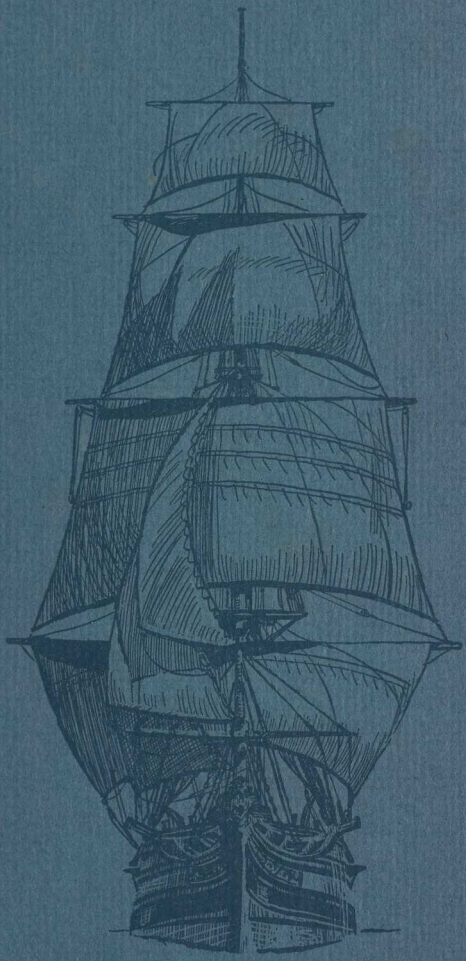
THE FIRST AMERICAN VESSEL IN CALIFORNIA



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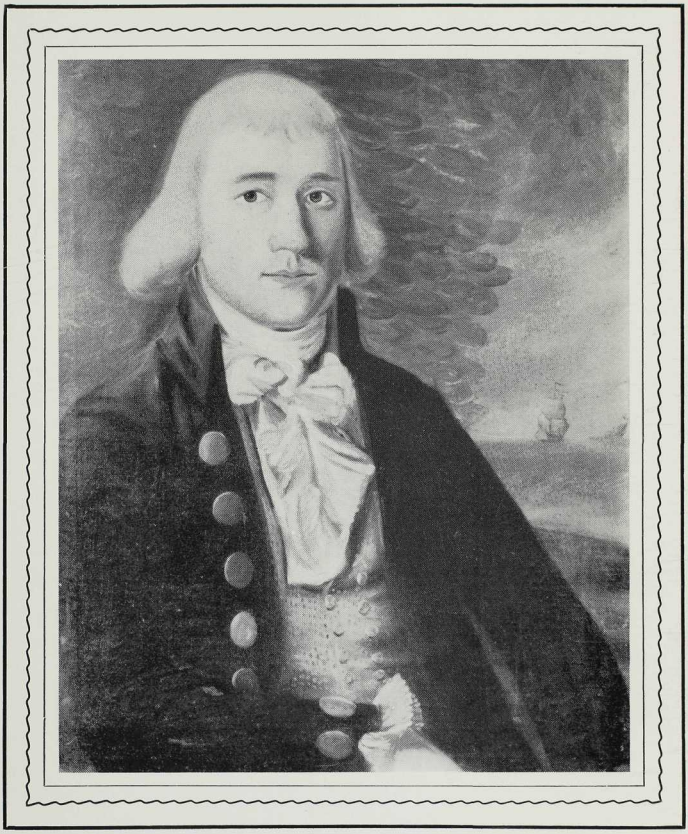

Captain Ebenezer Dorr, Jr.

The First AMERICAN VESSEL In California

Monterey in 1796

BY HENRY R. WAGNER

GLEN DAWSON : LOS ANGELES
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THE FIRST AMERICAN VESSEL IN CALIFORNIA

The First American Vessel in California
Monterey in 1796

ON OCTOBER 31, 1796, the *Otter*, Captain Ebenezer Dorr Jr., sailed into the port of Monterey, the first American vessel to touch at a California port. The *Otter* was a northwest trader which had run out of provisions and Dorr concluded to stop at Monterey to secure supplies, if possible, before proceeding to China.

