

The Relations of the Hudson's Bay Company with the American Fur Traders in the Pacific Northwest

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IN 1818, the British and American governments, neither willing to concede the Pacific Northwest, or the Oregon country as it was then known, to the other, signed a treaty of joint occupation. By the terms of this treaty, both were to have free access to the territory for a period of ten years. On the expiration of the treaty, the question was to be settled. In 1828, still unable to reach an agreement, the two governments extended the terms of the treaty indefinitely with the provision that either government might end the joint occupation by submitting a written notice of intention to do so one year in advance.

When this joint occupation agreement was first adopted, the British enjoyed much the stronger position. American fur-trading interests in the area were largely abandoned after the sale of John Jacob Astor's properties on the Columbia in 1813. The Northwest Company, a Canadian concern, continued to operate, and with the merger of the Northwesters and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 the British perfected a single organization which had a complete trade monopoly and certain legal jurisdiction over all British subjects in Oregon.

After 1822 American fur traders, this time mainly from St. Louis, again sent expeditions to the Pacific Northwest. Until the colonization movement began with the arrival of Protestant missionaries in 1836, the struggle for possession of the territory by the United States was carried on by these men.

Thus the history of the rivalry between the British and American governments for the possession of the Pacific Northwest from 1818 to 1836 is the history of the relations of the Hudson's Bay Company with the American fur traders. Throughout the contest for control of the fur trade, the struggle for possession of the region is evident. The conditions of trade during these years of joint occupation were such that even the most trivial encounter between rival parties might become an international incident.

This paper is a study of the tough and successful efforts of the Hudson's Bay Company to meet and overcome the American competition. The following decade would see new forces of expansion which the British could not meet so successfully. The fur-trading period, however, is a story of British supremacy.

Legally, the Hudson's Bay Company extended its operations into the Pacific Northwest in 1821, when Parliament passed the act ap-

proving the union with the Northwest Company. Actually, the beginnings of the Company's operations in the Northwest would be more properly dated as 1824. It was in that year that Governor Simpson traveled through the Columbia Department and instituted the policy and personnel changes that were to determine the conduct of the trade for the twenty-two remaining years of joint occupation in the Oregon country. This trip of Governor Simpson, part of his inspection tour of all of the territory under his jurisdiction, had for its purpose the unification and consolidation of the holdings of the two companies.

As early as 1822, the Governor and Committee recognized the situation and prepared to meet it. A letter, dated September 4, written to John Haldane and John D. Cameron, chief factors in charge of the Columbia Department, informing them of a rumored American expedition to the Columbia, goes on to say, "And we depend on your strenuous exertions to secure the Fur Trade to Great Britain by your liberality to and kind treatment of the Natives."¹

These early instructions outline the general plan of opposition used by the Company in the Columbia Department and, though amplified at later dates, were unchanged for the rest of the period. A letter from Chief Factor John McLoughlin to John Work, in charge of the Flat-head Post, illustrates a field application of this policy. Dated Fort Vancouver, August 10, 1826, it reads, in part, as follows:

... In case the Americans come to the Flat Head Country, they must be opposed as much as we can, but without a waste of property because the right to remain there will be decided between the two Governments. As an opinion, I think from discovery & occupancy we will have that part of the Country, therefore it is not our interest to spoil the Indians, however we must do so if necessary and treat them as liberally as the Americans.²

Further statement of this policy appears in a letter of the Governor and Committee to Governor Simpson under the date of February 27, 1828.

32. We think it very important that you should have the means of gaining a firm footing in the Coast trade, and in all the country on the West of the Mountains before the Americans arrive there in greater force; as if they are met with a systematic and well regulated opposition on the principle of underselling them, they will be less likely to persevere in their attempts, than if they are allowed at first to make large profits.³

This was the general policy of the Company in its conduct of the trade in the Columbia Department. There were other problems concerning the Company. One of these arose from the War of 1812. The treaty of Ghent had restored Fort George to the Americans. As Fort

¹ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire* (Cambridge, 1931), 187-88.

² *Ibid.*, 281.

³ *Ibid.*, 295-96.

