

FORT LANGLEY

Outpost of Empire

B. A. McKelvie

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FORT LANGLEY

Outpost of Empire



GEORGE H. SOUTHWELL

FORT LANGLEY 1858

FORT LANGLEY

Outpost of Empire

BY B. A. MCKELVIE

*Author of Pageant of B.C., Early History of British Columbia,
Black Canyon, Huldowget, Pelts and Powder, and
Maquinna the Magnificent.*

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PREFACE

Fort Langley was a focal point of West Coast development. Located on the lower Fraser River in 1827 it assured a future base of operations for the Hudson's Bay Company if the Columbia River passed into the control of United States; it also served as a convenient trading centre for a wide territory. It was the first place of continuous European settlement on the border-land of the Pacific between Puget Sound and Alaska.

It was appropriate that British Columbia's spectacular centennial festivities should be based upon the ceremony held in the Big House at Fort Langley, November 19, 1858: within the living quarters of that log structure on that day, the old order of organized fur trade control passed and the Crown Colony of British Columbia was launched, and was endowed with all the laws of United Kingdom then in force.

Fort Langley, for thirty years prior to that wet but magnificent day, had indeed been an "outpost of Empire". Now it was a centre of British liberties.

It was in an effort to portray some of the colour and romance of those three decades when savagery swirled about the wooden palisades; when danger lurked in every corner of that untamed land, and when contact with Europeans was infrequent and difficult that this little book was written. It was originally published by *The Vancouver Daily Province*, for limited circulation, as part of the policy of that great Southam publication to assist in preserving the inspirational story of British Columbia. It is with the kind permission of *The Province* and The Southam Company Limited that this edition is now offered to the general public.

Generous assistance of different government officials in British Columbia, of distinguished historians and many other helpful individuals, is gratefully acknowledged.

B. A. MCKELVIE

Cobble Hill, B.C., 1957.

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Sketch Map of trails to the Interior.

Decorations by C. P. Connorton

FORT LANGLEY

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CHAPTER ONE

Coming of the Sky-people

The lower valley of the Fraser opens like a great, green fan from the point where the river bursts from the gorges of the Cascades, and moves majestically through 95 miles of lush lowlands to empty itself into the Gulf of Georgia. In the last 40 miles of its gentle way it tastes the brine of sea tides. This estuary, since the beginning of time, was the larder of its littoral. Even today it is an important sustaining factor for those who live along its shores.

It is a turbid stream. It deposits earth torn from the far Interior on the ever growing deltas at its several mouths. But the Fraser was not always muddy. In the days before the big islands were formed it was crystal clear. Sturgeon and salmon could see from its pellucid depths the approach of native fishermen with net and spear. Consequently, there was a scarcity of food at all times and the human inhabitants of the valley found it difficult to exist. Then it was that Q'als, the Great Transformer, took pity on the people—so say the story-tellers of the Halkomaylem—and darkened the waters, although to do so he was forced to slay one of his brothers. Ever since the fish have been confused and are easily taken, and the natives have lived prosperously with little effort.

There were several names for the Fraser River. The Indians knew it as Stahlo prole. When white men first came to locate upon its banks they knew it as Cowichan River, a fitting designation, because it was the rendezvous of the mighty Cowichan division of the Salish linguistic stock. Indians came in their thousands to this gathering place when the two-horned mountain T'lagunna—known locally today as the Golden Ears—beckoned. When this grand bold peak could be seen from the sea, dwellers on the Coast knew that the salmon were crowding up to their spawning grounds. Then the Semiamus and the Songhees and the Saanich pushed their way up the winding, twisting little Nicomekl, and portaged over to an equally crooked little stream, known to them as the T'salkwakyan (now called the Salmon) to share the silvery harvest of the river.

The Cowichans were a mighty people, scattered, in scores of villages, all the way from lower Puget Sound to Seymour Narrows and Yuculta rapids, down the Mainland coast to the Fraser, and up that river to the mountain

barrier. There were many important divisions and numerous sub-divisions of this people. Each was autonomous, and they were frequently at war, one with another, but they were allied against the dreaded Kwakiutls, and more particularly the Yuculta branch of that piratical nation. It was an alliance of fear. Repeated raids in their long, swift canoes by warriors from the intricate channels between Vancouver Island and the mainland north of the Gulf of Georgia had taught the less warlike Cowichans to cower at the very name of their oppressors.

“Halkomaylem” was the name of the collection of sub-tribes of Cowichan strain who peopled the fan of the Fraser delta. There were some 21 bands of them, of whom the Kwantlen were most powerful. “Siam-Kwantlen”—or Royal Kwantlen—they arrogantly called themselves. They ruled the stretch of river from the points of its division below present day New Westminster to the domain of the Katzie. They claimed that in earlier times they also held dominion over Lulu Island.

They were intruders in this domain. Once the Coquitlams, a powerful sub-tribe, held sway over a goodly part of the river from Skaiametl, a big village which stood where New Westminster is now located. The invading Kwantlens had conquered the Coquitlams and had held them in subjection. Across the Fraser River, the land near the site of the old community of Brownsville was low and marshy. Beyond it was a hill of earth and gravel. The lordly Kwantlens conceived the idea of creating a summer village on the flat, so they made the Coquitlams carry filling from the hill and forced them to construct a site for the town, which they named Kikait. It was a pleasant place, was Kikait, according to the tales of the old people.

The woods were alive with game in those days. Bands of elk stalked majestically across forest openings, fleet deer grazed in the many natural meadows, while the industrious beaver continually engineered fish-ponds and new communities of his kind on the little streams that drained forest land and swamp. The Indians rarely disturbed forest creatures; the river gave them an abundance of foodstuffs. They were a happy people in a bountiful land. Only the constant dread of the Yucultas and the internecine disputes of their own people of Cowichan stock disturbed the Kwantlens, who became fat and fearful from easy living, and lost the will to resist the invaders from the North.

Strange tales reached the Kwantlens from the sea. The Semiamus and Songhees brought improbable stories with them in the summer of 1792. They told of gigantic white-winged canoes, so big that in the distance they looked like snow-capped islands. These stupendous craft were carrying

strange, supernatural men with light faces and wearing peculiar clothing, the like of which had never been seen before. There had been but little else discussed when the Cowichans met that autumn on the Saan-a-sant (Pitt) River where the Katzies were hosts each year during the digging of Indian potatoes, amid great festivity. Strange people from far away had been heard of from tribes on the outer sea coast. The Squamish peoples had actually met similar ghostly visitants the previous year.

Squamish chiefs boasted of having been aboard one of the mighty canoes, which approached like a floating island. In fact, they were “sky-people” declared the men from Howe Sound, who told how they had been given shining discs, such as some of the sky-people had on their clothing. The chiefs could not attach these to their Indian garb. The discs were hard and could not be pierced by instruments of bone or stone.

The Kwantlens doubted these tales. Surely if the sky-people were roaming about the country they would visit the mighty river!

Years passed, and stories of sky-people were forgotten. No longer did visiting tribesmen tell such improbable tales when the big fires blazed in the vast cedar buildings along the Saan-a-sant.

And then they came: the sky-people came to the Kwantlens!

It was 16 years after that summer when all were excited about the gigantic white-winged canoes. Everyone knows that four is the mystic number of the necromancers. This was four times four, a year of potent mysticism—if there was any truth at all in the stories of the ghost-men.

It was on July 2, 1808. The people from Skaiametl were luxuriating across the river at Kikait . . . but let the story be told as old Staquisit, who was present, related it many years later:

“I was there when Simon Fraser came,” he said. After a long pause his dim old eyes brightened as if he could see again the approach of the strangers. “All the people were frightened. They called out and ran around. Some picked up their bows and spears. Others just stood still and looked. It was seen that some of the people in the canoes were just like those who had come in the white-winged canoes. They were not like any of the people who lived on the river, or like those who came when the salmon ran thick in the summer. The faces of some were pale; others had big beards. They wore strange clothes. They were the Sky-people, we

thought. They stopped out on the river for a time, then they came ashore.

“We looked at them closely, and saw that the eyes of some of them were blue like the sky, and others were gray like the clouds. Yes, they must be Sky-people. Their faces were light in color, but were not painted. We touched their clothes. They were strange; not like blankets made from dogs’ hair, or from skins or from cedar bark.

“Whattlekainum, one of the sub-chiefs, tried to talk to them, but they had strange tongues. The chief of the Sky-people then made signs and we understood. He was on his way to the sea, but he would come back again. Then he went away.

“When the canoe of the chief started down the river, one of the men took what looked like a crane, and put the legs over his shoulder and blew on the head of it, and made his fingers dance on the bird’s bill—and strange sounds were made. Some said it was not a crane, but sticks. The noise that the man made went up the river and came back, and we thought that there were more Sky-people coming.

“The people of Musqueam were at war with those of Point Roberts. When they saw the strange canoes coming they thought that their enemies had crossed over by the way that the Semiamus came to get salmon, and they got ready to fight with them. When they saw that they were strangers, they did not kill them, but they were not friendly and the Sky-people did not go any farther.

“The next day they came back to Kikait and they all came ashore. Some of them took out small sticks with knobs on them and put them into their mouths. Then they took out bags and made fire, and put it on the end of the sticks and smoke came out of their mouths. We thought that they would burn up, but this did not happen, so we knew that they were supernatural.

“Then the chief of the Sky-people showed us what we thought was a big stick. He cut and peeled some small willows and put them up, crossed, one over the other. Then he went back some distance and pointed the big stick at the twigs. We nearly died, for fire came from the big stick and it made thunder, and the smaller sticks fell over. Everyone was frightened.

“He talked to Whattlekainum, and made him understand that he could use the thunder-stick, and if he could knock over the small sticks, which were set up again, he could have the thunder-stick.

“Whattlekainum—who was not afraid of anything—said he would try. Twice he pointed the big stick and only a flash came. Then the strange chief did something to the thunder-stick. This time when Whattlekainum pointed it, it made thunder, but it knocked him back and he fell down. He did not want to touch it any more.

“Before they came to us the water had made some of the goods in the canoe wet; so the Sky-chief had it all taken out and spread out to dry. Our young men became excited, for there were great treasures there—daggers, not made of bone or stone, but of metal like those of the Songhees which they had secured from the tribes on the outer sea. There were ropes there, too, not made of cedar bark or skin, and—oh, lots of things we would like to have. Some of the young men watched.

“The strangers stayed all night. When it was dark they had the strange music again, and one of the men danced. Before they had come down the river, we were told later, they stopped at Squa (Chilliwack) and when the music was made there they all danced. It was so good the people all wanted to dance with them.

“In the morning when the Sky-people made ready for departure, some things were missing. The white chief became angry. Some of his men searched among the people and found the articles our young men had stolen. They took the things from the young men and kicked them. That was bad. It is all right to kick a squaw, but not a warrior. It makes him ashamed. So the hearts of the young men grew black inside of them. When the visitors left the young men got ready to follow and kill them that night when they stopped to camp. We knew where it would be, opposite to Mount Lehman.

“When Chief Whattlekainum heard this he said, ‘No, do not try to hurt the Sky-people; you can not kill them because they are supernatural. They come from the sky. There are as many of them as the stars. If you try to kill them, more will come and they will kill us all. You saw how they took fire into their stomachs and

were not burned; you saw the thunder-stick. No, you must not do what you plan.’

“Some of the old men said the words of Whattlekainum were good. But the young men who had been kicked looked black. Then the chief said, ‘I know that you feel ashamed because you were kicked. I feel sorry for you, so I will remove the shame. I will make you presents.’ And so did Whattlekainum give away all his own belongings to the young men to keep them from killing Simon Fraser.”

A mighty man was Whattlekainum. Tales of his prowess in war and wisdom in peace are told and retold amongst the remnants of the once powerful Kwantlens. He was first amongst them to welcome the return of the Sky-people after another four-times-four years had passed.

Although he was a sub-chief of the Kwantlens, his mother was a sister of the chief of the T’chawassen, near the main mouth of the Fraser river. He had been brought up by his mother’s spartan people. He was roused before daybreak to plunge into the river, in all weathers. Then he had to run for miles to harden his muscles, and to practise with bow and spear.

One morning as he dashed through the woods a tremendous storm arose. Animals, frightened, ran wildly through the forest amongst toppling trees. When they saw the young Indian, they flocked about him for protection. He picked up two small wolf cubs which had become lost. Then their mother came seeking them. She bared her teeth to attack Whattlekainum when she saw her little ones in his arms, but he spoke gently to her, and pointed out that he was protecting them. She came and licked his hand. Years later, when there was a shortage of food in the village, Whattlekainum went in search of meat for his people. He found a newly-killed seal on the beach, another and then another. When his canoe was filled and he was paddling off, he noticed a big she-wolf at the river’s edge, wagging her tail. The mother-wolf had repaid her debt.

Then there was the occasion when he slew the giant from Active Pass. This man, who towered above all other Indians, was a gambler, and a fearsome individual. He kept frogs in his long matted hair to fascinate his gaming victims so that they could not concentrate upon the game. All men—except Whattlekainum—were afraid of him. He knew this, and hated the young sub-chief. One night at a feast on the Saan-a-sant, Whattlekainum saw him pass his hand over the dish of food intended for the Kwantlen. Instead of eating food the chief called one of his dogs and gave him a

morsel. The dog died almost instantly. Whattlekainum fetched his bow and arrows, returned to the banquet hall and drove an arrow into the giant. Looking for the body, later, he traced the giant to a hastily-erected structure some distance from the village, to which one of his wives had removed him. This time Whattlekainum's arrow did not wound. Years after, it was said, the skeleton of the giant was found with the arrow-head firmly fixed in the spine.

Then there was the time that Whattlekainum encountered the great lizard on Lulu Island. That was the only time he retreated.

Whattlekainum lived to a ripe old age, and became the familiar of several white men who later occupied Fort Langley. He watched the erection of the first fort, saw it replaced by a second and larger one, saw that one burn, and an even more pretentious one arise from its ashes.

The second and third forts were built on a gravel ridge above the high water of the river's flood periods.

Old Tent-a-coose, the bow-legged water carrier of the fort, who had learned the lore of the river, used to tell how that gravel ridge was formed. It was away back before there were many humans, and the animals could talk. The whole area was low and flat. On one side of the marshy ground lived the Brown Beavers; on the other, the Yellow Beavers. There was a grove of cottonwood trees about the centre of the tract and the beavers were continually disputing its ownership. They decided to ask the horned mountain T'lagunna to adjudicate. The chiefs of the Brown and Yellow Beavers told the mountain their troubles.

Golden Ears listened patiently. Then he shook his head. "No," he said, "it is too difficult for me to decide; you had better ask assistance from my brother, the great White Mountain" (Mount Baker). So the beavers travelled for days and came to the great White Mountain, who heard their complaints. He pondered for a time, and then told them to remove their people from the disputed ground. When this was done he shook and rumbled, and smoke and fire came out of his crest. Then he threw out earth and gravel and it fell on the low marshy land, creating a ridge that was to be the boundary between the warring beavers. That was how the ridge was formed. It must be true. Old Tent-a-coose said it was so.

A picturesque chap was the bow-legged water carrier. His long life had been hard and adventurous. Born near Active Pass, he had been captured by the Kwakiutls in boyhood and raised in slavery. He developed great strength, for which a chief of the Clayoquots (from the West Coast) purchased him.

That is how it came about that Tent-a-coose saw the blowing up of John Jacob Astor's vessel "Tonquin."

The Indians had attacked the craft and killed Captain Jonathan Thorne and most of his crew. Several men managed to get into the cabin and held the Indians off. That night all but one of them attempted to escape in a small boat, but were subsequently captured and killed. One man remained on board. He appeared on deck and motioned for the Indians to come. They swarmed over the ship. When several hundred Indians were aboard, a tremendous explosion took place. The lone survivor had exacted a terrible revenge. About two hundred natives were killed or wounded, Tent-a-coose used to explain with a delighted chuckle—he hated Clayoquots.

Ransomed by the Hudson's Bay Company, he was brought to Fort Langley, where he served the rest of his days. He was drowned in 1867 in the muddy waters of the river he loved.

CHAPTER TWO

Bombast, Wine and Confusion

It was a gray December day in 1813. Winter storms had lashed the Pacific northwest coast for a week, preventing the little sloop Dolly from returning to Fort Astoria from H.M.S. Racoon at anchor in Baker's Bay at the entrance of the Columbia River.

Racoon had come around Cape Horn in company with other armed vessels, intending to capture Astoria with its wealth of furs and trade goods. The ships had separated, and Racoon had arrived on November 30 with her guns cleared for action. Officers and men were eager for battle and their shares in prize money that would come from the conquest of John Jacob Astor's Pacific headquarters.

Braving the dangers of navigation over the Columbia bar—and only touching twice—Racoon had made Baker's Bay and dropped anchor, there to be boarded, not by cowering Americans ready to throw themselves upon the mercy of Captain William Black, but by representatives of the proud North West Company of Montreal. They shocked the captain by telling him that the establishment he had come so far to conquer now belonged to that Canadian organization, which had recently purchased the fort and all it contained.

Gradually, in the ten days that followed, Captain Black pieced together the story of happenings in the neighborhood for the past two or three years, and of the bitter rivalry that was developing for the commercial supremacy of the empire West of the Rocky mountains.

Astor, a naturalized American citizen of German birth, had conceived the idea of constructing a monopoly in the fur trade at the mouth of the Columbia and operating from a base there by land and sea. He offered partnership in the venture to the North West Company, but the lords of the fur trade in Montreal had scorned the offer. They had pioneered the pathways across the mountains into New Caledonia. It was plain presumption for Astor with his Pacific Fur Company to talk to them of sharing that vast wilderness beyond the continental divide. Besides, the fellow never could succeed; he was a dreamer of dreams.

But the mighty men of the fur trade, toasting to future success, boasting that their agents had challenged the might of the Hudson's Bay Company, in scattered trading posts across half a continent, did not know John Jacob Astor. While they laughed at his audacity, he worked. Soon he had induced a number of their most experienced men to join him. He prepared two expeditions for the Pacific, one to go overland and the other aboard the stout ship *Tonquin* by sea.

Tonquin was ready to clear from New York, laden with trade goods and personnel, to establish a fort before the Nor'westers realised the danger. Hurriedly David Thompson (a partner in the Company who had already achieved fame as an astronomer) was outfitted to dash across the continent, reach the mouth of the Columbia and there build a fort before the Astorians could arrive. It was a race, with an empire as prize.

Thompson aimed to reach the headwaters of the Columbia and follow that stream to sea. As he and his followers approached the foothills of the Rockies, the Piegan Indians threatened them. This—and unknown terrors that lurked beyond the snow-capped range—caused disaffection and finally desertion.

At last Thompson found himself with only eight followers out of his two score or more. It was impossible now for him to complete his dash for the sea before the coming of the heavy snows. He would have to winter in the mountains. There was no turning back. So he erected a small shelter—hardly to be dignified as a “fort”—at the source of the Columbia and he and his men spent a miserable winter. With the breaking up of the ice they embarked their canoes which had been constructed during the winter.

It was April when they started. They did not know that March had witnessed the arrival of *Tonquin*. When several months later, Thompson swept down into the estuary of the Columbia, it was to find the Astorians well on the way to completing their establishment. The Nor'westers had lost the race.

Tragedy marked the victory of the Americans. Their vessel, under command of an irascible former naval officer, Jonathan Thorne, sailed northward to traffic with the Indians. Alexander McKay—he who had accompanied Sir Alexander Mackenzie on his journey across the continent in 1793—had gone along as trader. The ship did not return. She was taken by natives of the West Coast of Vancouver's Island and her personnel had been butchered.

Captain Black was also told that in the late months of 1812 and the following year, despite many worries and anxieties, improvement had been shown and the abundant promise of the country was now being realized. Trading parties had pushed up through the Okanagan valley, and established a post on to the forks of the stream named by Fraser in honor of Thompson. The Similkameen, also explored, was a land of expectation.

The outlook had been fair indeed. And then the news had come—just how or when the captain did not learn—that United States and Great Britain were at war. The loyalty of some erstwhile employees of the North West Company was strained. Those of American birth became boastful. The revolting States had brought George of England to ignoble defeat once; it could be done again. But the dour Scots who had lived for so long in Canada kept their peace—and doubted.

While the belated news of conflict was causing concern on the Columbia, a danger to the settlement was approaching from the sea. The influential Montreal traders who had strong political friends in London, had whispered in the ear of the Government that there was a rich, fat, juicy plum to be picked from Astor's tree on the Pacific Coast. Orders were sent to the Senior Officer Commanding at Rio de Janeiro to send naval vessels to capture the settlement on the Columbia. The "Isaac Todd," bearing letters of marque, was to accompany the expedition. Aboard the Isaac Todd went John McDonald and Donald McTavish of the North West Company, to take possession of the fur fields if opportunity offered.