A full account of the *Otter's* visit to Monterey is to be found in a little-known work published in Paris in 1824, in two thin volumes, bearing the following title: *Mémoires du Capitaine Péron, sur ses voyages aux côtes d'Afrique, en Arabie, à l'Ile d'Amsterdam, aux Iles d'Anjouan et de Mayotte, aux Côtes Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique, aux Iles Sandwich, à la Chine, etc.* Paris, 1824. This contains

four charts and two illustrations, all drawn by Péron, one of these signed P. F. Péron.[1] In the Preface it is stated that a M. Bénard, a seventy-eight-year-old friend of Péron's, has painstakingly abridged the writer's lengthy manuscript which "could fill five or six volumes." M. Bénard has deleted personal references retaining only those of "primary importance in the domain of history and geography." M. Brissot-Thivars, the publisher, signs the Preface and has added a few notes. Most of the footnotes, however, are from Péron's own manuscript and he gives an accurate and vivid picture of the fur trade, also throwing a bright light on Captain Ebenezer Dorr Jr., a member of one of the New England families most prominent in the China and Northwest trade at that period. This trade was a triangular one. The vessel carried out an assortment of goods for trading purposes, traded these for sealskins on the South Sea islands or sea otter skins on the Northwest Coast, proceeded to China, sold the skins and took on board a cargo of tea, silks, and other goods, returning to Boston or some other New England port from which the vessel had previously sailed.

Captain Ebenezer Dorr Jr. (1762-1847), who brought the *Otter* to Monterey, was the fourth Ebenezer Dorr in New England. He was one of a numerous family, many of whom were engaged at one time or another in the China trade. Why the Dorr family embarked in the trade on the Northwest Coast is uncertain but the reading of Cook's account of his voyage was no doubt the cause of the entrance of other Boston vessels into this rich trade. The first mention of any Dorr vessel in this connection is contained in a letter of John Kendrick of the *Columbia* to his owners in Boston. It is dated "Canton March 28, 1792" and states that "This will be handed you by Mr. Ebenezer Dorr who goes to America in the Brig *Fairy*, Captain Wm. Rogers."

Ebenezer Dorr Jr. first appeared as a mate on the *Hope*, Master Joseph Ingraham. This vessel left Boston September 17, 1790, and arrived on the Northwest Coast on June 29, 1791,where she traded for sea otter skins and then proceeded to China where she arrived at Macao in December, 1791. Here Dorr left the *Hope* and embarked on the *Fairy*, one of the vessels owned by his family. This occurred after

March 28, 1792, as is proved by the letter previously quoted. I have also seen the Log of the *Hope* by Dorr, which covers the voyage from the Queen Charlotte Islands to Macao, his last entry being March 2, 1792. Dorr returned to Boston on the *Fairy* where he probably arrived late in 1792.

The vessel was made ready and sailed as soon as possible to resume her fur-trading activities. It was on this outbound voyage from Boston that she stopped at the Island of Amsterdam in the South Indian Ocean and here Capt. P. F. Péron makes his first appearance on the scene of the Dorr family trading operations.[2]

Péron states in his *Mémoires* that because of imminent hostilities between France and England he had been actual captain of the brig *Emilie*, although the titular captain was an American named Owen. The crew was composed of French and Americans. Péron had been persuaded to stay on the Island of Amsterdam to hunt seals, while Owen sailed the *Emilie* to the Northwest Coast for sea otter skins. Owen left Péron on the island on September 1, 1792, leaving with him three sailors from his ship and one

Lith de U. Edgelmann

Lion marin ou Eléphant de mer, nommé aussi Phoque à trompe ou à museau ridé.

English sailor from the *Nootka,* who was supposed to instruct the others in the sealskin business. Owen had agreed to return for them within fifteen months but he did not show up.

It was on September 19, 1793, that Péron records the arrival of the *Fairy* at the Island of Amsterdam where he was marooned. He does not mention Dorr at this time, but speaks of the avarice of the officer who represented Capt. Rogers in trading a barrel of rice for three hundred sealskins. The officer had asked first for six hundred skins. Rogers and Dorr having found Péron in virtual possession of Amsterdam Island the *Fairy* now sailed to St. Paul's, a smaller island eighteen leagues to the west. Here, probably having been fired with enthusiasm at the success of Péron in collecting sealskins, Rogers and Dorr landed some men. According to three contracts dated "St. Paul's Island October 1, 1793" and signed by Dorr and Rogers as owners of the *Fairy* these men were to be picked up within two years.[3] After leaving the men on St. Paul's Island the *Fairy* probably spent the season trading on the Northwest Coast as she appeared at Macao on November 29, 1794,

whence she sailed for Boston and was sold in that city in July, 1795.

