian was left to bring it along to the camp. The following day was spent in camp "to allow the horses to feed and repose".

On Friday, May 28th, they crossed the Washougal River and faced a steep hill which took them three hours to ascend. But in spite of its steepness the road was better. Saturday, they marched all day through open pine woods and camped at night in a swamp, the only place with grass for the horses that they saw all day. The horses were getting weaker. The Indian guide tried to cheer them by telling them that another night would find them at the Fort and the road would

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291 Work, op. cit., entry for May 27, 1850.
be better. The weary, disgusted but patient Work replied "This we have been frequently told, & found it not to be so".

Sunday, May 30th, found them still on the way. Burnt fallen wood barred their road. Boggy places were encountered which made it difficult for the weakened horses. One of the horses stuck in one of these swampy spots and had to be dragged out by two of the men. The poor beast died soon after. On Saturday it had rained incessantly so that the wet woods soaked the men.

Monday saw the end of their journey. Not without a little pride Work stated that he "...arrived at Fort Vancouver at 7 o'clock in the evening with 48 of our 50 horses ...We are glad our difficult and troublesome journey is finished."

293 Work, op. cit., entry for May 29, 1830.

294 Ibid., entry for May 31, 1830.
Map of the Mining Districts of Idaho & Oregon, embracing the Gold & Silver mines of Boise & Owyhee. Compiled chiefly from notes of his personal surveys during the last 18 months. By W. Woodman. Published according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, under the authority of the United States of America. 511 Montgomery St., San Francisco.
While there is no data covering the whereabouts of Work from the last day of May 1830, to the 22nd of August in the same year, it is reasonable to suppose that he spent the summer at Fort Vancouver, checking the returns from the interior and preparing annual outfits for the inland posts. He was given an added responsibility which must have taken a considerable time that summer, in that he had been appointed to succeed Peter Skene Ogden as leader of the annual Snake River Trapping Expedition. Ogden himself, was to undertake the difficult task of founding a post on the Nass River far to the north. In the opinion of Ogden in writing to John McLeod, Work's appointment was a mixed blessing.

Our friend Work succeeds me in the Snake country I accompanied him as far as Nez Perces and gave him a fair starting—Surely this man deserves a more substantial reward than he now enjoys it is an unpleasant situation he fills I wish him every success but it is all a Lottery.

The more "substantial reward" was not long in forthcoming, and high time too, in the opinion of Work and his friends. On November 3, 1830, while in the heart of the Snake Country, he was appointed a Chief Trader. For some years now

295 H.B.S., IV, p. lxxxv.

296 Ogden to John McLeod, Columbia River, Vancouver, March 10, 1831, in McLeod, Correspondence inward, p. 141.

Work had despaired of promotion. In March, 1829 he wrote Edward Ermatinger that he was determined to leave the service, "This determination will surprise you after the advice I have so frequently given you myself," he said.

John Tod expressed his sympathy concerning his old friend.

> Poor Work—if he remains much longer in the Country neglected I fear he'll die of the spleen—he is much more dissatisfied with the manner in which the good things are shared here than myself—He has now, however, an arduous duty to perform, but there is little doubt of his getting through it with his usual success.

This letter not only expresses Tod's sense of the injustice in delaying Work's promotion but it also expresses the keen appreciation of the latter's ability which his compatriots had.

In the Snake Expedition of 1830-31, Work was accompanied by Josette Legace, his "little rib", a Spokane half-breed woman whom he had definitely married in fur trader fashion. She and her growing family were to share the dangers of most of his later expeditions and to share his later years.

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298 Work to Edward Ermatinger, Colvile, March 28, 1829, (original in B.C. Archives)

299 Tod to Edward Ermatinger, New Caledonia, April 10, 1831, (in Ermatinger Papers) "The arduous task" refers to the Snake River appointment.

300 Work to Edward Ermatinger, Colvile, Jan. 2, 1828, (original in B.C. Archives). No authority can be found for the Christian name "Suzette" which is often used to refer to her. Work uses the term "Josette" invariably. "Josette" appears on the record of her marriage in Victoria. Mrs. Alice B. Maloney of Berkeley, California, reports that Mrs. Work was perhaps a Nez Perce woman and not from Spokane.
of peace and quiet in Victoria. Work was like many of the fur traders in this respect. Records show that he left behind two children, both girls, somewhere in the Red River. He was not above taking and discarding a woman who proved unfaithful and beating up the Iroquois who dared to tamper with her, if we are to believe the words of John Tod. Work did not view his marital responsibilities with complacency. "My little partner," he said in writing to Edward Ermatinger, "presented me with another daughter in the beginning of the winter, which cannot be considered a fortunate occurrence in this part of the world". However, these children, with others arriving in regular succession, followed their father and mother, year after year through the appalling conditions and dangers which Work describes in the pages of his journals.

These journals do not describe the journey of the Snake Expedition from Vancouver to Walla Walla, merely stating the fact that they reached the latter place on August 15th. Five days later they left Walla Walla on a year's trapping expedition. Work, as their leader, caught up with them two days later. The party was a considerable one, consisting of forty-one men and seventy-four women and children.

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301 Work to E. Ermatinger, N.W. Coast America, February 10, 1836, (original in B.C. Archives).

302 John Tod to E. Ermatinger, McLeod Lake, February 27, 1826, (in Ermatinger Papers).

303 Work to E. Ermatinger, Colville, March 28, 1829, (original in B.C. Archives).

304 Work, John, Journal August 22, 1830-April 20, 1831 (hereafter referred to as Journal 8) and Journal, April 21-July 20, 1831 (hereafter referred to as Journal 9).
a total of one hundred and fifteen in all. They had with
them two hundred and seventy-two horses and mules, a
considerable amount of provisions and twenty-one leather
lodges or tents in which to shelter. Three hundred and
thirty-seven traps were to be the means of making the ex-
pedition successful.

Their journey lay south-ea over the Blue Mountains,
at first through typical bare hills and later through thick
woods. They passed the summit on August 24th and were delayed
in camp the following day because one of the horses was lost.
Their method of travelling was typical of the whole season.
Each day the camp drifted from ten to twenty-five miles in a
pre-determined direction where beaver were supposed to be
plentiful. From the main camp small groups of trappers fanned
out and set their traps in nearby creeks and little lakes.
Sometimes these groups were away for two or three days, some-
times they were merely out overnight. Quite often traps were
set near the main camp itself.

Still moving south-east they reached the Powder
River on the 30th of August. Only a few beaver had been taken
so far. In general, each day's march at this time was a little
longer than the average, since as yet they were only on the
fringes of the beaver country and it was not yet profitable
to delay. Their route lay down the Powder River and thence

Powder River--tributary of the Snake River flowing into the latter from the west side.
overland to Burnt River. The road lay through barren, arid country, hardly a tree was to be seen even on the hills. Toward Burnt River the road was gravelly and lay over a succession of broken ridges. They reached this river on September 2nd, and found good feeding and a plentiful supply of water for the horses. The river at this point Work described as "a small stream not over 7 to 10 paces wide & not deep". As they marched they saw signs of Indians, enough to make them mount guard over their horses at night. Already the men were enthusiastically setting traps in likely places and were taking a few beaver. This enthusiasm, in Work's opinion, was misdirected since he wrote,

I dont like to check their ardour, yet it would be as well were they to pass on without hunting so much after the few straggling beaver that are to be had here, as it fatigues and impoverishes the horses to little purpose and reduces them so much that they will be unable for very active duty when we come to where beaver are more numerous. 308

Now following down Burnt River, they found themselves still in a barren broken hilly country where even grass by the river bank was scarce for the horses. On September 4th they crossed the Burnt River to its south bank and marching in a south-easterly direction cut across to the Snake River. Here, the Snake was two hundred yards wide and dotted with several islands. Now their route lay up the West or

306 Burnt River—tributary of the Snake River flowing into the latter above the Powder and on the same side.

307 Work, Journal 8, entry for September 2, 1830.

308 Loc. cit.
South bank of the Snake River. On the 7th a party of six men were helped across to the opposite side. These men were to leave the main body permanently. Their orders were to hunt the Weiser and Payette's rivers which flow into the Snake and then across the mountains to the Salmon River. They were to be back at Walla Walla during the first ten days of July, 1831, so as not to miss the fur brigade to Fort Vancouver. This reduced Work's party by six men, four women and thirty horses. "We are still sufficiently strong it is expected to oppose the Blackfeet," Work expressed himself hopefully, "should they be hostile inclined as there is reason to expect."

On the 8th of September, the main party crossed the Snake River in shallows, where the River divided into five channels. The next day they marched some eighteen miles south-east along the Snake River to the junction of Payette's river which they followed up six miles. September 10th they continued in the same direction and on the 11th crossed overland to the south to the Boise River which Work called Read's River. The river ran through poplar wood along its banks, but else-

309 Weiser and Payette's rivers flow into the Snake from the east, just north of the Boise River.

310 Salmon River—a tributary of the Snake River from the east side. It is the first large river north of the Weiser on that side.

311 Work, Journal 8, entry for September 7, 1831.

312 Boise River was also known as Reed's River after John Reed of the Astor Party who started a trading post at its mouth.
where except in patches on the mountains to the north, not a stick of timber was to be seen. For a while the Boise River was their route as now they travelled farther to the east and avoided the great loop of the Snake River to the southward. During the past weeks the men had been trapping a few beaver. The hunters shot an occasional deer or antelope. Wandering parties of friendly Snake Indians traded a few furs or a number of salmon to the party.

On the 13th they left the Boise River to cut across to the Malade or Sickly River which they did not reach until 313.

Tuesday, September 28th. The fifteen days' journey was a difficult one. For the first few days the road was rough and stony. Frequently at the end of a hard day's march little or no grass could be found for the horses, the country being parched and barren or having been recently swept by fire. When the road improved and grass became more plentiful other difficulties beset them. For two days the camp was not moved because the wife of one of the men was taken in labor and gave birth to a boy. Only the two days could be allowed for the unfortunate woman to have her child and then the camp moved on and she with it. On another occasion one of the men delayed progress for one day. This unfortunate individual had had a sort of abscess or boil on his stomach for some days and was in considerable pain. That day, much to his relief, it was lanced. "In our present mode of life," wrote

313 North Branch of the Sickly River identified as the Little Wood River of to-day, cf., Elliott, in O.H.Q., vol. 13, p. 567, n. 12.
Work, "a sick person is wretched indeed as he cannot possibly be properly attended to notwithstanding the trouble and delay occasioned to the rest of the party."

A few days later a much more serious occurrence overtook the party. Four of Work's party had been out visiting their traps in a mountain stream when they were ambushed by a band of Blackfeet Indians. Two of the men were killed, stripped of their clothing and one of them scalped. Another had been wounded in the knee but had managed to conceal himself in a tuft of willows until rescued. The fourth man escaped unscathed and rushed breathlessly, frightened almost out of his wits, to give the alarm. For a while Work was afraid that this event might be a prelude for a general attack on the camp, which he put in a state of siege. Horses were penned, and scouting parties scoured the hills for the enemy. But no further attack occurred, apparently the marauders had only been a small raiding party, out to fall upon small groups, kill or capture them and steal their clothes, weapons and horses. Wrote Work philosophically,

Thus are people wandering through this country in quest of beaver continually in danger of falling into the hands of these ruthless savages and certain of losing their lives in the most barbarous manner, independent of the privations and hardships of every other kind they subject themselves to. 315

Poor I'Etang was shot in the head, neck, back, belly and wrist, and had received an arrow in the thigh. 316

314 Work, op. cit., entry for September 24, 1830.
315 Ibid., entry for September 25, 1830.
316 I'Etang was one of the murdered men (cf. Ibid., entry for September 26, 1830).
However, these days were not entirely without compensation. For most of the time their route paralleled a branch of the Boise River lying not far across the mountains to the north, and while returns were not profitable enough to warrant moving the whole camp there, small parties had made successful catches of beaver. Moreover, they had come out into flatter country which Work designated as the Camass Plain. As they continued south on the Little Wood River the country again became rough and barren in appearance "studded with patches of bleak stoney ground". Only the banks of the river bore trees and these were for the most part but stunted willows. However, where any wood was present there were beaver, so, on September 30th, Work stopped to allow the people to trap and explore. During these days a careful watch was kept both night and day for hostile Indians. The horses were tied up at night—a safeguard which Work deplored—since they should be allowed to roam in order to make the most of the scanty grass.

A few beaver were secured but nothing to justify remaining longer. Scouting parties brought news that the lower reaches of the river were rockier, less wooded and showed but few signs of beaver. Work, therefore, determined to return the way they had come for the last two days' march and strike

317 To Work's relief these parties returned without encountering any Blackfeet Indians.

318 Camass Plain—Big and Little Camass Prairie in Elmore County, Idaho.

319 Work, op. cit., entry for September 28, 1830.
straight across to a swampy valley or plain of considerable size surrounded by steep hills where the Malade River has its source. Here, too, their hopes of obtaining beaver were dashed. Work surmised that the place had been hunted too often.

On Sunday, October 3rd, they continued their wanderings about sixteen miles down the Malade River in an easterly direction. On the 5th the party reached the part of the river where beaver were supposed to have been plentiful. "A small party of hunters 11 years ago took 300 beaver in two short encampments about this place and then not cleanly hunted, and it is not known to have been hunted since," wrote Work. Their high hopes were doomed to disappointment since only a few skins were taken. Many conjectures were raised as to the present scarcity of beaver. Some blamed it on a fire. Others on some disease which wiped them out. Work was inclined to favor the last opinion. Now the reason for the river's name began to appear. Several of the people were sick from eating the flesh of beaver, which, ordinarily, was a staple food with the trappers of the day. Work gives an interesting account of his theories.

The river about here and indeed further up is burdened with reeds, on the roots of which the beaver feed, but whether it is these or other roots that communicates the quality of sicken-

320 Malade River (Work's Sickly River) was so named by Donald MacKenzie because his men were made sick by eating beaver there. Alexander Ross reports a similar experience. (cf. Elliott, op. cit., O.H.Q., vol. 13, p. 368, n. 13)

321 Work, op. cit., October 5, 1830.
ing people to their flesh it is not easy to say,—hemlock is also found along the river the roots of which they are said to eat indeed they may feed upon different other roots and plants which may escape the notice of the hunters.—The leaves of the reeds particularly and some other plants are covered with a glutinous saccharine substance sweet to the taste, and which adheres to every thing that touches it, the clothes of the hunters who pass through the reeds are covered with it. The leaves are also covered generally on the under side with innumerable swarms of green insects somewhat in shape & size resembling lice.—They are so thick that they are floating in clouds down the river.— 322

Work’s party, disappointed again in their hopes of beaver, turned back up the river. On October 8th, they did not move camp in order to allow the horses a chance to feed. What with the poor dry grass and the necessity of having to picket the animals at night for fear of Indian raids, the beasts were getting lean and jaded. Besides this, Work had also the theory that the Blackfeet marauders would expect them to continue on to the Snake River farther to the east, consequently the delay would make the camp safer. On the 9th, they continued to retrace their steps. That night Work’s foresight in tying up the horses was justified. An unidentified Indian crept in among them and attempted to stampede them. Only the hobbles saved the expedition its means of transportation.

From this point their general direction was northeast toward the Salmon River, the headwaters of which Work

322 Work, op. cit., entry for October 6, 1830. The green insects are probably a species of green aphis commonly found on garden plants.
intended to trap. On October 11th, to Work's annoyance they found themselves encamped close to a party of Americans. Few enough furs had been obtained so far and the immediate presence of competitors would make the situation that much worse. There appeared only one thing to do—by evasive movements and by speed to get as far from these Americans as quickly as possible. Work's plan was to proceed north and east to Goddin's River and thence to the Salmon River. En route, he hoped to contact the Bannock Indians and to trade some furs and to hunt buffalo for present and future food since many of the people were already on short rations. He had the hope that this mountainous route might confuse the Americans if they made any attempt to follow the Hudson's Bay expedition. After a two days' march through rocky defiles they reached a branch of Goddin's River. The road was difficult and the horses and people equally tired but the Americans seemed to have been given the slip. Four buffalo bulls were killed—the first by the expedition. On the 15th of October they reached the main stream of Goddin's River after having marched through plain, swamp and then over a barren grassless area. More buffalo were seen and a cow and bull killed.

Their route lay up this main branch in a northwest
direction. Buffalo were both seen and killed. The presence of these animals was a mixed blessing. True, they were valuable for food, but in the narrow valleys through which the expedition was travelling, they had left but little grass for the horses. On the 20th of October the expedition reached a swamp which was the source of the river which they had been following. On the following day they crossed a height of land to a branch of the Salmon River. For the past week the weather had been getting cold and raw. Snow began to appear lower and lower on the sides of the mountains around them, but as yet only rain fell in the valleys. The expedition was having indifferent success in finding beaver as it moved north along this branch of the Salmon to a larger stream.

On October 26th, Work started to push westward into the mountains lying between the Snake River and the Salmon to a spot visited by some men of Alexander Ross's seven years before where beaver were supposed to be still plentiful. The distance was believed to be about six days march, and with winter coming on Work estimated that nearly a month could be spent in trapping the area, before the snow became too deep and before the streams froze over. The next day they continued their journey. That evening they reviewed the difficulties encountered during the day's march. The road had been very steep, and nearly blocked by fallen trees. From the top of a mountain over which they passed, nothing but mountains and deep ravines could be seen as far as the eye could reach. They had been forced to camp where scarcely any grass could be found for the horses. Beside all this, the weather had
turned sufficiently cold to freeze the streams solidly enough to walk on. Work decided to give up the plan and trap what furs he could on the lower altitudes before winter set in. The next day, October 28th, they began the return journey and on the 30th were back on lower ground and none too soon, for a foot of snow had fallen the previous night.

Until November 11th, they marched north down one of the branches of the Salmon. Each day small groups of trappers explored side streams for beaver with varying degrees of success. Not once did the party find a spot untouched by other trappers or Indians. A few beaver were found each day, sometimes seven, or nine and occasionally an otter or two. During this time they fell in with some Flathead Indians who stayed with them for four days and told them of their camp some six days' march away. Work did not visit this camp but sent some tobacco as a present to the chiefs and a letter to be forwarded to McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver.

Now Blackfeet began to prowl around in the darkness of the night. They had already surprised one of the men engaged in skinning a mountain sheep a few miles from the camp. But he had time to fire on them and leaping upon his horse escaped in a fusillade of shots. However, these stealthy shadows at night were demoralizing. "Thus it is with us in this part of the country," wrote poor Work, "when other people's labours cease and are succeeded by sleep and repose, Our troubles and anxiety begins." On the 12th of November,
they cut across to the north branch of the river and began to follow it up to the south-east. That night Blackfeet were around the camp again. For two days they did not raise camp, partly because the river looked promising for beaver and partly because six inches of snow had fallen. Again their hopes of beaver were dashed. In both days only sixteen had been taken, a very small number for the traps in use, and now the river began to freeze so that traps could no longer be set. On the 16th after having pushed eight miles up-stream, they were again bothered by Blackfeet prowlers. On this occasion Work sent a punitive expedition after them, but without success. About twenty savages were estimated in the group. Later in the day some friendly Flatheads visited the camp. "...What a difference" remarked Work, "between these people and the murderous Blackfeet...." On the 17th, more Flatheads arrived at the camp headed by old chief La Buche with whom Work had traded quite often at Flathead House. Out of deference to the Chief, Work did not raise camp until the 19th when they were again on their way south toward the Snake River.

The weather was getting colder, snow and ice were gradually gathering even in the more sheltered valleys. The day's marches were especially hard on the women and children. Even some of the more poorly clad men suffered intensely. After camping it was often difficult to find enough wood for fires.

326 Work, op. cit., entry for November 16, 1830.
On December 1st, they reached the entrance to a pass leading to Day's Defile. The following day they reached the Defile after a march of sixteen miles. On the way the road was hilly and difficult. On the height of land the snow lay three feet deep. Fortunately, at the Defile itself there was but little snow and the feed for the horses excellent. The hard day had had its recompense. On Friday, December 3rd, they moved south eight miles to a small unidentified stream closer to the buffalo, for meat was getting scarce. For three days they rested and hunted buffalo, cutting and curing the meat for future use, and making cords and apishamores out of the hides. Twelve buffalo were killed on the 8th as they again proceeded south down the stream. On the next day they journeyed seventeen miles across country to a dry branch of Goddin's River where they found good feed but no water. A foot of new-fallen snow lay on the ground. In the distance, herds of buffalo and antelope could be seen, but it was too late in the day to hunt them.

On the 10th, they stayed in camp to allow the horses to rest after the long march of the previous day. Here, six men rejoined Work's party which they had left on December 1st. Against Work's wishes they had left the expedition at Day's Defile, claiming to know a better road through the mountains. Work's ironic comment was "They lost some of their horses (4)"

327 Day's Defile was a pass at the head of the middle fork of the Salmon River north of Goddin's River (The Big Lost).

328 See page 31, n. 68.
which gave up from fatigue by the way*. Only one of the main party’s horses had foundered during this same period.

On the next day, November 11th, they continued their slow progress south-east toward the Snake River. The barren stony plain was covered with a foot of loose snow and the weather cold. Two horses gave up on the short ten-mile march. Another ten miles was made on the following day toward Middle Bute in still deeper snow. As they neared the Bute, grass for the horses became more abundant and stunted cedars were found to furnish fuel for fires, of which the people stood in desperate need. That night about forty of the horses strayed through the guard back to the previous encampment. For this reason the party spent the 13th of December in camp, while the strayed horses were being rounded up. Seven of them were found dead and some could not be found at all. On the next day the weather was a little milder as the expedition pursued its way still south-east. Near the camp they surprised a herd of a hundred elk and notwithstanding the weakness of the horses pursued, and killed twenty-five of them. On the 15th, the weather became progressively milder and brought with it dense fog through which they groped their way for another nine miles. The snow was still deep and the weakened horses found great difficulty pawing their way through it to the grass beneath. It was not until the 17th, that they arrived at the Snake River at Blackfoot Hill, another two

229 Work, op. cit., entry for December 10, 1830.

320 Middle Bute. See three Butes, map between pages 139 and 140.

331 Blackfoot Hill and Blackfoot River on the south side of the Snake River.
horses having collapsed and died on the way.

Near where Work camped there were a great many Snake Indians living; two large camps, one below him and another above. The natives complained of the lack of buffalo nearby. This was disturbing news, since Work's party depended largely on what they could kill in the field. Another item of news was more cheering, there had been little or no sign of the dreaded Blackfeet Indians near. It seems evident that Work crossed the Snake River to camp on the southern bank. Although he does not actually mention crossing anywhere in his journal, he does mention the presence of a good ford at Blackfoot Hill where the river was but sixty yards wide. Moreover, his trapping movements in the following spring were all made to tributaries along the southern bank.

From this date, until the following April, they were in winter camp on the Snake River. Day-by-day entries in Work's journal tell of much the same thing. The weather was a favorite topic, as of course it would be to a man camped on snowy ground in a leather tent. He recorded how the spells of extreme cold came and went. How snow and ice made life very difficult and how in the days before spring, alternate promises of mild weather raised their hopes, only to dash them again by a return of winter. His horses, too, were much on his mind. First, there was the problem of penning and guarding them by night. If this was done it safeguarded them against thievery and straying but the unfortunate animals

332 Work, op. cit., entry for December 17, 1830.
were unable to find enough grass in the confined area to keep themselves alive. If they became much weaker they were no longer able to run buffalo, upon which the camp depended for food. It was a quandary for Work to face. Much of the time the animals were allowed to go unguarded as winter conditions lessened the possibilities of attacks by the Blackfeet Indians. Inevitably a few horses did stray or were stolen by the less dependable of the Snake Indians. In some cases the horses were recovered and sometimes not, but always Work succeeded in keeping not only the friendship, but also the respect of the Indians. From time to time he moved camp a few miles up or down the river in search of better grazing for the horses. His general policy was to keep a Snake Indian encampment above him, since it was from that direction that any Blackfoot attack would come, so that the Snake Indians would receive the brunt of the blow. When conditions made it necessary for Work's expedition to be farthest upstream, he comforted himself by the thought that he was nearest the buffalo. Hunting was a matter of regular routine. Hunting parties came and went. Usually they had sufficient success to keep the camp well supplied. Toward spring the buffalo began to get out of condition and the meat was coarse, fatless and stringy, but it kept them alive. While hunting, the party kept careful watch for Blackfeet Indians. There were alarms, but mostly false ones. A warhoop in the night turned out to be a drunken Snake Indian reeling homeward. A visiting party of Snake Indians made the ceremonial ride three times round the camp firing their guns as they rode. Hudson's Bay hunters hearing
the firing, thought that the camp had been attacked, and rode hell-for-leather to the rescue.