But something might happen. The ships might not arrive. So the crafty lads in Beaver Hall decided to minimize chances of failure, this time. J. G. McTavish and John Stuart—Fraser's old companion in New Caledonia—were instructed to make all haste across the continent to the sea with a strong party. They did so, and arrived in time, reaching Fort Astoria well in advance of the British armed forces. They informed their former comrades, now in the employ of Astor, of the approach of units of the Royal navy to blast them from their log fort, and seize the furs and trade goods.

Sorry for their old companions were McTavish and Stuart—at least they said so. In order that all the effort of building the post and opening trade in the surrounding country should not be lost, the sympathetic visitors offered to buy the place and everything it contained, at—well—well, under the circumstances, of course . . . say about 15 per cent! The deal was made. And now, Captain Black of H.M.S. *Racoon* and his men realized that their dreams of fat purses had vanished into the coffers of the North West Company.

Great was the wrath of the gallant captain. He had been deceived in every respect. He had visualized great glory to be achieved by battering down a strongly fortified place. When he saw the log bastions and wooden palisades, he exclaimed: "Fort! Is this what I have come so long a distance to take? I could blow it to pieces in two hours with a four-pounder!" So to him and his complaining officers and men it was a case of neither profit nor glory.

For days Captain Black munched the bitter fruit of frustration. Then he decided to act. The Dolly, which had been storm-bound in Baker's Bay for a week, was about to return to Astoria, a dozen miles distant. Here was his opportunity. Chief Concomoly's Indians were sent in fleet canoes with messages for the chiefs of the Clatsops and Chinooks and all others that might be reached, to assemble at the fort. They were to witness a great ceremony. Then in his best uniform agleam with gold braid, and with the lieutenant of marines similarly aglow, and attended by four seamen and four marines, Captain Black boarded the Dolly.

Arriving at the fort, the gilded officers were affably greeted by the fur traders. They were noted for their hospitality, were the officers of the North West Company. And while the captain and lieutenant dined within the officers' quarters, they announced that they had come to take possession of the place, and would be obliged if McTavish would have an inventory made of all that he had purchased on behalf of his company from Astor's men. While he had no intention of making physical seizure of the goods and chattels at the moment, it might be that a prize court in London would award him the value of the merchandise—or at least a portion of the value for distribution among his men, said Black. McTavish and Stuart were dumbfounded.

So was James McMillan, clerk, when a few minutes later Captain Black ordered that all the Nor'west engagés should be armed with muskets and be drilled for half an hour. They were to form a guard of honor. So, Jean Ba'tiste and Francois and the dour Scots and half breeds who had come down the river in the company's canoes were lined up and armed, while the men of Astor's hiring were to enact the part of the conquered. It was a ridiculous affair: so thought Tom McKay, half-breed son of Alexander McKay who had perished with the Tonquin. Tom was already earning a reputation for courage. But men like Michiel Laframbois, the interpreter, who had but lately played the role of Indian, spying upon the incoming Racoon from Adams' Point, were interested only in the pageantry.

Now everything was ready. The trappers and boatmen of Black's militia were marched to the platform outside the palisades, where four pieces of artillery were mounted. There, too, was the flagstaff. The armed levies were, with some difficulty, formed into the proper military formation in front of the pole. Then Captain Black ordered the British ensign lowered, and that of United States raised, only to be again lowered to the ground at his command.

As the flag of the Republic came down, and that of Great Britain was once more to be hoisted, the Captain addressed the spectators and with an all-inclusive wave of his arms declared that he took possession of the post and of the country for His Majesty King George III. Now one of the sailors stepped forward and raised the Union Jack. The spectators were ordered to cheer. The sailors, marines and a sprinkling of others did so.

Now another sailor stepped forward and presented Captain Black with a long-stemmed bottle of Madeira. Stepping to the foot of the flagstaff, the gallant captain smashed the thin glass against the pole, exclaiming in a loud voice, "I rechristen this place 'Fort George'"—but there were no cheers, and subjects of the young Republic, among the onlookers, spat. George of England was not popular with them since the days of Lexington. But there was noise, for the captain commanded the guard of honor to fire three volleys in celebration, while the marines and seamen operating the four guns blazed away three rounds from each piece to celebrate the affair. And old Chief Concomly and the other princes of the Columbia looked on in wonderment at the strange antics of the white men.

Captain Black was pleased with himself. He believed that he had really accomplished something—and, at least, he had salved his wounded dignity. He had won for himself a place in history, but had irretrievably lost to the British Crown a magnificent land through his bombast and wine.

The Canadian company continued occupation of Fort George. In 1814 the inconclusive war ended by the Treaty of Ghent. The first article of that instrument stipulated that any and all places taken by one power from the other during the conflict should be forthwith returned. United States lost no time in demanding restoration of Astoria—for the name that had been bestowed on his "capture" by Captain Black was a constant reminder of dispossession.

Great Britain replied that Astoria had been acquired in a private deal between two private companies, and could not be regarded as a conquest. "No," replied United States diplomats, "it was officially captured by your

Captain Black, who formally re-christened it with good Madeira wine.” There was no denial. It was agreed the place would be returned.

This was effected in 1818 when another ceremony was held at the flagstaff. This time J. B. Prevost, on behalf of United States, accepted the return of Astoria and the country from Captain Hickey of H.M.S. Blossom and James Keith of the North West Company. There was not so much show, nor the burning of so much powder, but all the same, men like James McMillan, and Tom McKay the Fearless were not pleased, but to Michiel Laframbois it was a welcome break in the fort monotony.

Keith and the Nor’westers remained in possession of the place, for how long no one would predict. Prevost had hinted that United States would soon colonize the locality. There was an air of uncertainty. No repairs were made to the fort; no new buildings erected. It gradually fell into a sad state of disrepair.

At the North West Company’s headquarters at Montreal, too, things were not going well. Rivalry with the Hudson’s Bay Company had broken into actual warfare. Both concerns were being weakened by the conflict. At last they united, only just in time. United States suddenly awakened to the fact that her sovereignty had been established on the Northwest coast where her traders had operated in ships for many years. Russia, too, aroused herself and laid claim to all the land as far south from her Alaskan possessions as latitude 51 N. Spain, which had always asserted rights on the littoral and which were not clarified by the Nootka Convention of 1790, now sold her claims on all lands north of Latitude 42 to United States, giving the Republic real strength behind her pretensions. It was a dark outlook for British traders.

The Foreign Office in London sent for Governor J. H. Pelly of the Hudson’s Bay Company. The whole situation was surveyed. The improbability of maintaining a foothold on the south side of the Columbia was frankly admitted. The company was advised to cross to the other side of the river and build a new fort: it might contribute to holding the river as the eventual boundary line—but it was only a hope. Something must be done—and quickly, to give Great Britain a firm foothold on the Pacific.

George Simpson left York Factory on August 15 for the other side of the continent. Simpson was governor of the northern department in America for the Hudson’s Bay Company. He had come to the fur fields shortly before the union of the companies, and now was anxious to return to London to marry. But romance had to be put aside for the time being.

It was imperative that he cross the continent and examine the situation on the Columbia. So, with incredible speed, “the little emperor” as he became known, travelled. He lowered the existing time for the journey between oceans by twenty days. Before leaving “the Bay” he had long talks with J. G. McTavish, who had bought Fort Astoria from the Astorians and who was now chief factor in charge of York Factory for the united companies. James McMillan was there, too. He had attained to partnership as a chief trader, and was to accompany Simpson on his long trip.

Dr. John McLoughlin, whose name was to become interwoven with the history of the West, had already left for the Columbia, where he was to take charge. He preceded Simpson by 19 days, but was overtaken before he reached the passes of the Rocky Mountains. At Jasper House, McLoughlin’s half-breed step-son Tom McKay the Fearless, joined them.

Simpson’s active mind was busy with schemes for reorganization of the whole trade of the country. Foremost of all projects he considered to be occupation of the Fraser River—where Great Britain’s claim to sovereignty was strongest. It was north of latitude 49 which had been tentatively advanced in 1818 as a suitable line for an international boundary.

The dangers of the wilderness had no effect on Simpson. It was while he was shooting Death Rapids on the Big Bend of the Columbia that he broached the subject of the Fraser River to James McMillan:

“In the course of the Day” he wrote in his journal, “I imparted to Mr. McMillan my views in regard to extending the trade to the Northwest of Fort George (the traders still used Captain Black’s name for Astoria) and pointed out to him the importance of having an establishment at the mouth of Frazer’s River; this was done with the view that he should volunteer his services to explore the Coast at length in the course of the winter, but he did not see my drift, or would not take the hint; in the evening, however, I again opened the subject and intimated that rather than allow an other Season pass without obtaining a knowledge of the Coast natives and resources of that part of the Country (our ignorance of which after being established on the Coast upwards of Fourteen years being a disgrace to the whole concern) I should undertake it myself; this had the desired effect and Mr. McMillan immediately offered his services on this dangerous and unpleasant mission . . .”

Who would accompany McMillan as his lieutenants? They must be good men; men of courage, resource and ability to observe the country and write an intelligible report. McMillan suggested Tom McKay; he was well versed in the habits and ways of the Indians and was active despite a stiff leg, and—as for courage—he did not know what it was to fear! Then there was a young Irishman, whom they would meet near Spokane House; McMillan had great confidence in him. His name was John Work. There was still another clerk of good education—he had formerly been a school teacher near Quebec—who might be suitable. He was a half-breed named Francois Noel Annance. In addition to these aides, McMillan asked that the senior interpreter at Fort George, Michiel Laframbois, also make one of the party.

Not long after Simpson was able to confide to his journal:

“And in regard to its (Fraser’s River) situation we know from Indian report that it falls into the Strait or Sound that divides Vancouver’s Island from the Mainland near about Burrard’s Canal or 49 to 50 North Latitude. In order however to remove all doubts I despatched Chief Trader McMillan with a party of about Forty (who would otherwise have been laying idle here all winter) a few Days after my arrival at this place, altho the Season was extremely unfavorable for such an enterprise and I entertain sanguine hopes that he will accomplish the object of his mission with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of all concerned by bringing a favorable report on the various points on which we require information and which is an essential to carrying the present plan into effect. Taking such for granted, I would establish the principal Depot at the mouth of Frasers River from whence a Vessel for China would sail annually with the returns, where the Coasting craft would receive their outfits and deliver their returns and from whence all the posts of New Caledonia, Spokan, Nez Percës, Flat Head and Coutonais also Fort George if we are allowed to occupy a Post on the Columbia . . .”

Simpson was preparing against eventualities. He was doing what he could to retrieve the misfortune to his country of Black’s pomposity and wine.

CHAPTER THREE

Through Mud and Misery

George Simpson, lord of the far-flung fur empire of the Hudson's Bay Company in America, and Jean Ba'tiste Proveau, one of the humbler servants of the mighty organization, were happy. Thirty-nine other individuals, including Chief Factor James McMillan and three clerks, found no cause for rejoicing as they prepared to embark upon an expedition of exploration to an unknown country north of the Columbia River.

It was not that McMillan, or Tom McKay the Fearless, or Francois Noel Annance the Learned, or John Work the indefatigable Irish lad, were not interested in the purpose of the journey or that they were unduly frightened by possible dangers to be encountered. They would have welcomed the adventure in proper season, but now, in the third week of November, 1824, under raw, cold, drizzling skies, with mud underfoot, it must of necessity be a cheerless and miserable affair.

Then, too, there was grumbling at the thought of being absent from Fort George at Christmas, when it was customary to give the men a regale. They looked forward for months to the holiday season with feasting and drinking and dancing and fighting—and now they were to spend Christmas in a tractless wilderness. The officers, too, had looked forward to the Yuletide, for it was then that there was momentary relaxation from the constant strain of striving for furs, of vigilant preparation against savage treachery.

This year the festive board at Fort George would be graced by Governor Simpson, who had crossed the continent to visit the Columbia. John McLoughlin would be there too. He was the new Chief Factor—an old gray of the Nor'west—and had come to take charge of the district, and to carve for himself a great place in the history of the Northwest. A towering man, whose very height impressed the natives, he had abandoned a career as country physician for the perils and excitements of the fur trade. Of course Chief Factor Alex. Kennedy would also be present.

In place of enjoying the society of these great men in the officers' hall on Christmas Day, McMillan and Work, Annance and McKay must, perforce, spend that occasion directing the moving of heavy boats and baggage over a difficult portage, ankle deep in mud. No wonder there was

murmuring amongst the men and no gladness in the hearts of the officers as they pushed off from Fort George. Even Michiel Laframbois, the interpreter, a restless soul who delighted in change and excitement, was not pleased to be sent on such an errand.

But Simpson, pink-cheeked little governor, was delighted, with good reason. He had reached the mouth of the Columbia but ten days before, determined that the exploration of the country in the vicinity of the Fraser's mouth should be undertaken without loss of time. Fourteen years had passed since fur traders had established themselves on the Columbia, and in that time no effort had been made to follow up the discoveries of Simon Fraser who had almost—but not quite—reached the sea. International bickerings made it essential, even as the security of the Hudson's Bay Company required that the British company should occupy the banks of the muddy stream of the North.

Simpson had not been five years in America. He had come from headquarters in London, picked from a clerical position to undertake a hurried mission to the fur fields. He was to return in a few months, but winter overtook him, and he went to distant Fort Wedderburn, where he stayed. When, in 1821, the two companies merged, this little-known clerk was chosen for his loyalty and anonymity, over veterans of the fur trails to head the disrupted and disorganized affairs in the half-continent between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Coast.

Experienced men in the services of both old concerns grumbled and scoffed that a mere boy—a little boy at that—should be put over them. But Simpson amazed them. The “boy” had a will of cold steel, a grasp of the details of the fur trade and a determination that would tolerate neither delay nor excuses. One thing only counted—success. Then, too, although small in stature, he demonstrated that he could undertake the longest trips in quicker time than could the most experienced of them. So it was that he reduced the time for crossing the continent by 20 days and when the record was again lowered it was Simpson, himself, who did it.

Even before the completion of his breath-taking dash from the East he was planning the details of the expedition to the Fraser, and he badgered McMillan, a travelling companion, into volunteering to head it. But McMillan had no idea that almost before he had time to recover from the fatigue of hurrying across the continent he would be on his way to the North. There had been no pause in the insistence of the Governor for immediate action. Boats were constructed and all the details of the expedition were completed within ten days.

Such activity had never been witnessed at Fort George. It had been a lethargic place, but Simpson determined to alter all that: "It is now, however, necessary that a radical change should take place and we have no time to lose in bringing it about," he noted in his diary. The change was under way. The departure of McMillan and his men was evidence of the working of the new policy of speed and efficiency. So, Simpson was pleased.

Jean Ba'tiste Proveau was delighted. His hour had come. He had accompanied Fraser on his epic journey down the great river that had since been named for the explorer. Jean Ba'tiste was never tired of telling of that trip—but his fellow engagés were growing weary of hearing him boast of it. Now, with the departure of McMillan's party from Fort George he was of the number. Moreover, he had been personally interviewed by the great Governor, and by Dr. McLoughlin, and frequently by Mr. McMillan, and his advice had been solicited by these great men. He would prove to the doubters! So Jean Ba'tiste Proveau shared with Governor Simpson pleasure at the departure of the party, the trials and triumphs of which he would also share.

November 18 was a miserable day. There was a cold drizzle, that for nearly two weeks had only varied in volume. The party was not going by the easier Cowlitz Portage. They were to follow an entirely new route, known to them only by Indian report. This decision was based upon caution. Six years before, in retaliation for the killing of an Iroquois trapper, James Keith had sent Peter Skene Ogden to avenge the murder. He had done so by sudden attack upon an unsuspecting village. Thirteen had been slain.

Since that blood-soaked night the followers of the Nor'west Company and their successors had avoided the Cowlitz portage. So McMillan was essaying with his three heavy boats, laden with supplies for 40 men for several months, to carve out a new way to the North from Baker's Bay.

It was blowing hard at the mouth of the Columbia. It was impossible to round Cape Disappointment. The alternative was to portage across to Shoalwater Bay. This was a hard task. Along the shores of the bay they lined their boats in heavy wind and water—a dangerous and difficult work, for men had to try and keep the craft from dashing against the rocks, while others tugged at the lines. Entering a small stream they forced their way up through the driftwood and overhanging growth to the end of a 10-mile portage to Gray's Harbor. From here, by way of the Chehalis River and a tributary named "Black River," they reached Tumwater Lake, then by another portage they came to Eld Inlet on Puget Sound. It was a most exhausting journey. Chilled to the bone, the men suffered from being

continually wet. Potvin, one of the voyageurs, developed blood poisoning in one of his feet. He had to be carried over the portages. At last, when it was seen that his condition was growing worse, Indians were secured to carry him back to the fort, and one of the men was detached to accompany him. There had been two accessions of the party—or more properly three—for Iroquois George, a free man, brought his slave with him. The other was Pierre Charles, a famous hunter, whose gun was to add to the food supply of the party.

It was easier travelling in the sheltered waters of the Sound. Now sails could be used to help the weary paddlers, but progress was made carefully and cautiously. Indian interpreters had to be recruited as different tongues were encountered. The process of gaining information became more difficult as the party advanced. Several Indians would be utilized as intermediary interpreters before a language could be understood by Laframbois.

At last the party reached a shallow bay—known today as Semiamu Bay—on December 11. The weather was growing colder. The wind was blowing. Ahead of them was a wide open stretch of water and the rounding of Point Roberts. They waited. But let John Work tell the story as he set it down in his journal:

“Monday 13 . . . Embarked at half past 7 o’clock and set out with the intention of crossing the traverse, but had gone but a short way when it was thought too rough . . . The course was therefore changed & the boats crossed the entrance of the little bay in which we had been encamped, and continued along the main shore to another bay (Mud Bay) down which they proceeded to the entrance of a small river, (Nicomekl) up which they continued about 7 or 8 miles, in a very winding course which was in general N. Easterly. Encamped at ½ past 3 o’clock.

“The point above mentioned to which it was intended to cross in the morning is represented by the Indians to form the entrance of the Coweechin River (which is supposed to be the same with Frasers) on the S.E. side, it projects far out to sea and appears like an island, but seems to be joined to the main land which is very low, by a muddy ridge which probably be covered at high water. Immense flocks of plover were observed flying about this sand . . .

“The reason of proceeding up the little River was the Indians representing that by making a portage there was a road this way into the Coweechin River, but they said it was very bad and

seemed most desirous to go by the point. The Navigation of the little river is very bad after getting a short way up it was often barred up with drift wood which impeded our progress, tho' the Indians had cut roads through it for their canoes yet they were too narrow for our boats.

“Farther up it is very nearly closed up with willows so uncommonly thick that it was both laborious and tedious to get the boats dragged through them. It is yet some distance to the portage. The appearance of the country round the bay from where we started from this morning round to the point appears low, & flat the bay appears to be shallow.

“In the river nothing but little willows are seen for some distance from the water where the banks, though low, are well wooded with pine, cedar, alder and some other trees. There are appearances of beaver being pretty numerous in this river. Where we are now encamped is a pretty little plain.”

During the course of the day they found two Indian boys in a lodge, and gave presents to them.

The next day it was found “that the boats could proceed no farther up the river.” Carrying the heavy craft was resorted to by the men. The portage was 7,910 yards in length, the careful Work noted, explaining that 3,910 yards were completed the first day. The Indians knew this portage as “T'salkwakyan,” a name that they also applied to the crooked little river that led to the Fraser, and which is now known as the “Salmon.”

“This portage . . .” Work commented, “lies through a little plain which with the mighty rain has become so soft and miry that in several places it resembles a swamp . . . Elk have been very numerous here some time ago, but the hunters suppose that since the rainy season they have gone to the high grounds.”

So the journey went on—back-breaking work, dragging the heavy boats through the mire and carrying weighty loads of baggage and supplies through knee-deep mud—but the trained observers could see that it was a pleasant land despite the miseries of the moment. At last they came to the banks of the Salmon.

It was at 1 o'clock on the afternoon of December 16 that the boats, bearing McMillan—and carrying too, Jean Ba'tiste Proveau—and their

companions, emerged from the twisting, turning little stream into the broad flood of the brown Stahlo. The sky-people had come again!

Now the tongue of Jean Ba'tiste was excitedly busy, for he recognized the twin peaks of T'lagunna Mountain, which white men now dub "Golden Ears" . . . "and yes, that island!" He recalled passing bits of land and features of the vicinity, as the boats proceeded slowly up the river for several miles. Proveau was not mistaken; this was the river he had visited with Fraser. Even John Work, who had been a mite dubious about the story, had to admit that everything tallied with Proveau's description. It was a grand day for Jean Ba'tiste.

The party encamped about 3 p.m. and rested until 7 a.m. Before dawn they were once more on their way. They went some 18 or 20 miles up river, encamping again at the outlet from Hatzic Lake. Work relates:

"A high mountain covered with snow appeared to the S.W. in the morning, and shortly a ridge also topped with snow was seen extending from N.W. to N.E. Two peaks of this ridge are very high; as we are approaching these mountains the country is getting hilly . . .