Upon his arrival Ebenezer seems to have been able to kindle some enthusiasm in his family in Boston for whatever plan he may have had for picking up the men and skins on St. Paul and Amsterdam islands. The Dorr family purchased the *Otter*, a three-master, the subject of this article, from E. Woodward, but William Rogers and Edward Brown had small shares in the vessel. On August 20, Ebenezer Dorr Sr. sent the following instructions to Ebenezer Dorr Jr.:[4]

E. Dorr's Orders on a North West
Voyage to China & Boston

Mr. Ebenezer Dorr Jun. Boston Augt 20, 1795

You being master of the Ship Otter of this port now ready for her intended voyage, desire you to embrace the first good wind and weather and proceed to the Island of St. Pauls, there take Mr. Peter Peterson and the people that are with him together with what Seal-Skins they may have collected as p^{r} their several written agreements which you have with you, and agreeable to which you will conform, giving those people the same births on board the Otter as they had on board the Fairy, or at least make them equal in their pay—

You will go from thence and for refreshment will touch at Botany-Bay, after which proceed to the North West Coast of America, touching as I think will be necessary for the health of your people at the Sandwich Islands, after refreshing and getting such necessary, as you may have occasion for, you will proceed as before mentioned to the N W Coast of America, and there trade with the natives for furrs in the best manner you can, after which you will proceed to Canton in China and dispose of them for the most they will fetch and invest the proceeds in good Bohea Tea, Nankeens and some good Souchong Tea, some Silks or any other in whole or in part as you shall think most for the interest of the concerned, and return to this port. For your services you will receive as p^r shipping paper twenty Dollars p^r month and six p^r Centurn upon the nett proceeds of the return Cargo to this port; as also Edward Brown, mate to have twenty Dollars p^r month as p^r shipping paper, and four p^r Centurn on the Nett proceeds of the return Cargo to this port, which compensation made to you, and him respectively, is in full of all Commissions, priviledges due of every name and nature.

You will at Canton pay your people two or three months wages, if you can procure the money—Pay Edward Brown three months wages at least if convenient—

If you pay off any of your people in China, you will reflect that the probability is, that wages will be fallen at this port at that time at least to one half the sum specified in the shipping paper, besides the cash much more valuable

Probably you may meet Capt Joseph Pierpont on the

N W Coast of America and at Macao or Wampoo in China or anywhere else in which case you have our permission to contract with him to take his furrs on board ye Otter so as to make it to mutual advantage and save the expense of one of the Vessells at Canton, as it may be his desire to sell the Brig at Macao; in transacting which & all other of your business wish you to advise with Edward Brown who is your Officer & our Friend, depending on your attention and exertions making all prudent dispatch and using your best judgment, wish you a pleasant voyage and am for the Owners of the Ship Otter

Your Friend parent & owner
[signed] *Eben^r^ Dorr*

With Ebenezer Dorr Jr. as captain and Edward Brown as mate the *Otter* sailed on this historic voyage from Boston on August 21, 1795. Her destination was given as the Northwest Coast. She stopped at St. Paul's to pick up the men who had been left by the *Fairy*, but finding them gone, sailed to Amsterdam Island.

In the meantime, just one month before Dorr reached Amsterdam Island, Péron had been rescued during the fortieth month of his stay there. On December 16, 1795, the *Cérès* from London, Capt. Sir Thomas Hadley had arrived. He agreed to give

passage to Péron and his three companions[5] but would not take the 2,700 skins which they had collected. The *Cérès* reached Port Jackson in Sydney Cove with Péron and his men on board as passengers on December 23, 1795. NB Collins says January 23 1796 in account of Eng colony in NSW.

Thus, Dorr found no human being on Amsterdam Island when he arrived so he took possession of all the sealskins he could find which had been collected by Péron and his men and which they had been forced to abandon when rescued by Sir Thomas Hadley. After loading Péron's skins on board the *Otter*, Dorr also sailed for Port Jackson where he arrived on January 24, 1796, just one month after Péron reached that place.