January 1st, 1831, was clear and mild. That day none of the people went hunting, but stayed in camp endeavoring to regale themselves the best they could, on a dram of rum and a few cakes. This was their New Year's celebration.

On this day a party of Nez Perces and Flatheads arrived in camp on snowshoes. They had sold their horses to a party of Americans camped on the White River on the Eastern side of the mountains about ten days' journey away. These Americans sent word that they intended to cross the mountain in the spring to trade with the Flatheads and set up an establishment on their lands. They sent presents to the Nez Perce and Flathead chiefs. On January 12th, Work sent letters to Colvile and Fort Vancouver by this same party of Indians who were leaving for their own lands.

On February 14th, a hunting party managed to pursue a small party of Blackfeet who had stolen some Snake horses. The fleeing Blackfeet abandoned the horses and taking to the mountains, escaped. On the 22nd of February, Work recorded in his journal the trapping of two beaver—the first he

333 White River. Not identified, but possibly Jackson's Hole, a favorite rendezvous for furtraders between the Teton and Gros Ventre ranges.

334 The letter to McLoughlin contained his accounts up to November 18 and reached Fort Vancouver on March 8, 1831,—see H.B.S., IV, p. 227. Work also wrote McLoughlin on November 6th—this letter has not been traced. Dr. Lamb is of the opinion that the letter acknowledged by McLoughlin is that of November 6th as mentioned previously in Work's journal, in spite of the discrepancy in dates.
had entered since December 23rd. The weather was still cold but here and there the river had opened up so that a few traps could be set. After this encouragement, others began to set traps, so that each day the trapping of one or two beaver was recorded. Through March the expedition awaited warm weather impatiently. The snow disappeared so slowly and the ice rotted so gradually on the river. Some of the most optimistic of the camp began to make dugout canoes to trap the river when the ice finally did disappear.

On March 18th, Work began moving camp again. First, they journeyed to a fork of Portneuf's River where there was plenty of grass for the horses and freedom from snow. Five days before, ducks and geese began to pass overhead. On most days now the people were out in every direction setting traps and taking some beaver each day. On April 2nd, he moved camp to the junction of the Portneuf and the Snake rivers. Here was another good pasture and the chance of a few beaver. Moreover, the higher reaches of Portneuf River were frozen over, so that there was little use moving toward the mountains. On the 8th they began drifting westward crossing Portneuf River to the opposite side. Some of the people pushed ahead to trap the Bannock River. That same day a party of hunters requested permission to separate from the camp and proceed along the north side of the Snake River to the Boise. Work refused to give them permission. First, because he did not

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335 The Portneuf River falls into the Snake on the south side just below the Blackfoot River.

336 The Bannock River is the next tributary below the Portneuf on the south side of the Snake.
see any opportunities for a successful hunt in that part of the country. Secondly, because he felt that this would weaken the main party and at the same time expose the smaller party to extermination by the marauding Blackfeet. Word arrived by Indian that the Americans were headed their way. The party was said to consist of some fifty men headed by Fontenelle and Drips on their way eventually to Beaver Head in the Flathead country.

On April 10th, they raised camp and headed across country to the upper waters of the Fortneuf River. Here, they found themselves in a poor situation. Last year's grass had been eaten by buffalo, and this year's had not yet grown up, so that there was no fodder for the horses. There were signs of beaver but many of the small streams were still frozen over. Only ten beaver were taken. In spite of the poor location they remained there for another day in a futile attempt to hunt buffalo. The huge beasts were present in numbers but the horses of the expedition were in too poor condition to run them down. On the 12th, they moved down the river again, some seven miles to a better spot for grazing. Twenty-one beaver were trapped. Work sent two of his men to visit a little valley called Ogden's Hole which, according to his information had contained a good many beaver and had not been trapped for three years. The men found the valley still mantled in snow and ice, and impossible to hunt.

337 Andrew Drips was a member of the American Fur Company and one of their leaders in the field west of the Rockies.
338 Beaver Head. See Chapter 8, page 183-4.
339 Ogden's Hole was a small valley in the Bear River Mountains near Great Salt Lake.
On Thursday April 14th, they were visited by the American party which camped alongside of them for four days. As he had been informed, Work found Fontenelle and Drips, "gentlemen of respectable appearance" in charge. They had had a hard time particularly in crossing the mountains, where the snow lay deep. They agreed with Work that the winter had been longer and more severe than usual, and announced that they intended to follow up the Snake River and cross over to the headwaters of the Missouri in the hope of meeting the Flathead Indians.

It is to be imagined that Work was apprehensive lest some of his freemen attempt to desert to the Americans as those of Ogden's had done some years before under much the same circumstances. Two of the freemen did apply to the Americans and had offered to sell them furs. Fontenelle, the American leader, refused to accept their services and offer of trade until they settled their accounts with the Hudson's Bay Company, and warned Work of their actions. Finally, only one of the men insisted in leaving, claiming that some of his Iroquois relatives were in the American party. He settled his account to within four beaver of the amount of his debt and was allowed to go. In leaving however, the freeman attempted to take not only his own horses, but one belonging to the Company. This, Work had no intention of allowing and seized the animal. A scuffle ensued which seemed to be about to develop into a pitched battle between the Iroquois relatives.

340 Work, op. cit., entry for April 14, 1831.
of the freeman and the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. Guns were loaded but fortunately were not fired since the troublemakers gave up the struggle. Work kept the horse. He observed with regret that only two of his Canadians offered to help him. The rest all stood with folded arms leaving him to struggle for the horse. Obviously they sympathized with their compatriot but were not willing to jeopardize their position with the Company. Fontenelle remained to express regret at the trouble which had been caused. "Were people," wrote Work "who have to deal with these scoundrels in this country to act mutually in a similar manner to Mr. Fontenelle there would be much less difficulty with roguish men...."

On the 19th of April, they again raised camp and proceeded overland to a small river called the Bannock. It had been Work's original plan to hunt up to the headwaters of the Snake River and then to cross the mountains south to Salt Lake and the Humboldt River. Three considerations caused him to abandon this plan. First, that the Americans had the same plans as he for the first phase of the journey. Secondly, his own party was running short of ammunition and he feared a possible brush with Blackfeet Indians. Lastly, that area had been trapped by Americans during the previous autumn. Work, therefore, decided to follow the Bannock River up into the mountains and possibly cross then to the southward. He had been told that this country had never been trapped by whites and that nature had helped to disguise it from prying hunters by laying a huge swamp across the river and leaving the impression that this swamp was its source.

341 Work, op. cit., entry for April 16, 1831.
It was not until April 21st that they moved camp, an opportunity having been given to convalesce the half-starved horses and to hunt buffalo since food was again short. As they moved ten miles upstream they saw a party of Blackfeet which they pursued without success. Traps were set where they camped and twenty-five beaver were taken. Perhaps this was the virgin ground they had been searching for. Above them the river forked and men went to explore the eastward branch. "We are mortified," wrote Work disconsolately, "to find that as far as the men proceeded up it, it is choked up with snow..." The other branch proved to be in similar condition. Work decided to give up the attempt of trapping these little streams and also to abandon the risk of crossing the mountains southward for fear of losing their weak and jaded horses and for want of food for themselves. Work began to despair of his ambition to take six or seven hundred beaver in that quarter...."The oldest hands," he lamented, "even in the severest winters never witnessed the season so late."

On April 25th they returned down the Bannock to near the encampment of the 20th. The next day they marched ten miles southwest to the Snake River where the grass for the horses was excellent and where they succeeded in taking twenty-one beaver in two days they were there. On the 28th, they were again on their way, this time down the Snake River.

342 Work, Journal 9, entry for April 23, 1851.
343 Loc. cit.
to near the American Falls where heavy rain and sleet held them in camp for two days. During this time the trappers managed to take fifty beaver from a small creek called by Work "The big stone river". It had been hunted the previous season but not exhausted. The horses again began to worry Work. They were so lean and miserable and occasionally had to be abandoned. A few weeks rest and good grass would do wonders for them but because of the lateness of the season Work felt that he could not spare the time.

On May 1st, they moved camp to this "Rock Creek", where they stayed the following day. Work speaks of obtaining seventy-five beaver but apparently some of these were taken on the 30th of April. At any rate his entry in his journal for the 1st of May, states "...the traps this morning did not yield according to expectation". On the 3rd and 4th, they moved still farther down the Snake River and thence to the Raft River some ten or fifteen miles above its junction with the Snake. Only eleven beaver were taken there, presumably because of the height of the water and because the Americans had trapped there the previous fall. Since this might be the last place as they moved westward where buffalo were plentiful, Work planned to lay in a stock of meat. He


345 Not identified. It is not "Rock Creek" of the present maps which is below the confluence of the Raft River.

346 Work, Journal 9, entry for May 1, 1831.

347 The Raft River was another tributary of the Snake, flowing into the latter from the south.
reported that the buffalo were of better quality and the horses in better condition to run them down (one can almost hear his sigh of relief). Still, in his opinion three buffalo were needed to produce dry meat equivalent to the amount produced by one animal in the autumn.

They remained at this encampment until May 7th when they pushed on up the Raft River. As they went they were fortunate in securing some more buffalo unexpectedly but were worried because Blackfeet were following the camp. By May 12th, they were over the mountains to the south. Work now split his party. Eight men were to hunt to the westward through the headwaters of small rivers running north to the Snake River. They were also to trap the east fork of the Sandwich Island River (Owyhee River). The main party under his control was to push south to Ogden's River (the Humboldt) and thence west to the head of the Owyhee River.

Until the 16th of May the main party marched south and a little east to the plain lying west of Salt Lake. In general their route followed that of Ogden's. There was little water or grass. When they came out on the plain Work was rather appalled by its appearance. "...It appears to the Eastward," he wrote, "like an immense lake with black rocky hills here and there like islands, large tracts of the plain appears perfectly white and destitute of any kind of vegetables, it is said to be composed of white clay." On the 23rd of May after travelling west and south they reached the east fork of

348 Work, op. cit., entry for May 16, 1831.
the Humboldt hitting the river farther up than by Ogden’s trail. They had been travelling through a desolate country, barren and arid with but meagre supplies of brackish water for horses and men. The only inhabitants seemed to be a few naked and timid savages. At the Humboldt the water was high and the banks overflowing and no signs of beaver to be seen.

On Tuesday May 24th, they marched some fifteen miles to the middle fork of the river, where only three beaver were found in their traps. This branch too, was overflowing its banks. The next day Work did not raise camp. For sixteen days they had been marching steadily and not only the horses but the men as well, were tired and dispirited.

Some Snake Indians visited the camp and told them that the small streams in the mountains might be more productive. Work and his party turned north and west to trap these creeks. Until the 31st of May they wandered through steep rocky defiles. Only a few beaver were taken and scouting parties brought no better news of adjacent streams. In general, the streams look promising enough and poplar and willow were plentiful, but few beaver were to be found. On the 1st of June they reached a narrow valley containing small streams which united to form the east branch of the Owyhee River.

Here was a favorable spot for beaver, but again few signs were to be seen and the water until recently had been very high.

349 Here, Work has difficulty with his calendar, as in his seventh journal. His dates are correct to the end of the journal but the day following Monday May 30th is marked Thursday, May 31st, followed by Friday June 1st and so on until the end of the ninth journal. Checked from the British Almanac, London, Charles Knight, 1831, pp. 18 and 20.
In order to find out if the valley did contain fur they did not raise camp the next day. Out of one hundred and fifty traps set only twelve contained beaver. Once more Work was very disappointed and more so when his men suggested that they had hopes of very few more. To make things more difficult, food was getting scarce. No animals had been seen except an occasional antelope. Tracks of mountain sheep were observed, but not the animals themselves. Even the Indians who frequented the mountains for roots, had not yet appeared because of the lingering cold weather.

On June 3rd, they continued their journey over a low height of land south and west back to a branch of the Humboldt. This looked like excellent beaver country, but only a solitary lodge was seen and scarcely the mark of a beaver old or new. In this valley only nineteen beaver were trapped. Here the expedition divided again. Seven of the men and their families left to go down the Owyhee to the Snake and thence to Walla Walla. This new separation was occasioned partly by the desire for better trapping, but mainly because these men had not stocked up with buffalo meat as the opportunity afforded. They had depended on their ability as hunters to get along with what they could find. Now they were destitute of provisions and it was felt that a small group such as theirs could live better by chance animals as they marched by themselves than by staying with the whole camp.

By June 5th, Work's party was back again to the Owyhee River, this time to the main branch. For food they got a few roots from the Indians who stole two of their traps.
Here, they stayed until the 7th but took but few beaver, even though they explored streams untouched by Ogden in 1829. On the 8th of June they moved a few miles down the river where they remained for four days. Neither hunting nor trapping was successful. Work decided then to move up to the headwaters of the main branch of the Owyhee and thence cross over the mountains back to try the Humboldt once more. This phase of the expedition occupied him from June 12th to June 24th. In general, trapping was worse than usual. In many places high water made it almost impossible even to find the banks of the rivers let alone place traps on them. With the entire disappearance of beaver went their last source of food. Only one thing remained to be done, to kill their horses. On June 20th, two were slaughtered for food, and on the 25th another one was killed. "Thus are the people in this miserably poor country obliged to kill and feed upon those useful animals the companions of their labors," write Work. Even the best hunters could not find game. On June 27th, Work noted in his Journal, "Two Antelopes were seen yesterday, which was a novelty". As they went on crossing swollen streams, the weather began to get warmer and clouds of mosquitoes plagued them.

In the last days of June, the expedition headed north and west toward home, hunting and trapping as they went. On June 28th, they crossed a small stream which Work thought might be a fork of the Owyhee River. Here, they were fortunate.

350 Work, op. cit., entry for June 25, 1831.
351 Ibid., entry for June 27, 1831.
in killing an antelope. The next day was a long one of twenty-eight miles, across a plain and then over a salt swamp.

June 30th, saw them passing along the foot of a mountain identified by Mr. T.C. Elliott as Stein's Mountain. Here another horse was slaughtered for food and still another on July lst. On the 2nd they reached Sylvailles Lake. The lake was high and the water brackish "and so very bad that it is like a vomit to drink it". From Malheur or Sylvaille's Lake they marched twenty miles in a general northwesterly direction to Sylvaille's River. On the 4th of July they continued up the river and camped for a day to allow the horses to rest. They had been on the march for nineteen days without rest and often making as much as twenty miles a day. At this encampment they managed to trap seventeen beaver and to kill two antelope.

On July 6th, they proceeded on up the river getting a few beaver each day and finding more game. Elk and deer were now getting plentiful. On the 10th they crossed the mountains to John Day's River. The weather was warm and sultry and what with the hilly stony country, the horses were very fatigued. After a short march the next day, they camped

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354 Work, op. cit., entry for July 2, 1831.

farther down the same river. The worn hooves of the horses were sore from the rocky trail. Here, they remained for a day and traded some salmon and two dogs for food from an encampment of Snake Indians. They recovered two horses from these Indians which had been stolen the previous September.

July 14th was a cooler day, but an exhausting one for the people and horses, for they travelled twenty-five miles down the river. The following day they came to a fork falling in from the north and east, up which they journeyed seven miles, enjoying as they went, quantities of currants, the first fruit of the year, which were growing along the river bank. About noon on the 16th they left this branch of John Day's River and proceeded north over wooded mountains. The road was stony, hilly and fatiguing. Work was not sparing the party now since they were near home. The 17th was another long day, twenty-five miles through woods and then over naked stony hills. No game had been killed for the past two days except one deer. The next day, as customary on nearing a post, Work rode ahead of the party and arrived at Walla Walla in the afternoon, journeying through soft burning sand in midday heat. On the 20th his party arrived. The three smaller parties had also arrived safely. The group which left him in September lost all of their horses and from a pack to a pack and one half of beaver. All of these smaller bands had trapped but few furs.

The Snake River expedition of 1830-31 had been completed. Work and his party travelled upwards of two thousand miles in their pursuit of fur. Work himself was disappointed in his returns. They were not good. This however, was not
Work's fault. The whole area had been pretty thoroughly exploited by Ogden's expeditions. American competition made a good catch more difficult. To cap these difficulties, Work had run into a very severe and lengthy winter. However, the authorities knew that the Snake country was exhausted.

"...It is certain the Snake Country is getting nearly exhausted...", wrote McLoughlin to Simpson in March 1831, even before Work's expedition arrived back from their year in the field. In 1832, he, in referring to Work's expedition of 1830-1, wrote to the Governor and Committee, "The Snake country is exhausted...."

It had been a harrowing year for Work. This was his first really responsible job by himself and he had carried it out reasonably well. His party had been on the whole kept quiet and in hand in spite of discontent engendered by a poor season. One or two minor squabbles occurred, but in the only one of real consequence, that of the freeman who joined Fontenelle, disaster had been averted by a narrow margin but with a firm hand. Work had kept on good terms with friendly tribes whose traits of thievery and horse stealing were extremely provocative. He guarded successfully against attack by the bloodthirsty and watchful Blackfeet. Two men were killed but two babies were born during the expedition. "In compliance with your Instructions," wrote


357 McLoughlin to the Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 28, 1832, ibid., p. 104.
McLoughlin to the Governor and Committee in October 1831, "I have had the pleasure to deliver Mr. Work's commission to him..." This was John Work's appointment as Chief Trader.
CHAPTER VIII

An Expedition to the Flathead and Blackfoot Country, 1831-32.

It may be surmised that John Work accompanied the returns from Walla Walla to Vancouver after he came back from the Snake Country, since he was at the latter fort in August, 1831, preparing his expedition to the Arrow Stone River. McLoughlin did not want Work to proceed on this expedition, believing that the area was exhausted and that the party was not strong enough to make the attempt into such a hostile country. However, Work pressed his request and McLoughlin finally agreed, but with the proviso that this year the expedition should hunt the branches of Clark's Fork and give the district which they had trapped the previous season a rest. To make things more difficult for the proposed expedition, malaria had settled in epidemic proportions in the Lower Columbia. Among the Indians it was often fatal, but while it was not so deadly among the whites or half-breeds, it incapacitated the men. This was the reason why Work's party, in both the opinion of himself and McLoughlin, was not strong enough for the even more dangerous expedition which he planned. To augment their small force

359 The name applied by Work and his contemporaries to Clark's Fork.

360 McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 28, 1832 (cf., H.B.S., IV, pp. 103-4).

361 Work to John McLeod--Nez Perces, September 6, 1831, (Photostat copy in B.C. Archives)
they took a cannon along with them as protection against hostile tribes.

The party left Fort Vancouver about August 16 or 17, 1831 and camped a few miles away to enjoy their usual regale. Here, Work joined them on the 18th and planned to start with the forty people in four boats for Walla Walla. They were delayed for one day in getting away because a few of the men were too drunk, but of far more serious consequences, four were down with fever. On the 21st they reached the Cascades. Eight of the men were now ill, but fortunately some of the earlier cases were recovering. Four days later they had passed the Chutes and the Celilo Falls. On the 30th of August they reached Walla Walla. On the way from the Cascades another man was stricken, and some of those already ill were so sick that Work would gladly have sent them back if he could have spared healthy men to go with them. "...Every boat was like a hospital...," he wrote.

At Walla Walla they were delayed by an insufficiency of horses, some 120 being required and only 80 were available. It was not until Thursday, September 8, 1831, that additional animals were received from Fort Colvile and distributed to the people. Some of the party was able to start and the rest followed the next day. Work, himself, did not leave Walla Walla until September 11th, spending the intervening

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362 Work, John, Journal August 18, 1831-July 27, 1832, (hereafter referred to as Journal 10) entry for August 18, 1831. Work states that they were sent out for their regale "a few days ago".

363 Work to E. Ermatinger—Fort Vancouver, August 5, 1832, (original in B.C. Archives).
time in writing letters and carrying out last minute preparations.

One of the letters written at Walla Walla was to John McLeod, in which Work dwells briefly on the dangers he faced. "I escaped with my scalp last year," he wrote, "I much doubt whether I shall be so fortunate this trip." In spite of the dangers his wife and three small daughters 365 accompanied him.

From September 11th to the 26th, they journeyed eastward to near the present town of Weippe in Idaho. Lewis and Phillips 366 claim that the trail was up the Walla Walla River and eastward across the northern edge of the Blue Mountains to bring them out on the Snake River near the mouth of the Salmon and thence up that river. Mr. T.C. Elliott states that Work followed the regular Indian trail to the Snake River a few miles below the Clearwater (which Work mistook for the Salmon) and up this river, crossing the North Fork and over the hills to Weippe prairie. Work himself states that they crossed the bulge of the Snake River eastward from Walla Walla and rejoined it a little below the mouth of the Salmon River, arriving there on September 16th. They crossed the Snake with the aid of two Indian canoes and moved up stream to the junction of the Salmon, and on the

364 Work to John McLeod, Nez Perces, September 6, 1831, (original in B.C. Archives).
365 Work to Ermatinger, Fort Vancouver, August 5, 1832, (original in B.C. Archives)
367 Loc. cit.
17th followed up this latter stream about eight miles. Here, they stayed during the next day while they traded a few horses and watched the Indians perform a religious dance. On the 19th and 20th they continued up the Salmon River about twenty-two miles. In Work's opinion the road was fairly good with the exception of some stony parts. As they continued, their route became progressively hilly and rough. The hills closed in on the river on both sides. On Sunday, September 25th, they left the river to strike westward to what Work calls Camass Plain. Here, the Indians were gathering the roots of the camass for food. The party were now on the famous Lolo Trail to the Bitterroot Mountains. Two stops were made, one on the 27th to allow the horses to rest before getting into really mountainous trails, and another on the 29th when the child of one of the party died. For some days now, the nights were frosty but the days fine and bright. For the most part the trail lay through thick woods and over steep hills where little grass was to be found for the horses.

In these mountains the weather began to become more

368 Near Weippe, Idaho. Careful study of Idaho maps seem to indicate that the contentions of Mr. T.C. Elliott are correct and throughout this period the Salmon River is really the Clearwater. See de Lacey's map of Montana between pages 173-174.


370 Corresponds to the description of the Nez Perces trail through Weippe to Pierce City in the Clearwater Forest, (cf., Idaho, a Guide in Word and Picture, p. 320).
severe. On October 1, 1831, the camp awoke to find snow on
the ground and it continued to snow hard all day. The party
did not break camp that day. The next day they continued
their eastward journey through thick woods and deep valleys.
Here, Work's Indian guide left him since they were now well
on the main Lolo Trail. During the day the deep snow began
to melt so that before the march was ended the people were not
only tired but drenched with the moisture from the ground and
from overhanging trees.

On October 4th, another day was spent in camp in
order to search for some of their horses which had strayed
the previous night. At the end of the day's search there
were still seven missing. Each morning the horses had to be
rounded up before the expedition could proceed. The reason
for this delay is fairly obvious. Grass was scarce and what
little there was, was covered with snow. Hobbling or corral­
ling the animals at night would starve them to death. Quite
often the expedition moved forward to its next encampment
leaving some of its complement behind in search of missing
stock.

On October 8th, they again struck the Clearwater
which they had left on the 25th of September. The next day

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371 Work's dates go awry here. He has two entries for
September 30th in his journal. From the description of the
weather in each, they do not apply to the same day. From this
point therefore, each date should be moved forward one. For
the sake of convenience Work's entries are followed, leaving
the reader to make the correction.