"In the forepart of the day we saw an Indian lodge in a little bay on the E. side of the river. Our Indians were sent ahead to apprise the inhabitants of our approach and good intentions which prevented them from taking alarm. This was a miserable habitation formed of planks, both sides and roof; the usual appendages of Indian houses, filth and nastiness were here in abundance . . . Nevertheless the inmates . . . appeared healthy and seemed to have plenty of dry salmon provided. Our Indians were understood by these people, yet we got very little information from them."

But the following day more definite data was secured, for it was found that the natives spoke a dialect akin to the Okanagan tongue which McMillan, himself, understood.

"Rained without intermission all night and all day," John Work began his entry for December 18. "About 9 o'clock 47 Men, 3 Women and 1 boy of the Cohoutilt Indians (which is the name of the tribe that inhabit the village above where we were encamped) visited us, in a friendly manner. Some presents were given them consisting of a fish hook to each of the common men and a

looking glass and a little vermilion to each of 3 or 4 chiefs. A few beaver skins were also purchased from one of the chiefs for a couple of axes and a few beads. They laid no value on tobacco and would not use it. These Indians though of the same tribe were much more intelligent than those we saw yesterday.

“A new blanket, two guns, a pair of trousers, and a few other European articles, some of them very old and worn out, were in the possession of these people; these articles we understood were received in barter from tribes farther up the river, and that they had passed from white people through several tribes before that. A good deal of information was received from these people respecting the river. A letter being presented to the Chief to forward to Thompson’s River, he mentioned no fewer than 15 tribes . . . through whose hands it must pass before it reached the Forks . . .

“The chief of this tribe is a fine tall good looking man, but his people are of low stature. Their elderly men have generally beards. All their heads are a little flattened. Their clothes consisted of blankets of their own manufacture, some white and some grey or a black brown, with varigated bands of different colors mostly red and white. They wore mats to keep off the rain, & conical hats.

“On account of the short stay we could observe nothing respecting the manners, or mode of living of these people. They offered roasted sturgeon for sale which shows that these fish are in the river, but of their mode of taking them we know nothing. Our Indian guide understood them and was understood also. The language they speak has some little resemblance to the Okanagan . . .

“Mr. McMillan having determined to return, deciding it unnecessary to proceed farther up the river past noon and returned to near the camp which we left yesterday.”

The party got under way again early on the 19th and made camp that night opposite Annacis Island near the point where the Great Northern Railway now meets the Fraser. Here they found an abandoned village, and here, too, they cut the initials, “H.B.Co” into the bark of a big tree. Henceforth it was known as “H.B.Co Tree Point.”

The following morning the mouth of the river was reached. Work wrote:

“The channel through which we came was sounded in several places towards its discharge & found to be from 7 to 3½ fathoms about high water . . . We saw a canoe with 6 Indians near the entrance to the River. On being called to by our Indians they approached to within a short distance of the boats, but could not be prevailed upon to come nearer . . .”

So it was that Simon Fraser’s great work was completed, and the river’s mouth was found. It had required 32 days for the journey from Fort George. Now, however, with the vision of the comforts of home before them and spurred on by the possibility of being in time for the New Year’s regale, the men worked with renewed energy at the paddles and tugged and pulled and carried with added strength over the portages. McMillan and his men reached the Columbia as the old year closed.

Governor George Simpson smiled happily as he greeted the return of the explorers. He bestowed praise generously. Jean Ba’tiste Proveau threw out his chest and claimed his full measure of it.

There remained one thing upon which Simpson and McLoughlin required information: what was the depth of the channel over the bar at the mouth of the Fraser. McLoughlin promised he would obtain precise information during the summer.

In August the ship William & Ann arrived from England. He made arrangements for her to go to the mouth of the Fraser. Alexander McKenzie, a promising clerk, and J. P. Swan, chief officer of the vessel, were charged with making a survey of the river entrance.

It was McKenzie’s first glimpse of the Fraser; it would have been better for him if he had never set eyes upon it.

Governor Simpson was able to inform London that there were no obstacles to navigation of the river from the sea. There was sufficient depth of water to float the William & Ann across the bar.

The Governor and Committee in London, having considered all the reports wrote, February 23, 1826:—

“We wish Frasers River to be established next season if possible, and Mr. McMillan should be appointed to the charge of it, as his reappearance among the natives may have a good effect. From the central situation of Frasers River we think it probable that it will be found to be the proper place for the principal depot,

but not until we have passed at least one winter there, and acquired a knowledge of the character and disposition of the Natives and ascertained whether the navigation of the River is favorable to the Plan of making it the principal communication with the Interior . . .”

Occupation of the Coast, North of the 49th parallel, was approaching. The shadow of the Union Jack was spreading over the muddy waters of the second great river of the West.

CHAPTER FOUR

Civilization and Savagery

Whattlekainum heard exciting rumors of a vessel trying to enter the muddy mouth of the Stahlo. He heard of the great white-winged canoes of the white-faced strangers, whom he had first encountered on the river 19 years ago. Since that time he had been told by visiting Clallams and Saanich and Songhees tribesmen of the great canoes in which the Whan-ee-tum, as they were called, came to trade such fascinating things for fur.

There was a time when Whattlekainum had believed that the Whan-ee-tum were supernatural, that they came from the sky. That was when Simon Fraser arrived from the Interior, and Whattlekainum saved his life and those of his companions. Whattlekainum was glad now that he had done so. He wanted to be friendly with such interesting people.

So Whattlekainum started off down the river to see who the strangers might be. Perhaps it would be the same chief who had come during the rains of two winters ago! "Yes . . . there was a great canoe." It was just as the men from the sea coast had described. Her wings were folded. She was riding at anchor in the river between what the whites now call Annacis Island and the southern shore of the river.

Cautiously Whattlekainum approached. He was invited to come aboard. He did so, and . . . "Yes, there was the great chief, whose men called him McMillan." Whattlekainum was delighted, but he stayed only a few moments. This was important news, indeed. He must hurry to tell his people that old friends had returned to the Stahlo.

Up river, taking advantage of the eddies in order to make all haste, Whattlekainum paddled. He stopped to tell old Punnis, an irascible chief at Kikait, of the approach of the schooner. Old Punnis did not welcome the tidings. He recalled those days of long ago when Fraser had kicked the young men who stole from his packs. He remembered, too, how that insult could have been wiped out in accordance with the blood-code of the Coast, had it not been for the interference of Whattlekainum. Now Whattlekainum wanted to greet these strangers once more as friends. Old Punnis would have none of it.

The Schooner Cadboro, Captain Aemilius Simpson, the punctilious and eccentric, slowly made her way against the current. The vessel was bringing James McMillan, now a chief factor, who had headed the winter expedition of 1824, to discover the mouth of the river and examine its lower reaches for an eligible site for a fort, with a party to carry out that objective. With him was Francis Noel Annance, the half-breed scholar who delighted in contemplating the classics amid the dangers and privations of the wooded wilderness of the West. There were two other clerks, Donald Manson and George Barnston, and some twenty-five men. A strong fort was to be erected—that is a defensive work that would hold against the arrows and spears of savages, but which would offer little, if any, resistance to artillery.

The Cadboro emerged from the channel into the wider portion of the river and edged on past Kikait. Now was the moment that Punnis had anticipated. He gave a signal and out from hiding swept 150 braves in their war canoes—only to stop and gape in amazement at the huge canoe, larger by many times than those of the Yucultas, fierce warriors from the North. In vain did Punnis scream orders to rush the schooner and push it over. His army was overpowered by awe and curiosity. It did not move.

The old Indian waved his arms and commanded them to board the vessel; to start a flight of arrows. His braves just sat.

On the Cadboro, as soon as the Indians appeared, loaded cannons were trained on the frail craft. Muskets and sabres were served out to the sailors, and muskets to the passengers. Captain Simpson donned a new pair of white kid gloves—as was his custom in moments of danger. All the while the schooner kept her way up river and round the Slikwhinna—or Big Horn, as the Indians knew the great bend. And Old Punnis screamed himself black in the face without doing the slightest injury to the Cadboro.

The Cadboro had been off the river's mouth some days. In addition to the officers and men charged with the duty of establishing civilization on the banks of the Fraser within the picketed few acres of a post to be called "Fort Langley"—in honor of an aging director of the Hudson's Bay Company—there were two distinguished native guests. Chief Scanawa had come with McMillan from the Cowlitz Portage to Puget Sound and had there boarded the schooner. He would be a useful man to assure communications with Fort Vancouver on the Columbia, for Fort George had been superseded by a larger establishment.

The other native to share honors and attention with Scanawa was Shashia, king of the Cowichans. He was the most influential of all the chiefs

of that great confederacy, enjoying a measure of authority in other sub-tribes as well as in that of the Cowichan proper on Vancouver's Island. Shashia quitted the vessel when it entered the river, but rejoined it later.

As the schooner made slow way up-stream, McMillan and his men scrutinized the shores carefully. They were nearing the little river from which, two and a half years before—in 1824—they had entered the Fraser. There appeared to be a suitable site, and the chief factor and one of his clerks went ashore to examine it carefully. It might do, but perhaps there was a better location higher up.

The following morning, July 27, 1827, it was recorded in McMillan's journal:

“Mr. McMillan accompanied by Mr. McLeod and Mr. Annance and Shashia, went off up the river to look for a more eligible situation for an establishment.”

They found what appeared to be a most desirable spot, and next day all hands were employed warping the schooner up-stream to that place. It was found, however, that the Cadboro could not come within 300 yards of the site. This would not do, for it was imperative that cargoes should be unloaded and freights taken on from a wharf, while during building operations the vessel must be moored close enough to give protection to the shore party.

There was only one thing to do. It was to drop down river again to the place that had first attracted their attention. So it was that actual occupation of the soil of the Fraser fan was commenced on Monday, July 30. The weather was fine, and, according to the journal:

“The schooner was brought close to the shore and the horses landed by slinging them off to the bank. The poor animals appeared to rejoice heartily in their liberation. Our men at noon were all busily employed clearing the ground for the establishment. In the evening all came on board to sleep, a precaution considered necessary until we are better assured of the friendly disposition of the natives. A few Indians and Indian women were alongside for a great part of the day, and were quiet and peaceable. One of the ship's company was this day put in irons for making use of language calculated to promote discontent and create disorder amongst the crew . . .”

At five o'clock the following morning the laborers were landed to renew their struggle with the forest. The site selected was covered with big trees, the underbrush heavy and tangled. Indians crowded about to watch the Whan-ee-tum. It was work for squaws, not for warriors, they thought. Then, too, there might be opportunity of pilfering some of the magnificent tools that these strangers used.

In this, at least, one of the natives was successful, for next morning it was found that an axe was missing. The culprit, an old man, was detected and made to surrender it. For a time it was feared that trouble might ensue. Between 40 and 50 Indians assembled. They all talked excitedly, waved their arms and milled about, while several chiefs harangued them, "the purport of which was upon the whole of a friendly character."

The weather was hot, but the men were not permitted to take long periods of rest. The work to be accomplished was too vital. So, with perspiration running down their faces French Canadians, Sandwich Islanders, Americans, Englishmen and Iroquois toiled at the cutting of pickets for palisades; squaring of timbers for bastions, and the making of lumber for houses and stores, as well as the torturous labor of clearing land. From break of day until after dark they toiled, while round them hovered savages whose interest was, to say the least, open to suspicion. Shashia reported that amongst the Indians there was a feeling that the Whan-ee-tum should not be allowed to settle.

Now the first suggestion of hostility tightened up the discipline of the men, and aroused all to tense watchfulness. The Indians set fire to the forest in an effort to drive the fort builders away. The men cutting pickets had to run from the flames. The fire burned fiercely all next day, August 11. The incendiary endeavor only served to speed up efforts to complete at least one of the bastions, so that protection should be available. By nightfall of that day it was so far advanced that the journalist commented: "It appears to command respect." By the evening of August 13 it only required a roof of bark to complete it. Pierre Charles, the mighty hunter, was detailed with others to obtain bark.

Now the bastion was finished. Artillery could now be put in it, and men could shelter there in need. The work of hacking down trees, squaring timbers and cutting pickets went on apace as expert French-Canadian axmen demonstrated their ability with the broad axe.

By August 20 the picketting was cut, and digging of a trench three feet deep around what was to be the area of the fort was commenced. By the end

of the month the second bastion was finished, and erection of the palisades started.

Now the weather, which had been excellent, changed. It started to rain. This, however, was not permitted to slow down operations, and witness:—

“Sunday, September 2—It being a most desirable object to have an inclosure up as quickly as possible, all hands with the exception of the sick and maimed are at work. No Indians were allowed to land, on account of the theft committed yesterday (when some few articles were stolen) but the want of fresh provisions will soon compel us to concede a little in regard to this restriction . . .”

In fact the order was relaxed a little that very night, for the great Shashia arrived and was permitted to camp alongside the uncompleted fort.

One by one men sickened, and after a week of rain, hope was expressed in the journal that there would soon be improvement in the weather, “for the sake of advance with our business, as well as the health of the people, who have not yet had time to put up for themselves anything like comfortable lodgings, and consequently suffer much from their constant exposure to so wet a climate. Sickness at present prevails among them to an alarming extent, and we can ascribe it only to this, and the change of their diet. They are now living entirely upon fish, whereas their rations before consisted chiefly of grain—say Indian corn, pease and c . . .”

These sick, weary men had before them constant reminders of the dangerous country to which they had come. On September 7 it was noted:

“A Clallam woman, sister-in-law of Scanawa, has been restored by the Yucultas who had taken her prisoner in their last plundering excursion. Her ransom has cost Scanawa seven or eight blankets, besides other trifling articles of trade. The negotiator was a Yuculta woman who is married to an Indian that lives up this river and is well known here by the name of The Doctor.”

But the success of The Doctor on behalf of Scanawa proved to be fatal to her. Another Indian, who had relatives held by the Northern raiders, was so enraged over her failure to liberate them as well that he killed her.

Now the fort builders could breathe easier. On September 8:

“Picketting of the fort was completed and the gates hung. The rectangle inside is 40 yds. by 45; the two bastions 12 ft. square each, built of 8-inch logs and having a lower and upper flooring, the latter of which is to be occupied by our artillery. The tout ensemble must have a formidable enough appearance to the eyes of the Indians, especially those here who have seen nothing of the kind before.”

Here, on this enclosed ground of little more than half an acre, British civilization of the Pacific Coast was planted.

A week later the first storehouse was “roofed in with an excellent bark covering.” Immediately work commenced transferring stores and equipment from the schooner to shore. Then ballast was taken in, Captain Simpson, who had been charting the river during the long weeks that the schooner was idle, was anxious to get away. He was to cruise around the Gulf of Georgia trading for skins where such could be done advantageously, and notifying Indians of the establishment of the trading post on the Fraser. On the morning of September 18 the schooner weighed and saluted the fort with three guns. From the bastions three guns were fired in return compliment: the Cadboro swung slowly around and headed down stream for the sea. Fort Langley was left to its own devices.

Now Indians came in crowds to see what McMillan and his men were doing. They came from Vancouver’s Island; overland from the portage; from Howe Sound villages of the Squamish, and from Burrard’s Inlet. Clallams from the South side of the Strait of Juan de Fuca came to spy and pry and to argue over barter prices.

“These Indians,” McMillan declared, “make great difficulty in bartering with us at our prices, on account of having been visited by the Americans last Spring, who supplied them with goods more cheaply than we do.”

Competition of the Boston traders was already felt and would be for a long time.

Hardly had the Hudson’s Bay men become established behind the rough pickets of Fort Langley than they witnessed the ferocity of the wilds. A war party of Cowichans, accompanied by some Nanaimoes, stole up the river to make a surprise attack on the Chilliwacks in retaliation for some real or fancied grievance. After several scouting parties had inspected the locality, the raid was carried out.

“The war party of Cowichans returned this afternoon,” says the journal. “They have murdered one man and a woman and taken several women and children prisoners, who, as a matter of course, become slaves. The head of one of their victims was pendant at the bow of one of the canoes, presenting a spectacle as dismal and disgusting as can well be imagined; a spectacle the most shocking to humanity that this land of savage barbarism produces. The greater number of the canoes were laden with dried and fresh provisions, baskets, mats and other furnishings, the spoils of the camp of the unhappy creatures that they had surprised.”

By September 26 it was noted that “the wintering house” was close to completion, and men were working hard in an endeavor to finish it. It was 30 feet in length by 15 in width, divided into two apartments, with a fireplace and two windows in each.

Now the great migration of Indians from above was in full swing. These Indians who had gathered from far and near to catch salmon were on their way home, but before taking final departure from the river would stop at Saan-a-sant (or Pitt River) to dig “skous,” a tuber that grew in pools and swamps, and which was considered a delicacy. Here as many as 5,000 Indians would assemble. Harvesting of the root, dances and feasting and quarrelling would occupy them. Here new feuds were often started.

As watchers on the stockades saw canoes by the hundred pass down the river, a sense of loneliness was impressed upon the miserable men who, wet to the skin and chilled to the bone by the first cold of approaching winter, exclaimed, “Even the Indians quit this desolate land.” On October 7, two Indians, strangers, came down river bearing a letter from Archibald McDonald at Kamloops. Here, then, was evidence that communication could be had with the far Interior—but the letter was dated in October of the previous year!

Now, by Chakeinook, chief of a band of Saanich Indians who was encamped at the end of the portage, came disquieting rumors. He had heard, he said, that the Yucultas had cut off a boat’s crew from the Cadboro; and then, too, he announced that the same fearful warriors planned a retaliatory raid on the Stahlo Indians because of the murder of The Doctor. There might be no truth in the story of the attack on Cadboro’s men, but that the Yucultas planned mischief for the death of the woman was plausible; it was in keeping with the Coast blood-code.

Later, the little garrison at Fort Langley was to learn that the report of the murderous surprise attack on Cadboro's crew was only too true. The schooner had been up the narrows as far as Salmon River and was returning. Near Comox a boat was sent ashore to the mouth of a small creek to fill water casks. Indians gathered about, apparently upon terms of friendship. Suddenly a sailor named Driver was seized from behind and his musket was wrenched from his grasp. He was killed.

Another white, a boy named Peter Calder, was wounded in the ensuing struggle. Relief came from the schooner, and the Indians were driven away. Then the Cadboro sailed away. Whether or not Captain Simpson was in a position to exact vengeance is not clear, but white men had been killed and the murderers had escaped. The result was to bring all whites into contempt: "These men who do the work of women have hearts of squaws: they do not fight."

These were gloomy days, and dreary nights. The shortening, wet, cheerless days, the ration of dried fish and venison and the illness that attacked the men were bad for morale. McMillan seized upon the advent of All Saints' Day, November 1, as an excuse for a regale. Rum was measured out generously; additional food supplies from the treasured stock in the store room, grain and peas, were given, and laughter and song were heard for the first time in many weeks.

Rain, rain, rain—only varied in its volume; cold, increasing cold; that was the daily ration of weather. There were muddy pools everywhere. The horses had been so weak when landed that they could hardly stand. They had but little chance to gain strength since, for they had, of necessity, to be worked hard. One was caught in a quagmire and perished. A few days later another was drowned in flood waters in a nearby creek.

Everything appeared to be ominous. Even Nature grumbled and threatened. On November 23, it was recorded:

"Last night a noise was heard by some of the men, resembling the sound of distant cannon. The houses were shaken a little at the time, which makes us suppose that it was a slight shock of earthquake, as a tree falling would not have been so readily felt."

Through all the dreary days the men had toiled unremittingly, and now, November 26, there was another celebration in recognition of their faithful endeavors.

“This morning a flag staff was cut and prepared and in the afternoon erected in the South East corner of the Fort. The usual forms were gone through. Mr Annance officiated in baptising the establishment, and the men were regaled in celebration of the event. Our two hunters came home at night, having been alarmed at the firing which took place on the occasion.”

Pierre Charles and his partner had heard the booming of salutes from the bastions: so also had the Kwantlen Indians become alarmed at the sound of the big guns; but Whattlekainum, the Wise, knew that the noise was made by the big thunder sticks at Snugamish—the home of the Whan-ee-tum—and was not caused by protesting Nature.

So it was that after years of planning, and months of back-breaking toil amid ever-present dangers, that Fort Langley was established under the “H.B.CO”—initialled red ensign of Great Britain, on the banks of the great river that Simon Fraser had explored.

CHAPTER FIVE

Merriment and Murder

“Dull and monotonous—everything has a wintery appearance,” was the entry in the Fort Langley journal for December 8, 1827. The aspect was indeed cheerless; leafless deciduous trees and dark, gloomy conifers loomed across the dun-colored Fraser; a sprinkling of snow, dull grey skies, chilly days and cold nights; all these depressed the spirits of the pioneers.

Men shivered as they toiled, cutting and squaring timber for additional buildings or rough-hewing battens for lining the stockades. Heavy work it was at any time, it was now, since the horses brought from the Columbia had perished in the clammy quagmires of Autumn, the labor of beasts added to the normal toil of man. They had to pull and drag and strain to get the heavy timbers home.