George was, at this time, the principal depot of the Columbia Department, it was decided that a new depot should be established in case the Americans ever demanded the return of Fort George. Then, too, the location of it was very poor and the source of endless difficulties. The Governor and Committee concluded that the Company should withdraw its establishments to the north bank of the Columbia. They hoped, at this time, that the Columbia would be the eventual boundary when the period of joint occupation terminated. On July 22, 1824, the Governor and Committee wrote to the Chief Factor in charge of the Columbia Department and instructed him as follows:

10. As the Americans are to have possession of Fort George whenever they please, you will immediately proceed in erecting a Fort on the North side of the River taking care to select the most convenient situation and remove from the South side of the River with everything belonging to the Company: we are likewise desirous that the Establishment at Walla Walla and any other Post on the North bank of the Columbia should be put in good repair. . . .⁴

The Governor and Committee did not make any more suggestions at this time, as Governor George Simpson was on an inspection tour of the Columbia Department. Further action was deferred until he reported. Simpson was considering abandoning the Columbia Department, because he felt that the returns were not large enough to justify continued operation. However, Simpson's investigations showed him that the small returns were due to waste and inefficiency. By the time the inspection trip was completed, reforms had already proved the Columbia Department to be a profitable theater of operations. Under the leadership of the new Chief Factor, Dr. John McLoughlin, the Department was ready to meet the American opposition that had already begun.

Simpson's report on the condition in which he found the Columbia Department is interesting in the contrast that it shows with the later period of operation. He states that he found that "Everything appears to me on the Columbia on too extended a scale *except the Trade* and . . . that is confined to Four permanent Establishments the returns of which do not amount to 20,000 Beaver & Otters. . . ."⁵

The chief source of waste he found to be European food. In his report to the Governor and Committee he states that:

I do not know any part of the Country on the East side of the Mountain that affords such resources in the way of living as Spokane District; they have abundance of the finest Salmon in the World besides a variety of other Fish within 100 yds. of their Door, plenty of Potatoes, Game if they like it, in short every thing that is good or necessary for an Indian trader. . . .⁶

⁴ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 240.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

The cost of the European food, the shipping space, and the number of men employed in transporting it up the Columbia were sheer waste.⁷ By cutting the amount of European food to the Company minimum allowance, Simpson figured that he could reduce the personnel of the Columbia Department from 151 officers and men to 83 officers and men with an annual saving to the Company of some £2,040 in salaries and allowances.⁸

These savings, however, were not sufficient to put the Columbia Department on a really profitable basis. A more vigorous prosecution of the trade was necessary, as American opposition was already beginning to make inroads on the fringe of the territory. The first reports of this were brought back by the Snake Country Expedition when it returned to Spokane House that fall.

The Snake Country Expeditions were one of the largest sources of furs of the Columbia Department. An annual expedition, it fitted out in the spring and returned in the fall after a summer of trapping and trading. At this time, the Snake Country Expedition was in charge of Alexander Ross, a disgruntled clerk who felt that he had been cheated of his promotions.

In his *Journal*, under the date of October 14, 1824, Ross reports that

... With these vagabonds arrived seven American trappers from the Big Horn River but whom I rather take to be spies than trappers. Regarding our deserters of 1822 accounts do not agree. It is evident part of them have reached the American posts on the Yellowstone and Big Horn with much fur. I suspect these Americans have been on the lookout to decoy more. ... The report of these men on the price of beaver has a very great influence on our trappers. The seven trappers have in two different caches 900 beaver. I made them several propositions but they would not accept lower than \$3 a pound. I did not consider myself authorized to arrange at such prices.⁹

Governor Simpson was at Spokane House when the Snake Country Expedition arrived. Undoubtedly he read the Ross report and looked over the returns. Simpson seems to have realized the danger of the American opposition for he made drastic changes in the conduct of the expedition. The first step was to replace Ross as the leader of the party. Disgruntled and dissatisfied, Ross was not the right leader for such an important project.¹⁰ Simpson seems to have realized this.

The selection of the replacement for Ross shows Simpson's intentions concerning the Snake Country Expedition. The man selected was Peter Skene Ogden, who had been with the Northwest Company previous to the merger. In that period, Ogden had led such fierce

⁷ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 47-48.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁹ T. C. Elliott, ed., "Journal of Alexander Ross—Snake Country Expedition, 1824," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XIV (1913), 385.

¹⁰ Cf. Alexander Ross, *Fur Hunters of the Far West*, I (London, 1855).

opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company that he had not been provided for in the merger. The placing of a man with such a record in charge of the Snake Country Expedition indicates Simpson's intentions in the mountain country.