372 Middle Fork, identified by Lewis & Phillips, op.
cit., p. 86, n. 188.
they marched eight miles up a long steep hill to a small creek where there was good grass in the swampy clear ground along its banks. Snow and sleet kept them there for three days. Work was not sorry since grass had been scarce in the forests through which he had come. Moreover, this delay would give the stragglers who had stayed behind looking for stray horses, a chance to catch up. On the 13th they marched eleven miles to the Lolo Hot Springs on Lolo River. Their road was impeded by fallen timber and the horses were so fatigued that three foundered on the way. Fourteen beaver were taken by members of the camp who pushed on ahead. This is the first mention of successful trapping in this journal.

On the 14th they moved down Lolo Creek about fifteen miles. The road was hilly and slippery with mud. More of the horses foundered. For two days after this, the expedition did not raise camp. Grass was plentiful and the horses needed a rest. Their goods needed drying after pushing through so much snow. Moreover, they were now entering dangerous country and Work planned to pen the horses at night so that some time for them to feed during the day was imperative.

After twenty-one miles travel down Lolo Creek on October 17th and 18th, they reached the Bitterroot River. From this point Work followed the trail of Lewis on his return down the Bitterroot, up Clark's Fork, and the Blackfoot

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374 Spelled by Work as "Loloo's" River. Work, op. cit., entry for October 13, 1831. Work had marched about a hundred miles to Lolo Pass crossing the headwaters of the Clearwater River.
River. On the 20th of October the expedition crossed to Hellgate (called Hell's Gates by Work) which they entered from the valley of the Bitterroot. The former is a canyon forty miles in length lying between the ridges of the mountains. This pass was the great war road which Piegans and Blackfeet travelled and over which the Flatheads crossed to the Missouri side of the Rockies to hunt buffalo. Work proceeded up the Hellgate River flowing out of this defile, to the mouth of the Big Blackfoot River which they reached on October 21st. The following day they proceeded up the latter river fifteen miles in a northeasterly direction. The road was hilly and stony with very little grass for the horses. Then, they left the river and travelled east to a small camass plain. While they were here Work received discouraging information that during the summer a large party of Americans had hunted the same branches of the Missouri which he had planned to trap and that another party intended wintering on the Salmon River. It was disappointing news, but Work makes no entry in his journal to express his feelings. The territory which Work intended to trap was still in the Rocky Mountains but on the eastern side, in land belonging to the United States. This was forbidden territory and it


376 Ibid., p. 90, n. 195. See also Bancroft, (History of Washington, Idaho and Montana, p. 591) who gives a good description of this country. From it, it seems that Lewis & Phillips confuse the grassy and well-timbered Hellgate Valley lying on Clark's Fork just north of the confluence of Hellgate River with the defile through which the latter river flows; or else they apply the name of Clark's Fork to the Hellgate River.
is more than surprising that he planned to hunt there, in view of the strict orders which had been issued from headquarters in London. As they moved eastward the next day four of his freemen left his party to return with those who had brought the news of the Americans. Work deplored this desertion from his already small party in the heart of a hostile country.

The weather was turning cold, with occasional flurries of snow or sleet. Each day the men were out among the small rivers and creeks after beaver. Only a few were caught each day. "The Indians had hunted the Little forks up this far," wrote Work, "& probably all above this is hunted by the Americans so that nothing is left for us." Everywhere there were signs of beaver but also signs of recent hunting by the American trappers. On October 30th Work began to worry about proceeding any farther up the river which they had been following since the 28th. The country beyond was said to be rich in beaver but in Work's opinion the season was too far advanced and the small creeks would be frozen over. Far more serious than these problems was that of danger from the Blackfeet Indians.

His fears were not ill-founded. The very next day an ambush occurred which was similar to the one his party had suffered in the previous year. A small party of Blackfeet

377 H.B.S., IV, p. lxiv.
378 Monteur Creek--Identified by Lewis & Phillips, op. cit., p. 95, n. 205.
379 Work, Journal 10, entry for October 29, 1831.
surprised two of the men at their traps and fired on them, killing one. The other escaped unwounded. Another trapper, out by himself, was surprised and killed. The bodies of both men were left unmangled and unscraped, which signified to Work that the raid had been staged by a small band which made a precipitate retreat. They stole three horses, three guns and the ammunition and traps of the men they attacked. On November 1st Work's party stayed in camp to bury their dead and to observe All Saints Day.

On November 2nd, Work began to direct his expedition southward, trapping the streams as he went. Two days later they arrived at the Little Blackfoot River which lies farther up Hellgate River. They were still in the north-western basin of Montana, an area of 250 miles in length and 25 miles in width. This is the most wooded and the mildest part of the country, but already creeks were freezing over, thus preventing the trappers from obtaining furs. However, a few beaver were being taken each day. Here on the Little Blackfoot they killed two buffalo bulls, the first which Work mentioned so far in his journal. On November 5th, they proceeded down the River to one of its tributaries falling in from the south side. They began to follow this tributary up but found no beaver and but little game. The next day they continued their journey southward still up this small branch. Provisions were becoming scarce and only a buffalo bull, a mountain sheep and one beaver were taken. As this spot con-

380 Identified as Deer Lodge Creek by Lewis & Phillips, op. cit., p. 99, n. 211.
tained good grazing for the horses Work did not move camp.

On November 9th, they moved south to a hot spring where Warm Springs, Montana, is now situated. From this point they crossed over the Deer Lodge Pass to the headwaters of the Missouri River. They had come by way of one of the tributaries of the Big Hole River which flows into the Jefferson Fork of the Missouri. The Big Hole and the Beaverhead rivers drain a basin of land in Montana about 100 miles by 150 miles in extent, where Work intended to hunt buffalo in order to keep the expedition in food. On November 12th, they reached the "Grand Troux River" as Work called it. The only buffalo seen during the past week had been herds of buffalo bulls. Their flesh was coarse and rank and the party left them undisturbed, hoping by doing so, to avoid disturbing herds lying ahead which might contain the more eatable buffalo cows and yearlings. As they continued down the Big Hole River they managed to kill a fair number of buffalo. The weather was becoming increasingly colder. The small creeks were frozen and ice was running in the main river. Signs of beaver were seen but these conditions made it impossible to trap any. November 15th was spent in camp in order to allow the horses to feed, since the practice of confining them at night was beginning to tell on their strength. The next day they marched southeast to a tributary of the Big Hole on their way south to the Beaverhead River, where they arrived on the 17th of November. Here they saw the peculiar landmark

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381 The Big Hole—called Le Grand Trou by French Canadian trappers.

382 Identified as Birch Creek by Lewis & Phillips, op. cit., p. 102, n. 220.
which gives the river its name—a cliff rising out of sandy hills which has the shape of the head of a swimming beaver. About the Beaver Head the expedition found extensive herds of buffalo in prime condition and Work allowed the party to remain for two days to secure buffalo meat and to dry it for future use. They saw signs of beaver but the ice in the rivers prevented the men from taking any.

On November 19th they proceeded ten miles up the Beaverhead River and crossed to the other side. Work was very uneasy. This was the dreaded Blackfeet country and signs of them were everywhere. In spite of this fact, they stayed in camp for five days. For, wrote Work in a fatalistic manner, "...There is little necessity for us hurrying on as the danger from Blackfeet is the same wherever we go". On the fourth day of their stay in camp the Blackfeet attacked just at dusk. The camp was not caught napping. The camp cannon was loaded and fired and the surprised Indians melted away into the darkness. Even their attempt to stampede the horses failed. One of Work's men was shot through the chest and badly wounded. After another day in camp, they constructed a bed of poles for the wounded man, and carrying him on the shoulders of some of his comrades, marched ten miles upstream. On the 26th they moved west upstream again, to a spot which could be defended in case of attack and stopped for another day. Work was concerned over the wounded trapper.

and wrote, "...He requires a little repose". On November 29th, they proceeded up the Beaverhead River to two forks which unite to form the main stream, Red Rock Creek and Horse Prairie Creek. Large herds of buffalo were about and the party managed to kill about twenty of them. The next day was spent in camp, partly to favor the wounded man, partly to feed the horses and partly in order to dry the meat they had procured the previous day.

December 1st was a cold and stormy day. In spite of this the camp was moved ten miles up Horse Prairie Creek to a spot identified as Shoshone Cove. Buffalo were here in considerable numbers and the people were out after them. But, as in the previous winter, the horses were too lean and poor to run down many of the huge animals. Until December 8th, the expedition huddled in camp at this spot. All of the time the weather was bitterly cold with occasional windstorms and snow. Very few buffalo were killed on the cold slippery plain. On the 8th the expedition moved another nine miles upstream. The wounded man was sufficiently recovered to ride by himself and to curse the people who attended him. Saturday December 10th, saw them another 9 miles closer to the mountains which Work planned to recross to the westward.

Early the following morning a party of Blackfeet were observed near the camp. They were pursued immediately

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384 Work, op. cit., entry for November 28, 1831.

385 Identified as Shoshone Cove by Lewis & Phillips, op. cit., p. 109, n. 225. According to Bancroft the whole of the valley containing Horse Prairie Creek was called the Shoshone Cove (cf., Bancroft, History of Washington, Idaho and Montana, p. 593).
and surrounded in a dense patch of willows. Three horses belonging to these Indians were killed and some of the Indians themselves were supposedly wounded. However, Work's people did not care to risk entering the bush after the Blackfeet or to carry on the siege through the winter night so that the Blackfeet escaped after dark. Blood spots in the willows seemed to indicate that at least two of these people were killed or wounded.

During that week they moved steadily but slowly toward the westward mountains and on December 15th crossed the steep Lemhi Pass in two feet of snow. Here Work passed out of United States territory. The winter trail was hard on the horses and the people, but, not only did they cross the pass successfully but reached and followed down a small tributary of the Lemhi River. On Friday, December 16th, they continued down this small creek to the Lemhi River. Here, they found a camp of thirty-eight lodges of Flathead Indians who were headed up the river in search of food. These Indians did not bring very encouraging news. According to them, there were no buffalo to be found on the lower Lemhi and they themselves were near starvation. Moreover, a large party of Americans were encamped below at the junction of the Salmon and Lemhi rivers. It was apparently no use proceeding down the Lemhi River so that Work joined the Indian camp on its

386 Identified by Lewis & Phillips, op. cit., p. 113, n. 231, and picture p. 115.

387 Probably Agency Creek on the Lemhi River. The latter is the east fork of the Salmon. Work speaks of the Lemhi as the Salmon River.
way up the Lemhi. For some days the combined camps drifted south, sometimes remaining in camp and sometimes moving ahead. On the 21st of December seven of the American trappers from the junction of the Lemhi and the Salmon rivers visited them. From them Work secured fifteen beaverskins.

On Christmas Day 1831, they stayed in camp. On this occasion there was no mention of a regale. "Owing to our not having fallen in with buffaloe lately many of the people fared but indifferently," wrote Work, "having only dry meat & several of them not much of that." However, December 26th brought some buffalo meat to the larders of both the Indian and the white camp as they moved up the Lemhi River, along the foot of the mountains. The cold weather which had dogged their trail for so long was replaced by mild soft days which lasted on into the new year. Another party of Americans passed them on December 30th. Not until after they had gone did Work realize how short of food these trappers were and although they were his competitors his generosity rebelled at not having offered them something to stay their hunger.

On January 1st Work served the people and some of the Indian chiefs with a few cakes and a dram each of rum which had been saved for the occasion. The next day, Work moved the camp again to find better fodder for the horses which were becoming very lean. He would have preferred to

388 Work, op. cit., entry for December 25, 1831.
camp out in the open valley where the grass was longer and more plentiful, but was afraid lest the smoke of his camp fires scare away the buffalo. Work felt that he must decide between grass for the horses or food for the people and the food came first.

In spite of his precautions, buffalo remained scarce so that Work again faced the march eastward over the mountains into the Blackfeet country and back into United States territory. This time he went by way of the Bannack Pass and on January 5th, came out on the headwaters of Horse Prairie Creek. Here, they delayed for two days to allow the horses to feed off the excellent grass to be found there. During the following days they proceeded down the river hunting for buffalo without success. On January 10th, they reached Shoshone Cove again where they had camped on December 2nd to 7th. Their advance party met a band of twenty to twenty-five Blackfeet and both sides opened fire. Two of the Flathead Indians were wounded. When Work's main party arrived, the Blackfeet took cover in a large thicket of willows as they had done previously. As before, they escaped at night, much to Work's chagrin, who regretted that a better watch had not been kept.

On January 12th, still hunting for buffalo, they reached the junction of Horse Prairie and Red Rock creeks up the latter eight miles. Here, a few tough buffalo bulls were killed. On January 16th, in spite of the onset of

another cold spell, they returned to the junction again and proceeded down the Beaverhead to their encampment of November 26th. Still no buffalo were to be seen. Not until two days later, when camping still farther downstream, did they make a real kill, thirty-seven animals. The buffalo were moving toward the expedition now, not away from them as before. Work surmised that either a band of Pend d'Oreille Indians or Blackfeet were hunting them from the east. In the next two days enough buffalo (sixty) were killed to last the party for some time.

On January 20th, letters arrived from headquarters, either by way of Walla Walla or from Flathead House. They were brought by one of Work's party who had been left behind at Walla Walla ill with malaria. The next day they were visited by five of the American party from the junction of the Salmon and the Lemhi rivers. Most of these unfortunates were travelling on foot through the snow, since the Blackfeet had stolen their horses. On Monday, January 23rd, they proceeded north to their camping place of November 16th. Work was retracing his steps toward the Big Hole River. Here, they stayed until January 28th. Twice during these five days they were raided by Blackfeet who stole horses belonging to the Flathead encampment, to Work's own party, and some from the Americans who were still with them. On the 28th, they moved again. By now most of the Flathead Indians had left.

390 Work mentions them as coming from "the Fort", which Lewis & Phillips identify as Walla Walla or Flathead House. Lewis & Phillips, op. cit., p. 125, n. 255.
them and had gone to join a large camp of the Pend d'Oreille Indians encamped not far away. At daybreak, on the 30th, they were attacked by a band of three hundred Blackfeet who kept up the attack until noon. Two of Work's men were wounded, and two of his Indians. One of his natives was killed. The camp returned the volleys of the Blackfeet and forced them to retire into the hills overlooking the camp. Again the cannon was called into use, but burst on the third discharge. Five or six of the Blackfeet were killed, one of them was the chief of the attacking party. It had been this individual's purpose to "...wholly destroy the Whites & F. Heads [Flatheâds] ...he has been disappointed and his own carcass remains on the ground," wrote Work. Work, himself, had had a narrow escape from a similar death, since during the action, he was wounded in the arm.

On the last day of January they remained in camp to take care of their wounded. That night the Blackfeet stole six of their horses and the only retaliation was the capture of some of the Indian beasts-of-burden—a number of dogs loaded with bundles of shoes and other articles tied upon their backs. One of Work's Indians died from wounds received in the fight of January 30th. The expedition did not move camp until February 3rd, when they moved out of the hills down to the Beaverhead River again. Work now planned to retreat up the Beaverhead by the route by which

391 Work, op. cit., entry for January 31, 1832.
the expedition had just come. On February 9th, they reached the junction of Horse Prairie Creek and Red Rock Fork. As they went, they followed their usual practice of hunting buffalo and stopping to rest, as the occasion demanded. At their next encampment ten miles up Horse Prairie Creek, they were overtaken by severe cold. For seven days they huddled in camp. Their horses sought shelter in the bushes where four of them perished. It was too cold for the unfortunate animals even to venture out to feed. On the 19th of February, 1832, they again moved toward the mountains another day’s journey, but only because the Indian camp, by pushing on ahead, was frightening away the buffalo. Again cold weather kept them in camp, but on Wednesday, February 22nd, they pushed on to Shoshone Cove, where they had camped on December 1st. All about the encampment were considerable numbers of buffalo, but the weakness of the horses prevented many from being killed. However, a few were being taken each day so that Work remained here until February 29th.

By March 7th, they reached the entrance to Bannack Pass where Work stopped for a day to rest the horses before crossing the divide. Snow was still deep in the pass but he had hopes that well-beaten buffalo trails would be found. On the 9th of March they crossed the pass. Work remarked that it was extremely hard on the horses in spite of being able to

392 Lewis & Phillips (op. cit., p. 131, n. 262) state that Work reached this place on February 11th. A check of Work’s mileage, as well as the cross reference to December 1st, identifies this campsite as Shoshone Cove.

393 Work apparently forgot that 1832 was a leap-year so that he had to redate most of his journal after this date.
avail themselves of well-beaten buffalo trails. The wounded men suffered a great deal from the extra exertion. That day they reached the site of their encampment of January 4th, finding little snow and very good fodder for the horses.

The expedition began a slow descent of the Lemhi River, moving and camping in the usual way. On March 20th, they encamped just below the entrance to Lemhi Pass through which they had crossed from the east side on December 15th. During the past two weeks, one of the men wounded in the brush with the Blackfeet died, having wasted away to a skeleton. Just after his death a party of Blackfeet horse thieves came boldly into the camp and stole four horses. The thieves were pursued, this time with better success, for some (Work does not say how many) were caught, killed and scalped. The stolen horses were recovered but could not be brought back to camp in their jaded condition, moreover, the war cries of more Blackfeet were heard in the hills. Not many buffalo were killed during these days, since the horses were too weak to pursue them successfully.

They continued down the river to a large camp of the Nez Perce's and Flathead Indians. Two children died on the way—one from eating poisonous hemlock root—the other a babe of six weeks, born during the expedition. Work stayed on at the camp until the 24th of March to obtain information from the Indians concerning possible routes to be followed, then he moved down the river to the junction of the Lemhi with the main Salmon River, and camped at the
commencement of the deep Salmon River Gorge.

On the 26th of March, four men left the main body to hunt down the Salmon River to the Snake and thence to Walla Walla. Work had great hopes of their success since the lower reaches of the Salmon were not known to have been trapped by whites. Moreover, the river was navigable, since Lewis and Clark had passed down it in 1805.

The main party, led by Work, ascended the Salmon River with the object of hunting the country between it and the Snake River to the south. By March 31st, they had moved an estimated forty-three miles up the Salmon to the Pahsimaroi River. No buffalo had been seen but a number of mountain sheep were killed. In spite of the cold raw weather the ice and snow were melting and the water in the river rising rapidly.

As the days wore on into early April, the weather became fine and mild. The lower ground soon cleared of snow and vegetation was considerably advanced. The people had their traps out for beaver. Work's own contention, borne out by the entries in his eighth journal, is that the spring of 1832 came sooner than that of 1831. However, it was not until the 4th of April that their first beaver of the year was taken, whereas beaver were trapped in the previous year as early as March. As they ascended the Salmon River they got into the area which Work had hunted without success in the

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Work had been told on March 14th, that the Americans had left this part of the river, (cf. Work, op. cit., entry for March 14, 1832).
fall and winter of 1830. On April 7th, Work left the Salmon River, where no beaver were found, to cross to Goddin's River, which he reached on April 9th. From the depth of snow in the mountains, he gave up his original intention of striking straight across to the Malade River. His only other alternative was to continue down Goddin's River and swing west to avoid the mountains. The party continued down the river setting their traps each night and taking up to fifteen beaver per setting. As they went, Work kept examining the mountains to the west in the hopes of being able to cross to the Malade but each time found the snow too deep in the passes. Not until May 1st did they manage to reach Work's Sickly River. Here, they camped for a week while the men hunted and trapped taking just over one hundred beaver. It was the first profitable hunting the party had had. On May 7th, he moved two miles up the river to find better feed for the horses. Work's plans were to go to the sources of the Wood River and then cross the mountains north, to the east fork of the Salmon River. However, the snow in the hills made him decide to delay this plan for the time being and be content with trapping the Wood River and perhaps crossing over to the south fork of the Boise. This branch was reported to be rich in beaver and might provide a road across the mountains to the

395 The Big Lost River as previously identified.

396 East Fork of Little Wood River which runs into the Malade (Sickly) River. See map in Bancroft, History of Oregon, Idaho and Montana, p. 402.
Salmon. Until the 17th of May they continued trapping in the tributaries of the Wood River. Then on the 18th the party started for the Boise River, travelling fourteen miles across the mountains to the northwest. The next day they travelled another seven miles. Some of the men pushed on ahead to trap and took thirty-six beaver and nineteen otter, but in spite of this, they were not satisfied by these returns from what they supposed to be virgin country. On the 22nd of May, they reached the south fork of the Boise River which they intended following to the mountains. The next day was spent in reconnoitering. Work climbed one mountain to ascertain the appearance of the country beyond. Nothing could be seen but a succession of snow-covered peaks to the north. Two of his men ascended another hill for the same purpose. Guides were difficult to obtain. Two Indians had been coaxed into the camp who told a story of a pass through the mountains and plenty of beaver. They were engaged as guides and promptly disappeared. Work began to suspect that they had merely told him what they thought he wanted to be told. On examination, the fork which they intended to ascend, seemed very swift and gravelly and not at all suitable for beaver. Wrote Work,

Some of those taken had the skin nearly worn off their feet, & the fur partly worn of [sic] their backs, & were so lean from their want & misery they had undergone, that there was scarcely a particle of flesh on their bones. Probably, in Severe Seasons the most of them die from want, hence beaver never have been numerous here, nor are they likely to increase. 397

397 Work, op. cit., entry for May 23, 1832.
Four of the men were sent ahead to seek a pass in the mountains to the Salmon River and to report on the country beyond. The next day these men reported that they had found a passable road but it was still deep in snow. Beyond this lay numerous streams which united to form a river. Work decided to follow this route and on Saturday May 26th moved up the Boise River toward the pass. The road was hilly and rough, and lay through dense woods. The river was too high to allow them to cross from bank to bank in order to seek the easiest route. On the 27th they crossed the divide in snow, over fallen wood and through mud. Work did not think much of the valley when they did arrive. The willows were too stunted to produce many beaver. Moreover, there were signs that the Americans had been there the previous summer. "Thus," lamented Work, "we find the country which we expected to find new and rich is neither and does not answer the account given of it by the Indians."

After this disappointment, the expedition began to wend its way down the Salmon River, taking a few beaver each day. On June 1st, Work recognized his whereabouts on the headwaters of the Salmon. Alexander Ross had been there some years before and had descended the river as they were doing. On the 2nd, Work sent a scouting expedition ahead to report on the possibilities of beaver. Their report was that

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399 Work, op. cit., entry for May 27, 1832.

400 Alexander Ross came from the Big Wood River to the Salmon and descended it on his way home (cf. Lewis & Phillips, p. 160, n. 306).
Americans had trapped the country the year before. Work decided to turn westward over the mountains to the headwaters of the Payette River. This, they reached on June 5th after a fifteen mile journey along a narrow defile and over a divide to the south fork of Payette River. On the previous day Work states that they killed some "cabrie" or antelope.

Through fine spring days and new vegetation they continued down Payette River. On June 7th and 8th their path took them through thick woods and over fallen timber. Only here and there were little forest meadows found which bore grass for the horses. Very few beaver were trapped each day. On June 9th, another reconnaissance party was sent out to discover a road and reported a passable way along the valley of a river beyond the mountains. Work states that this was Read's River and that one of the men recognized it having been there before. For some days they were harassed by bad weather which brought heavy rain soaking the woods and making the trail impassable. For two days they did not raise camp. Then, on June 15th, they decided to try the route on the newly-discovered river. After two more days of very bad going over hills and down into steep gullies, Work decided that they would have to back-track the way they had come. From the 17th of June to the 23rd, they blundered through

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401 This term "cabrie" is rendered in various forms, "cabri", "cabrit", "cabra" and refers not to "caribou" as transcribers have rendered it, but to antelopes, cf., Coues, Elliott, History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark, London, Henry Stevens & Son, New York, Francis P. Harper, 1893, p. 35, n. 73.