Approach of the year-end holidays brought no comfort. They accentuated the loneliness and desolation of that first winter on the Fraser, by contrast with other posts and happier Yuletides spent elsewhere. So December dragged on. Men cursed and grew bitter, but they could do nothing about it. McMillan and the clerks suffered as much as the laborers. There was warmth within the houses, and a sufficiency of dried salmon, with an occasional treat of venison. It was the isolation and dull monotony of a comfortless country that bore down on all.

Now it was Christmas eve. Men muttered as they listlessly gathered firewood for the morrow. The river was frozen over and the snow was deeper. The muffled guards on the galleries stamped their feet and swung their arms to quicken the blood as they scanned the dull white waste before them.

Suddenly one of the men stiffened and peered down river. Then he called the attention of his companion to a movement among the trees. Soon the object of their scrutiny could be seen more clearly. It was an Indian, and he was hurrying. Indians did not usually hasten on foot. The native was making no attempt to conceal himself from the guards. Now he was out on the ice. As he came closer they could see that he was waving something. It was a note.

“Quick!” shouted McMillan, when the missive had been brought to him. “Quick, sound the alarm! Mr. McKenzie, from Fort Vancouver, and four

men are dangerously situated among the Musqueams at the Kwantlen River.”

In a few moments an armed party, headed by Donald Manson and Francis Annance was on its way down river to the rescue of Alexander McKenzie, chief trader in the Hudson’s Bay Company’s service, and his men. They had gone only a few miles when they met McKenzie. Ice had compelled them to land amongst the Musqueams, who were camped at the junction of the two rivers. There they had been threatened and robbed, but the chief trader had induced a Kwantlen Indian to carry the message to the Fort.

There was great rejoicing when the visitors to the fort were welcomed by beaming James McMillan. McKenzie’s men were given boisterous greetings by Jean Ba’tiste and Louis and the others. Gloom vanished by magic. Was there ever a more glorious surprise? Here were friends who had come all the dangerous and uncomfortable way from the Columbia to bring them Christmas mail and good cheer.

No longer were they the forgotten men of the service. That night fire places blazed high. Laughter and violin music echoed through the fort. Even the men doing guard duty on the galleries felt warmer and more cheerful despite the weather.

What a wonderful Christmas it was! The men had a grand regale. True, there was not much variation in the generous food ration, for dried salmon was the main portion because Pierre Charles had cut his hand and could not hunt. But on the day after Christmas the huntsman insisted that he would go in search of deer meat for a New Year’s feast. Injury or no, he would see that there would be plenty.

While Pierre Charles and his men were in the woods, Annance with a strongly armed party went to the Musqueam village to recover the property stolen from McKenzie. This was easily accomplished, for Annance had a determined way about him that the Indians recognized.

New Year’s Day—an anniversary always celebrated in the fur trade with even greater enthusiasm than Christmas Day—was a joyous affair. The men called at the officers’ quarters early in the morning to wish them well, and received a glass of wine and cake. Then they were each given a generous portion of deer meat—for Pierre Charles had done magnificently. A small amount of flour and dried peas were added to the food ration. A full pint of potent rum was ladled out to each. Men danced and shouted and fought and

sang. One competed with another in feats of strength and dexterity. Next day the celebration continued.

When the merry mood was spent, McKenzie prepared to return to Fort Vancouver, James McMillan decided to accompany him. The first returns of Fort Langley were ready for presentation, McMillan was just a little proud of the fact that in addition to erecting the post he had succeeded in trading 1,182 skins, of which 683 were large beaver, 228 were small ones. Also 269 land otters had been secured by barter. It was a creditable showing.

On the morning of January 3 the party got under way. It was intended to camp at the mouth of the river. McKenzie knew the locality well. He had made soundings there in 1825, while McMillan it was who first discovered the outlet of the great, muddy stream. The guns of the fort fired a parting salute and the men gave three cheers, and then they turned again to the routine of the establishment.

Ten days later McMillan returned. The party had been storm-bound at Point Roberts for a week, so he decided to defer sending the returns until later. With the men who were to accompany him to the Columbia he came back. McKenzie went on—to his death.

Chief Scanawa, who had followed McMillan from Cowlitz portage, had established himself beside the fort. He was becoming a man of some wealth and importance, according to Indian standards. The white men had developed a strong liking for the chief, who had appointed himself a sort of intermediary between some of the tribes and the traders, thus making himself useful to the white men and winning the enmity of local tribesmen. McMillan referred to him as his friend, and occasionally dubbed him, “a great rascal.”

But all the Indian chiefs visiting Fort Langley were not opposed to Scanawa. Shashia was his friend. It was this Cowichan who brought dire intelligence to Scanawa’s tent and it was passed on to McMillan. McKenzie and his party had been wiped out, murdered by the Clallams as they camped on the shores of Puget Sound.

Now, McMillan blamed himself for not having accompanied McKenzie . . . but perhaps it was not as bad as the Indians said . . . Indians were great liars . . . But the report of the attack on the Cadboro’s boat had been true. So doubts and fears haunted the minds of the chief factor and his clerks.

The news came just as preparations were being made to send Manson to Fort Vancouver with the returns. Perhaps it would be advisable to defer the

expedition until more definite word was received about the fate of McKenzie: but Manson was not afraid. On February 15 he left the fort, quietly. There was no firing of salutes this time.

And now the Indians, emboldened by the massacre on Puget's Sound, started a war of nerves against the little garrison of Fort Langley. A Sechelt Indian arrived with a story that the Yucultas were preparing to come and kill the whites and take away their store of blankets.

“As this is a cheap way of getting goods,” snorted McMillan, “we will not likely come to terms amicably. Our iron interpreters will have to settle the dispute.”

Whattlekainum, McMillan's friend, now brought confirmatory details of the murder of McKenzie and his men.

With the opening of Spring, a war party of 150 Cowichans passed up the river to raid the Chilliwacks. “Ugly looking devils,” muttered McMillan, as he counted the warriors. They killed 10 men and took 20 women and children prisoners.

Kennedy and Sauve, guards on the galleries, one night saw or heard—it was a dark night—Indians prowling about the fort. They challenged, and instantly came a shower of stones.

When news of the casualties amongst the Chilliwacks reached him, McMillan exclaimed:

“This warfare keeps the Indians of this vicinity in such continual alarm that they can not turn their attention to anything but the care of their families, and that they do but poorly. While the powerful tribes from Vancouver's Island harass them in this manner, little hunting can be expected from them. Unless the company supports them against those lawless villians little exertion can be expected from them.”

McMillan's nerves were wearing.

A few days after this impatient outburst, Scanawa burst in to the fort shouting that the Yucultas were coming. The alarm was sounded. Men dropped their tasks and ran to their stations. Those working in the woods dashed for the protection of the fort, while men on the galleries covered their coming. It was not the dreaded Northerners who had frightened Scanawa, but a party of Indians from the Thompson River.

Such alarms became daily occurrences. McMillan almost wished that the Yucultas would make an appearance. He was worrying too, about Manson's absence.

An attempt was made upon the life of Scanawa. Sentinels saw a canoe steal quietly up the river and disembark a number of men, who crept stealthily into Scanawa's lodge near the fort. But the chief, who had a premonition of an attack about to be made, had begged his friend McMillan to permit him to sleep in the fort. But the incident decided the chief that he had better return to the Cowlitz.

Mr. Annance one evening heard noises down the river. The Yucultas were reported to be attacking the Musqueam village at the entrance to the North Arm of the Fraser. Perhaps the enemy had come! He drifted down stream in the shadow of the bank until he could hear men talking. They were strangers. Next morning with an armed party, he made a reconnaissance and found evidences that a large number of men had been sheltering in the woods. Whether or not they were Yucultas, he could not say, but the possibility was alarming.

Men kept close to the fort now. They were living under terrific strain, and McMillan was alarmed about Manson's long absence. On April 8 he confided his fears to the journal:

"I am beginning to despair of the people who went to Fort Vancouver," he wrote. But a week later Manson appeared. He had come in the Cadboro to the mouth of the river and continued to Fort Langley by small boat.

The joy of welcoming him was tempered by the final assurance he brought that Alexander McKenzie had perished. There had still been the faintest hope.

The Cadboro made her way up to the fort to unload supplies. It was a welcome break, indeed, to have Captain Simpson, his officers and men at the post for a few days, and to get news of other places and of friends. When the schooner sailed on April 21, Clerk George Barnston went with her, being transferred elsewhere.

Scanawa had returned. It was too dangerous for him to continue his journey.

On May 7 there was another cry raised of invasion by the Yucultas. According to the journal, "immediately all the women and children embarked in their canoes and went up the little river and hid themselves in the woods. The men made a show of remaining at the camp, or rather on the

skirts of the wood. Anyone unacquainted with the Indian life would imagine all the furies of the infernal region were let loose at once; however, once the women and children and dogs were off, things got quieter.”

It was on Sunday, May 11, Scanawa again made his departure. McMillan set down: “Our friend Scanawa preparing to be off for the second time; he is only waiting for the darkness of the night, when the Indians give up fishing. I wrote to Chief Factor McLoughlin by him.”

Less than a week later, news seeped into Fort Langley that Scanawa was dead. He, his wife, sons and slaves—all except a Yuculta slave, for his murderers were too frightened of the vengeance of that tribe to kill him—had been murdered at Point Roberts. A wealthy Indian was Scanawa, for he had with him at the time of his death, 32 blankets, a gun, kettle, traps, axes, capots, shirts and other articles of trade goods.

The killing of Scanawa, the friend of the white man, only accentuated the dangers of the country and added force to the frequent, almost daily, reports that the Yucultas or the Kwakiutls, or even the Cowichans were intending to raid the place. And around the very gates of the fort the fights and squabbles of local tribes swirled. Hundreds of Indians hung about the palisades.

Despite the constant strain of living amongst savages who were becoming contemptuous of the whites—because the killing of Driver, the wounding of Calder, off Comox, and now the butchering of McKenzie’s party and the death of Scanawa had not been revenged—the men of Fort Langley maintained a bold demeanor and went about their accustomed tasks.

But such a lesson as the tribes of Puget Sound and the Gulf of Georgia would not soon forget was being prepared for them.

It was June 15: The brigade from New Caledonia, the men from the Snake County and the crew of the Cadboro were assembled with the retainers of Fort Vancouver in the square at that place. Dr. John McLoughlin, the gigantic, stern-visaged chief of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s operations west of the Rockies, spoke from the steps of the hall. He told of the murder of McKenzie, of the growing insolence of the Indians of Puget Sound and pointed out that unless there were reprisals it would not be safe for any white man to go beyond the immediate locality of a fort. He did not call for volunteers.

He did not need to call. All were ready to go. These men of the woods and rivers, French Canadians, Iroquois from the East, Hawaiians, Scots, Americans and Chinook slaves, all were aware of the terrors of Indian warfare, but there were no slackers amongst them.

Chief Trader A. R. McLeod was selected to head the punitive expedition. Actual direction of the party was entrusted to Michiel Laframbois, the restless interpreter. Clerks Thomas Dears and Frank Ermatinger, from the Columbia were assigned to the party and J. Murray Yale ("Little Yale," he was called by reason of his small stature) from New Caledonia was also taken. Yale was an experienced man. He knew Indian ways and he, too, had narrowly escaped death when, several years before, his men at Fort George on the Upper Fraser, were murdered during his absence. Yale was destined to play an important part in the future development of Fort Langley. Now he was going to help to make the road between that place and the Columbia safe for white men to travel.

Some sixty men were selected for the mission. They were to go by land, while the Cadboro was to proceed to the Clallam country by sea. On the eve of departure the Iroquois, the Hawaiians and Chinooks, held a war dance; their painted faces and wild gestures, characteristic of their different races, silhouetted against the light from the open door of the Hall, were weirdly barbaric.

They went by way of the Cowlitz Portage, making their way slowly towards Puget Sound. On the way they encountered an Indian bearing a note addressed to Dr. McLoughlin. It was from James McMillan, the one he had entrusted to Scanawa to deliver. The murderers had sold it to a chief of a neutral tribe. He in turn had passed it on, and from village to village it had been transferred, until the messenger who brought it to McLeod sold it to the white men. Old Scanawa was known to Laframbois and others of the expedition. Word of the manner of his death made the members of the party more anxious to come to grips with the killers of the Sound.

Reaching the salt water, the expedition secured canoes and headed up for the point of rendezvous with the Cadboro. On the way they met several Puyallups, from whom they learned that some Clallams were encamped not far from them at the beginning of a portage to Port Townsend. It was just breaking day when some of the party, headed by Frank Ermatinger and Murray Yale, silently crept close to the lodge where the Clallams slept. An Indian heard them. He rose and stepped to the door of the hut, only to crumple as several shots rang out. Now firing became general. When the

smoke of battle cleared there were eight dead Clallams, including women and children. Two families had been wiped out.

Contact was made with the schooner, and the Cadboro moved on with the volunteers to Port Townsend. The big village here was deserted. The Clallams had gone to New Dungeness where they proposed to make a stand.

When McKenzie was killed, a woman who was with the party was captured by the Clallams. She was being held prisoner and it was determined to save her life if possible. So when the schooner dropped anchor off New Dungeness, a demand was made for her liberation. This was promised, but the promise was not kept.

Several days were spent in futile negotiations. Captain Simpson and McLeod lost patience when the Clallams tried to trap them into coming ashore to attend a council meeting, where it was intended to murder them. The two Indians who brought the invitation were fired upon. One was killed, the other wounded.

Then the Cadboro was swung around so her guns bore upon the village. McLeod and his warriors in boats and canoes started for the beach. The cannon roared. Flimsy cedar houses splintered and collapsed. Men raced up the beach as the guns from the schooner raked the forest ahead with grape shot. The torch was applied to the remaining huts and debris, and soon the village of the Clallams was a sea of flames. Then some forty canoes drawn up on the beach were destroyed. It was learned later that about seventeen Indians had been killed.

The whites and their allies withdrew to the schooner. Several days later the woman was surrendered. Then the schooner went back to Port Townsend, and that place was also given over to the flames.

The Cadboro then went on to Fort Langley, and all the Indians encountered on the trip to and up the Fraser were told of what had happened to the Clallams.

McKenzie had been avenged, and Scanawa's death as well, but of greater value than vengeance was the fact that all the natives of the Inland Sea knew that the whites were not as squaws, afraid to fight. The road to Langley was safe.

CHAPTER SIX

Potatoes and Fish

There was excited fluttering among the women of Fort Langley. One of the eleven members of the sex was doing something entirely feminine on the morning of July 2, 1828. She was presenting her liege lord with a son. Often these females, who brought the joys of domesticity to the place, squabbled and fought and scratched each other to such an extent as to receive notice of their conduct in the journal of the establishment. But not so today; it was all too important for that.

James McMillan was very interested in the happening. He realized that it was a momentous event, and he registered the birth as being the first “amongst the whites,” saying, that by reason of the fact, the baby would be named “Louis Langley.” Unfortunately the chief factor was not accustomed to the compilation of vital statistics, for he neglected to give the names of the parents.

The aristocracy of female society—those women who had come with their husbands from the Columbia River—and their sisters from the delta of the Fraser chuckled and chortled and cooed and whispered and praised the infant. Jean Ba’tiste allowed, “She’s fine boy, dat babee, by Gar!” Old Whattlekainum and the great Shashia came to the fort to see the tiny product of the mingling of white and red blood, and grunted their approval. Chiefs and warriors could not demonstrate their enthusiasm in such matters as did the women. Everyone was pleased at the coming of Louis Langley. It was regarded as a good omen; the white man had come to stay.

James McMillan kept his men steadily employed. There was much to be done. More buildings were required. Already the enclosed space was becoming crowded. There were gardens to be planted and cultivated, for foodstuffs must be produced locally. Salmon had to be traded and cured for winter use. Above all, there must be a keen eye maintained upon the trade in furs. Those pestiferous Boston pedlars who came from New England in little ships and traded up and down the outer coast, occasionally venturing into the Strait of Juan de Fuca, provided competition that it was hard to meet. This had been especially so before the Clallams had felt the fury of the white man’s wrath.

After that unfortunate, but necessary, affair there was less boasting that this or that tribe was planning to destroy the fort. But always there was the threat that the terrible Yucultas would do so. It was a tedious time, a period of unremitting toil. As summer passed and the crisp air of early October told of the approach of the white bitterness of winter men recalled the cold and misery of the frozen months that they had spent in the half completed buildings during the previous season.

Things were better now. The dwellings were snug and warm. There had been a great improvement in food, for gardens had added vegetables to the daily diet. There were chickens to provide occasional eggs and it was reported that cows would soon arrive from the Columbia. It was even hinted that butter would be made. Fresh salmon were plentiful, while sturgeon—hideous looking fish, weighing hundreds of pounds—were offered for sale by Indians almost daily. The royal fish of Europe was common to the men of Fort Langley.

McMillan was tiring. He was longing for a furlough, and was wondering if he would obtain it that year. He was entitled to a holiday. He had not heard what had been decided by the Governor and Council at the annual meeting in the East. No word of the arrangements made there in June had yet reached remote Fort Langley. Then . . . it was just about dusk on October 10, . . . strange musical sounds floated down the river. Old Whattlekainum was one of the first to hear them: “Yes . . . it must be!” He could not mistake. It was the sound made so long ago by the Sky-people, when the man blew on the head of a crane!

The skirl of the bagpipes ceased with a long, wailing note, and the singing of men grew stronger on the evening air. Ah, now there was excitement on the galleries and outside the gate on the river bank. The tune was a familiar Canadian boat song, sung with gusto by many men. It was picked up by those at the fort.

But who could these strangers be? That they were of The Company was certain. Could it be possible that they had come all the way from Thompson’s River, or had a new route from Puget Sound to the Fraser been discovered?

The fleet of canoes now emerged from semi-darkness and swept to a magnificent landing at the little wharf. Out of the leading craft stepped the small, but dignified figure of a man of importance. McMillan knew him instantly. It was Governor Simpson himself! With him came Dr. Hamlyn and

two men who were to play important roles in the future development of Fort Langley: Archibald McDonald and James Murray Yale.

Now all was excitement indeed. Such laughter and shouting and bustling about and running hither and thither to assist in unloading the baggage, such swaggering on the part of be-sashed and be-ribboned voyageurs who manned the Governor's own canoe—the most expert in the service. Such a happy night had never been seen in Fort Langley, not even when McKenzie had arrived so unexpectedly last Christmas Eve. Before the visitors went to bed it was decided that McMillan would join the Governor and McDonald would remain in charge, with Yale as his second in command, while Annance would stay as Indian trader. Manson was required elsewhere.

McDonald had come across the continent with the Governor. A sturdy, energetic man of decision was Archibald McDonald. He was well educated and had been a secretary to Lord Selkirk at Red River in the days before the Union. Since that time he had served with distinction on both sides of the mountains. He had been but lately commissioned as a chief trader.

James Murray Yale, his health now improved, had lately taken part in the chastisement of the Clallams. He had served the Hudson's Bay Company since 1815. His had been a hard life. He had pioneered in the Peace River area. He had been taken prisoner by the Nor'westers in the days of the trade war, had narrowly escaped death at Fort George when his men were murdered, and had served at Alexandria. Now he had arrived at his last station, for he was to remain at Fort Langley until his retirement. Simpson was very fond of "Little Yale." "He is a young gentleman in whom we can repose the utmost confidence," the Governor declared.

McDonald has left his impression of Fort Langley as he first saw it:

"The fort is 135 feet by 120, with two good bastions and a gallery four feet wide all round. A building . . . of three compartments for the men, a small log house of two compartments in which the gentlemen themselves now reside, and a store . . . are now occupied, besides . . . which there are two other buildings, one a good dwelling house, with an excellent cellar and a spacious garret, a couple of well finished chimnies are up and the whole now ready for wainscotting and partitions, four large windows in front, one in each end and one with a corresponding door in the back. The other is a low building with only two square rooms and a fireplace in each, and a kitchen adjoining made of slab."

It was in this dwelling that McDonald, his wife, the former Jane Klyne and their young family were to live for the next four years.

“The outer work,” he noted, “consists of three fields, each planted with thirty bushels of potatoes, and looks well. The provision shed, exclusive of table stores, is furnished with three thousand dried salmon, sixteen tierces salted ditto, thirty-six cwt. flour, two cwt. grease and thirty bushels salt.”

And there were potatoes yet to be counted. Digging started late in October and was finished in the rain on November 15. So pleased was McDonald with the crop that he declared the occasion one for celebration—the first harvest festival. The yield, per bushel of seed, he proudly boasted, was twice that of the fertile lands of the Columbia Valley at Fort Vancouver. From 91 bushels of seed no less than 2,010 bushels had been gathered. So each man was given “a dram” and permission was granted for the holding of a dance. Fort Langley was prepared for the coming of winter.