Péron soon learned of Dorr's arrival in Port Jackson with his sealskins. Accompanied by Sir Thomas Hadley, Péron immediately went to see Dorr and make his claim of ownership of the skins. Péron says: "The disputes I had with this officer at this time and those which were to follow, are not of minor importance. I shall write immediately the result of our first meeting. After evading the main point for a long time, Mr. Dorr told me how happy he

was that Providence had sent him to place my skins in security and that while I was waiting to receive their value in cash he offered me a position as first officer on his ship for the duration of the voyage to the Northwest Coast of America, during the stay in China, and on the return voyage to Boston. I accepted his proposition."[6]

After replenishing his supplies Dorr sailed from Port Jackson on February 24, 1796. A number of convicts were now on board the *Otter*, just how many is uncertain. In a document which Dorr produced afterward and which will be reproduced later in this article Dorr claimed he had written permission from the Governor to pick up seven (?) convicts whose names were given,[7] and that others had secreted themselves in the vessel and were not discovered until at some distance from land. Péron writes that five of the convicts left the ship furtively at Middlebourg in the Friendly Islands, shortly after leaving Port Jackson. Dr. J. F. Jameson in an article "The Odyssey of Thomas Muir" states there were thirty-two convicts, among whom was Thomas Muir with two servants.[8] Dr. Jameson tells

us that five were transferred from the *Otter* to the *Sutil* with Muir at Nootka. In the Archivo Nacional, Mexico, Prov. Int. VI, will be found the original letters of Borica among more than one hundred documents relating to the *Otter* and the convicts. Borica tells us about the ten men and one woman who were put ashore in Monterey. This would make a total of twenty-two, so, perhaps others remained with Dorr but this seems unlikely.

Péron gives us an extremely interesting account of the *Otter's* voyage to the Northwest Coast and the trading operations there. The coast was first sighted on May 29, some high mountains in 48° 22′. The *Otter* remained on the coast trading for furs at various points. Nootka Sound was reached on June 9, and from there they sailed to the Queen Charlotte Islands, finally reaching Bucareli Sound which Péron places in 54°48′. At Nootka they found the *Sutil* under the command of José Tóvar. To this vessel Dorr transferred Thomas Muir and five of the convicts, whom Péron calls sailors. Tóvar could give the *Otter* no supplies so after further trading operations Dorr returned to Nootka where the ship's bot-

tom was cleaned and some necessary repairs made.

Dorr was running very short of provisions and on October 11, with one thousand sea otter skins, collected on the Northwest Coast, according to Dr. Adele Ogden, he set full sail for Monterey.[9] The *Otter* followed the coast until she reached Santa Cruz Point. Nobody on board knew where Monterey was and the fog seems to have troubled them a great deal. The mission of Santa Cruz had only been founded a few years before and not far away was the new town of Branciforte. Péron mentions both of these places although he did not know their names, and took the white mission for a mirage. For almost a week the vessel sailed about the bay of Monterey, gradually reaching farther south until finally she passed around Pt. Pinos where she lay to. On the 28th a boat was sent to the nearest shore which turned out to be near the mouth of the Carmel River. The boat capsized on nearing land and some Spaniards came out and helped the officer and men ashore. This officer was probably Capt. Edward Brown. They were obviously looking for Monterey and after drying their clothes the Spaniards told them

they had better carry the boat over the hill for three miles to the presidio. This operation took them until ten o'clock the next day and they were received by the Governor in Monterey on the 29th. On the same day they returned to the vessel which had lain to awaiting them. The *Otter* finally anchored in the port of Monterey on October 31, the first American vessel to anchor on California's shores. Here begins my translation of Péron's account of the *Otter's* stay in Monterey Bay, first published in the *Quarterly* of the California Historical Society, October 1922.

Monterey is the residence of the Governor General, whose jurisdiction is extended over all the Californias from the 23d to the 38th degree of north latitude. From accounts which I managed to obtain around the country, the population can be estimated at about four of five individuals per square league, and which promises to increase very rapidly. The beauty of the climate and the fertility of the soil are the causes which favor the growth of the country. Civilization has not made great progress. The zeal of the missionaries has up to the present encountered

stubbornness in the natives, although it has softened their customs, which is always a step towards a better order of things.