402 In spite of this, Lewis & Phillips identify it as the middle fork of Payette River much farther to the north. Lewis & Phillips, op. cit., p. 162, n. 315.
the mountains following creek beds, losing their way in thick woods and twisting valleys, and having to construct rafts to cross swollen streams. As in the spring of the previous year, food began to run short with the scarcity of game and beaver. Two of the men killed horses for food.

On June 23, 1832, they reached a branch of the Weiser River and continued down this branch eight miles. Here they were met by Indians who induced them to stop for a day to trade. Most of June 25th was passed with these people, who traded forty beaver and some dry salmon. The expedition marched another twenty miles down the Weiser and then cut across to the Snake River, striking it half way between the Weiser and Payette River. These were long marches, but for weeks they had been delayed in the mountains and time and food were getting scarce. On the banks of the Snake some of the men set to work to fashion a skin canoe to portage the baggage across the river. While they were doing this, others traded a few very acceptable salmon from the Indians. By June 28th the canoe was dry and ready for service. The expedition worked hard to get the baggage and horses across. However, the crossing was not completed until the 30th. There were no casualties except the loss of a Company mule which was drowned in the river. Six of the people overturned themselves on the last trip but without loss of life. Once across, Work sent out a small party of eight men to the Silvies River.

Identified as Cave Creek by Lewis & Phillips, op. cit., p. 166, n. 323.
and the Deschutes into which the former flows. These people would reach this district by way of the Malheur River which flowed into the Snake opposite Payette River. They were given 24 days to reach Walla Walla.

Work and the main party proceeded down the west bank of the Snake River to the Burnt River. Until July 4th, Work continued up the Burnt River to the point where the trail to Walla Walla turns aside to the Powder River. Here, another small party of eight men and their families were sent by the usual trail to the fort, hunting as they went. The main expedition continued up the Burnt River in the attempt to cross to John Day's River and make a circuitous route to Walla Walla. One of the men was sent ahead to find a trail over the mountains. After delaying one day in order to let this man make his survey, they began their journey westward. The guide was not sure of the way but they pushed forward down a small river which they believed to be an eastern branch of John Day's River.

On the 11th of July, they became alarmed at the disappearance of one of their men who had been missing for three days. He, like the others, had gone out to tend his traps but had not returned. Search parties were sent out and for two days Work halted their journey in order to search for the missing man. Then they reluctantly proceeded on their way. No trace of the man had been found. Another party was given the best horses the expedition had to return to the

404 Called by Work the Sylvailles and Chutes rivers. Work, op. cit., entry for June 30, 1832.
place where he was lost. Even this group returned bare-handed. Indians which they met were questioned but without success.

On July 15th, they reached the point where their trail of the previous year left John Day's River for Walla Walla. Here, they stopped for a day to send men to enquire from nearby Indians for news of their missing trapper but without avail. Then on the 17th they raised camp and marched across the stony mountain trail toward the Fort. This incident serves to show the care which John Work exercised over his men in their dangerous and lonely tasks. As they neared Walla Walla, Work rode ahead of the party and arrived at the Fort on July 19, 1832. The two smaller parties which left them on the Snake and Burnt rivers also arrived safely. Neither party had secured any beaver. The group of four men which had left them to go down the Salmon River by canoe had met with disaster. Two of the party were drowned, the other two lost everything they had, even their clothes, but after thirty days reached the Fort safely.

After spending some time settling the men's accounts for horses and traps, Work left for Fort Vancouver with the returns. His party consisted of thirty men and three boats. They passed the Chutes and Dalles on July 26th, and the Cascades on July 27th in the early morning, and reached Fort Vancouver without incident that same afternoon.

405 This missing man was killed by Indians (cf. Work, John, Journal, August 17, 1832- April 2, 1833, entry for August 28, 1832).
"Mr. Work's Returns are very poor," wrote McLoughlin to the Governor and Committee, "yet I owe it to him to state that though such is the case, I am satisfied that he did the utmost that could possibly be done in this instance, as also, I believe, in every other instance in which he had any duty to perform." This tribute to his faithfulness, may have helped Work to forget the difficulties of a dangerous journey. He had left Walla Walla with a total of 329 horses and returned with 215, having lost 114 on the way. American competition met him whichever way he turned. Two of his party had been drowned, one was missing and never found. His men had been set upon time and again by Blackfeet and three of them were killed. Work himself was wounded in the arm. He wrote as follows to his friend Edward Ermatinger,

I am happy in being able to inform you that I enjoy good health, and am yet blessed with the possession of my scalp which is rather more than I had reason to expect. This last My friend has been a severe years duty on me, all my perseverance & fortitude were scarcely sufficient to bear up against the danger, misery, and consequent anxiety to which I was exposed. 407


407 Work to Edward Ermatinger, Fort Vancouver, August 5, 1832, (original in B.C. Archives).
"I am going to start with my ragamuffin freemen to the Southward towards the Spanish settlements," wrote Work in August 1832, "with what success I cannot say." He had been at Fort Vancouver since the 27th of July after his return from the Blackfoot Country, and now on August 17th, he again set out into the wilds. His party consisted of twenty-six men, many of whom had been with him on previous expeditions. True to custom, the men left Vancouver on the 16th and enjoyed their regale a few miles from the Fort, Work joined them the next day.

On the 26th of August, the boats reached Walla Walla. There had been no unusual incidents en route up the Columbia River. The wind had been unfavorable most of the way so that the men had been kept busy at the paddles. Malaria still hung about and some of the men were affected but none as badly as in the previous year until they reached Walla Walla. Here, the number of fever cases increased sharply. Work was delayed for some time after final preparations were completed, hoping that his men would recover. With the thought that the Fort was the source of infection, he moved his camp a few miles down the Columbia to the Umatilla River. Work joined them there on September 6th, but it was not until the 8th

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408 Work to E. Ermatinger, Fort Vancouver, August 5, 1832, (original in B.C. Archives).
that the expedition was finally under way. To make matters
worse, he was forced to leave his assistant, Francois
Payette, behind. He was too ill to proceed. "This I much
regret," wrote Work, "as in the event of anything happening
to me he was the only person to take charge of the party."
Fortunately, Work could not know how nearly prophetic these
words were.

Until September 15th, they moved steadily south
through the Blue Mountains when they reached the north branch
of John Day's River. Work mentions that he followed the
same route as on their return journey in the spring of 1831.
On the way he met a Cayuse Indian who told him of two major
battles on the Salmon River between the Blackfeet and the
Nez Percés Indians who were supported by the Flatheads. Since
these battles took place just after he had left that country
in the previous spring, Work had reason to feel that his
trials might have been heavier.

The party now crossed the mountains to the south
branch of the same river which it reached on September 18th.
Since there was fever still in the camp and since the horses
were jaded from the rough march through rugged country, they

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409 Francois Payette was an employee of the North West
Company until coalition, when he entered the employ of the
Hudson's Bay Company. Until his retirement in 1844 Payette
was stationed in the Columbia District. He had been a success­
ful trapper and was raised to the rank of clerk. The town
of Payette, Payette River and Payette Lake in Idaho, were
named after him. (cf., H.B.S. IV, pp. 352-3).

410 Work, John, Journal, August 17, 1832-April 2, 1833,
(hereafter referred to as Journal 11), entry for September 6,
1832.

411 Ibid., entry for September 15, 1832.
spent the next day in camp. The hunters were out and trapped ten beaver and one otter. On the 21st the expedition continued upstream for fifteen miles and travelled a similar distance the next day to the mountains over which they crossed to the Silvies River. From September 23rd to the 29th they continued down the Silvies into the arid Harney Basin. Little game was to be found, only a few deer were killed and these were not enough for the camp. However, about a dozen beaver were trapped each day, and not only was Work glad to have their fur but their flesh was a welcome addition to the larder.

Fever still stalked among the members of the camp. Many of the company seemed to recover and then with the exertion of the march would suffer a relapse. To add to their troubles, the people found traces of horse thieves around the camp, while about through the hills, the smoke of signal fires spread the news of the party's passage.

On the last day of September, the expedition cut across through rugged hills to avoid a bend in the river. From October 1st to the 3rd they stayed in camp to nurse the people who were sick from fever and then continued on their way downstream on the 4th. Work had planned to trap the country eastward to the Humboldt River, but now, in view of the lateness of the season, he decided to push south to the Sacramento. They had passed northwest of Harney and Malheur lakes. For some days therefore, their journey lay through

412 These and subsequent places in Work's Journals 11 and 12 were identified through the generosity of Mrs. Alice B. Maloney of Berkeley, California. Mrs. Maloney's book, the title still undecided at this time, is appearing as a publication of the California Historical Society.
desert country and along the edge of almost dry salt or alkali lakes where fresh water was scarce. They travelled along the west side of Abert Lake and on October 11th marched thirty-two miles, a two days' journey, because no water was found at the first water-hole. The people were discouraged and talked of turning back. Fortunately for them, the weather was not hot but rather cold. On the 12th they found water which was brackish but drinkable. "I was really glad to find it," wrote Work. The next two days they stayed in camp while Work and some of his men went south to explore. They saw a chain of lakes stretching south as far as the eye could reach but could not find any streams or rivers flowing in or out of the lakes which might indicate fresh water and the presence of beaver. Work decided to follow the old route to the Sacramento so as to be sure of water and some fur. It was not until October 21st that the party reached the north end of Goose Lake, which Work called Pit Lake. The road had been rough and stony and very hard on the horses for whom little fodder was to be found. The men too, were running short of provisions and Work grew angry at the improvidence of some of them who were forced to kill four horses for food this early in the journey. They proceeded down the west side of Goose Lake, stopping on the 24th to refresh the horses and to hunt. No game was to be found except some ducks, but

413 Work, Journal 11, entry for October 12, 1832.

414 Work may have seen the chain of lakes which stretch north and south just east of the Warner Range which lay on his left hand, as he journeyed south.
wild plums were gathered in abundance along the way. This was not sufficient provender and on the 25th another horse was killed. The next day's journey brought them nearly to the southern end of the lake and on the 27th of September they came to a small creek which formed one of the headwaters of Pit River. The next day they came to the Pit River proper, "which with the addition of several small brooks from the mountains is here a handsome stream". On the 29th they reached the south fork of the Pit where they camped for three days while Work and three men explored its upper reaches. The stream seemed to be well-adapted for beaver with its willow-lined banks and swampy forks but none was found in it. Fifteen were taken meanwhile downstream at the camp.

Work and his party now turned southward again and crossed the river to the east side exploring each little stream as they went. No beaver and no game were found. As they continued southward the country became wooded and a few oak trees began to appear. On November 11th they left the Pit River which swings westward and reached a small river flowing out of the mountains. The next day they crossed the

415 In wet weather the waters of Goose Lake overflow into the Pit River, cf., Dallenbough, P.S., Fremont and '49, New York and London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1914, p. 314. This river is supposed to derive its name from the pitfalls which the Indians dug for game.

416 Work, op. cit., entry for October 28, 1832.

417 Called the East Fork by Work and identified as the South Fork by Mrs. Maloney.

418 Identified by Mrs. Maloney as Hat (Canoe) Creek and the Cascade Mountains.
mountains to the south, after a hard day's march through a country wooded with pine trees which were interspersed with oaks and cedars. Here they came on another small creek which they followed as it wound its way along the foot of the mountains. Few beaver signs were seen and only four deer were killed. They met Indians who seemed very timid not of the men of the camp, but of the horses and dogs. On the 16th of November they reached a larger fork. Here fifteen deer and one elk were killed, the first good day's hunting since they left Walla Walla. The next day was spent in camp and more deer and elk were killed, but only four beaver were trapped. On the 18th, they followed the river down to near its junction with the Sacramento River.

Work now decided to make dugout canoes to hunt the Sacramento. He had originally planned to wait until he got farther downstream before he tried this scheme of trapping, but the high water would not permit of any other method. From November 19th to the 25th most of Work's party remained in camp busily hacking out dugout canoes. Others were out hunting, killing a fair number of deer and three "grizzle" bears. While at this place, Work heard lamentations from a nearby Indian camp and on investigation found the Indians cremating four of their number who had been killed in an attack on their village. To Work, who had seen and remarked

419 Not positively identified but thought by Mrs. Maloney to be a branch of Cow Creek. Work calls it Cara[?] Creek.

420 Work, op. cit., entry for November 22, 1832.
on Indian methods of burial on the Columbia, this practice was new and strange. He made two visits to their camp to see exactly what had taken place.

By November 25th, the canoes were ready and their crews were directed to paddle upstream for a two-day reconnaissance trip and if their information was satisfactory the camp would follow. To Work's chagrin, the canoes returned the next day with an adverse report. Work wrote that he suspected that the hard work of paddling the heavy canoes was the cause of their coming back. After spending a day lightening their craft by chipping away more wood from their sides and bottom, the men started out again with instructions to remain out two nights. At the same time, the main camp moved down the Sacramento to its junction with the Sycamore River. This River was examined for beaver without success so once again they proceeded downstream to the Quesnelle River where they remained in camp until December 2nd because of bad weather. Only nine beaver and two otter were taken. That same day they pushed south along the Sacramento to Bear Creek and in the days following journeyed on still further. On December 8th they reached Butte Creek which Work called Deception Creek. This seems a fitting name for this stream because it flows toward, but does not reach the Sacramento, but spreads out into the low flooded area of Butte Sink.

421 Identified by Mrs. Maloney as possibly Battle Creek.
422 Identified by Mrs. Maloney as Mill Creek on condition that the previously mentioned stream is Battle Creek.
423 Pine Creek according to Mrs. Maloney.
On December 7th two messengers from Michel Laframboise arrived at the camp. They were on their way with letters to Fort Vancouver. Work's first feelings were those of anger. Laframboise had been sent south to hunt the coast and had apparently deliberately disregarded his instructions and come inland to hunt the Sacramento which had been assigned to Work. The former had built canoes just across the river from Work's present camp and since the spring had hunted the river to its mouth. To add to Work's annoyance a party of Americans were reported to be trapping these lower reaches. Work detained these messengers and sent one back the next day to Laframbroise with instructions to meet him to discuss future plans. In the meantime, Work moved downstream to the Buttes which rise directly out of the valley floor in the area between the Sacramento and the Feather rivers. Here they camped until the 30th of December. Rains had set in so that the surrounding country was nearly inundated. As yet Work had not met Laframboise, who, in answer to Work's request, had sent word that he intended moving downstream and had given up any idea of ascending the river. In his journal Work makes no comment on this decision.

On the last day of the year the expedition marched eastward from the Buttes to the Feather River. The following

424 See Chapter I, p. 13, n. 34.

425 A major tributary of the Sacramento which flows into it from the east side. All of this area was the gold country after 1849.
day they celebrated New Year's in the usual fashion with cakes and rum, and on January 2, 1833, marched down the Feather River about nine miles. In that short distance they passed six Indian villages which had an estimated population of some hundreds each. The diet of these natives seemed to be mostly acorns, augmented by a few large white salmon from the river. The next day Work moved camp down the Feather River again and then went on to examine its junction with the Sacramento. The level of the water was falling but it was still too high to risk camping there, so he now planned to move upstream, cross to the east bank, and hunt toward the mountains. On January 4th, they camped higher up the Feather beside an Indian village where rafts were borrowed and preparations were made to cross to the other side. These natives lived in houses "sunk a considerable distance in the earth and covered with clay & resemble a round hillock". On the 5th they got safely across the river with only the minor mishap of having drowned a horse. The next day they pushed upstream to the confluence of the Feather and the Bear River. From this point, Work wrote Laframboise again, asking him to join the former's party if he could not cross the flooded Sacramento with safety at his present camp downstream. Then both parties could move north and cross the Sacramento higher up where the river was smaller and its flood waters less dangerous. From this point they could move westward to the coast and trap the country Laframboise had missed.

426 Work, op. cit., entry for January 4, 1833.
On the 9th of January, Work's expedition moved still further upstream to a small stream near the mountains. In spite of the short distance which they covered, the whole camp was exhausted. All day the horses had waded belly deep in mud and water. On the 10th they moved again to another small fork. But few beaver were being taken, and what worried Work more, no elk were to be found, and the camp depended upon these animals in this locality as much as they depended upon buffalo in the Snake country. News reached him that, as he suspected, Laframboise had let his camp become trapped by flood water on a point near the river and they were nearly starving. This time Laframboise was willing to accept Work's suggestion that the camps join forces, cross the Sacramento, and proceed to the coast as soon as the season permitted. To solve the food situation Work planned to return to the Buttes where elk were plentiful.

On January 12th the expedition began to retrace its steps. On the next day they reached their camping ground of January 8th, about ten miles up the Bear River. All the way they were impeded by soft ground, since heavy rain had set in again. Not until the 16th did the party move again and on this day met Laframboise and his men, who arrived very short of food. Two days later the augmented party recrossed the Feather River whose waters were now low enough to enable them to ford the stream. Two men were sent ahead to the Buttes to scout for signs of elk. On the 20th they arrived

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427 Identified by Mrs. Maloney as Coon Creek.
back with the good news that plenty of these animals were to be found, so that as soon as possible Work pushed on to that spot. Elk were now more necessary to the camp's economy than ever. For one thing the number of people to feed was now increased. For another, dried meat must be secured in large quantities for their proposed journey west from the Sacramento where animals were scarce.

On January 23rd and 24th, they killed 104 elk, which was really more than they needed. Now Work began to worry about the scarcity of powder and shot which this slaughter, if continued, might cause. For a month they camped at the Buttes, laying in provisions and waiting for the water to abate. During that time 395 elk had been killed. Finally on February 23rd they moved 18 miles northeast to the Feather River which they followed up during the succeeding days over miry ground to the foothills. When far enough north to be above Butte Sink, they turned northwest again to the Sacramento which they rejoined on March 3rd. Then began the search for a suitable place to cross. Finally Work selected a spot about eleven miles south of Pine Creek where they had camped on December 5th. Taking the elk skins which had been saved for this purpose, they constructed five canoes, and completed the crossing successfully the next day. Here they remained until the 7th while the hunters searched for food, which was already very necessary, since, in spite of

428 Identified by Mrs. Maloney as a point near Jacinto, north of Butte City.
the slaughter of elk at the Buttes some of the people had been improvident enough to dry very little meat.

On that day, the 7th of March, they pushed westward ten miles toward the Cascade Mountains. The ground was swampy so that it was with some difficulty that on the 12th they reached the foothills beside which they marched in a southeast direction. From hill-tops here and there, Work surveyed the country to the west, which seemed a sea of rugged hills. On the 16th, they reached the spot where the American party, which had wintered below them on the Sacramento, had crossed the mountains to the westward. Here, Work decided to divide his party. Half of them were to push on with their traps and two horses each after the American party. The other half were to remain with Work and move south toward San Francisco while Laframboise went ahead to try to replenish their supply of ammunition.

On March 18th, the party started off after the Americans. On the next day Laframboise left for the Spanish Mission at Sonoma for powder and shot. On the 21st, news arrived from Laframboise that he had been unable to obtain supplies at the Mission and had gone on to the Russian establishment at Fort Ross. From thence he returned on March 26th, with some powder, shot and tobacco. He reported that the Russians had treated him well and had told him that

429 Mission San Francisco Solano, generally referred to as Sonoma, was built in 1823.

430 Fort Ross was built by the Russians in 1812, cf., H.B.S., IV, p. xvii.
as far as they had been north, about thirty leagues, there were no rivers flowing into the Pacific which could be trapped. Following on the heels of Laframboise came natives wishing to trade horses of which Work bought thirty.

On March 27th, Work sent Laframboise on ahead to arrange a rendezvous with the party which had been following the Americans, and he, himself, with the rest of the people pushed southward to trap in the vicinity of San Francisco Bay. He found the shores of the Bay destitute of wood and resembling a swamp overgrown with bulrushes and intersected by channels which ran in every direction. The area seemed to him to be well-adapted for beaver, but difficult to trap without canoes or boats. On the 31st of March, Laframboise arrived back with the whole party which went after the American expedition. To Work's disgust they explained that they had become discouraged and had returned.

On April 1st, some Spaniards arrived from the Mission. One of them claimed to have been sent by the Spanish Governor at Monterey to look over the camp. Having heard that a ship had arrived in the Bay, Work sent Laframboise to see if he could secure additional supplies of powder and shot. The latter returned on April 6th, with 24 lbs. of powder and 40 lbs. of shot. The price he paid for it was high but an

April 2, 1833, is the last entry in Work's 11th Journal. His next journal begins on April 3, 1833, and is a continuation of the 11th, (Work, John, Journal, April 3-October 31, 1833, hereafter referred to as Journal 12). Lewis and Phillips make the error of stating that Work returned to Fort Vancouver, April 2, 1833 and the next day started on an expedition to the Snake River which occupied all summer. Cf., Lewis and Phillips, op. cit., p. 59.
adequate supply of ammunition was indispensable to the party. That same day was Easter Sunday, and some of Work's Roman Catholic Canadians went to the Mission for mass.

Work decided to leave the Bay and to march west to the coast and follow it north to the Columbia, trapping as he went. The start was made on April 9th when they travelled westward sixteen miles to just past a spot where the Spanish Mission had a cattle ranch. Work had hoped to get well beyond the Mission lest trouble break out, but fever and colds had started again in the camp and the people were too ill to proceed farther. His fears were realized on the next day, when his pack train got mixed up with a herd of sheep and all stampeded together. Many of the sheep were killed and some of the camp baggage was missing. When this was at last settled amicably, a dispute arose over the horses which Work had purchased from the Indians. The Mission claimed that these animals could not be sold without the priests' permission. Work finally agreed to give them up if the Spanish steward would pick them out and have the Indians return the goods. Since this was impossible the Mission dropped its claims. Work complained that the Mission sold liquor to his people for their clothes, "which is not saying much in behalf of the Morality of a religious institution".

On the 15th of April, Work did not move camp. Laframboise had contracted malaria; Work had a cold. One of their men had been clawed by a bear and "mortification" had

432 Work, Journal 12, entry for April 12, 1833.
set in. This unfortunate died three days later. On the 18th the party reached Bodega Bay, upon which stood Fort Ross, and pressed along the seashore to the Russian River which they crossed immediately. The Russian governor objected to their passing so close to the Fort but withdrew his objections and later invited Work to dinner. The governor corroborated the statement made by Laframboise that the Russians had explored northward about one hundred miles and had found no large rivers but only ragged and steep gullies.

The expedition left the vicinity of the fort on April 21st and marched north along the beaches and across headlands. By May 5th they had travelled nearly to Cape Mendocino which checks with an estimated 107 miles to which Work's entries total during this period. He had found but few large rivers and these proved to have no beaver in them. The estuaries of these streams were very difficult to cross except at low tide. The gullies through which they ran were very steep and hard on the horses. Work decided to leave this difficult and unproductive coast and turn inland.

On May 9th, after hearing the reports of reconnaissance parties they turned inland over a steep mountainous area and then up a fairly large river. The road was rugged and difficult with no signs of beaver. Because of this lack of beaver, Work decided to split his party. Michel Laframboise was to make his way north as best he could by

435 Not Identified. Perhaps a western branch of the Eel River.
the coastal route and Work would cut overland southeast, back to the Sacramento Valley. On May 13th, the party divided, Laframboise with 30 men and Work with 33.

Work's route lay in a general southeast direction. On the 17th they fell in with a river which Work considered to be the Russian. The next day he sent a party to trap its lower reaches, while he with the remaining men and all of the women and children proceeded toward the Sacramento. It was near this point that the expedition found the tracks of the party they had sent after the Americans in the month of March. They turned up a branch of the Russian River on the 18th and crossed over a range of hills to Clear Lake. Three days later, while resting in camp, they were rejoined by the men who had left to trap the Russian River, who reported that they had been stopped by an Indian war party and had barely escaped with their lives. Until the 26th of May the expedition travelled along the south side of Clear Lake, through dense bush and then over stony, gravelly trails to the arid country they had reached in the eastern foothills of the Cascades during the month of March. Game was getting scarce and but few provisions were to be found in the camp.