From the day that he arrived McDonald was not allowed to forget that while the Clallams had been taught a lesson, the Yucultas held the white man in contempt. They said when they found it convenient, they would come and take the place. Just to keep the whites nervous, the Yucultas made frequent raids on the Musqueams and exacted tribute from other tribes. “The Whan-ee-tum of Snugamish” (the whitemen at Fort Langley) might be brave when faced by the Clallams. But the Yucultas! None could withstand their ferocity.

A meeting between the traders and the terrors of the Coast was inevitable. It came on March 21, 1829. Little Yale, the courageous clerk who had fought against the Clallams, and Annance the bold classical scholar, had been sent with ten men to take the accounts as far as the Cowlitz Portage. They were on their way home, had entered the Fraser River and were proceeding out of the channel between Annacis Island and the main shore when they saw, drawn up across the river barring their progress, nine great war canoes, each bearing between 25 and 30 howling, painted Yuculta braves.

Not for an instant did the paddling cease. Trained and trusted men made up that crew, the very best men from the fort, said McDonald in telling of the incident.

A whispered word between Yale and Annance, then a sharp order, and the paddles struck with greater vigor. Straight at the Yuculta line the boat

leaped. The Northerners, from whom men invariably fled, were taken completely by surprise. With a shout of defiance the Langley Express went through. Now the savages had to turn about. Bullets and arrows sprayed the water about the white men as they widened the gap between them and their enemies. None was hit. Now several of the canoes closer to shore sped ahead and landed warriors to harass the whites from the shore.

Suddenly the Langley crew swerved and made for the beach. Out sprang the two officers, followed by the men. They took cover and opened such a rapid fire that the Yucultas stopped trying to follow. How many were hit by the white men's bullets could not be ascertained. It was believed that casualties were high. The fight went on for a quarter of an hour. Then the savages turned and paddled down river to the open sea as hard as they could go.

The Whan-ee-tum of Snugamish had met the Yucultas, not on even terms, but at twenty to one odds and had beaten them in fair fight! The news was almost incredible. It flashed from village to village. Indians gathered—from far and near to look upon men who could do such a thing.

McDonald was jubilant. It had demonstrated to the men themselves that the vandals from Johnstone Strait and Yuculta rapids were no match for them. It had established that fact to natives tribes who had existed in constant alarm of their oppressors.

“All the Indians hereabouts collected today and seem amazed at the victory gained over the invincible Yucultas, and that, too, by a handful of men,” McDonald wrote in the journal.

Indian tradition says that having seen how the Whan-ee-tum were unafraid of the Yucultas, the Kwantlens decided to abandon their hereditary villages of Skaiametl and Kikait and cuddle beneath the wing of the fort. So they migrated up river and settled on Kanaka Creek directly opposite the fort, while a few established themselves on the same bank on the Fraser, close to the stockades. Here, they were convinced, they would be safe—and they were. The Yucultas came again only once. Then, as McMillan had predicted, “the iron interpreters” settled the argument.

It was in 1837, the story-tellers say. The Yucultas came in great numbers. Each long canoe bore at least 20 warriors, and there were scores of canoes. Word of their approach was conveyed to the fort. The alarm was sounded. Men hastened to bastions and galleries. The cannon in the blockhouses were loaded with grape, swivel guns on the walls were packed with musket balls

and small shot. The Kwantlens, and their allies the Musqueams and the Katzies, retreated before the invaders, and hid in the forest fringe.

Just before dusk the Yuculta fleet nosed around the Slikwhinna, and gathered for a dash at the village across the Stahlo. With savage yells, intended to frighten their prey, the Yuculta armada shot diagonally across the river to within range of the death-crammed guns of the fort. Patiently the gunners awaited the word. It came at last, and from the bastions and galleries death and destruction poured upon the close-packed canoes.

The carnage was terrific. Canoes were blasted right out of the river; others splintered and sank; dead and dying mixed in the reddened, muddy waters. Then from the forests burst the Kwantlens with knives and spears. They and their allies started the work of butchery.

Few, if any, Yucultas escaped, tradition says. How many died in that final accounting when the Yucultas came to destroy the Whan-ee-tum of Snugamish, will never be known, but Kwantlen ancients maintain the total was several thousand. Suffice to say that the encounter broke the power of the Yucultas.

Archie McDonald was not long installed as commander of Fort Langley when he made an inspection of the district, and expressed his surprise and disappointment that the post had been located at the site selected in 1827. The situation did not permit of cultivating the most desirable agricultural lands of the vicinity, the large prairie on the T'salkwakyan portage, over which the explorers of 1824 had come from the sea. Even the smaller area of arable land on the east side of the Salmon was too distant to be given ready protection from the fort. This, he found, had limited the possibilities of farming to the 15 acres already being utilized, of which only 5 acres comprised really good land.

McDonald was disappointed, but he did not let that fact retard his endeavors to make the best of what was available. He knew that it was good potato soil, but it did not show results he anticipated in grain crops. Then, too, part of the land was liable to flooding.

There was one crop, however, that delighted and amazed the canny Scot. It was the harvest of silver salmon that came up from the sea. Sufficient fish could be taken in a few weeks, while the runs were on, to feed year round every establishment west of the Rockies, he calculated. Here was the answer to Fort Langley's future! If these fish could be cured and shipped, a great export industry might be constructed. Out came paper and pencil, and McDonald computed the 7,544 salmon that had been traded from the Indians

in 1829 had cost £13. 17. 10 in trade goods, or less than a ha'penny each! The average weight of the fish, he noted, was six pounds. Here, indeed, was potential profit. He decided to experiment with brine curing.

He wrote to the Governor and Committee in London about his dream of developing a fishery. He pointed out that already there was a store that might be utilized and a building in which coopers could be set to work. He was less enthusiastic about the agricultural possibilities of the place, observing,

“As to the farm, little can be said of it, all our operations that way being confined to the hoe. The elevated ground near the fort being already exhausted, did not yield us above 25 bushels wheat, 20 of pease and 10 of barley.”

Governor Simpson, after his trip through the canyons of the Fraser, concluded that Fort Langley in its present location was not suitable for a main depot, “in the event of our being under the necessity of withdrawing from Fort Vancouver,” even though it had served a useful purpose in obtaining a share of furs that otherwise would have gone to the Boston traders. In this work of driving the American marine from the Coast, Fort Langley, in the first ten years of its existence, collected a total of 14,651 beaver skins, of which no less than 10,330 were large prime pelts! But in its earlier years the gathering of furs entailed a larger force than Simpson felt the returns warranted.

“The great population of this part of the country, and the hostile character they bear,” he said, “renders it necessary to send a larger force among them than trade, in the first instance, could be expected to afford, as we are only respected by these treacherous savages in proportion to our strength and means of defence.”

But that was written before the mighty Yucultas had been taught their lesson.

These reports reaching London created the impression that farming was both uncertain and unprofitable at Fort Langley. While McDonald was not optimistic as to the future of farming, he enthused about the fisheries, both salmon and sturgeon. In view of the fact that his vision was justified by the salmon trade becoming one of the world's great fisheries, McDonald's letter to Governor Simpson, under date of February 10, 1830, is of interest:

“In my last Communication I touched at some length on the prospect of curing Salmon at this place, as an additional source of Returns, and I have the satisfaction to inform you, that the experiment of last Season completely proved the theory; the fish, it is true, arrived late—indeed after we had almost given up hopes of making anything at all of it; but from the 20th of August to the 13th of the next month we were fortunate enough to procure upwards of 15,000; enough to make up more than 200 Barrels, which in that very short space we contrived to do, into nearly that number of casks of our own making, with means so imperfect, however, that I fear from the sample that remained with ourselves, the first Cargo will not stand the Test of a foreign market, and trust by the next Season, we shall be provided with a good Cooper, that will know something of fish curing.”

His fears were realized, for the barrels leaked, and the sample sent to London did not win approval as an article for that market. But the trade had possibilities, and eventually coopers were provided. There was no hard wood for the manufacture of barrels, but a stand of white pine was found on a little river that flowed into the Fraser at some distance up-stream, and which, by reason of the suitability of the wood, is still known as “Stave River.”

There was another objection to Fort Langley that carried weight with those in authority, it was that shipping had to wait for a wind and fair tide to make the trip up from the sea to the fort. This sometimes caused loss of several days. The suggestion was advanced that Langley should be removed to the Coast. At first the head of Puget Sound, where later Fort Nisqually was located, was favored. But while the plains there were reported to be admirable for stock, they were not so adaptable to other forms of agricultural production. Then Whidby Island came in for consideration and Francis Heron, chief trader, was instructed to prepare to locate a post there.

But John McLoughlin, the dictator of the Columbia, then at the height of his power and favor with the Company, did not think it would be advisable to abandon the post without making provision for the maintenance of the salmon fisheries. In March, 1834, he wrote to Yale, who had by then succeeded to McDonald’s command of Fort Langley: “You will keep the fort in repair and sow as much grain as you can.”

Yale did not want to leave the Fraser. He too, envisioned the possibilities of the salmon fisheries. He believed as well that there were opportunities to

be developed in farming. He suggested that if it was essential that Fort Langley be moved, then Lulu Island should be considered.

The exertions of Yale and McDonald had returned 2,062 large prime beaver and 499 small ones—a record any post might boast about—for the year 1833, and this had a bearing on the delay in final decision as to abandonment. But in that same year, in London, the Committee came to a momentous decision. Steam vessels were now being used for deep sea voyages that were formerly considered impossible. In steam, it was thought, might be the answer to the problem of the north west coast of America. Consequently a steamer was designed especially for the requirements of North Pacific waters.

A sturdy vessel was the *Beaver*. Of timbers of greenheart and oak was she built, with the latest in steam engines from the shops of Bolton and Watt. Launched in 1835, she reached the Columbia the following year. Her paddles were shipped at Fort Vancouver, then under the Union Jack. The *Beaver* sailed from that place in the same year, and never returned, but half a century later she laid her bones at the gateway to the new Vancouver—under the Union Jack.

In the intervening years the sturdy craft had made history. Her contribution in retaining Fort Langley on the Fraser River was not the least of her services. Had the fort been moved, it is possible the flag she carried all her days might not have continued to fly north of the 49th parallel. In any event, the ease with which the steamer ran the distance from the mouth of the Fraser to Fort Langley removed one of the obstacles to the Fort's continuance on the banks of the muddy river.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Fire and Religion

Fort Langley was crowded. It never was very commodious, even before McDonald had enlarged it to enclose a space 200 feet square. Now, however, with additional room required for cooperage and fish-curing it was becoming inconvenient. Besides it was poorly located in respect of the most arable lands in the vicinity.

James Murray Yale kept his little force of a dozen men busy. In addition to essential business, trafficking in furs with the Indians, or cultivating sufficient land to supply the establishment with some of its food requirements, the increasing demands of the export trade in cured salmon entailed much labor and attention. Salted fish was now being shipped regularly to Honolulu. Another phase of the fishery industry had developed in the manufacture of isinglass. This was made from the float bladder of the sturgeon, and as long as Yale remained in charge some hundreds of pounds were shipped each year, varying in price from six shillings a pound to as high as fourteen dollars during the Crimean war.

Yale had greater faith in the soil of the locality than had Archie McDonald. "Little Yale" was anxious to try his hand at farming on a large scale, but that required a new and larger fort, situated in more arable land.

Chief Factor Duncan Finlayson, McLoughlin's coadjutor in direction of affairs in the Columbia department, visited Fort Langley. Yale told him of his ambitions. Finlayson looked over the locality and selected what he thought would be a good site for a new establishment.

In 1838 McLoughlin was called to London to consult with the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, for great plans were in the making. Chief Trader James Douglas acted in his absence. Douglas was powerful of physique and possessed of a coldly analytical brain and also the ability to direct such men as Yale, whose worth he appreciated. Douglas envisioned good opportunities in farming as well as in fishing at Fort Langley.

"I feel much gratified," he wrote to Yale (November 21, 1838), "by the progressive improvement of the farm and stock. In a few

years Fort Langley will supply all the salt provisions required for the Coast. The salmon fishery is an object of much importance and merits the utmost attention . . .

“I am sorry that the site selected for the new Fort should be found subject to so many disadvantages and we must therefore abandon it, and fix upon some other spot, alike convenient for the fur and salmon trade, combined with facilities for the farm and shipping. Probably the place you first pointed out to Mr. Finlayson will be found on the whole most suitable. If a better can be found, let it have preference; however, remember that the salmon trade must not be sacrificed. It will always yield a more valuable return, at less trouble, risk and expense than the farm.”

This is what Little Yale wanted—a free hand. In Douglas he had a friend who would trust him. He went to work with rare good will. The new site lay higher up the Fraser by several miles.

Once more fort-builders’ axes cut deeply into the forests for suitable timber; pickets were felled and rafted down the river from several points upstream. Canadians with broad axes squared logs for new bastions. Sandwich Islanders toiled methodically in the saw pits finishing lumber. When stockades and blockhouses were in place, work commenced tearing down and moving heavy buildings from the old fort. In a remarkably short time Fort Langley was ready to be shifted. The move was completed on June 25, 1839.

Yale proudly boasted, in a letter to Governor Simpson, January 15, 1840:

“The affairs of Fort Langley are in as favorable a condition as could be expected. Our removal from the old place was effected by the 25th June, without aid. We had cleared, fenced and cropped a sufficiency of new ground to amply repay us for what we had abandoned and that cost several years’ labor. We did not commence moving any part of the old fort until we had our square here well surrounded with pickets and bastions and a store made to receive the goods.”

And Douglas, reporting to London about the same time, added:

“We have abandoned the old Langley establishment which was in a dilapidated state, as well as inconvenient in some respects for the business, and removed all the effects into a new fort built a

few miles higher up on the banks of Fraser's River, the stockades of which, four block houses, and nearly all the necessary buildings, are now erected. It is fully as convenient for the fur and salmon trade as the former site. Moreover it possesses the important and desirable advantage of being much nearer the farm."

Fur returns were on the decline from Langley, Douglas told London. That was to be expected since the arrival of the steamer Beaver, which was a veritable mobile trading post. Still Langley was not doing too badly, for Yale had traded 1,025 beaver skins during 1839, an increase of 398 over the previous year's total.

Yale had done a magnificent job. He was entitled to be proud of it. Prospects were bright that spring of 1840 for Fort Langley to accomplish great things. The force of men at the fort had been augmented by several men and a bustling, apple-cheeked little Scottish woman, Mrs. Finlay, wife of one of the recruits. She was an expert butter-maker and he was a dairyman. A creamery was located within the fort and the big barns for the cattle that grazed on the lush meadows of the little prairie were located close at hand. From the farm on the Big Prairie hay and grain were barged down the twisting, winding, sluggish Salmon to be stored in sheds erected near its confluence with the Fraser. Later these were replaced by larger buildings where the village of Fort Langley is now located.

Indians, impressed by the mastery of the "Whan-ee-tum" over the Yucultas, moved with the white men from Snugamish, and located on McMillan Island, where they built a new home, named for themselves, "Kwantlen." They were copying the whites. Men who could defeat the warriors of Johnstone Strait and Yuculta Rapids, and yet would cheerfully do the work squaws alone should undertake—such men were puzzling, but worthy of imitation. Douglas was able to report to London:

"I may be permitted to mention . . . as a matter likely to interest the friends of our native population, and all who desire to trace the first dawn and early progress of civilization, that the Cowegians (Cowichans) around Fort Langley, influenced by the counsel and example of the fort, are beginning to cultivate the soil, many of them having with great perseverance and industry cleared patches of forest land of sufficient extent to plant, each ten bushels of potatoes; the same spirit of enterprise extends, though less generally, to the Gulf of Georgia and de Fuca's straits, where the

very novel sight of flourishing fields of potatoes satisfies the missionary visitors that the Honourable Company neither oppose, nor feel indifferent to, the march of improvement.”

While Yale was building his new fort, Sir George Simpson was at Hamburg, Germany, discussing with Baron Wrangell, representing the Russian-American Fur Company something that would add to the importance of Fort Langley. It was a lease, by the Hudson's Bay Company, of a part of the Russian territory of Alaska. Relations between the two great trading organizations had not been good. It was thought that by coming to an understanding with the Russians it would be easier to drive the United States marine traders from the Coast, because the Boston men received supplies from Russian posts.

Negotiations resulted in an agreement, signed on February 6, 1839. By its provisions the Hudson's Bay Company was to pay rental, for the territory involved, in land otter skins. It also agreed to sell certain agricultural products at fixed prices. The Company was obligated to provide 2,000 fenagos of wheat in 1839 and double that amount annually thereafter. A fenago was 126 pounds. Other supplies included 30 cwt. peas; 160 cwt. wheat flour; 130 cwt. grits and pot barley; 160 cwt. butter; 300 cwt. salted beef, and 30 cwt. of pork hams.

Fort Vancouver had extensive farms; Nisqually had fine possibilities for stock raising, and the Cowlitz lands could be developed, so with the incentive of the Russian agreement, great plans were made for farming. The Puget Sound Agricultural Association, a parallel company to the Hudson's Bay Company, was organized to direct the work. But the program of the new concern did not contemplate taking over Fort Langley's lush lands. Murray Yale was capable of handling their development, and he did.

But McLoughlin, Douglas and others in authority urged the little man to great endeavors. They promised him every possible aid, and even sent him some laborers in addition to the Finlay family. One of these new arrivals was Jason Ovid Allard, the laughable, likeable, hard working, able nephew of a Point Levis notary. He became a very useful man, and as interpreter and postmaster won esteem among Indians and whites. He soon cemented affiliation between the Cowichans and the fort by marrying T'seeyiya, sister of the great Shashia. She adopted the name Justine.

Among the new arrivals was a Canadian named Brulé, from Fort Vancouver. A small hut for him was being constructed, and he was permitted to occupy part of the blacksmith shop pending its completion. Just what

happened is uncertain, but on the night of April 11, 1840, while Brulé was absent from his quarters, flames broke out from the smithy. Instantly the cry of "Fire!" rang out and the alarm was sounded. Before the men of the fort could assemble, however, other buildings and the stockade itself were ablaze. All was confusion.

"Quick," shouted Yale, "the powder!" Barrels of black powder were trundled from the bastions and the magazine to a place of safety. Then the men tried to save the trade goods. From already burning buildings they carried bundles of blankets and other merchandise, so necessary for them to have if they were to secure the co-operation of the Indians.

Mrs. Finlay was perhaps the most excited person there. She ran about shouting excitedly for some one to save the cream that she had set out in pans. At last she attracted attention and several men helped her to carry the big shallow pans beyond the flaming stockade. A moment later someone upset them. In her excitement the good wife had forgotten her baby. Just in time Allard dashed into the burning building to bring it to safety.

As the burning fort illuminated the skies, canoes by the dozen came from Kwantlen, from Kanaka Creek and from even below Slikwhinna. Indians crowded about the fire, getting in the way of the whites, seeking a chance to pick up loot.

When morning came only hot ashes and charred and blackened stumps remained of the fort of which Yale had been so proud. The commander could take stock of the extent of disaster. A few furs had been saved, the bulk of the trading goods, eleven muskets and the powder, seven barrels of salmon and three or four "old implements for building." The rest of the stock, barrels for pickling salmon and all the rest was gone.

But Yale had no time to repine. Fortunately several rafts of pickets, intended for the farms, were available. The men commenced at once to putting up a temporary stockade. In an incredibly short time a defensive work of 70 by 108 feet was erected. As soon as this was finished, the indefatigable Yale commenced construction of a new and bigger fort.

Chief Trader Douglas was on his way to Puget Sound to board the Beaver for Alaska when, at Cowlitz portage, he learned of the destruction of Fort Langley. He hastened to the Sound and ordered the steamer to make all speed to the Fraser. He arrived on May 1, where he found Yale secure. Peppery "Little Yale" bluntly told the gigantic Douglas, "All I want from you is that you give me six axes and be off." But Douglas stayed several days, put 20 men to help finish a bastion and in cutting and squaring logs for

a building. This done, he was convinced the temporary fort was secure. “The work of destruction has been fearfully complete,” he noted in his journal, “extending to every part of the premises, of which a few blackened stumps alone remain.” And then Douglas went his way.

With such purpose did Yale labor at rebuilding, that by February 10, 1841 (ten months after the destruction of the post) he was able to tell Governor Simpson:

“The whole total affairs of Fort Langley would hardly seem to have met with a check. Nearly everything that could be done in the way of farming was accomplished; the salmon fishery in due time re-established—that is in the necessary buildings, vessels for pickling the fish in, etc.—and in regard to the business of the dairy, it would appear that we may carry the feather.

“Have a fort far more spacious than the old one, and things inside nearly as far advanced towards a completion as Fort Langley was when you first visited it, the second year after it was established.”

It was, indeed, a spacious fort, constructed on a ridge overlooking the verdant fields of the lowlands. It was enlarged slightly some years later, when it had a length of 630 feet by a width of 240 feet—one of the largest forts built by the Hudson’s Bay Company.