The bay of Monterey at its opening is from twenty-two to twenty-four miles wide between two points, one named Año Nuevo[10] at the north, and Point Pinos at the south, which bear the one from the other, northwest, the one a quarter west 05° north, the other southeast 05° south, one-quarter south.[11] Its greatest depth inside of the line of opening does not exceed twelve miles, although one can anchor at any point in thirty fathoms of water two miles away from the shore. The choicest and safest anchorage is inside Point Pinos, the coast running to the south about two miles and then to the east, deviating somewhat towards the north, which forms a bay where a vessel can be protected from the west and southeast winds which, blowing through the opening of the bay, are often violent and very damaging to vessels. The fort, which the Spaniards call the presidio, is constructed on Point Pinos and entirely dominates the anchorage. The landing must be made here on low and swampy ground, which

causes a great deal of embarrassment, especially at low tide.

The object of our touching at the port was to secure food and other provisions. Our first step, therefore was to go to the governor. Mr. Dorr and I went ashore. At the landing we were received by an officer of the post and by the secretary of the governor. These gentlemen had brought horses which they offered to us, but we had the sailors' tread, which gives but little grace to a rider, and it may have been for the pleasure of the walk or for our self esteem that we preferred to go on foot. The gentlemen were good enough to accompany us in the same way. The route we followed led across an uncultivated plain, but the soil was light and covered with verdure like rich vegetation. At the end of an hour we reached the door of an enclosure which appeared to be of considerable size. The guard was composed half of infantry and half of cavalry. We entered a building on the right. A camp bed showed us we were in the guard room. It was two o'clock and our audience with the governor was at three-thirty, so to occupy the time of waiting

we were offered an excellent cup of chocolate. This delicate attention was very well received by us, as for men who were accustomed to salt fish and biscuit it was a great treat. At the appointed hour a sergeant came to tell us that the governor was ready to receive us. Before reaching his apartment we had to cross a big square enclosed in walls twelve feet high. The apartment of the governor is, like the storehouse and the rest of the buildings devoted to the garrison, situated in the back of the place against the western wall and facing the east. These different buildings are of the slightest character, have only one floor and can only lodge one hundred people, a number entirely out of proportion for the guard and police of a district as large as that of Monterey.

The governor did not belie the opinion which we had conceived of his affability. In that first interview, as in all the relations we had with him during our sojourn, he showed us great courtesy and helped us in every way he could. For my part, I will always cherish his memory as I shall never forget the tender interest he displayed in me. Mr. Muirr, of whom I have had occasion to speak more than once, having

preceded us at Monterey, had told him about my abandonment at the Island of Amsterdam, my misfortunes, and the nature of my relations with Mr. Dorr. The governor had the kindness to give me good advice and letters of recommendation for the remainder of my voyage. So much loyalty, such noble assistance never receive the price they deserve. The governor had a great deal to complain about Mr. Dorr. Five sailors of those we had taken on board at Port Jackson had left the vessel. The governor, who did not wish to keep foreigners under his government, had sent them back on board with precise orders to place them under strict guard. Mr. Dorr, who did not wish to pay the men the price of their engagements, put them on shore a second time.

Before leaving Monterey I have to relate a fact which will not give a good opinion of the progress of industry in this part of the world. We lacked about 380 pounds of flour. The governor, in order to supply these provisions more quickly, gave the order in my presence to augment the number of millers. I showed my surprise and could not understand how so many people were necessary for such

a simple operation. "In Europe," said I, "the smallest mill would produce one hundred pounds an hour." "Follow me," said he, laughing. In the workroom where he took me, fifteen to twenty Indians were seated on their heels, having in front of them a flat stone two and one-half feet in length and one-half a foot in width. They held in their hands another stone of prismatic shape with which they were grinding the grain. This was the method used by the savages and some of the Negroes in the colonies, but I could not understand why a mill like the ones in Europe was not established in the capital of a government as extensive as that of California. The governor told me that Mr. de la Pérouse had showed the same surprise as mine, and he had the kindness to leave a model for a mill of a form as simple as it was economical, but that in spite of his encouragement and his orders, no worker up to that time had been found willing to put his hand to the work.

The aspect of the town shows ignorance in the arts and a stationary state of the country. The houses and cabins are constructed without taste, the furniture is crude, the utensils imperfect. There is an

absolute lack of the conveniences of life—such is the picture that everything showed. In general, industry is the weak side of Spanish establishments and it is for this reason that they cost the government so dear. The governor did not answer my just criticisms; he avowed only that he had to regret he had proposed different methods of amelioration without avail.