In addition to this change, the Governor revised the schedule of the expedition so that, instead of laying over from November through February, it would start in November. There were three reasons for this: first, the prime fur season began in November; second, the men could not gamble or trade away their outfits before the hunt began; third, Simpson wanted the expedition to finish at Fort George in the summer. This would save the Company the cost of transporting the furs and supplies, because the expedition would deliver its furs and receive its supplies at Fort George.¹¹ He rejected a proposal that the headquarters of the expedition be transferred to Walla Walla, as he felt that the control of that area by the Nez Percés would leave the expedition at the mercy of these Indians and make travel difficult.¹²

With the Columbia Department reorganized, Governor Simpson returned to Canada. The first American blow at the monopoly of the Columbia trade came almost immediately. Ross seems to have been correct in his appraisal of the Americans as spies, for Ogden had barely begun his hunt with the Snake Country Expedition when he got into serious difficulties with a party of Americans under the leadership of a man named Gardner. It was a blow that seriously crippled the party and jeopardized the whole expedition.

The only available contemporary account of the incident is contained in Ogden's *Journal*. It presents such a graphic picture of the meeting with Gardner and his party that I reproduce it here.

... they [Gardner and party] encamped within 100 yards of our Camp and hoisted the American Flag, and proclaimed to all that they were in the United States Territories and were all Free indebted or engaged, it was now night and nothing more transpired, the ensuing morning Gardner came to my tent and after a few words of no import, he questioned me as follows, do you know in whose Country you are? to which I made answer that I did not, as it was not determined between Great Britain and America to whom it belonged, to which he made answer that it was, that it had been ceded to the latter, and as I had not license to trade or trapp to return from whence I came without delay, to this I replied when we receive orders from the British Government to abandon the Country we shall obey, he then said remain at your peril, he then left my tent and seeing him go in an Iroquois Tent (John Gray) I followed him, on entering this villain Gray said, I must now tell you, that all Iroquois as well as myself have long wished for an opportunity to join the Americans, and if we did not the last three Years, it was owing to our bad luck in not

¹¹ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 44-47. Simpson discusses these moves and his reasons for them in great detail in this letter.

¹² Cf. *ibid.*, 54-57, for a full discussion.

meeting them, but now we go, and all you can say or do cannot prevent us. During this conversation Gardner was silent, but on going out he said you have had these Men too long in your Service and have most shamefully imposed on them, treating them as *Slaves* selling them Goods at high prices and giving them nothing for their Furs, Gray then said that is all true and alluding to the Gentlemen he had been with in the Columbia, they are says he the greatest villains in the World, and if they were here I would shoot them, but as for you Sir you have dealt fair with us all. We have now been five Years in your Service, the longer we remain the more indebted we become altho' we give 150 Beaver a year, we are now in a free Country and have friends to support us, and go we will, and if every Man in the Camp does not leave you they do not seek their own interest, he then gave orders to raise Camp and in an instant all the Iroquois were in motion and ready to start this example was soon followed by others, a scene of confusion now ensued, Gardner at the head of the Americans accompanied by two of our Iroquois who deserted two years since, advanced to assist and support all who were inclined to desert. It was now that Lazard an Iroquois called out we are greater in number let us fire and pillage them, on saying this he advanced with his Gun cock'd and pointed at me. Old Pierre then seized two of the Companys horses but finding I was determined not to allow him or others to pillage, finding it sufficiently galling to see them going off with our Furs and enduring the most approbious terms they could think of, without allowing them to pillage us from both Americans and Iroquois . . . [only Kittson, McKay, and two *engages* helped Ogden] the greatest part of these Villains escaped with their Furs, in fact some of them had conveyed theirs in the night to the American camp. . . .¹³

The only reaction of the Governor and Committee to this event seems to be contained in a letter of June 2, 1826, addressed to Governor Simpson. Ogden, in reporting the incident, had dated his letter "forks of the Missouri." This was definitely in American territory. The Governor and Committee did not want this mistake repeated.

We have repeatedly given directions that all collision with the Americans should be avoided as well as infringements upon their Territory, it appears however . . . that Mr. Ogden must have been to the southward of 49° of latitude and to the Eastward of the Rocky Mountains which he should particularly have avoided. . . .¹⁴

In the meantime, McLoughlin had been attempting to carry out the orders of the Governor and Committee concerning the location of the Columbia posts. Fort Vancouver was established on the north bank of the Columbia to replace Fort George (which had never been satisfactory) as the chief post and depot of the Columbia Department. It

¹³ Frederick Merk, ed., "Snake Country Expedition, 1824-25," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XXXV (1934), 109-11.