“Last winter,” Yale complained, “Chief Factor McLoughlin proposed to send us plenty of aid to get in the crops, etc., but unluckily the sick had apparently become great, none could be spared; he has, however, though rather late, consoled us a little by sending Fort Langley an old broken threshing mill.”

Yale was irritated because McLoughlin had taken some of his cattle from him. Douglas tells of what happened. On the latter’s return from Alaska in September he called at Fort Langley, where he found instructions from McLoughlin to remove as many cattle as the Beaver could carry. Yale was angry. He stormed that he could provide food for three times as many animals. “However,” Douglas wrote, “his wishes were not to be consulted.” Douglas well knew McLoughlin’s hasty temper. He had ordered the beasts to be shifted, and shifted some at least must be. Douglas sympathized with his friend and he compromised by taking only 11 head although the steamer could carry 25.

The observing Douglas noted that the outlook for farming operations was for a harvest of 500 bushels of fall wheat and 250 bushels spring wheat; 300 bushels of barley; 600 of peas and 500 of oats. The potato harvest promised to be abundant.

It was a fine fort, was the last Fort Langley. Within its walls were all necessary buildings, spaced well apart to isolate fire, a provision that twice saved the establishment from complete destruction. It was a pleasant spot, where the personnel fared better than at any other post, except Fort Vancouver, the great emporium of the West. Yale could well congratulate himself on the harmony that had been established since the defeat of the Yucultas. Peace reigned—as far, at least, as the white men on the Stahlo were concerned.

Fort Langley, however, was to have a new experience. Religion was at hand. It was coming to the Halkomaylem, and even to their ancient enemies. The Cross was raised on the banks of the Fraser in the summer of 1841. Father Modeste Demers had crossed the continent with Father F. N. Blanchet, newly-appointed vicar-general under the Bishop of Juliopolis in Quebec, to minister to the Indians and whites of the Pacific slope. Great men were these pioneer Catholic missionaries, who attained to high honors in the Church and won the esteem of men of all creeds by their principles of service and self sacrifice.

Father Blanchet had visited Puget Sound and had instructed the Indians in 1840, and now—the next year—Father Demers was extending the mission to the Fraser River. Describing the trip he said:

“I arrived . . . at the entrance of an inlet or vast bay called Birch Bay, where my guides told me we would have to make a difficult portage before reaching the prairie upon which Fort Langley farm is found. Indeed, the following day we travelled laboriously for ten hours and arrived exhausted and fatigued at the entrance of a prairie where I met a Canadian who was awaiting me with a horse. The farm is three miles from the Fort . . .

“Mr. Yale, commander of the Fort, sent men with horses to transfer our baggage, and I finally arrived at the post where I was received with hoisted flag and a salute of seven cannons. This was a brilliant occasion. The welcome that Mr. Yale extended me was such as would be expected by a man of merit and distinction. Five or six hundred savages instantly surrounded me and I had difficulty getting out of their midst to enter the Fort.

“Destroyed in 1840 by fire, this post has since been rebuilt on a larger, more beautiful plan. A score of men are employed as agricultural laborers. Eight of whom are Canadians, one Iroquois and the others Kanakas, natives of the Sandwich Islands; all have wives and children in the manner of the country. I baptised fifteen children, including those of Mr. Yale, and gave instructions to others, older, who did not even know the Lord’s Prayer.”

Father Demers’ mission was primarily to the savages. He turned his attention to instructing them and so came into contact with the Yucultas. He had heard of them as soon as he reached Puget Sound. Now he was to meet them, especially one of their great war leaders. The fact that this chief was at Fort Langley testified that an alliance existed between the Yucultas and the Stahlo people. Such a peace could only have been sued for by the Northerners; Yale could not have so risked the white man’s prestige.

“I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of a chief of the Yucultas, who by a recent alliance was found among the different nations whom I instructed,” said the priest. “This man of remarkable stature and outstanding because of his stately bearing, had a forehead high and wide, and hair long and thrown back. He was constantly at all the instructions and even had one of his children baptised. ‘I am wicked,’ he told me one day. He spoke very truly when he declared himself wicked, for savages here assured me that in warring with other nations, to cut off a head and take it to his mouth to drink the blood flowing from it is an action wholly to his taste . . .”

Yet, this bloodthirsty chief was so impressed he offered to carry the message of Christianity to his people.

In describing the phenomenal success of the mission, Father Demers told of how he baptised a total of more than four hundred. “The assemblies were held a short distance from the Fort gate in a low, level prairie,” he explained. “I was continually surrounded by fifteen to sixteen hundred adult savages, understanding my instructions, all listening attentively and with an incredible order.”

For several days the teachings went on, and each day was featured by baptisms, until his arms ached, he said. “All these nations had forgotten their hates and plans for vengeance in order to come and listen to the Word of God in common. Several injuries had not been atoned and vengeance was

only being suspended. That is why they at first came to the instructions suspiciously, and arrived with guns that I soon had disposed at my feet . . . It was an extraordinary feat and the result of visible protection from Heaven that in reassembling so many different nations by their interests, language and customs no quarrel was brought up.”

Now, from away up the river, came word that a tribe was anxious to meet the black-gowned medicine man, but that they feared their ancient enemies. Word was sent to them to come and they would be received in peace. The next day 306 of them arrived. “Everyone placed himself in line in order to give the indispensable greeting,” remarked the priest, “and I had to extend my hand to three hundred and six persons, while I held the other raised above my head.”

Now, after more than a week, Father Demers had to leave Fort Langley to return to the Columbia. So, on September 8, in closing his mission he distributed all his remaining religious medals and a stock of tobacco—for the Indians had become addicted to the weed since those days when Simon Fraser astonished them by inhaling smoke.

“There was a grand smoker,” the priest noted in his diary.

CHAPTER EIGHT

New Fur Trails

“Little Yale” was happy in his new fort. It was beautifully and conveniently situated, but he soon found that expanded activities he had undertaken were difficult of accomplishment with the force at his command. He had gone ahead with such vigor in bringing land under cultivation that he soon had 240 acres broken, while 195 neat cattle and 180 pigs required somebody’s constant attention. He had but 20 men at his command. They must, in addition to agricultural pursuits, cut timber at Stave River and float it down to the fort for the manufacture of barrels, tubs and kegs for the salmon fishery.

Then too, there were the demands of the fur trade to be met, and, as always, the ceaseless guarding of the establishment. There were 15 horses at the post, but the men worked harder than did the beasts. But they fared well. While Yale was a hard-driving master he was just, and so they worked willingly.

McDonald and Yale had started an industry that was to grow into a world-export trade when they began curing Fraser River salmon. McLoughlin saw in it some immediate profit to compensate for the decline in fur returns from Fort Langley. Douglas, however, envisioned the day when the fisheries would replace the combined values of furs and farms.

Mrs. Aurelia Manson, daughter of Chief Trader J. Murray Yale—for he had, in 1844, received deserved although belated promotion—left an interesting glimpse of the commencement of British Columbia’s salmon fisheries, as she remembered it:

“Ovid Allard was postmaster; that is he had charge of the Indians and the keys of the fort. Many a time have I heard him calling out the time for the people to go out, and of course all strangers would hurry out.

“I used to visit him when he was trading with the Indians for their cranberries, hazelnuts and fish.

“The blacksmith’s shop was a wonderful place for me. The smith made nails of different sizes, and iron hoops for the kegs,

barrels and vats that were being made by the cooper, W. Cromarty, with his three or four assistants, getting ready for the salmon run.

“Ovid Allard did all the trading with the natives for their salmon. He used to stand at the wharf with two or three trunks full of the Indians’ favorite stuffs, such as vermilion for the women to give themselves rosy cheeks, and tobacco for the men.

“Cromarty would be at the big cauldron making brine, and ever so many boys, and a man or two, would be running from the wharf with salmon, which they piled before the women of the fort and others who were seated in a circle in the shed where they cut the salmon. No rest for the boys! They had to continue their running; this time with the cut salmon to the men in the big shed where they were doing the salting. So they worked all the week; early in the morning until late at night, until the salmon run was over.”

Yale, himself, could measure the potentialities of the place better than could officials who seldom, if ever, visited Fort Langley. His views, about the second year after the fire, were contained in a letter to Sir George Simpson—for a grateful sovereign had rewarded the governor for his services to Crown and Empire:

“The Salmon trade, so far as regards quantity is likely to continue productive. Our farm is well established with buildings and fences and quite extensive enough, having now more cultivated ground than we are able to till in the course of a season, exclusive of a reserve for winter wheat; but the climate is unfavorable and the soil ill adapted to its disadvantages, being low and wet, and making the suitable time for ploughing, sowing and harvest exceedingly backward and we have been and still continue to be ill provided with means to obviate these local obstacles . . . The part of the Establishment constituting the Fort with the outdoor building for curing Salmon in &c. affords every desirable convenience.”

While the trade in salmon made up the major part of the fishery output of Fort Langley, it did not include all the wealth of the river that the industrious Yale garnered for the company. He manufactured from 300 to 800 pounds annually of isinglass. This was made from the membrane of the float bladder of the big sturgeon. This rare product was valued for inventory

purposes at 6 shillings a pound, although during the Crimean war San Francisco bid as high as \$14 a pound for this product of the Fraser. Oolichans were also cured to some extent, while Yale also tried his hand at making caviar. The recipe for making this delicacy was obtained from Russia as part of the deal for the lease on Alaskan territory.

And while the ink was still drying on Yale's commission as Chief Trader, great events, affecting the future of Fort Langley, were shaping at London and Washington. The results of Captain Black's folly when he smashed the bottle of wine on the flagstaff at Astoria were being realized. United States was laying claim anew to the whole of the Western slope, north of latitude 42 to the Russian line at 54 degrees 40 minutes. British statesmen were confident that they would be able to hold the boundary at latitude 49.

Such a demarkation had been suggested as early as 1818. But in those early times little was known of the country and the location of the mouth of the Fraser River had not been precisely determined. Now, however, in the early years of "the fateful forties" the great worth of the Fraser with its silver treasure in fish was realized. The Strait of Juan de Fuca must be kept open as a corridor to the second great river of the West, for if the 49th parallel was followed to the ocean it would bisect Vancouver's Island, and British shipping might be forced to thread the dangerous waters of Johnstone Strait to reach Fort Langley. The establishment of the post on the Fraser had helped to hold the country for Great Britain, for it was established British occupancy. Now, under orders from the Governor and Committee in London, on suggestion of Sir George Simpson, the southern tip of Vancouver's Island was occupied, and Fort Victoria, named after the young and popular sovereign was constructed.

In 1829 Simpson had explained:

"Fort Langley was established . . . with the double object of securing a share of the Coasting trade which had previously been monopolised by the Americans, and of possessing a settlement on the Coast which would answer the purpose of a Depot, in the event of our being under the necessity of withdrawing from Fort Vancouver."

Fort Victoria, it was determined, might be used as a main depot in the future, but Fort Langley would form an admirable brigade terminus and supply base. So it was regarded when, in the summer of 1846, the boundary was established, leaving the whole of Vancouver's Island to Great Britain.

British traders were supposed, under the treaty, to have equal rights with Americans in the navigation of the Columbia River, but it was soon found that United States customs officers did not place such an interpretation upon the treaty. The construction of a new route into the Thompson River and New Caledonia districts must be undertaken.

In charge at Fort Alexandria, the gateway to the Chilcotin Plateau, was Alexander Caulfield Anderson, an enterprising and well educated clerk. Anderson, who was destined to play many important roles in the development of the Pacific Coast, was born in India, the son of a former British army officer who had taken up indigo planting. The boy, with his brother, had been sent to England to be educated; later they entered the fur trade as apprentices. A. C. Anderson was a born explorer and geographer, and a keen naturalist, an ability that he had inherited from his famous grandsire Dr. James Anderson, the noted Scottish botanist who was a correspondent of George Washington.

Anderson followed with keen interest the slow moving news of the negotiations between the two powers that seeped through to his lonely establishment. Someone should be looking for a new route while the diplomats argued, he reasoned; so he wrote to Sir George Simpson offering to explore for a way to Fort Langley from Fort Kamloops at the forks of the Thompson River. His offer was gladly accepted, Chief Factors James Douglas and Peter Skene Ogden welcoming the news that the Governor and Council had accepted Anderson's offer. Ogden remembered that Archie McDonald had ventured West of the Fraser from Pavilion and had reached the Lillooet River that flowed into Harrison Lake and on to the Fraser not very far above Fort Langley. He suggested that Anderson first explore this possibility.

It was on May 15, 1846 that Anderson with a party of five left Kamloops. He passed down Kamloops Lake and along the Thompson and up the Bonaparte to Hat Creek, and on through the Marble Canyon, the beauties of which deeply impressed him. At last they came to the Fraser River at the mouth of present Cayoosh Creek and went up that stream and Seton Creek to beautiful Seton Lake—which bears the name of a relative of Anderson. The bold, rocky ramparts of that lake did not indicate ease of construction of a brigade trail—but the lake could be travelled by batteaux.

So down the lake went the explorers, and across the narrow neck of land that separated Seton from another attractive large lake—which later obtained the name of Anderson himself—and so by way of Gates, Birkenhead and Lillooet rivers to Harrison Lake, and on to Fort Langley, where he arrived on

May 24. The way was not difficult, but it would require frequent use of batteaux.

Resting for four days, Anderson and his party started on a more difficult journey. They had heard of Indians crossing from the Okanagan and Similkameen countries to the Fraser. They started to find how they came. He went up the river to Silver Creek, but the trail that might be made that way would not be practical for horses; so he returned and entered the mountains again by way of the Coquihalla valley, which he followed until he came to the Nicolum river, and then by a creek he called the "Simil-a-ouch" (but which is now known as the "Summallo") to Skagit river. He followed the Skagit to Snass river. He proceeded up the East fork of the Snass to its headwaters and crossed the divide to the Tulameen.

He met, by appointment, an Indian named Blackeye, whom he had ordered to meet him there before he had left Kamloops. He had intended to cross to the Red Forks, the site of the present Princeton, but Blackeye advised a short-cut by way of Otter, Myran and Guilford Creeks to Quilchena Creek and Nicola Lake. This was accomplished without difficulty, and the usual road from Nicola lake to Kamloops was followed.

The following year Anderson went out again. The boundary line had been fixed, and the need of a new route to the sea was urgent. The Board of Management—for Dr. McLoughlin had retired—felt that the Coquihalla route might delay brigades unduly by reason of snow lingering well on into the summer on the higher levels. Therefore Anderson was advised to try and break through the Fraser canyon.

He found that it was impractical to build a horse trail down the Thompson to the forks—where Lytton stands today—and from that point through the difficult country along the Fraser, so he went to Nicola Lake and made a hazardous and exhausting trip through the mountains, coming out at Kequeloose, an Indian village on the river. He managed to cross to the other side and found that it was possible, but dangerous, to transport goods through the mountain barrier by making use of batteaux and portaging at several especially difficult bits of water. The route from Nicola Lake to Kequeloose had been by way of Nicola River to the Colwater, up that stream for 20 miles, where Spius creek, a branch of Uztlius creek, a tributary of Anderson river was crossed. From the Anderson the way led to the Fraser.

Douglas, however, was not satisfied with the proposal to risk the passage from Kequeloose to "the foot of the Falls"—where Fort Yale was later established—by the water route. So he and Chief Factor John Work, who

had succeeded to the Board of Management on the retirement of Ogden, came to Fort Langley.

What a change! Work found the muddy prairies where he had commented upon the growth of rich grass for wandering bands of elk, now smiling fields of grain, while domestic cattle grazed contentedly within sight of one of the largest posts that the Hudson's Bay Company possessed. Old Whattlekainum was not there to greet him, but the aging Shashia gave him welcome.

Douglas took Yale and Wm. Sinclair with him to investigate the Canyon route. John Work was left in charge of the establishment that had eventuated from that trip when, twenty-three years before, he and James McMillan and Tom McKay the Brave, and Annance the Scholar and the restless Laframbois, with the voluble Jean Ba'tiste Proveau and others had crossed the T'salkwakyan portage from the sea.

Douglas and Yale found an Indian track that left the river and passed by way of a mountain defile to come down a slope to meet the river again at Spuzzum. Douglas was delighted. He was sure that a feasible road could be constructed. Yale was not so optimistic, so he indelibly associated his superior with its selection by naming it "the Douglas portage." It was realized that a great deal of work would have to be done, not only on this portage, but on the whole route to make it into anything like a good brigade trail. It was hoped that it might be got ready by 1849.

Then, late in 1847, came the butchery of Dr. Marcus Whitman, his wife and members of his mission, at Waiilatpu, in the Oregon territory, and the consequent unrest amongst the Indian tribes, who were unhappy under the new rule of their country. This made it dangerous for the brigades to follow the old route to the Columbia. The risk was too great to permit waiting for the improvement of the trail.

So orders were given that Donald Manson, in charge of the New Caledonia brigade, with his furs and those gathered by John Tod at Kamloops, must force their way, via Anderson's Kequeloose route to Fort Langley during the summer of 1848. Anderson was to lead the way. It was a terrible journey, exhausting both men and horses. Beasts toppled down hillsides, and only the most arduous efforts on the part of the men, and the courage of their leaders brought the brigade through.

In the meanwhile Yale had sent Ovid Allard to construct a store and stopping place at the foot of the falls—which he named in honor of the Fort Langley commander—and another, just a big house, at Spuzzum where the

brigade was ferried across the river. This was named "Simon's House." Batteaux were built there and more were constructed at Fort Langley and sent up the river. At last the brigade reached Fort Yale, and the horses were left there, while the goods and men were transferred to the boats to drift down to the good fare and fun of that well-found establishment.

When, on July 17, Manson started to return, he found that five of his men had deserted rather than face the terrors of a second trip over the trail. He had trouble with them all the while they were at Fort Langley when the preparations for the return journey were being made. Now, however, he got them, grumbling mightily, into the batteaux and the start was made. It took eight days to make the distance between Fort Langley and Fort Yale. There further delays were required to round up the horses and arrange the packs. There was very little horse feed at Fort Yale, and the big band of horses soon had all the grass in the vicinity eaten. The result was that they were weak and hungry when they were called upon to start freighting through the mountains again.

H. N. Peers, a clerk in the Company's service, went with the brigade, and he kept a diary. It is typical of the toil and dangerous travel of the fur trails. He tells how, in order to ease the horses, "half the goods . . . were carried over the river portage by 80 Indians in three or four trips." This was along the Indian trail that clung precariously to the canyons. Thirty-five horses, the best of them, were used to take the balance of the merchandise by way of Douglas portage, making three or four trips. Two horses rolled down the mountain slopes. It was a difficult and exacting trip—a foretaste of days to come.

The brigade required three days to rest the men and horses and rearrange the merchandise at Spuzzum, and to ferry the horses across the river. It was August 6 when a start was made again, "with some five hundred and upwards pieces of goods in 15 brigades, each brigade having 18 and some a greater number of horses and two men. We encamped at the foot of the Big Hill where the road leaves Fraser River, many of the brigades only arriving when pitch dark and consequently great confusion from horses straying with their loads and so forth; several fell down a steep hill on nearing the encampment . . . from weakness, threw their loads and a bale was swept off in the river . . . and one animal killed."

It had been a terrible day. One poor fellow was so tortured in mind and body that he crawled away during the night and committed suicide, rather than endure the rest of the trip. He was buried on the spot. Father John

Nobili, who accompanied the men, conducting a brief ceremony before the brigades moved on.

Day after day the brigades, with Anderson doggedly leading the way fought their way onward, the weakened horses unable to find grass in that rugged country, falling and stumbling from sheer exhaustion. One night 80 pieces of freight were missing when the stop was made at the close of daylight. A halt had to be made the next day while search was made for the goods. Indians were enlisted for the purpose. On August 12 Peers recorded:

“It was our intention to have reached the height of land today, but from the jaded state of our animals and the general confusion among the rear brigades we were obliged to camp in the woods Here again was a sad account of the goods, many pieces left on the road and three parties obliged to halt, separated one from another, night having overtaken them before they could reach the camp.”

Such an entry was typical of that journey.

Finally, when the height of land was passed and they had progressed a little way towards the Nicola country, they found fresh horses waiting. The balance of the way presented no trouble, and at last they reached Fort Kamloops to count the cost; some 70 horses had been lost, of which 27 had died on the return trip; much property had been destroyed or was missing, and one man had died.

It was clear that this route was not satisfactory in its present state, nor could it be improved without much expense and toil. It was a gloomy council of war that Manson, Tod and Anderson held at Fort Kamloops. What was to be done? The answer, Anderson was certain, was to try the route that he favored most, via Coquihalla. So the three gave written instructions to Peers to try and open a road through by that way. And Peers did so.

He found that by varying slightly Anderson's track he could avoid one or two difficult places. The work of opening the trail went forward, and it became the main route for the argosies of the North to reach the sea until after the construction of the Cariboo road.