On November 8, 1796, our crew being composed of only fourteen men altogether, in place of the thirty-one which we counted on leaving Port Jackson, we sailed at daybreak with a light breeze from the southeast. On the 9th in the morning the coast showed itself northeast to east, about fourteen miles distant. At noon we estimated our position as 35° 43′ N. latitude and 237°37′ E. longitude, and at three o'clock in the afternoon we entirely lost sight of land.

In this narrative Péron states that the *Otter* arrived in Monterey October 31 and left November 8. Two letters of Diego de Borica, the governor, dated November 5 and November 12, in which an

account is given of the stay of the *Otter*, are substantially like that of Péron except for a difference in dates and a few other minor discrepancies.[12] Borica's dates are October 29 for the arrival and November 6 for the departure. These differences in dates can be explained by the information we have. The *Otter* did up anchor and sail on November 6, but returned that night to a remote part of the bay and put five men on shore. The next night five more men and the woman were put ashore in the bay, and the *Otter* finally left the coast at daybreak of November 8, just as Péron says. In the *expediente* there is also some correspondence about a draft on Boston for forty-one pounds twelve shillings which Dorr gave to Governor Borica in payment for food. There is no direct evidence that the draft was paid except that the equivalent in Mexican pesos was finally credited back to Monterey.

From Monterey Péron takes us to the Hawaiian Islands and then to Macao where the *Otter* arrived on February 13, 1797.[13] Here Dorr had the misfortune to run against W. R. Broughton in command

of his majesty's war sloop, the *Providence*. From the communication of Dorr to the commander it appears probable that Péron had complained immediately to Broughton about his skins and had also told him about the convicts whom Dorr had brought from Port Jackson. Broughton at once pressed five of Dorr's men. Dorr sent a lengthy communication to Broughton, a copy of which he retained. This is so interesting, that I include it herewith. Although Dorr's own communication is undated, the letter among his papers, which is signed by J. Norvel and which I reproduce below, shows that Péron lost no time in placing his charges upon arrival of the *Otter*.

Capt. E. Dorr, or Captain Brown, Ship Otter, Typa

Green's Bay
14 Feby. 1797

Sir,

I have just heard what has much surprized me, namely that Capt. Broughton had, in consequence of an application from a frenchman, determined to seize your ship. If this is true, which I very much doubt, you had better come down here directly in a Boat, as I think I can put you in a way to get out of the scrape.

Dorr's letter to Broughton follows:[14]

W. R. Broughton Esq.re
Commander of his Britannic Majesty's Sloop Providence

Sir,

I have taken the opportunity to address you on the subject of the conversation we had yesterday respecting the charges brought against me, and your seizure of a large portion of my crew. As I have no doubt but your intentions are as accommodating as your orders, and the [manner?] of the representations made to you will admit, I shall act with the fullest candour in my present communication.

Before my departure from Port Jackson, I had a written permission from the Governor of that settlement, to carry away [seven?] convicts, whose names are therein specified and a copy of which I enclose. The original shall be submitted to your inspection whenever you request. Independent of the aforegoing number thirty secreted themselves on board my vessel—and [blank] hours after, when I was in Lat.e [blank] & Long. [blank], they appeared on deck. This was the first knowledge, or intimation I had of their being in the Otter; and the wind then blowing from [blank], it was out of my power, considering the detriment it must have occasioned to my interest, to return to Port Jackson to have relanded them. I am not by any means certain that such a plan would have been feasible even had I determined on it; for the natural and acquired ferocity of the deserters would have been much stimulated by the certain punishment they

w^d have received had they returned. The characters of these men, judging from that of their associates, must be well known to you—and the situation of any merchant vessel, whose appointment is not more than twenty men, must be extremely dangerous with such passengers, unless they can be governed without that force it may be very hazardous to use.

(2) On meeting one of His Catholic Majesty's vessels, commanded by D^n Tomas Tobar in Nootka Sound, five 4 of these men, before alluded to, requested to go with him—As they were without the verge of my power I of course consented; & even self preservation dictated the measure; for by that time my provisions were so far expended, by the consumption occasioned by this unexpected and unwelcome addition to my crew, that my voyage was not only materially injured by it, but an apprehension of wanting a mere subsistence for the remainder of the voyage was naturally entertained.