¹⁴ E. E. Rich, ed., *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, First Series, 1825-1838*, Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, IV (London, 1941), lxiv.

was not possible, however, to transfer the other posts to the north bank. At Walla Walla, there was no good location for a post on the north bank, and the Indians of the area seriously objected to the move. In general, the north bank was not good fur country. As early as 1825, McLoughlin reported to the Governor and Committee that no fur post could maintain itself on the north bank of the Columbia if the Americans got possession of the south bank, for the bulk of the furs of the Columbia Department came from lands located some distance to the south of the river.¹⁵

There was a growing concern on the part of the Company officers regarding the settlement of the boundary in the Oregon country. The treaty of joint occupation expired in 1828, and it was believed by many that the Americans would press for a settlement of the Oregon question. Governor Simpson made plans for a settlement of the boundary along the line of the Columbia and Snake rivers. He planned to substitute the Fraser River for the Columbia as the main artery of travel and to remove the chief depot from Fort Vancouver to a new post to be built at the mouth of the Fraser.¹⁶

Simpson developed a new policy for the area south of the Columbia and Snake rivers, as this region would undoubtedly be lost to the Company when the boundary was settled. In addition, it was the probable point of American entry into the Columbia Department, as the big summer rendezvous of the American traders was just over the divide from the Snake country. The policy, outlined by Simpson in a letter to McLoughlin, is simple.

6. The greatest and best protection we can have from opposition is keeping the country closely hunted as the first step that the American Government will take towards Colonization, is through their Indian Traders and if the country becomes exhausted in Fur bearing animals they can have no inducement to proceed thither.¹⁷

In the field, Ogden was having better luck with the opposition than he had had in 1825. In the 1826 expedition, he returned to hunt the same territory, and on April 9 he met a party of Americans. He relates that the Americans were surprised to see him, feeling that the previous year's encounter would have driven the Company out of that part of the country.¹⁸

The following day he entered into trading with them. The results of this encounter mark the beginning of the ascendancy of the Company in the Snake country. The air of self-satisfaction with which Ogden

¹⁵ E. E. Rich, ed., *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, First Series, 1825-1838*, 13.

¹⁶ E. E. Rich, ed., *Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia*, Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, X (London, 1947), 152-53.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁸ T. C. Elliott, ed., "The Peter Skene Ogden Journals, 1825-26," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, X (1909), 359.

relates the incident in his journal is noteworthy, for he is not given to overconfidence.

The strangers paid me a visit and I had a busy day settling with them, and more to my satisfaction and the company's than last year. We traded from them 93 large and small beaver and two otter seasoned skins at a reasonable rate and received 81.12 beavers in part payment of their debts due the company, also two notes of hand from Mr. Monton (Montain) for his balance, Patrick Prudhomme and Pierre Sinanitogans. We secured all the skins they had. Our deserters are already tired of their new masters and from their manner will soon return to us.¹⁹

On the following day Ogden and the Americans separated. Goddin's son was permitted to join his father (one of the deserters) in the American camp, and the Americans paid three beaver toward his debt. Ogden gained in this (he characterizes young Goddin as a worthless scamp), for two men of the American party joined him with their traps and horses. He says that none of his party showed the least inclination to desert him.²⁰ This was quite a change from Ogden's previous encounter with the Americans.

When Ogden met the Americans the next year, the situation had changed even more. On September 25 he tells of meeting an American party on the Weiser River. He collected thirty-five large beaver from them as a debt payment for a deserter.²¹

Ogden and the Americans remained together until November 30, at which time the Americans left for Salt Lake. Ogden reports that the Americans took only twenty-six beaver in the time they were with him, while the Company got more than 100 by trapping and trading.²² Ogden was not following the Americans for the sole purpose of trading with them, however. He had another motive, which he relates in his journal under the date of Friday, November 2.

Stormy weather prevented starting. It is my intent to amuse the American party now with us so that McKay's men may have time to trap the beaver where the Americans purpose going. As they are not aware of this, it is so much the more in our favor.²³

On December 24 Ogden met another party of Americans under Tullock, who informed him that his company (Tullock's) would gladly enter into an agreement with Hudson's Bay Company regarding deserters. He also added that Gardner's conduct was not approved.²⁴ Ogden merely reported the fact to his superiors, and no action seems to have been taken.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, X, 359-60.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, X, 360.