Fort Yale was now temporarily abandoned, and Allard was sent to build a new post near the mouth of the Coquihalla. Here, on a nice, grass-covered flat, admirably suited for a horse depot, he built Fort Hope.

And at Fort Langley, Yale was having his troubles. The winter of 1847-48 was the most severe that the memory of the oldest Indian could recall. Many cattle died, and others were taken into the Indians' huts for shelter. The making of Fort Langley the terminus of the brigades placed new responsibilities and more work on the shoulders of Yale. The demands in the export markets for Fraser River salmon were increasing. Yale decided to locate a fishery at the mouth of Harrison River. He could not afford to place a white man in charge, so he hired an Indian. In July, just when he was looking for good returns from this venture, the station was burned to the ground.

But this was not the only loss by fire. "On the 26th November," he reported to Governor Simpson, "we experienced a great disaster. One of our sheds, the most spacious and staple built of the sort (with the adjoining shed for threshing in) and its contents, about 800 bus. Oats. The whole crop of Peas and Barley and a quantity of fodder, reserve of the year before, was totally destroyed."

Some boys were hunting chicken nests in the shed, and, it being cold, started a fire for warmth. In a few minutes there was a flaming furnace, and the adjoining structure was aflame. Now the wisdom of Yale having built a large fort was apparent, for the space between buildings gave the men a chance to fight the fire. The lesson of the second fort's construction had been well learned. But the loss was heavy. As a result of the loss of provender, more than 100 animals died.

Fire was always a menace, and once again Yale had to battle it, when in 1852 flames again threatened the place, but were confined to a single building.

But Fort Langley had come of age. It had reached manhood, and was fully established; it had come a long way from the little fort that McMillan had built and the Indians had called Snugamish, to have a definite place in the general economy of the North Pacific, with fisheries that were to become world famous, fair farms and an important position on the fur trails of the West.

CHAPTER NINE

Gold and Grief

Opening of the new fur trail to the Central Interior brought heavier burdens to Fort Langley and added responsibilities to its commander. "Little Yale" became more irascible and pepper-tempered than ever.

The tremendous growth of the export trade in salmon, amounting to 2,000 barrels annually, and requiring manufacture of at least that number of large containers, and in addition kegs and casks for smaller fish and for cranberries, provided sufficient tasks for practically the whole force stationed at the fort. Then there were the extensive farms to be worked, the herds to be attended, the barter of the fur trade to be maintained and the fort itself to be kept up.

The cranberry trade was a new development; one that followed the establishment of a large consuming market at San Francisco with the discovery of gold in California. Two free traders started it, Captain James Cooper, a settler on Vancouver's Island, and a Captain Webster, of the Honolulu Packet. They induced the Indians to gather the berries that grew in profusion on the marshy lands of the Fraser delta.

It was in 1852 that Cooper arrived at Fort Langley. He wanted to buy barrels for the berries. Sufficient containers for his immediate wants were sold to him by Allard. Later when Douglas rapped the knuckles of Yale for encouraging trade by unauthorized individuals on the river, the chief trader upbraided Allard, who in turn asserted that Yale had sanctioned the sale. The result of the quarrel was that Allard quit Fort Langley.

He was transferred to Nanaimo, where coal had been discovered, and became superintendent of Indian labor there. He was a great loss to Yale; Allard had been his right hand man.

Conditions had changed of late years, and each alteration of the old system seemed to irk the little man at Fort Langley. In 1849 the Board of Management moved from the Columbia River to Fort Victoria, which became the headquarters for the Company's affairs on the Pacific slope. Douglas was the first to transfer his abode to the Island. John Work, his coadjutor and the assenting member of the Board, was sent to the northern coast to personally supervise operations there, while Douglas carried on the

principal direction of the business. He was soon wielding even greater power than had Dr. McLoughlin, and with equal efficiency and greater tact.

The same year that the fort on Camosun harbor became the official seat of the company's operations west of the Rockies, the British Government had created Vancouver's Island a Crown Colony, and having thus asserted the right and dominion of the Crown, it was leased to the Company for ten years. Conditional upon this lease was a guarantee to encourage settlement. Richard Blanshard was sent but as governor. He stayed less than a year, retiring in 1851 when Douglas succeeded him.

Yale did not like these changes, and particularly the selection of Fort Victoria as headquarters. He would have preferred being at a greater distance from the Board of Management. He was too convenient. "Let Yale do it," appeared to become an easy way to shift burdens. The coal mines at Fort Rupert had proved to be a failure; new deposits were required . . . Yale could find them. He did. He discovered thin seams away up Kanaka creek, opposite the original fort, and "between the North channel of Fraser's River and Burrard's Canal." Fortunately, however, for his peace of mind splendid outcroppings were revealed by an Indian at Wenthuisen Inlet where Nanaimo was located to conduct mining.

Foodstuffs were required for the Interior posts; the supplies of grain and flour had formerly come from the broad acres at Fort Vancouver . . . Yale could make up the deficiency. He was instructed to put more and more land under tillage, and was promised six good farm hands. He received four men and had to send three of them back to Fort Victoria as being useless. And so the Little Man and his meagre force worked and strained to meet each new demand made upon them.

The annual brigades arriving and staying—sometimes for weeks—disrupted the whole smooth economy of the place. Jason Ovid Allard II, the son of Yale's assistant, has left a description of the arrival of the brigades. He tells of how firing would be heard from up the river. Then the batteaux laden with the baled furs of the north would stop at the island off Whonnock, where the men would don their best clothes and decorate themselves with gay ribbons. Then they would push off, singing old Canadian boat songs, punctuating the melody by the firing of small arms.

Now the cannons from the bastions would blast out a welcome and the populace of the place would hasten out of the gates to the riverside to cheer and wave greetings to the on-coming boats. All would be excitement. The freight would be quickly unloaded and be carried to safety in the

warehouses. This done, half a gill of rum would be dished out to each man—the regale was on! More strong liquor could be purchased. For several days and nights there would be dancing and feasting, and drinking and fighting; a happy time would be the measure of everyone. It was a merry break in the monotony, but it played havoc with the efforts of Yale to produce foodstuffs to a maximum.

Such things slowed up operations. Yale did not like the delay and the confusion caused by the brigades. Nor did he care to have Chief Factor Douglas too often about the place. It was not that he did not like the great man, for he did, and Douglas held Yale in high esteem, but the towering and somewhat pompous governor had a secret delight. It was to stand beside wee Yale and look down upon him from his six feet two inches. It amused him to see how Yale would quickly move to avoid the inevitable comparison between their stature. It was not this, however, that bothered Fort Langley's commander. It was that those who did not understand conditions blamed him for the decline in fur returns from the Stahlo country. One of the reasons for this falling off in skins was that it was too easy for Indians to cross the Gulf of Georgia to Fort Victoria.

He became quite vexed over the whole thing, and poured out his heart to his old friend of Athabasca days before Union, Sir George Simpson, in a letter dated in October 1852:

There was, he asserted, “a seeming necessity of superior powers” to bring the functions of the “highly respected but rather singular body the Board of Management, to bear upon a concentrated course, and restore the company's affairs in these quarters to a more wholesome condition.” He was not going to stand for being blamed for conditions that he could not control, nor was he going to have the good name of Fort Langley sullied by unwarranted criticism. He strained his vocabulary in vigorous refutation of baseless innuendoes.

“The greatest evils here seem to spring out of Vancouver's Island,” he declared. “It would be ungenerous and to cause no salutary consequences, to cast reflections derogatory to the business of Fort Langley. [*sic*] It has resisted many tendencies to obstruct its due course, and tho' much depreciated, Old Langley stands still stable, the main prop of the Company's commerce on the North West Coast of America, and can not, with any show of reason, be reproached for anything, except, perhaps, that of

affording maintenance to a rising Sodom on Vancouver's Island

...

“A great part of the fur procured by the natives in the Interior within the Langley precincts are taken to Fort Victoria. The Indian traders here are glad to get a few furs to secure an ostentatious reception at the great emporium . . . and after seeing the World, and tasting of its sweets into the bargain, they come home loaded with goods. Then follow a host of laborers, all in the costumes of princes, and with wealth such as a few years ago would have been considered sufficient to maintain them in grandeur for an age.”

No, Yale did not like the changed conditions. He wanted to have Fort Langley remain as it was when his old friends, Whattlekainum and Shashia were men of might on the Stahlo . . . But they had passed out of the picture, and younger men ruled in their stead. Gone, too, was Tzouhalem the Wicked, the bluebeard of the Cowichans who emerged from his fort at Cowichan Bay, where he kept his many wives, to plunder and kill. He led the attack on Fort Victoria in 1844.

Yale did not mourn his violent death as he regretted the passing of the others. No, Tzouhalem had tried to murder him, and might have done so but for Allard. The Cowichan had hidden himself outside of the fort waiting for Yale to come out. The postmaster had learned of the ambush, and crept up from behind and pounced upon the Indian. He wrested his gun away from him and then booted him down the bank and into his canoe. Tzouhalem did not return.

The younger generation were not like their fathers. Yale could understand Indians in those days. Now the swaggering youths aped the ways and cultivated the vices of the whites. But all the protesting that he could do would not alter conditions, he had to conclude—but he did deplore them.

Now it was 1856, and weary, discontented Yale and powerful Douglas were to encounter new worries and difficulties as the result of the happenings of that year. Perhaps, if old Tent-a-coose—who bowed by age, continued to carry water up from the river, and while away his happy, carefree hours by telling of the brave days of old, when the world was young—had been consulted, he would have warned them that it was a year of portent for Fort Langley.

All of the old people knew that four was a mystical number, and sixteen was fraught with tremendous possibilities; it was four times sixteen

summers since the white-crested floating island of Captain Vancouver had been seen off the entrance of Stahlo prole! It had been just sixteen years after Vancouver that Fraser came, changing the name of the Stahlo to his own; and sixteen years later the great fire had wiped out the second fort. Now the cycle of four fours was again complete. Douglas knew that something had happened that might affect the whole land. Gold had been found!

It was first located on the Mainland—for there had been a brief excitement on Queen Charlotte Islands several years before—on the British side of the line north of Fort Colvile. Prospectors from Washington and Oregon stampeded there, and then made their way here and there, panning and testing creek bars. The Indians soon learned the value of the yellow metal. So it was, that writing to the Colonial office, London, October 29, 1856, Douglas said: “From successful experiments made in washing gold from the sands of the tributary streams of Fraser River, there is reason to suppose that the gold region is extensive.”

A year later he reported:

“Concerning the goldfields of the Interior, north of 49 degree parallel, which for the sake of brevity, I will hereafter speak of as the ‘Couteau Mines’ (so named after the tribe of Indians who inhabit the country) I have received further intelligence from my correspondents in that quarter.

“It appears from their reports that the auriferous character is becoming daily more extensively developed, through the exertions of the native Indian tribes, who, having tested the sweets of gold finding are devoting much of their time and attention to that pursuit.

“The reputed wealth of the Couteau Mines is causing much excitement among the population of the United States territory of Washington and Oregon, and I have no doubt that a great number of people from those territories will be attracted thither with the return of the fine weather in Spring.”

Douglas did not like the prospect; neither did Yale. They feared a collision between gold-mad miners and Indians. War had been raging for some time between natives and whites in Washington territory. The Chief Factor discussed the matter with Yale, and as a result he hurried to Nanaimo and persuaded Allard to return to the Fraser to re-open Fort Yale, which was

bound to become a focal point in any gold excitement. Allard agreed to do so, provided that Fort Yale was no longer considered a subsidiary of Fort Langley. Years had done nothing to heal the breach between the former friends.

Douglas had expected, "a great number" would come, but he had no conception how great that number would be. Captain Jones of the schooner "Wild Pigeon" gave confirmation to the wild rumors that had percolated to the United States settlements on Puget Sound. The Puget Sound Herald, published at Steilacoom, Wash., reported on March 26, 1858 that Captain Jones had declared men were making from \$8 to \$50 a day, and that a man returning from Fort Langley had advised his friends to "come soon."

Within a matter of days the coal mines at Bellingham were idle, as the men had all crossed the border to the new diggings . . . Workers quit the mills . . . Large sailing vessels at Port Gable were abandoned by their crews who joined in the stampede . . . Soldiers deserted from the forts on the Sound . . . Farmers left their ploughing uncompleted to take their shovels and start off. And so the story went: 300 men were billeted in a bowling alley at Port Townsend on the way to the mines; Steilacoom was crowded, while Bellingham and Whatcom were sending off parties nearly every day. A trail had been commenced from Whatcom to join the brigade trail to Fort Hope.

They came in hundreds, and the hundreds became thousands. A veritable tidal wave of red-shirted, bearded men splashed down upon the banks of the Fraser. They eddied and swirled about Fort Langley, crowding the square and standing in line to buy supplies. Indians, Kanakas, halfbreeds and Europeans were questioned from morning until late at night: "What was the best place to prospect?" "How were the Indians?" . . . "How far was it to the diggings?" . . . "What were the latest reports on actual discoveries?" . . . and so on. A jovial, good-natured and eager lot they were as they poured their money across the counters in such volume that for the first weeks of the rush sales averaged \$1,500 daily.

Then came the thousands from San Francisco. They came in crazy old craft of every description, steamers, sailing vessels, river boats; crowded so tightly that men stood all the way for want of seats and lay in turn on the decks to doze. California had gone mad with excitement. Stories that had been magnified in the telling on Puget Sound were enlarged again and again by the time that they were repeated in the State that had its own great day of gold. For instance, it was said on the Sound that the Hudson's Bay Company

had shipped away 110 pounds of gold! When this story was printed in San Francisco, it was more than 200 pounds that had been forwarded to London.

And Douglas did not welcome the Californians. In this he was seconded by the Puget Sound communities. The Herald commenting, under date of May 7, in respect of their fellow Americans: "San Francisco is casting upon our shores thousands who can find no employment there, while from Oregon the cry is 'Still they come'. The free lunch tables of San Francisco we fear, will soon be utterly abandoned, and the vendors of bad whiskey compelled to shut up shop." Hard words, indeed, but Douglas had heard even worse words about these new arrivals:

"They are represented as being, with some exceptions," he wrote to London, "a specimen of the worst of the population of San Francisco; the very dregs, in fact, of society. Their conduct here would have led me to form a very different conclusion." He was to learn that the exceptions were not the decent, hard working miners, but the worthless proportion that takes part in every migration.

Alarmed at the totally unexpected size of the rush—it has been computed that there were as many as 33,000 adventurers who crowded into a territory where there were not more than 500 or 600 whites, in the space of three months—Douglas asked the Imperial Government to set up authority, and to send out police and soldiers to keep the horde in order. In the meantime he took a desperate step; one that a less courageous man would have hesitated to do. He assumed control and appointed officers to act for the Crown. He had no authority to do so. His commissions only extended to Vancouver's Island and Queen Charlotte Islands. But he was fearful of what would happen if the stampedeers were not held under some restraint.

He felt, too, that it was of utmost importance to obtain an acknowledgment of British sovereignty from all who entered the country. In order to do this he collected a mining license from every one in the name of Queen Victoria. If, however, he argued, this action on his part was not sustained by law, then the only authority that could exist was that of the Hudson's Bay Company under its license of exclusive trade. And so he exacted a head tax in addition to the mining license. In this manner they acknowledged British authority through the great trading company.

And while Douglas worried and fretted and took bold measures, the miners made their way up the river in their hundreds and thousands; they fought against the currents in leaky canoes, in home made boats, in sailing craft and even on rafts; they crossed the portage from the Nicomekl—now

covered by Fort Langley farms—and crowded about the post. The fields were white with tents, while along the edge of the woods were scores of cedar bark shelters.

And by now gold was trickling down from the bars above Fort Hope. Douglas who was at Fort Langley late in May, reported that he had heard of three men taking out 190 ounces of gold in seven days; of men making from \$8 to \$12 on the average; and of the rich discovery made on Hill's bar, below Fort Yale, where as high as \$25 a day was being taken. He found, too, that the affairs of the company were being seriously disrupted; that Indians were being paid \$2, \$3 and \$4 a day for working for the miners, and that none could be hired for the company's service.

The rush was on in earnest, and the auriferous character of the country was established. Between February 18 and May 24, he found Fort Langley had accumulated, in addition to specie, no less than 648 ounces of gold. He went up the river and met the miners. Before leaving Fort Langley he had been interviewed by a number of men who wished to take up land. Here was a new problem. He wished to see them raising their own food if the rush was to be developed into a permanent mining industry. But he had no authority to grant them lands. All he could do was to refer the question to London.

Now he learned that the miners were pushing their adventurous way through the Fraser canyons, higher and higher up the river, and as they progressed, the bars were richer and the gold coarser. This pointed to a great danger. If these men were caught by the winter snows the results might be tragic. A new road to the Interior must be built. Where was the money to come from? It was a puzzle, but not for long, the volunteer governor was equal to the occasion.

He addressed the miners, and induced 500 of them to agree to work for nothing; further he persuaded them to put up \$25 each as a guarantee of good conduct. This provided money for immediate requirements. This bond money was to be returned later, not in cash but in supplies. He recalled Anderson's exploration of the way between Cayoosh creek and Harrison Lake. He sent for that hardy pathfinder and asked him to take charge of the laying out of the freight road by that route. He divided the men into companies under captains and set them to work. They started in July and freight was rolling into Lillooet town on the Fraser in November. The situation had been saved; the danger averted, and mining placed on a more definite and permanent basis.

CHAPTER TEN

Fort Langley's Mightiest Moment

The summer of 1858 was one of excitement and confusion at Fort Langley. It was also one of changes, and these augured ill for the future prosperity of the old establishment.

Steam, applied to marine transportation, had anchored the post to the Fraser River in 1836, when the Beaver paddled bravely up the stream against the current, making the journey in a few hours that often required days for sailing craft to accomplish. No attempt had been made to take mechanically propelled vessels beyond the fort. Now, however, daring Yankee skippers had adventured higher up the Fraser and had reached Fort Hope, and later had carried freight and passengers to Fort Yale at the very foot of the ramparts of the Cascade range. Soon steamers that formerly landed their cargoes and human freight at Fort Langley were making that place only a port of call. Others plied between the Fort and the upper communities.

Naturally the larger vessels of deep draught, such as the Hudson's Bay Company's steamers Beaver and Otter, still recognized Fort Langley as the limit of safe navigation. And fortunate were the miners that the old trading concern had vessels to go even that length, for the Company fought strenuously against inflation. Although the trading vessels were required elsewhere, the Board of Management put them on the Victoria to Fraser River service when freight rates from Vancouver's Island to Fort Yale skyrocketed to \$50 a ton.

The result was that the rates from Victoria to Fort Langley were forced down by the Company to \$12 a ton. But the astute and greedy American captains plying the river beyond Fort Langley, met the situation by raising their tariff to \$40 a ton, making the total, if the Hudson's Bay boats were used, higher by \$2.00 than the direct charge by other craft.

Still the volume of trade to Fort Langley continued fairly heavy, but a decline had set in with the opening of navigation to Fort Hope. The American steamer Surprise was the first to make the trip. Speel-set, a Fort Langley Indian, had been secured by the steamer's captain to act as pilot, and August Willing, a clerk, went along as interpreter. The attempt was

successful, and with the return of the Surprise to Fort Langley, the blanket Indian had disappeared and a natty figure arrayed in a uniform of pilot cloth and brass buttons, and wearing a large panama hat and polished shoes stepped ashore. It was not Speel-set—for he had discarded the name. He was now “Captain John” and his pockets bulged with twenty shining five-dollar gold pieces. In other days one or two blankets would have been adequate payment for such a service.

Contact with white miners had not been so profitable to all Indians. Too many rough characters had regarded the natives with contempt that they made no effort to conceal. The inevitable clash took place, just as Douglas had feared it would, when he induced Allard to return to Fort Yale.

It was a short, sharp war in the canyons above Yale, and many whites and red men died—how many will never be definitely known. The more timid from the up-river communities dropped back on Fort Langley, but several hundreds of courageous miners formed themselves into armed companies and carried the fight to the natives. Peace was at last restored.

The Indians had been restless for weeks before this outbreak, right from the mouth of the river. Bodies floating out to sea were ascribed to Indian treachery.

Word was carried to Fort Langley one day in late July that a white woman was being held prisoner by the Indians near the site of the old village of Skaiaametl. She had been wounded and several white men had been killed by the natives, it was reported. Yale at once outfitted 45 men with muskets and revolvers and sent them to rescue the woman.

Yale had difficulty in accommodating himself to the changing conditions. Everything was different; even his old friend Chief Factor Douglas. The great man had always surrounded himself with a certain amount of impressive dignity; now he travelled with a military escort when he came to the Fraser River. He was attended by officers and men drawn from the Boundary Commission escort or by marines and seamen from the navy.

The economy in the establishment was once well regulated and orderly. Now it was sadly disrupted. Shacks of squatters spread along the river bank and on the broad flats. Whisky pedlars plied their trade with Indians and whites alike. Smuggling was becoming a regular calling.