1) On arriving at the Friendly Isles, six 5 of the fugitives went on shore. I had no possibility of controuling their inclination; for the duty of my vessel and the defence of it from the Savages without sufficiently employed me, without hazarding mutiny among the criminals within—and I considered my personal danger much decreased, when I was luckily by an easy method, rid of them.

(3) When I reached Monterey I found the suspicions I had entertained at Nootka were realized, having scarcely a

days allowance on board for the Ships Company. The supplies afforded me there were too scanty for me not to wish the diminution of the number as much as possible. Eight of the Convicts ran away here—and my Carpenter and a boy, both Citizens of the U.S. of America, also left me. One man who came with me from Nootka; and said he had been left there by Capt: Barber, was permitted to remain.

Such was the small quantity of my provisions at that time that it reconciled me to the loss of my Carpenter, a very useful valuable man.

In consequence of your having pressed part of my Crew, and some of them having left me I am placed in such a predicament that I know not how to proceed. It has already, if my information be correct subjected me to the displeasure of the Governor of Macao—who had not vouchsafed permission to let me remain in the Typa and, having no people to remove my vessel or to protect her any where else than there, from the Chinese Ladrones which infest the adjacent Islands, I am obliged to continue there.

Respecting the Seal Skins claimed [or] /? suspected to be French Property / now in my possession and I shall at any time be ready to give every proper elucidation on the subject; and have already desired M. Perron to explain it [to] you.

After having made the afore statement of my conduct & situation, I hope you will as soon as possible, favour me with an answer to the following questions, which will much facilitate the termination of the business; viz:

Whether you consider my conduct respecting the Con-

victs who fled from Botany Bay, as in any degree criminal, according to the evidence already before you?

Whether the Crew of the *Otter* or any part thereof taken by you will be returned to me?

Whether you intend to attempt producing proofs that the property on board the *Otter*, suspected to be French, is really and *bona fide* so?

I trust you will excuse the liberty I have taken, as from the general [te]nor of your conduct I must believe your intentions are not the effect of a litigious disposition; or that they would be intentionally vexatious to any one.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Y. m. o. H. S.

What became of the skins Dorr took from Amsterdam Island I do not know but at Macao he undoubtedly without difficulty disposed of the 1,000 skins which were taken on the Northwest Coast. The *Otter* was still at Whampao on March 26, 1797, as two receipts, signed there on that date by Ebenezer Dorr Jr. are extant.[15] They acknowledge 104 chests of best Hyson tea to be freighted on the *Otter* to Boston and two large chests of Bohea tea to be also carried as freight and delivered to a Providence firm.

The Boston firm receipted the freight on October 31, 1797, so the *Otter* with Ebenezer Dorr Jr. arrived in New England shortly before that date.

Péron had left the *Otter* in Macao, staying for about a month in Canton. On March 23, he sailed on the *Grand Turk*, reaching Portland, Maine, on January 28, 1798. After a short stay in that city he went to Boston where he brought suit against Ebenezer Dorr Jr. for the value of his skins. Péron says this suit lasted for almost a year in which depositions were taken from all on board the *Otter*. Justice was served, he says, and he recovered the full value of his skins. Péron also says that his stay in Boston was the happiest time of his life and is high in his praise of Americans and the United States.

He left Boston on November 8, 1799, on the *Sally*. Capt. Hall, "my pupil and my friend," was the titular captain because of the hostilities between France and England. They rounded the Cape of Good Hope and sailed for the Island of Amsterdam where, upon landing, Péron found one of the French sailors who had been marooned with him, now in the employ of the Dorr family, and who had been

sent to Amsterdam Island to find the skins which Ebenezer seems to have missed when loading the *Otter* in 1795. Péron remained on Amsterdam Island from March 7, 1800 to June, 1801, when Capt Hall came to pick him up. Capt. Hall was so eager to clasp him in his arms that he stood up in the small shore boat which capsized, and he was drowned. Péron took the *Sally* back again to Boston via the Cape of Good Hope. He anchored at the end of Forster Wharf, Boston, April 26, 1802, and on August 8 he sailed for France where his story ends.