From this point, they made several attempts to push eastward to the Sacramento River but ran into impassable marsh country. Finally after turning northeast, they reached the Sacramento on May 29th near the present town of Woodland. The water was high and Work anticipated considerable

434 Identified by Mrs. Maloney.

435 Ibid.
difficulty in crossing. Until June 3rd, the men were busily fashioning dugout canoes. Then for three days the party moved downstream to below the Feather River, looking for a place to cross. Having found a suitable spot, they crossed without incident. On June 7th, in following the southeast bank of the Sacramento, they found their way barred by a succession of shallow lakes caused by flood waters and had to retrace their steps in order to find a way through them to the country beyond. On the 9th they rounded these lakes to their eastern side and the next day reached the Consumnes River which because of its high water, seemed as large as the Feather. They crossed the Consumnes higher up and came down its other side toward the Sacramento and its shallow lakes. Here they encountered one of their canoes which had been sent out in various directions to trap. As they went south along the east side of the shallow lakes the weather became oppressively warm. "...The scorched ground as hot as the floor of an oven," wrote Work. As they continued their way south, they came, on the 13th of June, to Sand River whose banks were a hopeless confusion of swamp and lake, especially in the part lying between them and the Sacramento. The weather was still very hot, so that the mosquitoes and flies were terrible and the tepid water unpleasant to drink. Here they stayed, looking for a place to cross the river. Finally some Indians from the Spanish mission took two of the men up-river.

436 Work, op. cit., entry for June 12, 1833.
437 The Mokelumne River.
to a traverse made by a fallen tree. Work did not move camp until June 24th, using this site as a rendezvous for the canoes which were bringing in an average of a dozen beaver and four or five otter each day. After a brief cool spell, the weather became hotter than ever, so that the heat was almost insupportable. Night after night was spent in sleepless exasperation because of heat and mosquitoes.

On June 24th they moved upstream on the Mokelumne River to the tree-crossing, carrying the baggage over and swimming the horses across. From this point Work began to be troubled by horse thieves who stole seven horses on June 25th, of which none was recovered.

Until July 18th they proceeded around the southeast side of San Francisco Bay as far as Smith's River. During this time they had considerable trouble with the natives. Horse stealing continued and on July 2nd, five were taken in broad daylight. Work was angry enough to destroy a village in retaliation but the absence of the men and lack of ammunition prevented this immediate action. On the 10th another five were stolen. This time one of the thieves was shot through the head, but the horses were not repossessed. Three days later the Indians made another attempt by their usual method of having some of their number pretend to trade while others made off with the horses. On this occasion they were detected and fired upon, two of the natives were killed and others were wounded. This time the Indians' horses were left

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438 Identified by Mrs. Maloney as the Stanislaus River and the most southerly point reached by Work's party.
behind. Work prepared for the inevitable assault which must follow this crisis. The Indians attacked just before dawn with volleys of arrows. Work’s party sustained one casualty, a wounded horse. That same day they raised camp in order to find a more peaceful and protected spot.

On July 23rd, Work began his return journey and the next day counted up the furs they had obtained in this locality. The catch consisted of only 45 beaver and 14 otter, a poor return from five canoes in twelve days. Since the 11th of June they had taken 249 beaver and 85 otter and in Work’s opinion, the skins were of indifferent quality. But now the season was late and the people were short of ammunition so that he planned to return to Fort Vancouver as soon as possible. One more attempt was made to recover their stolen horses when they came to the guilty Indian village. An attack was made by Work’s party, several natives were killed or wounded and eighteen horses were confiscated. From these defeated Indians they learned that another village had participated in the theft. Here a peaceful attempt was made to recover the animals, but a fight developed with similar results to the previous one. Twenty-one horses were taken. “The chief of this village is the Indian whom the Indian from the Mission recommended to us as being a good Indian and converted to Christianity”, wrote Work.

On July 28th they reached the Consumnes River, and after crossing it remained in camp for two days in order to

439 Work, op. cit., entry for July 26, 1833.
secure and to dry elk meat for their return journey. On August 5th they reached and crossed the Feather River and on the next day proceeded on to the Buttes. As he travelled north, Work noted that some form of sickness was prevalent among the Indians and that the populous villages of the previous January and February now seem deserted. He gave them as wide a berth as possible lest the disease prove contagious. The expedition stayed at the Butte until August 12th, partly to secure a supply of meat and partly to give an opportunity for some of their own people to recover from an illness which had set in amongst them. Then they crossed Deception Creek, and pushed northwest through intense heat and swarms of mosquitoes to the Sacramento River. They passed Indian villages which were nearly depopulated and dead or dying lay in the bushes around the lodges. Work was hurrying now and the day's marches were long, hurrying in the hopes of escaping the disease which was consuming the Indians.

On August 15th they arrived at the spot where they had crossed the Sacramento in March. Thirty of their expedition were now ill. As they pushed on upstream keeping to the east side of the river, the heat became less oppressive. In succession they crossed the rivers which Work calls the Bear (Pine Creek) and the Quesnelle (Mill Creek). The number of sick was increasing. On August 18th, Work wrote, "Several of them had shaking fits yesterday and to-day. The most of the others have the hot fits...." The day came when few of the families were without someone ill, and in many there was

440 Work, op. cit., entry for August 16, 1833.
but one well person. Work was thankful that the men seemed to have escaped or the camp must stop and suffer the fate of the Indian villages.

On August 20th they passed Sycamore River (Battle Creek) and passed Cow Creek on the 21st. The next day they spent in camp where Work had to fight dissension. He pointed out that it would be folly to remain when they had no medicine and that the mountains might help cure these malarial attacks, moreover, the Fort was not more than a month's journey away. They must push on. On Saturday 24th, there were 72 sick in camp and the men were beginning to fall ill. The next day the first death occurred in camp, an old Cayuse Indian. On the 26th, Work began to keep a separate list of the people who were ailing. It shows such entries as August 26th, 71 ill, August 28th, 70 ill, August 30th, 75 ill and then breaks off, for Work himself, ailing now for some days, had become a victim of fever. His wife and children were already stricken.

By the 29th they had been getting into mountainous country which was cool and their surroundings green, instead of the parched browns of the lower Sacramento. But this change did not seem to benefit the ailing. To add to their troubles the Indians attacked and wounded five of their horses.

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441 The writer discovered these hitherto unidentified manuscript sheets inset as pages 12-16 in the Fort Simpson, Correspondence outward, September 6, 1841-October 11, 1844, (Original in B.C. Archives). Careful inspection and comparison of these sheets with the register of people on this journey as contained in Journal 11, along with the fact that their totals of persons who were ill, correspond to the totals as given in Journal 12, proved them to concern this expedition. These sheets are now inset in Work, Journal 12.
in the night. On August 31st they reached the Pit River and crossed it to the north side and journeyed northward on up a small tributary called the Fall River. On September 7th, they crossed the mountains to Sheep Rock. No water was to be had sooner and the road had been very bad; eleven horses were lost because there was no one to look after them. Hostile Indians were following the camp. By now, Work was very ill. "I tremble every day myself," he wrote, "and am become as weak as a child."

Still moving ahead, they reached the Klamath River on September 13th and found there the return trail of the party of Laframboise. Their progress was pitifully slow, being only eight or ten miles a day with frequent days off for rest. On the 16th they reached a small tributary of the River Coquin (Rogue) and four days later came upon the main body of the Rogue River. On September 26th a second member of their party died, one of the men who had become so weak that for some days he had been tied on his horse. They pushed north through the narrow valleys lying on the eastern side of the Coast Range until on October 4th, they reached the south fork of the Umpqua River and in succeeding days crossed its northern fork. Here on the north fork on October 8th Work noted the first real signs of improvement among the

442 Identified by Mrs. Maloney.
443 Old landmark northeast of Mt. Shasta, ibid.
444 Work, op. cit., entry for September 5, 1833.
445 The Klamath River is McLeod's River, cited in H.B.S., IV, pp. 45, 86, 112, 113,
sick. Four days later they crossed Elk Mountain and on October 13th, they met Laframboise and four men on their way from Fort Vancouver to the Umpqua. McLoughlin had become exceedingly anxious over the fate of Work's party and had heard rumors that they had been killed by Indians. Work promptly sent off a letter to ease the Chief Factor's mind and then settled down to enjoy his share of the flour, Indian corn, tea and sugar which Laframboise supplied them.

On October 17th he reached St. Mary's River and crossed it, keeping to the high ground some distance to the west of the Willamette River. On the 18th Work's messenger arrived back from McLoughlin with more tea, sugar, bread and butter. The next day they reached the Yamhill River and were delayed there for three days because of heavy rain to which Work did not wish to expose the sick. Because of this heavy rain the Yamhill River rose considerably and since their usual route lay north across several similar streams which were also bound to be swollen, Work decided to change his course. He proceeded down the banks of the Yamhill, secured a canoe from a settler and got the people and the horses across. The following day they got as far as Sand Encamp-ment on the Willamette. There they secured another canoe to take down stream to ferry them across the Tualatin River.

446 McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, August 31, 1833, in H.B.S., IV, p. 112.

447 A tributary of the Willamette. Since many of these place names are dealt with more fully in Work's subsequent Umpqua Expedition they are touched on but lightly here.

448 Sand Encampment is Champoeg, see more complete reference on page 227, n. 458.

449 Called the Faladin River by Work.
On the 27th of October they arrived at the mouth of the Willamette. Here the people, many of whom had recovered, were employed drying and beating the furs, swimming the horses to a small island off the mouth of the river, and securing boats to ferry the goods and personnel to Fort Vancouver. On October 29th at daylight, Work embarked in a small canoe and reached the fort at 9 o'clock, "...where," he writes, "I was received with a hearty welcome". By the last day of the month all the people and baggage were safe at Vancouver. The most arduous journey Work had ever taken, was safely over. It was not a financial failure in spite of the fact that Work brought back only 1023 beaver and otter skins after fourteen months in the field. McLoughlin estimated that they would bring a profit of £627, "which is very well when you consider the exhausted state of the country and the severe sickness with which he and his party were afflicted".

Work arrived back from the Sacramento expedition so late and had suffered so much with malaria that it was impossible to send him out again that fall. He stayed at Fort Vancouver during the winter of 1833-34 to recover from his illness. On May 22, 1834, he left on a short trading

450 Work, op. cit., entry for October 29, 1833.

451 Quoted from H.B.S., IV, p. 358.

452 McLoughlin to John McLeod, Fort Vancouver, March 1, 1834, (McLeod John, Correspondence inward 1826-1837)

453 McLoughlin to E. Ermatinger, Fort Vancouver, February 1, 1834, (Ermatinger Papers).
and trapping expedition to the Umpqua country which lies beyond the headwaters of the Willamette River. His party was a small one, consisting of but twelve men. The boats were taken up the Multnomah Channel of the River to the traverse which led across to McKay Creek, which was a branch of the Tualatin River. The men were sent to collect horses for the expedition at Tualatin Plain which lies just north of Dairy Creek, another branch of the same main stream. Here about 170 horses had been pastured. Enough of these animals were selected for the party's needs, packs were sorted out and the expedition got under way on the 27th of May.

The general route followed by the party lay to the west of the Willamette River and crossed its tributaries on that side. The trail was close enough to the Coast Range to avoid the lower and swampier sections of the valley. Throughout the journey through the valley, one is struck by the fact that Work's journal ceases to be that of a fur trader or trapper, and becomes one of a farmer or prospective settler. Whether this change of attitude on the part of Work is unconscious or deliberate is hard to say. Simpson stated that he "was bred an operative Farmer", which might be sufficient explanation. On the other hand one wonders if he was gazing upon the country with a view to settling there himself, or


456 H.B.S., IV, p. 358.
whether the Company had asked for an informal report of the valley. Certainly the contrast is striking between the meagre description given as he passed there sick with malaria on his way north the previous fall, and the detailed view of the country as it lay before his eyes during this month of May.

During the first day's march they crossed all but the last fork of the Tualatin River. They had managed to ford these branches with one exception, where a bridge was made out of a fallen tree over which the baggage was carried while the horses swam across the stream. The next day, May 28th, they did not raise camp because of heavy rain and the drenched underbrush of the trail. On the 29th they set out again and followed along the eastern side of the swollen Wapato Lake. After camping, Work paid a hurried visit to Sand Encampment on the Willamette to get information concerning the Umpqua trade. He secured but little and returned to camp. The next day they continued their journey south to the Yamhill River, which they crossed. As they went on, Work noted the fine rich soil, the excellent pasture land on the extensive plains and even various sites on streams which would make suitable places for mills. On the 31st of May they reached and camped at what Work calls the second fork.

457 No definite information has been found concerning this point. Perhaps it is reading too much into the Journal to take this view and Work may have been only following the general instructions concerning the making of official Journals.

from the Yamhill. On June 1st, they marched twenty-four miles to the Sourie River. Here their road lay through woods and over plains which were sometimes swampy. They camped not far from the Willamette River, where they met a band of Indians who informed them that the party of Michel Laframboise had been wiped out by the natives with the exception of the leader and one man. From St. Mary's River they moved on to Long Tom River which flows into the Willamette from the south. By June 3rd they had ascended this river to its headwaters in the Mountains and on the following day crossed to the Siuslaw River which flows northwest to the Pacific. Here Work gazed on the river valley with the eyes of a settler, as he wrote:

...there is a considerable quantity of clover, among the long grass...and most excellent hay it would make. The ground appears highly susceptible of cultivation, and would be superior pasture land, the low ground for cattle and the bare or partially wooded hills for sheep. 462

On June 5th and 6th they did not raise camp because of the heavy rain which soaked the trees and bushes along the trail. Here further rumors reached them that disaster had overtaken the party of Laframboise. Then, on the 7th, they proceeded over the Calapooya Mountains which separated them from the


460 St. Mary's River. This river had been called Riviere des Souris, hence Work's name for it. Scott, O.H.Q., vol. 24, p. 249n.

461 Called by Work the Yangara River.

462 Work, op. cit., entry for June 4, 1834.
Umpqua River and its tributaries. After a twenty-two mile
march they reached Elk Creek. At this point Work left the
main camp with three men and an Indian and proceeded down
the Elk to its junction with the Umpqua and down the latter
river to what he called the Verveau River. The estimated
distance was forty miles which would bring him to tidewater
near the present town of Scottsburg. A curious character
named Joe had his home there and invited Work to enter,
"...which we reluctantly did," said Work, "as we dread being
infested with fleas...He has 7 wives now in the house with
him which is said to be but the half of the number he posses-
464 ses". At this curious place Work collected seven packs of
furs and a letter for McLoughlin left by Laframboise on
April 17th.

On June 10, 1834 Work arrived back in camp on Elk
Creek. Joe accompanied him and traded his beaver with the
Company. Other Indians turned up to trade so that Work
collected 72 beaver and 25 otter. After delaying in camp
because of a sick child, the party moved south over the hills

this identification. Another source places this point west
of Scottsburg at Mill Creek, cf. Sullivan, Maurice S., The
Travels of Jedediah Smith, a Documentary Outline, Including
the Journal of the Great American Pathfinder, Santa Ana,

464 Work, op. cit., entry for June 8, 1834.

465 Work had a little leather bound notebook contain-
ing a few entries for May and June 1834. One entry for June
8, 1834 states that he found five packs of furs at Joe's.
This notebook is in the B.C. Archives.
to Umpqua old fort on the Calapooya River at or near the junction of the Umpqua. During the past few days they had been visited by Indians who brought a considerable number of furs to trade. One of the natives brought a note from Laframboise dated April 8th; but a few days later (June 17th) others brought information that Laframboise's party had all been killed.

From this point the party began its retreat. On June 21st, they back tracked to the Elk River and then crossed the Calapooya Mountains to the most southerly fork of the Willamette slightly east of the Long Tom River by which they had come south. They moved down this fork some ten miles to hunt, but without success. On June 24th they crossed to the Middle Fork of the Willamette at the base of the Cascade Mountains. From Indians they learned that trappers had never been up this river and that it had many beaver just over the first range. The natives informed them that horses could not be used for travelling since the upper country was very rough. This story was confirmed by other Indians who arrived and also by the trapping of seven beaver below the camp, which Work believed might have come down-stream alive with the spring floods. From June 26th-28th the men were employed making cedar dugout canoes for a trapping expedition up the Middle Fork. The next day, June

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467 Coast Fork (Identified by Scott, op. cit., O.H.Q., vol. 24, p. 261n.)
29th, a small party started off. It consisted of six men and three Indians in three canoes. They had orders to stay away for two months if necessary.

Work and the rest of the party travelled northwest to McKay's old house and left here another three men and the families of the men who had gone up river. In order that these three men should not suffer by remaining behind, it was arranged that they should share in the proceeds of any furs which were trapped. With the remaining three men, Work set off down river for Fort Vancouver with the furs. He crossed the Willamette at Long Tom River and picked up his outward trail, camping often in the same spots. He visited a few Indian villages en route and traded a few beaver. On July 5th, the party camped near Sand Encampment. Four days later he reached the traverse near the mouth of the Willamette and set off in a canoe for the Fort which he reached on July 10th. His homeward journey from Long Tom River had been just two days shorter than his trip outward. His quicker return was not due to his faster travelling but to the fact that two days had been spent at the Tualatin Plains in May, rounding up the horses for the journey. This was Work's last expedition on the Columbia River or its tributaries.

468 At or near the confluence of the Willamette and the McKenzie River named after Thomas McKay. Scott, op. cit., O.H.Q., vol. 24, p. 263n.
CHAPTER X
To the Northwest Coast, 1834-35.

After his return from the Umpqua Expedition in July 10, 1834, Work was sent to make a report on coal deposits found on the Cowlitz River. He was no sooner back from this venture when he was directed to take charge of the coasting trade in place of Peter Skene Ogden. Work left Vancouver on December 11, 1834 on board the Lama commanded by Captain McNeill. The trip was to distribute some twenty servants of the company among northern posts and to trade with the various Indian tribes. On December 15th, they arrived at Fort George and anchored beside the Dryad which had made port from the north on the previous day.

Captain Kipling of the Dryad came aboard to inform Work that the schooner Vancouver had been wrecked on Rose Spit in the Queen Charlotte Islands. Besides that, he brought the news that the Russians would not permit the Hudson’s Bay

469 McLoughlin to William Smith, Fort Vancouver, November 19, 1834, in H.B.S., IV, p. 132.

470 Lewis & Phillips state that he left Vancouver by steamer (Lewis & Phillips, op. cit., p. 59). The first steamer, the Beaver, did not arrive on the coast until 1836. The Lama was acquired from Capt. McNeill by the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1833.

471 the Vancouver was the second ship launched at Fort Vancouver. She was constructed by carpenters from the Orkney Islands and was wrecked in March, 1834. Hacking, Norman, Early Marine History of British Columbia, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., 1934, p. 17. See also Wright, E.W., ed., Lewis & Dryden’s Marine History of the Pacific Northwest, Portland, Oregon, The Lewis and Dryden Printing Co., 1895, p. 13. Both of these sources incorrectly give 1832 as the date of the wreck. The first ship launched was the sloop Broughton, cf., H.B.S., IV, p. lxxi.
Company to establish a post on the Stikine River. The site of this post beyond Russian territorial limits, had been selected by Ogden in 1833. Its purpose was to tap the hinterland for furs. This, the Russians did not intend to allow and built a fort, Redoubt St. Dionysius, at the mouth of the Stikine River. They also stationed an armed vessel in front of the Fort. Ogden had been sent north in the brig Dryad, with complete equipment for the new Hudson's Bay post. The Russians would not permit him to pass the mouth of the Stikine. He argued without avail and even visited Baron Wrangell, the resident governor of the Russian American Company, but to no purpose. There was nothing for Ogden to do but to return to Fort Vancouver.

No inkling of this news had come through to the Columbia, so, instructing the Lama to wait for him, Work set out with Ogden by rowboat for Fort Vancouver where he arrived on December 17th. Here, he secured revised orders from McLoughlin and still in company with Ogden, returned to Fort George. Work had with him three boatloads of supplies and naval stores for the Dryad. On arrival at Fort George the passengers and their baggage were unloaded from the Lama and

472 H.B.S., IV, pp. cv-cvi.

473 For further details on this whole episode see H.B.S. IV, p. ciii, ff., see also Davidson, Donald C., "Relations of the Hudson's Bay Company with the Russian American Company on the Northwest Coast, 1829-1867" in B.C.H.Q., vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 35-51.

474 It has not been possible to find out just what these were, but from the readjustment of cargoes and the shift of passengers from the Lama to the Dryad, it would seem that the Lama's duties were reduced to supplying Forts McLoughlin and Simpson as well as carrying on a trading expedition along the coast.
a considerable portion of the Lama's cargo was transferred to the Dryad. This task was completed on December 29th, and the vessels separated. The Dryad with Ogden aboard moved upstream, while the Lama completed last minute preparations for sea.

On January 2nd, with a favorable breeze, they dropped down the river to just inside Cape Disappointment where they awaited a favorable opportunity to cross the dangerous Columbia Bar and put to sea. The delays caused by this Bar were soon obvious to Work, for it was not until January 22nd that wind and wave permitted the vessel to slip out. Strong prevailing westerly winds and heavy swells had held the Lama prisoner for twenty days. Surely this was an argument for a steamer and a change of headquarters to a more accessible place.

On January 26th they arrived off Cape Swaine on Milbanke Sound, and turned east to put into Fort McLoughlin at Bella Bella. Adverse winds prevented them from getting closer than Active Cove which was about six miles from the fort. Dr. William Fraser Tolmie came aboard in the forenoon with news that Donald Manson and all the people at the Fort

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475 Dr. William Fraser Tolmie entered the Hudson's Bay Company as physician and surgeon in 1832. He was stationed first at Nisqually and left for Fort McLoughlin in 1833. He returned to Fort Vancouver in 1836 where he stayed until 1841 when he paid a visit to England. On his return he was placed in charge of farming at Fort Nisqually up to 1859 and then moved to Victoria.

476 Donald Manson entered the Hudson's Bay Company in 1817. He became a clerk in the Columbia District and was with James McMillan when he founded Fort Langley. In 1829 he went to Vancouver and thence to Fort Simpson in 1831. He was in charge of Fort McLoughlin from 1834-9. He became Chief Trader in 1837 and never rose above that rank.
were well. Work with Dr. Tolmie, left the vessel and arrived at Fort McLoughlin in the early afternoon. The Fort, begun in 1833, was now nearly finished. Land was cleared for a garden in order to follow out the policy of making each post self-sufficient. Work did not think much of the soil, but commented on the abundance of cheap dry salmon. He regretted that fresh salmon (which would not be available in January anyway) were lacking and but very little venison was to be had. More beaver were traded than in the previous season but the price was high—a blanket for each large skin. In Work's opinion it was better to pay this price than let the American vessels have them. The men found the fort too isolated for their liking and when their accounts were settled not one would re-engage.

The cargo of the Lama was unloaded and ballast taken aboard. On Friday, February 6th, they again set sail. The next day they were only off Cape Swaine, but made good time on the 8th, moving north to the northern tip of Bank's Island off Hecate Strait. Two days later they arrived at Fort Simpson. Here Work was welcomed by Dr. Kennedy. James Birnie was ill and so were a few of the others, but nothing serious, "The Sick are only ailing with casual sickness."

477 Fort Simpson was started in July 1834 at the tip of the Tsimpsean Peninsula on McLoughlin Bay. The Dryad was employed in the moving from the old fort which had been founded in 1831 and now in August 1834 was being abandoned.

478 Doctor John Kennedy was listed by the Minutes of Council for 1835 as surgeon at Fort Simpson. He was placed in charge of Fort Taku when it was built. He returned to Fort Simpson as clerk in 1843.

wrote Work.

He inspected the fort which had been moved the previous summer from the Nass River. It was nearly completed. The buildings were all up but some were only roofed temporarily with bark. The timber had been felled for a gunshot distance from the stockade but as yet it had not been all cleared away. The stockade was not quite completed. The policy of making gardens to support the fort was being carried out with considerable difficulty. The black peat soil was encumbered with matted roots and overlaid with fallen logs.