Every time that Douglas appeared he was besieged by land hungry men. He could do nothing until Government was established. He knew that a new

Colony was to be formed—and he was also aware that he was to be governor of it. He knew, too, that a military force would be available to him, for a specially selected Royal Engineers corps was to be sent out. He was informed about these things when, on September 15, he arrived at Fort Langley on a tour of inspection.

Here he was amazed to find that a group of ambitious speculators in Victoria had taken possession of the original fort and were subdividing it into lots, to be sold as being “in the town of Derby.” He was furious, and issued a proclamation just as quickly as he could pen it. He declared that no land had been sold to any person, and that the affair was a swindle. He went to greater length: he formally took over the properties for the Crown, and sent Surveyor-General J. D. Pemberton from Victoria to check up on the surveys and make arrangements for selling lots to the public by auction.

Thus, it was speculators who first located Derby. Douglas was much impressed by their selection of the site for a town, for he found that it was favorably regarded by business men of Victoria.

The bill creating a new colony was passed in August, Queen Victoria personally selecting the name, “British Columbia.” Immediately two small detachments of Royal Engineers were despatched from England, Colonel R. C. Moody, with additional personnel following at intervals.

The Home Government also appointed Matthew Baillie Begbie, a tall young barrister of courage and determination as judge of the new colony, and Chartres Brew, formerly an officer of the Royal Irish Constabulary, to organize a police force.

The first units of the Royal Engineers arrived within a short time of each other under Captain R. M. Parsons and Captain J. M. Grant. Brew came next and on November 15 Judge Begbie reached Victoria—and just in time, for Douglas had set November 19 as the great day upon which the Crown Colony of British Columbia would be proclaimed.

It was fitting, indeed, that the birth of a new colony should be celebrated at Fort Langley, and that there the inauguration of government by the Crown should take place, for Fort Langley had been a mighty instrument, fashioned by the old trading company, that had been a bulwark of British sovereignty on the North American continent—holding the Union Jack north of the 49th parallel.

Douglas planned to have an impressive ceremony in the fort square, with all possible pomp and dignity. But the morning of November 19 was cold

and miserable, with a constant drizzle of rain. The “H.B.Co”-marked Red Ensign,—that had flown so proudly and defiantly over the Fraser since that other November day, when Annance, the scholar, had unfurled it at the behest of Chief Factor James McMillan,—hung limp and sodden as if in mourning for the completion of an age.

And it was just that, for later in the day, after James Douglas had officially taken office and added that of “His Excellency the Governor of British Columbia” to his other titles, he read a proclamation ending the license of exclusive trade of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

But let the central figure in the pageant of the day tell the chronology of bringing into being government on the Mainland, as he did in a despatch to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Colonial Secretary:

“. . . I proceeded on the 16th inst., by H.M. Ship Sattelite to Point Roberts and from thence by the Hudson’s Bay Company’s steamers Otter and Beaver to Fort Langley to proclaim the Act of Parliament providing for the Government of British Columbia.

“I was kindly accompanied on that occasion by Rear Admiral Baynes, by Mr. Cameron, Chief Justice of Vancouver’s Island, and Mr. Begbie, the Judge of British Columbia, who arrived from San Francisco on the evening of the 15th inst., just in time to take part in the solemnity.

“Captain Parsons with the 1st Detachment of Royal Engineers also accompanied me from this place. Captain Grant with the Second Detachment, and also Inspector Brew having preceded me by a few days.

“The ceremony was performed at Fort Langley with becoming solemnity, on the 19th inst., in the presence of those gentlemen, Her Majesty’s troops and the inhabitants of the place and the officers holding appointments from Her Majesty were installed in the usual manner, and with the accustomed forms.

“Proclamations were then made:

“1. Of the revocation by Her Majesty of all the exclusive privileges of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

“2. Indemnifying the officers of Government from all irregularities previous to the proclamation of the act.

“3. Proclaiming English Law to be the Law of the Colony.

“Copies of these proclamations are herewith transmitted for the information of Her Majesty’s Government.

“I returned to this place on the 21st instant, and Rear Admiral Baynes and all the other Gentlemen who accompanied me to Fort Langley except Captains Grant and Parsons, who were left with the Royal Engineers at old Fort Langley . . .”

Such was the manner in which Douglas described Fort Langley’s mightiest moment, when government was born in the big room in the Big House within the stockade. He had first officiated as Governor of Vancouver’s Island in inducting Begbie into office, and the big heavy-bearded barrister who had been a Justice of the Supreme Court for a matter of minutes, administered the customary oaths to James Douglas, who thereupon was officially and legally the governor—and Government—of British Columbia.

And then the men who had been carrying on as Government officers and Chartres Brew, the talented police officer, were installed. The officials who formally entered upon their now lawful duties and who had been indemnified for their actions in office to that moment, included: Richard Hicks, revenue officer and assistant gold commissioner at Yale; Robert Smith, holding similar appointments at Fort Hope; George Perrier, justice of the Peace at Hill’s Bar; P. B. Whannell, magistrate at Yale; W. H. Ladner, police chief at Fort Hope; W. H. Bevis, revenue officer at Fort Langley, and O. T. Travaillot, assistant gold commissioner at the Forks of the Fraser (Lytton).

And while these ceremonies were being celebrated with as much pomp and circumstance as the crowded big room of the officers’ quarters would permit, and with salutes fired in the rain, the rest of British Columbia and of Vancouver’s Island were without realization of the significant character of the happenings with the fort.

“As the first day of the existence of a new colony destined to occupy no unimportant place in the history of the future,” the San Francisco Bulletin, December 9, commented, “the nineteenth of November might have been, very properly, considered a fit occasion for burning gunpowder, etc.; but everything was quiet here (Victoria), in fact, few knew anything about it until the announcement was published in the Gazette.”

It was a proud day for His Excellency James Douglas, but a bitter one for the little man who had been associated with the Hudson's Bay Company in the days when the towering Douglas was an apprentice with the North West Company. And as he listened, from an inconspicuous place to the reading of the revocation of the Hudson's Bay Company's privileges, Yale could not help but recall how that concern had come to the Fraser delta when there was doubt as to what country would eventually control the Columbia, and of how it had been destined as a depot for the Interior; and of how he had given the best that was in him for thirty years to build the fort and district into one of the leading ones in the West, and of how he had fought the Clallams and the Yucultas to protect it . . . and now, his world was finally crashing about him.

He was not opposed to ordered government, but he was human, and Fort Langley was his, and he was of The Company. And so it was that Little Yale asked for a holiday: he had not had one for years. He wanted to get away from it all, to have time to think.

Now Governor Douglas, of British Columbia, could issue land titles. So, without loss of time, the sale of lots at Derby was held in Victoria. Pemberton was the auctioneer. It was planned to hold the sale within the Public Offices of Vancouver's Island, but such was the crowd that turned up to bid against one another for property, that proceedings, on the first day, had to be conducted outside. Lots had an upset price of \$100, and Pemberton explained that he would not take less. He did not expect more. The Victoria correspondent of the San Francisco Bulletin, attended on the opening day, November 25, and described the scene in that paper, December 9:

“. . . The bidding commenced at once very briskly. The prices offered seemed to astonish many, and particularly the auctioneer, who used no effort to obtain a higher price, but in fact seemed amazed. Evidently he was unused to such a crowd, and such a way of 'going it blind', and 'taking the chances', and seemed to think them great fools to pay so much when they only asked \$100.

“Lots brought as high as \$750. I witnessed the sale of the first twenty lots, which averaged \$355. They sold, the first day, 205 lots, for over \$41,000. The sale continued for three days.

“Buildings will commence going up at Langley at once. The Government advertises for proposals for building a church,

parsonage, court house and jail. Various parties have purchased lumber here, to take there, to build stores and houses . . .”

The action of Douglas in sanctioning this sale is hard to understand, for two days before he was sworn in as governor, Captain Grant had written to him, warning him against such a thing. In a survey of the situation, of remarkable clarity, Captain Grant had pointed out that he was addressing the governor-to-be “. . . with a view of delaying the sale of any land which will tend to establish a town without fuller information being obtained.”

He objected to the site of the proposed town for several reasons. It was hard to defend; it was open to smuggling from United States, and while steamers could reach it, the prevailing winds did not always allow sailing craft to do so with ease and despatch. He favored locating the chief town at the confluence of the Pitt and Fraser, where the slopes of Mary Hill, the deep water, and winds and ease of protection, commended themselves for such a project.

Douglas was accustomed to giving orders, not to taking advice that might be regarded as criticism of his actions. He ignored Grant, but he could not so readily brush aside similar suggestions coming from Colonel Moody, who arrived on Christmas Day, for Moody held a commission as Chief Commissioner of Works, and dormant authority as lieutenant-governor. Moreover, he had powerful friends in London.

So, with what grace he could muster, Douglas agreed to Moody’s recommendation that Grant’s suggestions be followed. As a result, early in 1859 further surveys were made of the locality about Mary Hill, but Moody saw greater possibilities in building on the slopes of the first high land on the North side of the Fraser where there was a broad expanse of deep water. Here accommodation along the shore could be found for ships of the deepest draught that could possibly enter the river and so immediate preparations were made to build a camp there for the Royal Engineers.

These trained and efficient builders verified the wisdom of the earliest dwellers on Stahlo prole—for they selected the old site of Skaiametl for their camp, which they named Sapperton, while the city they planned was Queenborough, later changed by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, to “New Westminster.”

While New Westminster took form and grew mightily in importance, Fort Langley declined, and the town of fond hopes, Derby, withered rapidly. Disappointed purchasers were offered opportunity of buying in the new

townsite and of applying payments to the purchase of lands there. Some availed themselves of the offer; others did not. The barracks, and jail and other government buildings gradually disappeared, the lumber being used elsewhere. The church, some years later, was moved across the river to Maple Ridge, and the site of the town of Derby is now part of the farm of Alex. Houston.

And in the immediate years that followed, all the dangers that Captain Grant had anticipated were realized. Langley became the resort for many worthless characters. There were robberies, and other crimes reported to Revenue Officer Bevis, who kept his pen employed constantly in telling his troubles to the governor. And there was a regular trade being carried on in smuggling goods from United States, he asserted.

Then, too, when Peter O'Reilly replaced Bevis in 1859, he reported that United States Army escort troops had camped on British soil; a soldier had stolen a gun from a saloon keeper near Semiamu, who had followed him to the U.S. camp. The saloon keeper, John Shaw, had been chased half a mile further into British territory, and had there been shot down by a U.S. sergeant named Leonard. Judge Begbie became interested and told O'Reilly to make complaint to Leonard's superior officer. This was done, and the officer only replied with a bombastic speech.

The following year, an armed force under an officer crossed the boundary and invaded Langley, capturing two men, who were claimed as deserters, and taking them away. The New Westminster Times, (published in Victoria) February 2, 1860, tells the story:

“Information has just arrived that an American officer named McKibbon, marched with a sergeant's guard to Langley, and arrested there two men whom he claimed as prisoners, and took them over the boundary. He acted, he stated, by orders from his commanding officer, and was ready to resist any attack made upon him . . .”

And while all these things were happening, Little Yale was wandering in the East, wondering and fretting where he could go, and what he would do. He returned to Victoria at last. He did not want to go back to Fort Langley, and had offered to accept a post in the Peace River district. But this soon lost its appeal.

He decided at last to purchase land near Victoria, where he could occasionally chat with his old friend John Tod, with Anderson the

pathfinder, and John Work, the wise old Irishman, who had pioneered the way with McMillan from Puget Sound to the Stahlo. So he bought land by the side of the Colquitz, and he roamed about in the pleasant woods by day, but when night came, “reminiscences and sadness that none of my fondest hopes, though always seeming fair, have availed.”

And these memories and saddened thoughts revolved about the stockades of Fort Langley and of the figures of men, white and dark, that played their parts in the pageantry of his mind. There was old Whattlekainum, and Shashia, the prince and diplomat, and Scanawa whose trading instincts had won him a fortune in white man’s goods and lost him his life. There were Annance and Manson, and Archie McDonald, the clever, with whom he had worked to devise additional production from both river and forests.

And in those musings and rememberings, it was with pride that he recalled that Old Langley—his Langley—had been the first outpost of civilization on the Mainland Coast, north of the 49th parallel and south of Russian possessions. It was there that the salmon fisheries had developed as an export industry; that native timber had been used to manufacture barrels and casks. It was from Langley’s broad acres that much of the produce went to pay the leasehold requirements on the panhandle of Alaska; and the trade in cranberries, and in isinglass.

He would recall, also, how only such a short time ago—but it seemed longer and far away—it had become the supply centre of the brigades; and there was the nightmare of the gold rush, when red-shirted, bearded men had swarmed like grasshoppers over the land, bringing trouble and confusion with them; and then, too, it was as if only yesterday that British Columbia was born at Fort Langley.

When these memories crowded upon him, there was a longing to see the old place again, so he journeyed to the river. It would have been better if he had not gone, for as he told Sir George Simpson, “Old Langley seemed to present the aspect of a cemetery, and on our return those sad impressions were renewed by similar melancholy emblems of decay in old Fort Victoria.”

An age had closed.

Today there is one building—the old store—standing at Fort Langley; a museum recalling the picturesque past of the locality. It stands amid a quiet and beautiful scene. The twisting, turning Salmon river, now a lazy trickle of a stream, flows through a changed countryside. The twin peaks of T’lagunna

(Golden Ears), however, still beckon fisher folk from the sea when the salmon are running. The muddy old Stahlo of the Halkomaylem tribesmen sweeps on to the sea.

Finis

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE:

Indian Names—For ease of understanding, where possible modern spellings have been adopted. In earlier times native names were recorded phonetically, with resulting confusion in spelling. An effort has been made to identify some geographical locations, such as New Westminster with the names used by the Indians.

Native Stories—Through the agency of the late Jason Ovid Allard, who died in 1932, such stories as the Indian account of the coming of Simon Fraser, and the adventures of Whattlekainum were preserved. Mr. Allard, who was born at Fort Langley in 1848, was possessed of a very retentive memory. He wrote fluently and with a beautiful hand, and present day knowledge of much of the romance and lore of the development of the pioneer establishment is due to him.

CHAPTER TWO:

Tent-a-coose's Story—This former slave was ransomed on the West Coast of Vancouver Island by the Hudson's Bay Company and was brought to Fort Langley where he spent the balance of a long life, said to have extended well over the century mark at the time of his death in 1867. The blowing up of the Tonquin was his favorite story. His account corresponded fairly well with that told by the only person to have escaped, the interpreter, of what happened immediately before the vessel was blown up.

Instrument of Restoration—The formal return of Astoria to the United States on October 6, 1818, read:

“In obedience to the commands of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, signified in a dispatch from the Right Honorable the Earl Bathurst, addressed to the partners or agents of the North West Co., bearing date, the 27th of January 1818, and in obedience to a subsequent order dated the 26th of July, from W. H. Sheriff, Esq. Captain of His Majesty's Ship *Andromache*, we the undersigned,

do, in conformity to the first article of the Treaty of Ghent, restore to the Government of the United States, through its agent J. B. Prevost, Esq., the settlement of Fort George on the Columbia River.

“Given under our hands, in triplicate at Fort George, Columbia River, this 6th day of October 1818.

“F. Hickey,
Captain of His Majesty’s Ship Blossom.

“J. Keith,
of the N.W.Co.”

CHAPTER THREE:

Portage to Fraser—The crossing between the Nicomekl and Salmon rivers, across the flat lands of what is now Langley Prairie, was named by the Indians “T’salkwakyan.” The same name was applied to the Salmon river, so the whole route became known as such. The trail from the fort to the farm was not developed for some years, transport to and from the farm being effected by flat bottomed boats on the winding, twisting, languid Salmon.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Site of First Fort—The location selected by the fort builders was a second choice. It was well situated for defence, but it was heavily timbered and the land in the vicinity was largely made up of gravel deposits and swamps. It was located on a big bend of the river which the Kwantlens called “Slikwhinna,” meaning “Big Horn.”

Thomas Langley—The man after whom Fort Langley was named inherited his brother’s stock in the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1783. This he held until his own death in 1829 two years after the fort was built. He was selected as a member of the Committee in 1807 and held office until he died. He is believed to have been related through his brother Nicholas to Nicholas Garry who had a distinguished career with the Company, and after whom Fort Garry was named. Information supplied by and published by

permission of The Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company.

CHAPTER FIVE:

"The Little River"—This was a creek called, to this day, "Kanaka Creek," in compliment to the Hawaiian—or Kanaka—laborers at Fort Langley. The Indians, following the abandonment of Skaiametl, built a village there. It was up this stream that coal was later found, and it was off this place that the Yucultas were finally defeated.

CHAPTER SIX:

First Birth—No further records have been found that might suggest the surname of the first baby born at Fort Langley. The fact that its first Christian name was "Louis" might indicate that such was in compliment to his father, but there were at least two men stationed there in 1828 who bore that name. Some twenty years later the son of one of those men committed suicide when he was upbraided for marrying an aged squaw, so, perhaps it is just as well that positive identification can not be made.

Victory Over the Yucultas—The courageous manner in which Yale, Annance and their ten men charged the Yuculta host, cut through their line, and finally put the "Terrors of the Gulf" to flight is an outstanding incident of Indian warfare on this Coast. It is not only detailed in the Fort journal, but is related by the storytellers of the Kwantlen, with comparative accuracy. It is the general correctness of Indian narration of historical events which may be substantiated that makes it possible to place dependence upon the account of the subsequent wiping out of the Yuculta fleet that came to attack the village opposite the fort in 1837. There are no known reports from Fort Langley covering that period. Old time residents and clergymen who have ministered to the Kwantlens for many years have no doubt as to the slaughter occasioned upon that momentous day.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Destruction and Rebuilding—Precise location of the second Fort Langley is not known with certainty, but it may be assumed that it

was where the last one was built. This assumption is based on the probability that the temporary stockade was put up as close as possible to the still smoldering ashes of the burned establishment, and from this immediate shelter the work of reconstruction would proceed.

Father Demers' Visit—This mission of the courageous young priest, who was to become the first Bishop of Vancouver Island, marks a starting point in the religious history of the province. It is true that the Spanish priests ministered to the people of that nation and gave some instruction to the natives of the West Coast during the brief period of Spanish occupation, but Father Demers commenced the teaching of the Christian faith on a basis that has been continuous.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

Anderson's Explorations—It is noteworthy that the three routes explored by A. C. Anderson in 1846-47 for a new fur trail were all utilized. The first to be examined was the last to be opened, known as the Harrison Lake-Lillooet Road. It was the first way to suggest itself after Simon Fraser's descent of the river. Archibald McDonald, when in command of Fort Kamloops in 1827, tried to get through to meet the Langley Fort builders and got as far as Lillooet River before turning back. When, in 1858, it became imperative that a new supply road for the miners should be built to the Interior, Chief Factor James Douglas—not yet named governor—procured the services of Anderson to lay out in detail the project to be constructed by volunteer labor. It was fitting that on this occasion Douglas should instruct him to indelibly associate himself with the pioneer pathways of the country.

On an old map made by Mr. Anderson, in the B.C. Archives, is a note to the effect that Douglas requested that he name several large lakes after himself and members of his family. In keeping with this request, he named the first one out of Lillooet town, "Seton Lake," in honor of his heroic cousin Colonel Alexander Seton, commander of the gallant 74th Regiment, that gave to the world an undying example of British courage and devotion to duty, in the troopship Birkenhead, when that vessel went down off the African Coast in 1852, by standing at attention with unbroken ranks as the seas closed over them. The next lake he named

“Anderson” after his own family, and the connecting link between the two he called “Birkenhead Strait.”

CHAPTER NINE:

Discovery of Gold—In 1903 Hon. Richard McBride, Provincial Secretary, became convinced, as result of personal inquiry, that the nearest that any one person could be identified with the first discovery of the gold that was the immediate cause of the rush of 1857-8 was James Houston, who wandered across the border where he was prospecting, and where his partner was killed by Indians, and found gold at Tranquille Creek near Kamloops. Houston later took up land covering the site of the original Fort Langley. He died in 1903 just as recognition was about to be given him. His son, Alex. Houston now occupies the farm. He recently deeded a plot for the erection of an historic monument there.

CHAPTER TEN:

Town of Derby—This, the first subdivided property placed on the market, and the site of the original Fort Langley, is often referred to as the “First Capital of British Columbia.” There is no official confirmation for this belief. Another misconception is that there was no objection to its being developed until the arrival of Colonel R. C. Moody, who reached Victoria on Christmas Day. Actually Captain Grant of the Royal Engineers, put his objections in writing and submitted them to Douglas before the Crown Colony was proclaimed. There is plenty of evidence that it was the hope and intention of Douglas to make Derby—or as he usually referred to it, “Old Langley”—a large town, and he intended to have the Royal Engineers located there. There is no indication that the Governor ever intended for it to be the political capital of the colony.

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[The end of *Fort Langley--Outpost of Empire* by B. A. McKelvie]