After the voyage of the *Otter* described by Péron, Ebenezer Dorr Jr. remained in and around Boston. He first married Jane Ritchie on November 14, 1798. She died on May 13, 1814. He then married Clarissa Badlam on October 23, 1815. They had four children, one son, Clarendon Herbert born December 18, 1816,[16] and three daughters, Jane Ritchie, Clarissa Badlam, and Caroline.

The Dorr family continued to take an active part in the China and Northwest trade for some years. One of the sons, Sullivan Dorr, remained in Canton, acting not only as agent for his family but also as

Vice-Consul. From his very interesting letters we see that Ebenezer also continued his participation in the family business affairs.

At the age of seventy-six Ebenezer Dorr Jr. appeared before a Congressional Committee which was investigating the claim of John Kendrick's family to a parcel of land in Nootka Sound. Dorr said that in 1792 he saw the deed for the land in Macao. Ebenezer Dorr Jr. died on January 1, 1847, at the age of eighty-four years and twelve days.

Herbert C. Dorr, Ebenezer's only son, took up his residence in California. He had some negotiations with Mr. H. H. Bancroft about writing up the account of the *Otter's* visit to California. Mr. Bancroft describes him as a well-known litterateur residing in San Francisco.[17] We have an interesting notation of Herbert's which he made on the bottom of a document relating to the voyage of the *Otter*.[18] It reads as follows:

San Francisco, Mar. 4, 1881

Among the papers of Cap^{tn} Eben^{r} Dorr, which were formerly in his house on Dedham turnpike (the old family mansion) was a *Journal* kept by himself during his voyages

to the Pacific Coast—this journal with his other papers was in *a draw* in a small room—called the China closet—situated in the North West corner of the house—by that Journal I should be able to write an article for Bancroft's forthcoming history, and *give Captn Dorr* the *credit he is entitled to,* as having been (if not the first) one of the first American Navigators on the Pacific.

[signed]

H-C Dorr

NOTES

The frontispiece portrait of Captain Ebenezer Dorr Jr. is reproduced from the original painting in the California Historical Society, San Francisco. The hunting illustration by P. F. Péron is reproduced from the 1824 edition in the Huntington Library, San Marino. I am indebted to Mrs. Ruth F. Axe for assistance in this study.

[1]Probably P. F. stood for Pierre François. A scientist named François Péron flourished about this same period. He had been on the Rhine with Napoleon's Army when many of the events took place which are described in this book. Later, he, too, was on Amsterdam Island which has caused much confusion.

[2]Péron puts Amsterdam Island in 38°42′ S. Lat., 74°34′ E. Long., Paris meridian, actually in 38°58′ S. Lat. and 77°37′ E. Long.

[3]These contracts are in the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

[4]The Burton Historical Collection, B 2690, Detroit Public Library.

[5]One of the sailors, a Frenchman named Gouju, had died and was buried on Amsterdam Island.

[6]Péron, *op. cit.* I, 259.

[7]The document is mutilated but the number appears to be seven. There is other evidence to substantiate this. *See* Dr. Jameson's article cited below.

[8]The *American Historical Review* (Vol. XXIX, October, 1923), pp. 49-72.

[9]*The California Sea Otter Trade 1784-1848*. University of California Press 1941.

[10]The point Péron calls Año Nuevo is really Santa Cruz, Año Nuevo being much farther north.

[11]Compass points like all the other bearings I have established. [This is Péron's note].

[12]In the Archivo Nacional of Mexico, Seccion Provincias Internas, Vol. VI will be found the original letters of Borica together with a large number of documents about the men and the woman whom Dorr put on shore at Monterey.

[13]A few entries of figures in Dorr's Log of the *Otter*, simply showing distances run from Monterey are attached to his Log of the *Hope* in the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

[14]This is a rough draft and also somewhat mutilated.

[15]The letter of Norvel to Dorr, that of Dorr to Broughton, and these two receipts are all in the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

[16]Later changed to Herbert C [larendon] Dorr.

[17]Mr. Herbert C. Dorr made his will in San Francisco on December 9, 1887, and died on December 28 of the same year. His will and the oil portrait of Ebenezer Dorr Jr. are now in the possession of the California Historical Society. The portrait was bequeathed to the Society by Miss Caroline Dorr.

[18]In the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library.

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