For a week after their arrival the weather was so wet that nothing was done on ship or shore. Soon, however, the ship was almost ready for a trading expedition, even to the extent of spreading boarding nets to protect the crew from a surprise attack by Indians. Work again deplored the high tariff on furs but hoped that it would discourage American competition so that at some future date when the Hudson's Bay Company had the trade all to themselves, prices might be lowered again.

They sailed on February 19th at 10 o'clock in the morning and by that evening were off Cape Murray. They were on their way to a tribe of Haida Indians at Kaigani Harbor at the north side of Dixon Entrance. Here, they anchored between two villages. The natives came out to trade but only


481 Kaigani Harbor on Dall Is. so called by Etolin in 1833 (ibid., p. 342).
parted with five beaver and an otter. Work states that these Indians had been on other hunting expeditions to California and the Sandwich Islands so that they were quite aware of the rivalry between the Americans and the Hudson's Bay Company and held out for high prices.

It was here he learned the details of the wreck of the schooner Vancouver in March, 1834, and wrote as follows:

...It was most unfortunate that they abandoned the vessel so soon as they did, for the next tide she floated off to her anchor & might easily have been saved. It also appears that a great deal of the danger they apprehended from the Indians was imaginary for the Natives themselves affirm that only 8 were on the ground, and that in order to intimidate the Crew they kindled a great number of fires in the night to make it be believed that their numbers were greater than they really were. 482

This information came from a half-breed who handed Work a letter from Captain Alexander Duncan of the Vancouver, dated February 27, 1834, just a few days before the vessel was lost. The Indians apparently had completely looted the vessel.

Work was extremely anxious to secure the furs at Kaigani. "...This is always the first part the opposition makes on reaching the coast," Work wrote and went on to say, "it is of importance to secure the skins before they arrive." The natives were quite aware of the advantage which this offered to them, and it was not until two days later that their desire for trade goods--especially blankets--got the best of them. In all, Work secured about twenty-nine beaver, thirty-

482 If this story is correct, it is a wonder that Captain Duncan was exonerated and reinstated as Captain of the Cadboro. (cf. Work, Journal 14, entry for February 25, 1835).

483 Work, Journal 14, entry for February 24, 1835.
two sea-otter and eight land otter. He left feeling that these Indians had many more sea-otter, but that no more could be secured at the highest price which he was willing to pay.

While at Kaigani he listened to Indian tales. Two of these interested him. One was a report that the natives at Stikine intended to massacre the Russians at Redoubt St. Dionysius, since no stockade had been built to protect the fort. They also enquired whether the Hudson's Bay Company intended to exact any vengeance or payment for the plundering of the wrecked schooner, Vancouver. It is altogether probable that Work replied in the affirmative to this question, since the prestige and safety of the white population in this northland might depend on the respect of these warlike savages. In his Journal he states that he did not plan a punitive expedition himself but waited for the arrival of the steamer to overawe the natives. It is obvious that one great advantage of such a vessel was apparent to Work—one which has not been emphasized—that the appearance of a craft proceeding without sails or paddles and belching smoke would impress the natives tremendously.

Unfavorable winds blowing into the harbor kept Work at Kaigani until March 10th, when the vessel was towed out by her boats in the face of a southeast wind. Work had planned to return to Fort Simpson and go on to the Nass. Already he

484 This is an estimate only since Work's entries during his stay at Kaigani are incomplete.

485 So early a reference to the Beaver is interesting since she was only ordered in 1834, cf. Lamb, W. Kaye, "The Advent of the Beaver" in B.C.H.Q., vol. 2, no. 3, p. 167.
had been delayed eight days. Outside the harbor the Lama ran into a full southeast gale on a lee shore and just managed to claw off. The gale continued until March 12th, when the wind gradually abated and shifted to the southwest. That same day they passed Zayas Island and landed at 2 P.M. at Fort Simpson. Work had planned to call at Tongass Harbor to trade on the way, but realized that the inhabitants might have already gone to the Nass River to fish.

Work stayed for only four days at Fort Simpson but long enough to chafe at the slowness of the construction of the fort. No files were to be had to sharpen the saws, which were used to whipsaw boards. The blacksmith, who made all the nails, was ill. On the 17th of March a favorable wind enabled him to sail for the Nass River, where the Lama anchored in sight of the old fort. The Indians were there waiting for the little fish called oolichans. The next day a few natives ventured aboard to examine trade goods and to check

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486 Small Island which was used as a landmark well inside Dixon Entrance on the south side and near Fort Simpson.

487 There are two harbors by this name mentioned in the Geographic Dictionary of Alaska. One is on Annette Island just behind Point Percy which forms the southeast entrance to Clarence Strait. The other is on Tongass Island three or four miles east of Cape Fox. (cf. Geographical Dictionary of Alaska, p. 614 and p. 632) The first of these was named by the Russian Governor Etolin in 1833 and seems to be the one named by Work, since he also mentions Point Percy in his Journal.

488 The old fort was about twenty miles up the Nass Estuary on the north shore and near a large Indian village called Ewen Nass—the selection of the spot (according to Walbran, John T., British Columbia Coast Names, Ottawa, Government Printing Bureau, 1909, p. 394) was made by Captain A. Simpson. The site is shown on Admiralty Chart, no. 2190, print in B.C. Archives.
on the prices, which were a blanket and a head of tobacco per beaver—the same price as at Fort Simpson. Work managed to trade thirty-four beaver and fifty-three martens before the flocking gulls announced the arrival of fish. Then the indians' interest in trade ceased. Work decided to cruise elsewhere and to come back in a month or two. They had hardly got out of the straits and were bearing down on Clemanculty when a sail was observed from the direction of Fort Simpson. It was the American brig Europa, commanded by Captain Allan. Allan came aboard the Lama and reported that he left the Sandwich Islands in February and had so far traded only a few skins.

From March 26th to 31st, the ships lay at anchor near one another at Clemanculty. All this time the Indians had been going from one ship to the other dickering over prices. Very few furs were traded and Work was completely out of patience with the whole situation. On April 1st he took a rowboat and party across to Fort Simpson to confer with James Birnie. The trip took 5¼ hours and is nearer the fifteen miles as shown on the chart than the eight miles mentioned by Work. He returned the next day and at noon met the Lama coming out to meet him. A sou'easter brewing,

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489 Clemanculty or Clemcitty has not been positively identified. It may be Tlehonsiti on Tongass Island just east of Cape Fox, a place which the Tongass Indians were wont to visit on their way to the Nass (cf. Geog. Dict. of Alaska, p. 682).

490 Lewis & Dryden op. cit., p. 14, Morton reports that another American vessel the Bolivar, was on the coast that season (cf. Morton, op. cit., p. 726)
McNeill decided to run to Kaigani Harbor for shelter. As luck would have it, the Europa followed them in. Here, the two vessels stayed until April 8th. Neither had traded very much.

On April 8th, the Lama towed out again. So did the Europa. By nightfall the latter was some distance ahead. Work decided to sail south among the islands of the coast of British Columbia. In the morning they entered Canal di Principe down which they sailed to Seal Harbor at its southern end. They had seen the Europa at anchor in a bay in the morning. She had come out to follow them but up to this time had not caught up with the Lama. At Seal Harbor they fired guns to announce their arrival to the Indians. The natives arrived next day with news that their chief had gone to Port McLoughlin with most of their furs.

Since but few furs were therefore available at Seal Harbor, Work decided to sail south to Vancouver Island and touch at Nahwitti Harbor. Again they were delayed by unfavorable winds so that it was not until April 16th that they hauled out around the south end of Banks Island. The next evening they were off Cape Swaine making only two knots in a very light wind. Sunday, April 19th, saw them eight or ten miles off Vancouver Island, at the entrance to Queen

491 Behind Banks Island and now called Princip Channel, cf., Admiralty Chart 2025, (print in B.C. Archives).

492 Not identified.

493 Nahwitti Harbor is on the northeast coast of Vancouver Island. It was later the site of Fort Rupert.
Charlotte Sound. On Monday, they arrived at Nahwitti. It had been a slow tedious trip of one hundred and forty miles in light and variable winds.

At Nahwitti they did a little trading, securing a few land otter and marten but more mink than anything else. They also traded some "hiaquas" or shell money, consisting of strings of shells, worth so much a fathom. The Europa arrived about noon on Wednesday, April 22nd. Allan had followed them to Seal Harbor but obtained few furs there. He had been fortunate enough to get fair winds to enable him to reach Nahwitti in a thirty-hour sail, much to Work's disgust, who hoped to have all the furs before the Europa arrived.

Again the exasperating parade of Indians began from boat to boat. "It is annoying in the extreme," wrote Work, "to see the advantage which the black vagabonds endeavour to make of this circumstance." He yearned for the establishment of uniform prices between himself and Allan.

On April 25th, the sight of a freshly killed beaver brought out his past years' training as a trapper. It made him look critically at the surrounding country as a trapping ground for beaver. "There is a small river," wrote Work, "[which] falls into the head of the harbor which appears remarkably [sic] well adapted for them...."

The end of April arrived. Work was still at Nahwitti.

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495 Work, op. cit., entry for April 23, 1835.

496 Ibid., entry for April 25, 1835.
He was on the horns of a dilemma. This place was a principal centre for trade. Other Indian tribes to whom messages had been sent were expected daily, but had failed to arrive. He would like to leave, but could not risk leaving the Europa behind to gather in any furs that these long-expected Indians might bring. To date Work had traded, eight beaver, twenty-seven land otter, twenty marten, one hundred and eleven mink, one sea-otter pup.

On the 1st of May, he gave up hope of the other Indians arriving and weighed anchor. That evening they were off Cape Scott, the northern tip of Vancouver Island, in a nasty cross sea formed by a combination of the tide and a brisk northwest wind. In the morning of May 2nd, the Lama was abreast of Calvert Island. No sign was to be seen of the Europa. Work supposed that she had gone to Naspatti. Work, himself, intended returning to the Nass in the hopes of picking up the furs which he failed to get on his previous visit. The Lama sailed north in fog and unfavorable wind. By May 9th, they were off Skidegate Harbor, on the east coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands. The Indians were at first too shy to come aboard and Work suggests that the reason may have been that they feared reprisals for the "Vancouver" affair since they were related to the guilty tribe. Two days later the Lama moved up the inlet at Skidegate about five

497 In his entry for April 25th, Work spoke of Naspatti as being a harbor to the southward. On May 2nd, he mentions Naspatti as near Woody Point, which identifies this place as Nasparti, near Woody Point or Cape Cook, on the west coast of Vancouver Island (cf., British Columbia Pilot, London, Hydrographic Office, The Admiralty, 1888, p. 333.)
miles, to a good anchorage. Here, they traded a little fur and bought some potatoes. Work noted that, while these people spoke the same language as those who plundered the schooner Vancouver, they did not seem to possess any of the loot from her.

On May 13th, they set sail from Skidegate. Work had intended to visit an anchorage called Skiddoon Harbour on the West Side of Banks Island. However, the winds were too light and variable so that he decided to sail directly to the Nass in order to beat the Europa there. They reached the Nass at midnight on May 15th and found the Europa already at anchor. Captain Allan had already done some trading. Work had to increase his prices, since Allan's blankets were admittedly better than his. The price of one large beaver was one blanket, three gallons of Indian rum, and six heads of tobacco or altogether seven gallons of rum. The Indians swarmed to the Lama to get the benefit of these prices. Then Captain Allan arrived to find out the Hudson's Bay tariff. He met their scale and Work raised his again to a blanket, five gallons of rum, and ten heads of tobacco, remarking as he did so that if the Europa's blankets were better, the Lama's rum and tobacco were more potent. Trading was dilatory for some days, since, as Work wrote, "The natives have got such an ample supply of liquor, that they are in no hurry."

498 This spot has not been identified. The B.C. Pilot does not list any reasonable anchorages on the west side of Banks Island.

499 Indian rum consisted of rum and water. Work was certainly breaking the Treaty of 1825 which forbade the sale of liquor to the Indians.

500 Work, Journal 14, entry for May 18, 1835.
Captain Allan got under way in the forenoon of May 19th, but returned again to his anchorage. Work had intended to follow him rather than continue trading at these fantastic prices and take his chance of getting the remaining furs later at a lower price at the Fort. Finally, on the 21st, the Lama did set sail. Altogether they had traded: eight sea-otter, eleven land-otter, two hundred and five beaver, fifty-nine bear, fifty-three marten, three marten robes. Work was under the impression that the Europa might have succeeded in getting a few more skins than he did.

It was not until May 23rd, that they came abreast of Fort Simpson. Work and Captain McNeill proceeded ashore in a small boat, while the Lama stood off and on. Later McNeill returned alone with a further supply of trade blankets and orders to proceed to Nahwitti to trade with the tribes they had missed. He had further orders to be back in time to sail for the Columbia in September. Work had decided to stay ashore at Fort Simpson to speed the completion of the fort.

One of Work's first cares was to supervise the clearing of ground for potato planting. The task was a terrible one, since the ground was full of the typical stumps and matted roots of the northern coast. By great effort, five-eighths of an acre had been already cleared and planted. Now his men were engaged on a similar plot. One day, one of their axes was stolen by a visiting Indian. His chief interfered on behalf of the Company and the thief shot and killed the chief. This divided the band (a party of Cumshewa
Indians from Cumshewa Inlet on the Queen Charlotte Islands) into two groups, one favoring the chief and the other the malefactor. Outside the Fort, these Indians argued and quarrelled. Finally, they got down to shooting at one another. At last they held a parley and decided against the murderer. He managed to escape but was declared an exile and his property confiscated. While this went on the whites ceased work and stayed within the confines of the fort, not knowing when the violence of these Indians might be directed against them. It was not until June 1st, that these natives finally left the locality. The stolen axe had not been returned and Work at the time did not press the matter, feeling that enough violence had been committed. However, it was his opinion that sooner or later they would have to be punished since they might interpret Hudson's Bay forbearance as weakness.

Once more the daily routine went on—draining, leveling and hoeing the land. Then again they were interrupted and called within the protection of the fort by an arrival of Masset Indians; some going home from the Nass and some just arriving from the Queen Charlottes. There were thirty canoes in all. Work was taking no chances of a surprise attack. It was at this time that he saw the first article from the looted Vancouver, a teacup which the Indians brazenly offered for sale. On the next day, ninety-one canoes of the Fort Simpson Indians returned from the Nass River. On June 8th, the Massets left. That day Work found out that this was the tribe which had plundered the schooner, for the Masset chief came to the Fort gates in a halfhearted attempt to patch things up.
Work tried to lure him inside where he could be punished, but without success. Later he learned that unexpected consequences might have followed, had he been successful in seizing the Masset chief. The Fort Simpson Indians had been waiting and hoping that the seizure might take place and then they had intended to attack and pillage the leaderless Massets.

On June 12th, news was brought that four vessels were in Kaigani Harbor. The Lama, the Europa, the American brig Bolivar, and an unidentified vessel commanded by a Captain Bancroft.

During the month of June, amidst interruptions, the routine work of the fort was carried on. The development of the garden continued. The rest of the potatoes were planted and seven hundred cabbage plants as well. Charcoal pits were dug, filled and fired to furnish charcoal for the ever-busy blacksmith. The temporary bark roofs on the buildings were replaced with permanent ones. The clearing around the fort was completed and stumps and logs cleared away.

Indians kept coming and going so that a certain amount of trading took place, limited however, by the news that competitors were in the neighborhood. Work had attempted to lower the tariff to the usual one of a blanket per beaver, and then had to raise it to a blanket and three gallons of rum. He consoled himself with the thought that prices could be lowered as soon as American competition ceased. It is interesting to note that a considerable supply of potatoes was exchanged from the Indians. All through this journal,
Work noticed the quarrelsome nature of these natives. He was continually witnessing murders, or watching pitched battles with firearms break out between families or tribes.

In July, the garden began to yield a few radishes, lettuce and cress. The potatoes had begun to show a few weeks before but were growing very slowly in the wet, cold, peaty soil. Not until July 12th did they begin to flower.

On the 2nd of August, Work again reported on the garden. The potatoes were very uneven. Peas were coming along well. The Indian corn which had been planted did not appear to be going to ripen. In August, Work made his last garden report for that first year. Potatoes had after all, done fairly well, but had gone partly to tops. The cabbages and carrots were very successful.

On July 3, 1835, the American brig Bolivar, commanded by Captain Dominus arrived. She had been at Kaigani with the Europa and the Lama. All three ships had gone to Fort McLoughlin. From the latter place, the Bolivar and the Lama had proceeded to Nahwitti, where each secured between five hundred and six hundred beaver. Dominus announced that another American ship intended to visit the coast during the next season. The news made Work very pessimistic. His thoughts ran in this vein. The more competition which existed, the less profit was possible. Moreover the supply of beaver was already becoming depleted. Then to make a bad situation worse, he felt that the Americans looked upon this coast trade as a stop-gap, whereas it was a part of the essential economy of the Hudson's Bay Company. The American ships sold most
of their cargo in the Sandwich Islands and then visited the Russians in Alaska. What they had left, they dumped on the Indians for whatever it would bring, since their profits were already made. It is not possible to ascertain whether Work knew of the solution to the problem—namely an agreement between the Russian American Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. However, it was not until an agreement was carried out in 1839 between these Companies, that the latter could forget the threat of American competition.

Captain McNeill arrived in the Lama from Nahwitti on July 4th. He had visited that place as well as Kaigani and Fort McLoughlin as reported. Most of his trading had been done at Nahwitti. All furs in the Lama were brought ashore at Fort Simpson. The salmon season was about to start on the coast so that Work supplied McNeill with considerable salt with orders to secure fish if possible, "but as he has our opponents to look after he is directed not to run the risk of losing beaver for the sake of Salmon." On July 11th, the Lama in company with the Bolivar, set sail for Kaigani. The next day some Indians arrived with the first fresh salmon of the season. The fresh fish was a welcome change from the tedious diet of salted salmon. Day after day the Indians brought an increasing amount of fresh or newly-dried salmon to the Fort. Work lamented that his people had no salmon nets of their own to secure these fish, which were


502 Work, op. cit., entry for July 8, 1835.
now plentiful as July advanced. So plentiful did they become, that Dr. Kennedy with a fair degree of success, went out spearing salmon by torchlight.

While salmon were secured and stored for winter provender, the men continued work in and around the Fort. The main dwelling house was floored and partitioned; two hundred barrels of charcoal were manufactured for the blacksmith. On July 26th, the men started clearing the landing place of stumps and branches. This proved a tedious and difficult task since the stumps proved too heavy to float and too wet to burn. All debris had, therefore, to be dragged laboriously away. No sooner was this completed than they commenced squaring timber for a kitchen, making ladders for the gallery inside the stockade, and manufacturing tables and bedsteads for the dwelling-house.

During August, the Indians began to bring an increasing amount of fur. On August 14th, a canoe of Stikine Indians sold Work seventy-six beaver, one beaver robe and another of marten. These Indians kept back twenty beaver skins which they traded with the local Indians for slaves. Slavery was still common among the Indians on the whole coast. These natives also brought the welcome news that the trading goods of the Lama and the Europa were nearly exhausted, the latter had even sold the ship's muskets for furs. This news was welcome since it showed that McNeill had run into some good trading and that Captain Allan although successful, must now leave the coast. The Bolivar had already set sail on August 10th for California, where Captain Dominus intended to trade
and to hunt sea-otter.

On August 25th, both the Lama and the Europa arrived at Fort Simpson from Tongass. As expected both ships had a surprising quantity of fur. The Lama had secured: thirty-eight sea-otter, nine land-otter, thirty-one bear, forty-six marten, thirty-eight mink, seven hundred and seventeen beaver. The large number of beaver was especially welcome since Work had only dared to hope for about two hundred. McNeill had fallen in with a large band of Stikine Indians at Tongass, where they had come to buy slaves. The place was an established slave market. Work was at a loss to understand why the Indians had not sold the bulk of their fur to the Russian post at Stikine. His only surmise was that the Indians had quarreled with the Russians or had heard of the higher prices offered by the competing ships. He confirmed the story that Allan had sold nearly everything he had, even his ship's provisions. The Fort, too, was running out of trade goods, especially blankets, and moreover, was short of supplies for the men. Work hoped that the supply ship would arrive before the Lama had to leave for the Columbia. In this shortage, the Europa was able to help out, since Captain Allan sold Work the last of his surplus supplies— one thousand pounds of tobacco, three barrels of beef, one of pork and four boxes of soap.

On Monday August 31st, Work spent his day in re-engaging the men. Some refused to sign again, wishing to return to Canada. A few wanted higher pay. Of those which he re-engaged none objected to Fort Simpson, but not one would
agree to go to Fort McLoughlin. Enough men were signed on for the season. McLoughlin had recommended fifteen as a sufficient number but in view of the tasks still to be done and the presence of such large numbers of hostile Indians, Work arranged for twenty men and two gentlemen (Messrs. Kennedy and Birnie). Ten men would return to the Columbia. In the next few days, all furs were packed and the 1835 inventory made up for the Lama and the Fort. Altogether 1839 beaver and a good variety of other skins had been secured. Added to these was a quantity of whale oil and castoreum. Work estimated the total value at £5,700, which was better than he expected, in the face of such active opposition.

On September 8th, the Lama with Work aboard, set sail for Fort Vancouver. Work took with them twenty bags of pease and one hundred and twenty pounds of grease for Fort McLoughlin lest anything happen to prevent the annual supply ship reaching that place. He also planned to visit Skidegate to secure a quantity of potatoes for Fort McLoughlin but was prevented from doing so. With a favorable wind, the Lama ran in close to Fort McLoughlin on August 9th, and Work went on ahead to the Fort in a small boat. The ship reached there the next afternoon.

Work had planned to take the furs out to the ship by small boat instead of bringing the ship up the difficult passage to the Fort. He abandoned this idea because the Indians were definitely unfriendly. They blamed the establishment of the Fort for the lower prices they had received for furs, since competing vessels did not come in so often. They
blamed the Fort for taking their place as middle men in the fur trade between the mountain Indians and the white men. When the inventory was taken here, Work found that the McLoughlin returns consisted of 1051 large beaver and some other skins, principally three hundred marten. The estimated value of these returns was £2,095, less than last year, but not bad in view of the "hot opposition". For both Forts Simpson and McLoughlin, Work stressed the need of quantities of cheap bright trade goods such as calico, handkerchiefs, vermilion and combs to obtain the small furs which were offered for sale.

At Fort McLoughlin only six men would re-engage. In Work's opinion this was due to the bad food and in particular the method of smoking salmon. The duties there were actually lighter than at Fort Simpson since the Fort was now completed. Work still lamented not calling in at Skidegate for potatoes; however, a favorable wind to Milbanke Sound and the necessity of having to call in at Fort Langley later prevented him from doing so. Work's last instruction to Manson was that he should raise his price for beaver to one blanket and one gallon of rum.

On September 13th, they set sail for Fort Langley.

503 The Stikine Indians had expressed the same hostility to the Hudson's Bay Company's attempt to establish a post up the Stikine River (cf., Davidson, Donald C., "Hudson's Bay and Russian American Relations" in B.C.H.Q., vol. 5, p. 42).

504 The method of curing salmon at Fort McLoughlin consisted of drying them in smoke. No further details of this have been found to add to Work's explanation. (cf., Journal 16, entry for September 7, 1835).
Two days later they were off Scott's Islands (twenty miles west of Cape Scott at the northern end of Vancouver Island). The wind was light with rainy, hazy weather. In the morning of the 18th, they were fifteen miles off Nootka Sound and maintained that distance off the land all day. On the 19th and 20th of September, they beat back and forth in fog, off the Straits of Juan de Fuca, before entering and anchoring at Neah Bay. It was not until the 23rd, that they got as far as Dungeness at 11 o'clock in the morning and to Rosario Strait in the late afternoon.

No entry appears in Work's fifteenth journal for Thursday, September 24th. He had left the ship at Point Roberts at 2 P.M. in the vessel's long boat and gig, and after travelling all night arrived at Fort Langley before breakfast on Friday morning. His purpose was to secure another boat known to be at the Fort and by hiring some big Indian canoes, move all the furs and salt salmon down the river and to save the Lama the difficult and often tedious job of moving upstream. The plan had to be abandoned since the boat proved unseaworthy and the canoes could not be obtained. Word was sent to McNeill to bring the Lama up to the Fort.

Work does not give the amount of furs taken at Langley but mentions that the fur returns and salmon pack were not very satisfactory, due in the opinion of James Yale who was in charge of the fort, to competition in the case of the

Work was not sure of his nautical terms for he speaks of "knots an hour". (cf., Work, op. cit., entry for September 16, 1835).
former and the poor run of good salmon in the latter. He spent the day with Yale going over the farm and the fields around the Fort.

It was not until the 2nd of October that the Lama finally arrived. In the meantime instructions arrived from Dr. McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver, dated September 7th, directing Work to proceed with the Lama to Nisqually after loading the Fort Langley returns. He was ordered to take there twelve barrels of salmon and thirty-five bushels of pease and to load all spare grain with the rest of the salmon for the Columbia. Work was a little confounded by the last instruction since the grain was not yet threshed and even if it had been, he doubted the capacity of the Lama to carry it all. Finally, Work was ordered to quit the Lama at Nisqually and proceed overland to take charge of the annual supply ship for the north since the ship from England arrived too late to make the trip up the coast.

Work decided to act independently of McLoughlin’s orders by sending the Lama directly to the Columbia so as not to cause an additional delay at Nisqually. The barrels of salmon and the supply of pease for Nisqually, would be sent there by a large Indian canoe. The Nisqually furs could go overland to the Columbia by the returning men for whom there

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506 By good salmon, Yale probably means the sock-eye for which the river is famous.

507 A good description of the planting and the yield for 1835 is given in his Journal (cf., Journal 15, entry for September 26, 1835).

508 The Ganymede which reached Fort Vancouver, July 30, 1835, H.B.S., IV, p. 137.
was no room on the Lama anyway.

By October 7, 1835, the canoes had been purchased and the Lama was ready to sail. It was not until the 12th that they groped their way through fog to the mouth of the river, going aground and warping off once on the way. The canoes for Nisqually were towed behind the Lama. All went well until that night, when the canoes were damaged by surf beyond repair. This destroyed Work's carefully laid plan. He now decided to get a canoe from the Indians and leave the Lama, and proceed to Nisqually and thence overland to the Columbia, since the Lama on arrival at Fort Vancouver must go back to the coast immediately with winter supplies for the posts, and certain preparations were necessary.

On October 15th, they anchored off Port Townsend and secured two canoes of very indifferent quality. The next day Work left instructions for McNeill to proceed to the Columbia without delay, ascend the River to Vancouver if the vessel for England had not come downstream to Fort George, or if it had to remain at the latter place awaiting instructions. With the goods for Nisqually (not including the salmon) he set off for the Fort and arrived there on the 19th. Here, Work found Kittson, who was in charge, and his people, all in good health. He planned to leave the next day with two men, a boy and an Indian. His men were to follow with the furs, about ten packs, on the 22nd.

Following the usual route from the head of Puget Sound, he reached the Cowlitz River on the October 22nd. After a short delay caused by a missing canoe and the "dieing" wife of the guide, he proceeded down the Cowlitz to the
Columbia. Heavy rain which changed to snow, made their journey wet and miserable, soaking and benumbing the party. All along the banks the heavy wet snow flattened the willows and tore the limbs off the larger trees. On October 24th, at 4 P.M. he reached Fort Vancouver. Word was sent on October 26th to Fort George to direct McNeill to bring the Lama up the river. On the 27th, the last of Work's fifteen journals breaks off.
CHAPTER XI

Fort Simpson and Fort Victoria,
1836-1861.

John Work left the Columbia River in January 1836, to return to Fort Simpson where he arrived on board the Lama on February 20th. Here, he set up his headquarters and exercised supervision over the posts and shipping on the coast. His control was not complete, or to express it more exactly, Work's position was that of a field superintendent subject to the whim of John McLoughlin, who did not hesitate to change arrangements from time to time. Chief Factor Duncan Finlayson, who arrived on the coast in 1831, was given command of the shipping until he left the Columbia in 1837. After Finlayson left, James Douglas began to carry out much the same duties, so that between the two, Work found his powers restricted. However, until 1840, Work was regularly employed at Fort Simpson and usually, as a check of his letters show, brought the coast returns to Fort Vancouver each fall.

Until the agreement with the Russian American Fur Company was reached in 1839, Work had to put up with the

509 Work to E. Ermatinger, Columbia River, January 1, 1836, (original in B.C. Archives).

510 Duncan Finlayson was equal in rank to John McLoughlin and seems to have been sent out as McLoughlin's second-in-command, with the idea of succeeding him at some later date. He left the Columbia in 1837, (cf. H.B.S., IV, p. xcviii,ff).

511 Sage, Douglas, p. 88.
exasperating competition of American ships. In 1836 two vessels were on the coast, so that the extravagant prices of 1835 and the unlimited sale of liquor had to be continued. The Hudson's Bay Company even descended to the practice of stretching the blankets which were sold to the Indians in order to match the size of those sold by the Americans. To make matters worse for trade, a small-pox epidemic spread among the Indians. But even under these adverse circumstances the combined operations of ships and northern posts showed a profit of £2962 for the outfit of 1836.

The year 1837 was more fortunate for the trade. Small-pox was still rampant among the natives, but no American ships appeared that year. Work's accounts showed nearly double the profit of the previous year; £5162 in all, from ships and posts. Work's furlough fell due in 1837-8. For some time he had been playing with the idea of visiting Canada and even thought of a trip to England. The thought of taking his family to a land where they might not fit in, or the alternative of being separated from them, deterred him from going. However, the winter of 1837-8 provided Work

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512 The Lagrange (Captain Snow) and the Peabody (Captain Moore).

513 McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, November 15, 1836, in H.B.S. IV, p. 162.

514 H.B.S., IV, p. 286.

515 Loc. cit. See also Work to E. Ermatinger, N.W. Coast America, February 10, 1838, (original in B.C. Archives)

516 Work to Simpson, March 17, 1834. Simpson Correspondence, Hudson's Bay Archives, D.4/127. See also Tod to E. Ermatinger, Oxford House, July 12, 1838, in Ermatinger Papers, p. 51.
with a certain amount of excitement, unpleasant though it was. Mutiny broke out on the steamer Beaver, while it was laid up that winter at Fort Simpson. The whole crew, except mates, carpenter, cook and wood-cutters were involved. Work stated in a letter to Edward Ermatinger, that the reason for the mutiny was the fact that the crew objected to serving under a Yankee master, Captain McNeill. In its initial stages, the trouble seemed to have been confined to two members of the crew whom McNeill flogged for their insolent attitude. This made the whole crew mutiny and Work was called in to settle the problem. Nothing that Work could do would make them serve under McNeill. Douglas attached the following confidential report to his letter of October 18, 1838 to the Governor and Committee in London:

Mr. Work seems to have been staggered, by the general discontent and decided tone of the rioters, & being at the same time, anxious, to get the vessel ready for sea, as the season was advancing, he yielded to their unjustifiable demands so far, as to assume the command of the vessel himself; when order was restored on board, and all hands promptly returned to duty. In this state with Mr. Work Master, and McNeill a simple passenger, the vessel reached Fort Nisqually,...

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517 Work to E. Ermatinger, N.W. Coast America, February 10, 1838, (original in B.C. Archives).


519 This excerpt is from attachment 4 appended to Douglas's letter as cited in the preceding note. It was secured through Dr. Lamb.
At Nisqually, four of the men were taken into custody, McNeill was reinstated in command and Work returned to Fort Simpson.

Nothing very much has been found about Work's movements at Fort Simpson during 1838. Douglas ordered him to utilize the Beaver "exploring the Canals and inlets of Queen Charlotte's Sound". In October 1839 Work paid one of his periodic visits to Fort Vancouver on the steamer Beaver, probably to bring in the annual returns from Fort Simpson and the other northern posts. While on the Columbia he assisted in surveying property for the Puget Sound Agricultural Company at Cowlitz, a survey which assisted the Hudson's Bay in establishing its claim before the joint commission after the boundary question was settled in 1846. This project was organized by McLoughlin in 1838-39 during his stay in England. In 1840 its capitalization was fixed at £200,000 to be held in £100 shares by the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. It is not known whether John Work invested in the venture.

The formation of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company dovetailed with the agreement between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Russian American Fur Company in 1839, an agreement which was to make a considerable change in Work's position on the coast. Besides the clauses of the agreement already

520 Douglas to Governor and Committee, Fort Vancouver, October 18, 1838, (H.B.S., IV, p. 245).

521 Work to Ermatinger, Steamer Beaver, October 24, 1839. (originals in B.C. Archives).

522 Archibald McDonald to E. Ermatinger, Fort Colville, April 2nd, 1840 (in Letters to Edward Ermatinger 1828-1856, pp. 96-97). See also Bancroft, History of Northwest Coast, vol. 2, p. 616.
cited, the claims which the Hudson's Bay Company had made against the Russian American Company for their refusal to allow Ogden to build a post on the Stikine in 1834, were now withdrawn. The Hudson's Bay Company planned to proceed immediately with the occupation of the Russian post at Stikine and the erection of other forts on the leased territory. Accordingly Douglas took charge for the first year after the agreement, going north to Sitka to arrange matters with the Russians and then returning to take over the fort at Stikine from them and to build Port Taku. When he returned to Port Vancouver he found his commission as Chief Factor awaiting him. At the same time Captain McNeill was made Chief Trader in charge of the Beaver. Between McNeill as shipmaster-trader on the one hand and Douglas as supervisor of the trade with the Russians on the other, Work lost control of everything of importance except Fort Simpson. So, at least, it seemed to him:

Here I fill, with the exception of the Depots, one of the most important situations in the Country, before I came to it it had created a heavy loss since then it has realized a handsome gain. Notwithstanding the opposition and other difficulties we had to contend with yet this it seems did not give satisfaction. Mr. Douglas was sent on here last summer as superintendent. [sic] ...." 525

Of this demotion, if it can be so termed, no clear-cut statement can be found. There is certain evidence that

523 See Chapter I, pp. 16-17. The full text of this agreement is to be found in Oliver, Canadian North-West, vol. 2, pp. 791-96.

524 Oliver, op. cit., p. 785.

525 Work to Edward Ermatinger, Fort Simpson, February 15, 1841, (original in B.C. Archives).
Work had authority beyond the stockade of Fort Simpson. For example, he was receiving agent for bills of exchange in favor of the Hudson's Bay Company from the Russian American concern. Besides this, it is obvious from a study of the Fort Simpson Letter-book of 1841-44 that Fort Simpson was the distributing centre for Forts Stikine, Taku and McLoughlin. To all of these posts, on occasion during this period, Work sent or withheld supplies and collected returns. On the other hand, it is equally clear that for a time Work lost control and supervision of shipping and the northern posts.

On May 16, 1842, he wrote as follows to McLoughlin,

> Since I was superseded in 1840 I am left in total ignorance of those plans [Taku] and also of the Steamer so that I have no means of knowing how affairs go or how the balances are made out.  

Two years later he wrote in the same vein,

> Since I was degraded in 1840 and the charge I previously held taken out of my hands I have been kept ignorant of the affairs of the Steamer and posts on the coast, except this place....

Another indication of a certain loss of position lies in the fact that a search of his correspondence reveals the fact that between the years 1840 and 1845 he seems to have been immured at Fort Simpson. Before and after those dates he came south

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526 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, September 6, 1841, in Fort Simpson, Correspondence outward, 1841-1844. Similar letters occur in the same volume.

527 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, May 16, 1842, in Fort Simpson, Correspondence outward, 1841-44.

528 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, February 26, 1844, in Fort Simpson, Correspondence outward.
to Fort Vancouver regularly. Wrote John Tod to Ermatinger,

...he [Work] frets & worries himself at the idea of being superseded in his charge by a person subordinate to himself—Now when I leave this, were they to put a shoe black in my place it would not give me one moments uneasiness. 529

This evidence seems somewhat contradictory, but it must be understood that McLoughlin was pretty much a law unto himself and could and did increase or cut down the amount of authority allowed to his subordinates.

Just why poor Work was put in the shade is not clear. It seems to be due to a number of causes. For a time he suffered an eclipse between the rising power of Douglas on the one hand and McNeill on the other. Then three other things brought a shadow on his reputation—things which were not directly his fault but which cast doubt on his ability as an administrator of a considerable area. These were the mutiny on the Beaver in 1837, the difference of opinion over the relative merits of ships and posts between McLoughlin and Simpson into which Work was drawn, and lastly a rousing quarrel between McLoughlin and Work over trade policies in 1844. The first of these three has already been dealt with. The second came about during and after the visit by Simpson to the Alaskan coast in 1841. As a result of this trip Sir George became thoroughly convinced that the Company would be well advised to abandon Forts Stikine and Taku in favor of an

529 Tod to E. Ermatinger. Thomsons River, March 20, 1843, in Ermatinger Papers. The "person subordinate" would appear to be Capt. McNeill.
annual trading expedition by the steamer Beaver. McLoughlin took the opposite view. When the Governor visited Fort Simpson he discussed the matter with Work, Douglas and McNeill. What Work said at that meeting is not recorded but it is obvious that he felt trapped between the Governor's wishes and those of his immediate superior, McLoughlin. He wrote to the latter on May 16, 1842 and reported his views. His letter does not convey a clear-cut opinion. He expresses doubt as to the capability and reliability of the Beaver, but he also points out that the steamer might save wages, time and personnel. It seems clear that McLoughlin doubted Work's support of his opinion. These doubts would not help Work's reputation in the eyes of the irascible John McLoughlin.

The third of these incidents lies in the alleged failure of Work to carry out McLoughlin's instructions. McLoughlin blamed Work for not sending the Beaver to the northern rendezvous during the winter (Forts McLoughlin and Taku had been abandoned in 1843). Work's reply was that the opposition in Queen Charlotte Sound had to be dealt with or furs would be lost, that the northern rendezvous had been visited in September and the Indians would not be destitute of the means of hunting. Moreover, the natives did but little

530 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, May 16, 1842, in Fort Simpson, Correspondence outward, 1841-44.

531 American Whaling ships appeared in 1843 and wintered on the coast. They carried a small amount of trade goods and reported that they had succeeded in getting 300 beaver and 30 sea-otter. Work thought they exaggerated.
hunting in the winter. He claimed that Captain Duncan of the Beaver knew of this opposition and had told McLoughlin of it. McLoughlin also blamed Work for allowing the steamer to bring three men involved in the murder of John McLoughlin Jr., south to Nisqually and then criticised him for having then allowed the Beaver to loiter there and at Victoria and Fort Langley, while the opposition preyed on the trade at Queen Charlotte Sound. Work's reply to this was that he had commanded Manson and Captain Duncan to bring the steamer to Point Mudge, and to go beyond this point only if the Cadboro (in tow) found the wind unfavorable to enable her to sail to Nisqually in time to catch the Spring Express to send the three men east for trial. Work alleged that the wind had not been unfavorable and that Manson had been wrong in taking Duncan and the Beaver to Nisqually. Moreover, Work insisted that Manson should have accepted the blame himself when he arrived at Fort Vancouver with the men. Certainly, Work's instructions to Manson and to Duncan were quite definite, but McLoughlin chose to blame Work for not insisting that Duncan carry out his orders. It might be noted here that if McLoughlin knew of the presence of the Beaver at Nisqually it would have been easier for him to insist, than it would have been for Work at Fort Simpson to do so. The last straw for Work was a set of six notes from McLoughlin which minutely set down standing rules for the steamer. Work's reply

532 Certainly Work thought so (cf. Work to Simpson, Fort Simpson, October 8, 1844, Hudson's Bay Archives, D.5/12, #402).
to McLoughlin did not mince words,

I have been some 20 years under your orders and you have not before found it necessary to censure me for any deviation from instructions.

You write to me in detail as if I had never known anything at all about the business or indeed taken any interest in it. Nevertheless your Instructions shall be adhered to the letter so far as it rests with me; but I shall decline being responsible for the result. 533

In a private letter Work begged McLoughlin in a more subdued tone to reverse his judgment and to remember what effect such an adverse report would have on his reputation at headquarters, for the former knew that McLoughlin would report to Simpson on the matter. Work felt strongly enough to present his side of the case to Simpson personally.

How Simpson felt we do not know, but it is reasonable to expect that he did not blame Work too much. The governor himself had reason to doubt McLoughlin's own judgment in two matters, the first, the latter's mistrust of the Beaver, and more important still, the question as to whether posts or ships were the more important, in coastal trade. Added to these was the matter of the murder of McLoughlin's son, John McLoughlin, Jr. at Stikine in 1842. Here, Simpson and McLoughlin fell out completely in the matter of bringing the

533 Work to McLoughlin April 27, 1844, in Fort Simpson Correspondence outward, 1841-44.

534 McLoughlin did write in a highly critical vein and appended a copy of his letter to Work, (McLoughlin to Simpson, Fort Vancouver, April 7, 1844, Hudson's Bay Archives, D.5/11, #241.)

535 Work to Simpson, Fort Simpson, October 8, 1844, (original in B.C. Archives).
murderer or murderers to justice. Indeed, one wonders whether or not the tragic affair did not undermine McLoughlin's judgment completely. Certainly his letters to Fort Simpson seem often to contain little more than a constant urging that Work should abandon all else to assist him to secure justice for his murdered son.

The unfortunate young man had been in charge of Stikine and had been murdered in the spring of 1842. When news of the tragedy reached Work at Fort Simpson, he sent Roderick Finlayson north to take charge and to investigate. Before Finlayson arrived, Simpson reached Stikine and took charge. He held an investigation and apparently came to the conclusion that the murder had taken place under sufficiently curious circumstances to warrant hushing up the whole matter. McLoughlin was equally determined to bring all the offenders to justice and Work was busy during 1842 and 1843 collecting affidavits and rounding up the personnel of Stikine to be sent south for interrogation and possible trial. It was for the purpose of sending south on the Beaver, three men who had fled to the Russians at Sitka, that Work was criticized so roundly by McLoughlin in 1844. Work had expressed sympathy to McLoughlin and had assisted him in every way. "From the very first," wrote Work, "I had but one opinion in the melancholy affair, that it was the bounden duty of every person to

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536 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, May 19, 1842, Fort Simpson Correspondence outward, 1841-44.
do his utmost to bring the Murderer or Murderers to justice...." It was to him more than an isolated murder but something which might happen again in some isolated post, so that it was more than ever desirable to make an example of the men concerned.

Trade at Fort Simpson and its adjacent posts varied considerably during these years. In 1841 Work reported a considerable falling off. The next year produced only one-half of the revenue. This decline was not due to American competition, which had stopped soon after the Russo-Hudson's Bay agreement in 1839. Work blamed it not only on the decrease of prices which followed the cessation of this competition, but upon the stopping of the liquor traffic with the Indians. Roderick Finlayson told of his own experience at Fort Simpson,

In the Autumn of 1842, the liquor trade according to our agreement with the Russian Comp'y was entirely stopped. I was then a trader at Fort Simpson, and for several months the trade was at a standstill, the natives keeping their furs stating that they could not part with them unless we gave them liquor....By way of inducing us to reopen the liquor traffic, large body of Indians assembled before the Port and spread their most valuable furs such as Sea otters, beaver, silver fox etc., as a carpet over a large space, invited us to view this fine display and saying we could get them at

537 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, August 3, 1843, Fort Simpson, Correspondence outward, 1841-44.


539 Cf. Finlayson, Roderick, History of Vancouver Island and the Northwest Coast. (typed copy in B.C. Archives) P. 11.
our own price, provided we gave them liquor. Finding this was of no use, they took them away, and threatened to keep us prisoners within the Fort. They afterwards went to Sitka with their furs, but finding they could not get any liquor there either, they at last opened trade gradually.... 540

Indian wars were also a cause for this decline. But whatever the reason, Work retained a supply of rum, treaty or no treaty, to contend with American competitors if they appeared again on the coast.

In 1843 American whalers appeared off the coast and stayed until the following spring. They caused Work some alarm and were one of the causes for McLoughlin's acrimonious letter in 1844, but in spite of this opposition, Work reported that the trade was £1,000 better than 1842. Only about a dozen skins had been received from the Milbanke Indians and nothing from the north. Work grumbled against the stopping of the liquor trade and claimed that the greater amount of trade was due only to "greater exertion of our own Indians". Work stated that the 1844 returns were just an estimated £21 less profitable than those of the previous year. In a letter to Donald Ross, Work gave the returns in beaver for the three years up to 1848, for Fort Simpson, the Steamer and Fort Stikine. They are about the same, 1847 being slightly the highest, with a total return of £13,600.

540 Finlayson, op. cit., p. 16.
541 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, July 6, 1842, Fort Simpson, Correspondence outward, 1841-44.
542 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, September 21, 1843, Fort Simpson outward.
543 Work to Donald Ross, Fort Victoria, November 28, 1848, (original in B.C. Archives).
The difference between the tariff of 1835 and 1848 is striking. In the first year, Work gave as much as a blanket and five gallons of rum and ten heads of tobacco for a beaver. In 1848 three large beaver were demanded for one blanket. However, it must be remembered that the year 1848 was one of the lowest in the market value of beaver. Prices were to rise again but the great demand for beaver was gone.

In 1846, Work's long-awaited and often despaired of promotion arrived. He was appointed Chief Factor. That same year the resignation of McLoughlin took effect. The Minutes of Council for 1846 divided the Columbia District into three parts. Ogden was to have the Interior Department, Douglas the Depot and the Shipping, Work was to be given charge of the Coast including Fort Simpson, Fort Stikine, Fort Langley and the Beaver. London apparently approved Work's charge of the Coast, but did not ratify his appointment as one of the Board of Management until 1849. Until that date, Douglas and Ogden divided the control between them. Work kept his headquarters at Fort Simpson until November 1851, when McNeill took over. However, after 1846 he no longer confined himself to year-round residence at the Fort. His correspondence shows that he, once more, began to make

545 Minutes of Council for 1846 (MS. in B.C. Archives). H.B.S., IV, p. 358, dates Work's commission as chief factor for 1846, but states that he was not one of the board of management until 1849. This view is borne out in Howay & Scholefield, op. cit., vol. I, p. 503.
546 McNeill to Douglas, Fort Simpson, November 20, 1851 and McNeill to Board of Management, Fort Simpson, August 26, 1852 (Fort Simpson, Correspondence outward, 1851-55).
frequent trips to other posts and engaged in other activities as he had in the 1835-39 period.

In 1847 and again in 1848, he accompanied Douglas to find a new route for the fur brigade from the interior by way of the Fraser River since the Treaty of 1846 had placed the old route in American territory. Work stayed in charge at Fort Langley while Chief Trader Yale went on with Douglas to investigate. The year 1849 was a busy one for Work.

Not only had he been busy abandoning Fort Stikine but he had been establishing a new fort (Fort Rupert) near the northern tip of Vancouver Island for the purpose of mining coal. Here he settled a party of miners. During its short and unsuccessful life as a mining centre, for it was abandoned as such in 1853, Fort Rupert had a stormy career. Work had heard reports of difficulties there as early as the spring of 1850 and called in on his way north to Fort Simpson, but everything seemed to be going well at that time. That summer however, difficulties arose. Eight Kanaka sailors whose contracts with the Company had expired, clamored to be sent home, or to California in the vessel, England, which had called in at the port. Authorities at the fort recognized their right to return, but insisted that they wait for passage in a Hudson's Bay vessel and refused to pay their fare on the visiting ship.

547 Douglas and Work to Governor and Committee, Fort Victoria, November 6, 1847 and same to same, Fort Victoria, December 5, 1848 ("Fort Langley Correspondence," 1851-1858, in B.C.H.Q., vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 191-195).

548 Work to E. Ermatinger, Fort Victoria, December 10, 1849, (original in B.C. Archives).
To add to the confusion, the miners proved difficult to manage and had been confined to the fort prison. They and their fellows brought before Dr. Helmcken, who was resident magistrate, a charge of false imprisonment against the Company. Work at Fort Simpson was sent for and arrived by canoe in July. Meanwhile, another misfortune had overtaken the fort. Three sailors, who deserted from the ship Norman Morison at Victoria, sought refuge on the England, which had put in at Fort Rupert for coal. Hearing that the vessel was about to be searched for them, they took to the wilds and were murdered by local Indians. Work went on to Victoria to report to Douglas and then returned to Fort Simpson in August and called in at Fort Rupert with instructions, on his way north. Altogether he had made a trip of 1500 miles by Indian canoe. "The fatigue and dangers was [sic] of no avail" wrote Work, "so far as the miners were concerned, they were gone before I arrived."

Work’s attention had been turned from furs to coal-mining. It was now to be centred on gold. In 1850, Work wrote Douglas that the natives of the Queen Charlotte Islands had discovered gold on the west side of the Island and that an Indian had brought a specimen to Fort Simpson. Work then

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549 Work to Donald Ross, Fort Simpson, November 27, 1850, Helmcken to Blanshard, Fort Rupert, July 2, 1850, in Magistrate's Court—Fort Rupert Reports, (originals in B.C. Archives).

550 Helmcken to Blanshard, Fort Rupert, July 17, 1850, ibid.

551 Work to Donald Ross, Fort Simpson, November 27, 1850, (original in B.C. Archives).
despatched Pierre Legace' and a party of Indians in a canoe with instructions to examine the gold district. This expedition did not reach the gold field because of difficulties with the Indians, but made the important discovery that there were two large islands instead of one and that a clear passage existed through them from Skidegate to the West Coast. Subsequently Work made the dangerous crossing himself from Fort Simpson in May, 1851 by canoe with six men to Englefield Bay on Moresby Island. "We narrowly escaped being swamped and all lost while passing along open coast from Cartwright's Sound to the mine," wrote Work. They prospected for two days, did some blasting, and returned to Fort Simpson satisfied that further investigation might prove profitable. Having returned from the north, the Beaver was sent from Fort Simpson. She tried to get through Skidegate Inlet but found the passage too narrow and returned. Now the Una set sail on July 16, 1851 under Captain Mitchell, with Work and McNeill aboard. She came by way of the northern tip of the Islands and remained at the mines five days returning to Fort Simpson again on August 3rd. That same fall the Una was despatched again to Mitchell's Harbor, where the gold had been found.

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552 This may be Work's father-in-law. He accompanied Work on the Umpqua expedition.


554 Work to Douglas, Fort Simpson, August 6, 1851, ibid., p. 148.
on Board were McNeill and eleven men with orders to winter on the Island. They commenced mining and found gold in four places, but were forced to stop because the natives stole their tools and rushed in to seize the gold after a blast had been set off. A regular scramble took place, the Indians grabbing the miners by the legs and holding them away from the gold. Some blows were struck but bloodshed was avoided. As a result they remained but fifteen days and then abandoned the venture. Then the Una set sail for Victoria and was wrecked on her way at Neah Bay. In the meantime news reached California and six American vessels sailed for Mitchell Harbor in 1852. They met with little success and returned almost immediately. One of them, the Susan Sturgis returned for a second attempt. She was boarded and her crew overpowered by Indians. Chief Factor Work succeeded in ransoming the crew, but was too late to save the vessel, which was looted and destroyed. During the same year the Hudson's Bay Company made another attempt to work the mines but the attempt failed and mining was abandoned by all concerned. Work also discovered gold up the Nass and the Skeena Rivers but not in paying quantities. These gold discoveries were the first in British territory west of the Rockies.

During this period Work was spending less of his time at Fort Simpson and more at Fort Victoria. The summer of 1852 seems to have been his last in the northern post.


556 Work to E. Ermatinger, Fort Victoria, March 14, 1853, (original in B.C. Archives).
He was there from April to November with McNeill, who was in charge, and then left for Victoria with the annual returns. A year later McNeill addressed the statement of his returns to Work at Victoria, where he was now on the Board of Management for the Western Department. His Fort Simpson days were over.

Work’s ambition had prompted him to go to Fort Simpson in the first place. "I might have avoided going to this undesirable place, but am induced to prefer it," he wrote, "because I may attract more notice than elsewhere...." The years there had taken their toll of his health. He was not a young man when he first went, being already forty-eight years of age. Tod spoke of him in 1836 as having become "quite bald, hollow-cheeked & slender limbed." It was not very long before he was known as the "old gentleman". The fever that he had had on the Sacramento had left its effects on him. He had been ruptured by an accidental fall in the summer of 1840 while clearing land for the garden and had aggravated this condition a month later by jumping down from a fallen tree. Three years later he was troubled by a cancerous growth on his lip. Dr. Kennedy treated it for twelve months without success. Finally, the surgeon of the

557 Work to E. Ermatinger, Columbia River, January 1, 1836, (original in B.C. Archives).

558 Tod to E. Ermatinger, Fort Vancouver, February 28, 1838, (in Ermatinger Papers).

559 Tod to E. Ermatinger, Columbia, Cowlitz Plain, February, 1840. (ibid.)

560 Work to E. Ermatinger, Fort Simpson, February 15, 1841, (original in B.C. Archives).
British sloop of war, Modeste, removed the growth by operation. Added to all these troubles were rheumatism, a heart condition and his old problem of sore eyes which nearly blinded him. So Work grumbled about "the privations of the Service & this 'Cursed Country!'".

Most of the time at Fort Simpson he had his family to comfort and cheer him. They did not accompany him north at first but on December 31, 1836 his wife and the two youngest girls joined him, leaving the two eldest ones at school in Fort Vancouver. These eldest girls were entrusted to the care of American missionaries at Willamette when the school at Vancouver stopped because of McLoughlin's quarrel with the chaplain, the Rev. Herbert Beaver. Work was very proud when they were able to write their own little letters to him. His wife went south to the Willamette in the summer of 1841 and brought the pair back with her. They did not care for their new home. At Port Simpson, six of Work's eleven children were born—three girls and three boys. All of them fell ill with measles at the same time, and Work to his disgust, had to do most of the nursing. Then a fever attacked them, proving nearly fatal for two of the girls. In 1849 he sent his whole family to Victoria so that those of school age might receive the rudiments of an education. His wife and the three youngest were with him at Port Simpson again in

561 Work to McLoughlin, Fort Simpson, October 11, 1844, (Fort Simpson Correspondence outward 1841-44).

562 Tod to E. Ermatinger, Columbia Cowlitz Plain, February, 1840 (in Ermatinger Papers).

563 Work to E. Ermatinger, Fort Simpson, February 15, 1837, (original in B.C. Archives).
1850, but all of them were soon to be settled in their new home at Victoria.

In 1851, an incident occurred which illustrates the anti-Hudson's Bay attitude which was adopted by the early American settlers in Puget Sound. The town of Olympia had been newly established as a port of entry into the United States. The steamer Beaver was employed towing the Mary Dare to Nisqually. On board the steamer as passengers were John Work, his wife, his daughter Letitia, and one of his sons. In the party was Rose Birnie. The two girls left the vessel at Nisqually and the ships proceeded to Olympia for entry. Here, the Captain and Work discussed the vessels with the customs authorities but apparently did not complete the necessary formalities. Both ships were seized by the American authorities—the Beaver because she was entered in ballast and had none, the Mary Dare because of sugar aboard. Work and Tolmie went to Olympia to try to untangle matters. Finally Work arrived back at Nisqually on the Beaver, which was released. Later the Mary Dare was released under bond and the charges against her settled in Washington. To complicate matters, trouble also arose concerning the landing of the two girls at Nisqually. The courts finally awarded

564 Work to Donald Ross, Fort Simpson, November 27, 1850, (original in B.C. Archives).


566 Ibid., p. 233.
the Company $1,000.00 for the detention of the vessels.

As late as 1850 Work was not quite decided as to where he would settle after leaving Fort Simpson. Letter after letter to his friend Edward Ermatinger tells of his hopes of moving to Upper Canada. He apparently also thought of the Red River, and decided against it. Finally, he decided that since it must be west of the Rockies, he would try Vancouver Island, although he was loath to face the difficulties of carving a farm out of the bush. From 1853 he resided at Victoria where he and his family took up residence first "...in Mr. Finlayson’s house at Rock Bay, without a particle of furniture..." From here he wrote his son-in-law, Dr. Tolmie, at Nisqually to look out for furniture there for him and to try to get some oxen, cows and horses for his farm. Work states that he did not intend to spend too much, lest the venture should not prove to be a permanent one. From this time on, Work’s life was to be three-fold, a public

567 Cf. Report of the Proceedings of the Mixed Commission on Private Claims, established under the convention between Great Britain and the United States of America of February 8, 1853 with judgements of the Commissioner and Umpire. Compiled from the Original by Edmund Hornby, London, Harrison and Sons, 1856, pages 212 ff. This account states that the trade goods on the steamer were strictly open to seizure but were ordered released by the court. But the matter of trade goods did not justify holding the Beaver. Hence, the award of $1,000.00. No reason was brought forward by authorities for the seizure of the Mary Dare.

568 Work to Donald Ross, Fort Simpson, November 27, 1850, (original in B.C. Archives).

569 Work to E. Ermatinger Fort Victoria, August 8, 1856, (original in B.C. Archives).

570 Work to Tolmie, Fort Victoria, March 14, 1853, (original in B.C. Archives).
servant, a member of the Company and a private farmer.

During negotiations for the grant of Vancouver Island to the Company, Sir John Pelly had suggested James Douglas as the Governor of the Island. He also tendered a list of fourteen men whom he considered suitable as justices of the peace for Vancouver Island. Work's name appears fourth on the list. In 1851, Blanshard left the colony and Douglas became Governor. As his last act, Blanshard had created a Legislative Council of three members. Work was not a member of the initial council which consisted of James Douglas, John Tod and James Cooper. In April 1853, Douglas announced that he had "...appointed John Work Esqre, a gentleman of probity and respectable character, and the largest land holder on Vancouver Island, to be a member of Council..." This appointment was confirmed the following March. Work remained a faithful member of this body until his death, becoming Senior member, and during May and June 1861, acting for the Governor during his absence. From the Minutes of Council he does not appear to have had much to say, but seems to have missed but one meeting. He appears as a member of a Committee of four to examine and select a site.

571 Sage, Douglas, p. 148, n. 2. Howay & Scholefield, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 504, state that these commissions, with the exception of that appointing Douglas as governor, were duly made and forwarded.

572 Douglas to Newcastle, Victoria, April 11, 1853, Vancouver Island, Governor (Douglas) Dispatches to London 1851-1855, (original in B.C. Archives). H.B.S., IV, p. 356, wrongly gives this appointment as in 1857.

573 Cf. Vancouver Island, Governor (Douglas) Correspondence outward, January-September 1859, p. 163, pp. 169-170, 172-3.
for a road between Sooke and Victoria. In 1855, his name appears again to be one of the Commissioners constructing the present Gorge Road which was then described as a road on the east bank of Victoria Arm.

On September 23, 1853, the Legislative Council set up a court of common pleas. The judge who was appointed was David Cameron, a brother-in-law of Douglas, who had come to the colony just a few months before. He had no legal training and had previously been employed as a clerk by the Nanaimo Coal Company. This appointment aroused a storm of protest. A committee was formed, which drew up and sent a memorial to the colonial secretary, the Duke of Newcastle. The memorial for the removal of Cameron stated that he was not a fit person to hold office as judge, had no legal training, and had not been impartial in his judgments. This memorial was signed by seventy persons in the colony. Douglas replied vigorously and enclosed an address to himself which supported the appointment and which was signed by John Tod, John Work, Roderick Finlayson and fifty-one other landed proprietors of Vancouver Island. James Cooper, always the stormy petrel of the Council, had agreed to the appointment of Cameron at first, then had changed his mind and led

574 Minutes of Council of Vancouver Island, p. 20.
575 Ibid., p. 27.
577 Cf. Correspondence with the Government of Vancouver Island, relative to the appointment of Chief Justice Cameron, The House of Commons, July 25, 1863, pp. 40-1.
the opposition. The final upshot of the affair was that the appointment of David Cameron was finally approved by the Colonial Office in 1856.

Before this turmoil had died down, Douglas and his Council were faced with mandatory directions to set up representative government on Vancouver Island. Douglas had opposed the formation of a popular Assembly. In this opinion he was supported by Work who stated his view quite clearly,

I have always considered such Colony & such a government where there are so few people to govern as little better than a farce and this last scene of a house of representation the most absurd of the whole....The principle of representation is good, but there are too few people and no body to pay taxes.... 579

In spite of these protests the orders of Henry Labouchere, then secretary of state for the colonies, had to be carried out. The Council drew up the property qualifications for members of the Assembly and for voters. The former required the ownership of £300 of freehold property and the latter a minimum of twenty acres of freehold land. Four electoral districts were set up; Victoria, Esquimalt, Sooke and Nanaimo. The first election was held and on August 12, 1856 the first popular assembly, in British territory west of the Great Lakes, met. Out of the seven elected members, five were connected with the Hudson's Bay Company, which still held sway in spite of representative government.

During this time Work was still a Chief Factor

578 Sage, Douglas, pp. 186-188, gives a detailed account of the whole incident.

579 Work to Edward Ermatinger, Victoria, August 8, 1856, (original in B.C. Archives).
in the employ of the Company. With Douglas, he served on the Board of Management of the Western Department from 1853-58. Nothing much is known of Work's activities during this period. He deplored the slow growth and settlement of Victoria. Both Douglas and Work felt that one of the main impediments to colonization was the rule laid down by which settlers could not purchase less than lots of twenty acres. To obviate this inconvenience Douglas and Work, acting as trustees for what was known as the Fur Trade Branch of the Hudson's Bay Company, in 1856 purchased public land for the purpose of disposing of it afterward at the original cost of £1 an acre, in small allotments to bona fide settlers, who were unable to purchase the larger blocks.

When James Douglas severed his connections with the Company in 1858, to become governor of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, control of the Company at Victoria passed into the hand of Alexander Grant Dallas, John Work and Dugald McTavish. One of Work's recorded tasks in this capacity consisted of advancing the land claims which the Hudson's Bay Company made to the British government after 1858. Douglas himself, had been requested to forward these claims by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, who wrote,

580 The indentures covering these purchases are in the Land Office, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. (see also Berens to Lytton, London, March 4, 1859, in Record Office Transcripts, H.B.C., vol. 728, pp. 111-112)

581 Chapter I, pp. 26-27.
You will therefore at your earliest convenience be good enough to inform me as accurately as you can of the extent and character of the land claimed....

Meanwhile you will understand that it is the wish of H.M. Govt. to take a liberal view of the claims of the Company.... 582

The Company had already communicated with Lytton suggesting that they possessed the same title to the land around their forts as they had had in Oregon, which had been recognized by the British Government. Work and McTavish, as chief factors of the Company now wrote to Douglas setting forth the claims of the Company and listing all of their forts in British territory on the coast. Amor De Cosmos, editor of the British Colonist at Victoria, succeeded in getting a copy of the letter and printed it under the heading "Gigantic Land Grabbers", indicating his feelings about such claims.

Work became one of the gentlemen farmers of Vancouver Island and its largest land owner. His purchases of property as recorded in the Department of Lands at Victoria, B.C., total 1304.23 acres, not including acreage deducted for roads, swamp and rock. The home farm at Hillside consisted of 565 acres net. Its approximate boundaries

585 British Colonist, October 10, 1859, p. 3. Amor De Cosmos, born William Alexander Smith, was born in Nova Scotia, came to California 1852, and thence to British Columbia. He was a critic of Douglas and the Hudson's Bay Company.
586 Official Land Register, Victoria District, Dept. of Lands, Victoria, B.C. pp. 3, 15, 14, 15, 16, and 20.
would stretch from Selkirk Water, due east to Cook Street and be bounded on the north by Tolmie Avenue and the south by Bay Street. Another large area lay across the low-lying lands of Shelbourne Street and stretched up over Mt. Tolmie. The third portion consisted of two sections from Gordon Head along to Arbutus Bay. His son-in-law, Roderick Finlayson, told how the land was secured:

The Company about this time were getting very anxious in regard to the Settlements. The news of Grant's failure became known in England & it was now difficult to get settlers to come out. In those days—'51-'52 were formed large reserves of land so that no one could get land within 20 miles of the fort. The Co. now relaxed those rules to a certain extent; they gave every encouragement to retired, active officers of the H.B.Co....and gave them the privilege of taking lands beyond certain plots laid off for the Town.

The officers seeing the Co's. predicament & the willingness of the Co. to start settlement bought wild lands at £1 an acre. I myself was one of those; so was Mr. Douglas, Mr. Work, Mr. Tod, Dr. Tolmie and a number of others. 588

He went on to explain that the officers on the active list, such as himself and Work, carried on farming by giving half shares, the officers providing the capital and their representatives the labor. Work himself complained of these representatives or "conductors" as he termed them, and spoke of the heavy expense of clearing, fencing and breaking in the land. But he admitted that it was "...a fine climate, the soil...good and with justice done it would yield well...."

587 See map between pages 284 and 285.
588 Finlayson, op. cit., p. 39.
589 Work to A.C. Anderson, Victoria, April 7, 1858, (original in B.C. Archives).
The first census of Vancouver Island sheds a great deal of light on the type of farming in which Work specialized. He does not seem to have bothered much about livestock, except for his immediate needs. No sheep are listed at all. In 1854 he was the greatest producer of potatoes, producing one-fifth (1200 bushels) of those grown at Victoria. Only the Fairfield Farm belonging to Douglas produced more wheat. Besides these, he planted oats and peas. The Victoria Gazette for October 22, 1858, contained the following item on Work's prowess as a farmer,

We yesterday were shown a couple of pumpkins raised on the farm of Mr. John Work, a mile and a half from Victoria, which, in consequence of their enormous size and weight, are worthy of special note. The largest one weighs 108 3/8 and the other 68 pounds.

Work's only other business venture seems to have been the purchasing of shares in a sawmill in 1851. This was a private enterprise but all the investors were Hudson's Bay employees. The Company acted as banker. Total capital was £2,000 divided into 2100 shares. Work bought one share. The venture failed.

The home of the Works at Hillside was noted for its hospitality. "...The Works are about the kindest people I ever came across," wrote Lieut. Charles William


591 Daily Victoria Gazette, October 22, 1858.

Wilson, "'my Western home' I call it..." The family was a large one, eleven children in all, so a few extra guests made little difference and were always welcome. Work's last child, named Josette after her mother, was born on September 15, 1854. None of the three sons proved to be a worthy successor of their father. Henry, the second son, died in 1856, at twelve years of age. The other two boys, John and David, did not enjoy enviable reputations. "The family of our late departed friend Work, I regret to say," wrote John Tod, "seem overwhelmed with grief at the reckless profligacy of the elder Son...the other, Son, altho sufficiently temperate, as regards drink, is Yet in my opinion, a much more dispicable [sic] character than his brother."

All of the girls married. Conventionally enough,


Tod to E. Ermatinger, Oak Bay, V.I., November 12, 1868, (in Ermatinger Papers).

Marriage of daughters:
1st--Jane to Dr. W.F. Tolmie, Feb. 19, 1850. Register of Marriages at Fort Vancouver and Victoria (Photostat copy in Archives).
2nd--Sarah to Roderick Finlayson, Dec. 14, 1849. Ibid.
4th--Margaret to Edward H. Jackson, Feb. 5, 1861, British Colonist, February 7, 1861.
6th--Catherine (Kate) to Charles W. Wallace, Jr., Feb. 5, 1861, British Colonist, Feb. 7, 1861.
Work decided to have his own marriage solemnized by the Church of England. His first marriage to Josette Legace had taken place according to the custom of the country. This second one with her, took place just a month before the marriage of his second daughter, Sarah. The ceremony was performed by the Reverend Robert Staines, Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company. James Douglas and John Tod signed the marriage certificate as witnesses. Josette Work made her mark, for she could not write.

The year 1861 was Work's last. For some time he had had the appearance of an old man. His strenuous life, his injuries and illnesses, rather than his years, had aged him prematurely for he was then only sixty-nine. His friend John Tod felt that he should retire from the Company. "Our poor friend Work has got completely into his Second dotage," he wrote. "In such a state it is pittiful [sic] to see him still clinging to the service, as if he would drag it along with him to the next world." In October, Work was attacked by a recurrence of the fever which had sapped his strength years before on his return trip from the Sacramento Valley. For two months he was confined to his bed and finally, on the 22nd of December, he died. His funeral took place the

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596 November 6, 1849. Register of Marriages for Fort Vancouver and Victoria.

597 Tod to E. Ermatinger, Vancouver Island, July 27, 1861, (Ermatinger Papers).

598 Tod to S. Ermatinger, Vancouver Island, December 20, 1861, (Ermatinger Papers).
day after Christmas from the Fort yard. He was buried in the Church Reserve Cemetery. To the funeral, came Governor Douglas and his suite, Chief Justice Cameron, the members of the Legislative Council, the Speaker and the Members of the Assembly, officials of the Company and many relatives and friends. To-day his tombstone may be found in Pioneer Square. His wife lived until the winter of 1895-6. At her death the legislature passed the following resolution,

That the members of this Legislature having heard with regret the death of Mrs. Work, wife of the late Hon. John Work, a member of the Council of Vancouver's Island from 1853 to 1861, who before her demise was the oldest resident of British Columbia, and will be remembered for her usefulness in pioneer work and many good deeds, beg to express their sympathy with the relatives of the deceased.

The names of Work and those of his family have been perpetuated in place names in British Columbia and especially in and about Victoria. His picture hangs in the Archives in the Legislative Buildings at Victoria.

John Work was not a great man, but he was a capable, conscientious subordinate, who could be better counted on to carry out orders, than to give them. He lacked the necessary hardness of character to be a really successful leader, especially in the wider field to which he was promoted and

599 The British Colonist, December 27, 1861.

600 Lugrin, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

601 A partial list of these would include, Work Channel near Fort Simpson. Work Street, Work Point Barracks in Victoria. John, Henry and David Streets named after his sons, also in Victoria.
was often too willing to excuse his men their shortcomings. Unfortunately for Work, he was ambitious and through the later years when promotion came slowly and he saw such men as Douglas and McNeill creeping up to his rank, he became critical and somewhat bitter. His letters to Edward Ermatinger and to John Tod are filled with his exasperation. "Last time I heard from our friend Work," wrote Tod, "...he appeared in very low spirits--indeed of late years he has scarcely been otherwise at least if we might judge from his letters--always complaining of the Country." Tod accused Work of a want of decision, of not cutting the Gordian knot which held him to the country. This was not a want of decision but rather an affection for his wife and family, coupled with a knowledge that any attempt to transplant their western natures to the older less tolerant east, might end in misery and disaster.

Work did not share Douglas's rather cold and calculating nature. He shows a warm sympathy, amounting to sentimentality, to the world in which he moved. The stinging reprimand which McLoughlin meted out to him in 1844 originated from Work's use of the Company vessel to help McLoughlin bring his son's murderers to justice. To Work's rather sensitive nature the reprimand was all the more bitter because of this fact.

602 Tod to E. Ermatinger, Fort Alexandria, March 1, 1841, (Ermatinger Papers).
He was extremely capable as a leader of small expeditions in the field. Throughout his career he had less trouble with his men than others. His physical courage and great endurance stood him in good stead in dangerous moments in the Indian Country. But more often the safety of his party was due to his caution, forethought and attention to details. The small things such as the placing of guards and the corralling of the horses are but a few instances of this. He was successful in handling Indians. True he was backed by Hudson's Bay tradition, but he understood their childishness and the need for kindness and firmness. He knew their love of pomp and circumstance and how much a fitting salute meant to a visiting chief.

When Chief Factor John Work died, the Hudson's Bay Company lost a servant who had contributed years of able and devoted service.
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