²¹ T. C. Elliott, ed., "The Peter Skene Ogden Journals—Snake Expedition, 1827-28," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XI (1910), 362.

²² *Ibid.*, XI, 365.

²³ *Ibid.*, XI, 363-64.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, XI, 367.

Ogden did, however, keep a close watch on the Americans, and, when they tried to procure snowshoes, he forbade his men and the Indians to sell. Though the offers were as high as twenty-five dollars a pair, neither the trappers nor the Indians sold any snowshoes. Ogden felt that the Americans wanted the snowshoes for the purpose of bringing in a party of American trappers.²⁵ He also mentions that old Goddin made \$2,100 in three years with the Americans, adding that it was more than he could make in ten years with the Company, even with careful economy.²⁶

An interesting event that occurred on February 19 illustrates how completely Ogden's aggressive leadership had gained the Hudson's Bay Company the dominant position in the Snake country trade. One of the American traders informed Ogden that two of the trappers who had joined the expedition the preceding fall, Goodrich and Johnson, were heavily indebted to his firm. Ogden reports that "I had no knowledge of the same and that it was his duty to secure his men and debts also. I said my conduct to them was far different from theirs to me four years since."²⁷ The following day Ogden mentions that the two men were to return to the Americans. Having made his point, Ogden was satisfied.

Ogden's vigorous conduct of the Snake Country Expeditions was not unnoticed. In a letter to the Governor and Committee dated August 7, 1828, Dr. McLoughlin commended him as follows:

Mr. Ogden's returns are better than last year & among them are some Skins traded from American Trappers with their own mark on them, accompanying this is the A/t of the Expedition & when it is considered Mr. Ogden was in a part of the Country over run by American Trappers, his returns are a proof of his exertions & those of his Party with whose conduct he is highly pleased.²⁸

John Work took charge of the Snake Country Expedition in the fall of 1829. The expedition of 1829-30 was without event as far as the opposition was concerned. Work was given orders to prevent, if possible, any party sent by Smith, Jackson, and Sublette from reaching the Columbia, but the occasion did not arise.²⁹

Nor were the men as favorable to desertion as they had been when Ogden first took charge of the Snake Country Expeditions. Governor Simpson had sent a letter of instruction to Work the preceding year when he was at Fort Vancouver on his inspection trip. This letter had materially improved the working conditions of the trappers.

²⁵ T. C. Elliott, ed., "The Peter Skene Ogden Journals—Snake Expedition, 1827-28," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XI, 369.

²⁶ *Idem.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, XI, 375.

²⁸ E. E. Rich, ed., *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, First Series, 1825-1838*, 66.

²⁹ Burt B. Barker, ed., *The Letters of John McLoughlin* (Portland, 1948), 55.

... They need not be apprehensive of harsh treatment from us, we shall deal liberally by them as regards their old debts, sell them our supplies cheap (say on Servants prices) & give them large prices for their Furs, their savings will be paid by £Stg. either in England or Canada as they choose, in short we can afford and are disposed to give them most advantageous terms, so advantageous that any saving industrious man may clear from £60 to £80 Stg per annum. If they have any desire to see me on the subject & that they conceive they would be more secure by treating with me personally than in any other way—I shall be ready to confer with them at Colville on my way out.³⁰

On his next expedition, Work did encounter the Americans. In October, 1830, a large group of Americans camped at no great distance from him. The only contact with them was through an Iroquois who had deserted from the Company's service some time before. He informed Work that the party consisted of about two hundred men outfitted by Crooks and Company. The two parties left the area at different times, Work waiting until the Americans had left, then leading his men away in another direction in order to avoid the Americans, an effort which was successful.³¹

On the expedition of 1831-32 Work met the Americans again. He had followed them for some time, finding the trapping very poor. His first mention of them is dated December 21 and says "... A party of seven American trappers arrived from their camp at the forks below in the evening." The following day he notes "Did not raise camp. The people traded fifteen beaver from the Americans who went off."³²

The final mention of the Americans occurs on the 30th of December. The journal entry reads:

A party of twelve Americans passed in the morning on the way to buffalo. They appeared to be very hungry but did not stop, or they would have received to eat from our people, indeed it was not known that they were so short of food till they were gone.³³

Though Work had received orders from Governor Simpson through Chief Factor McLoughlin to attempt to draw off any of the late deserters found attached to American camps,³⁴ he does not mention having made any efforts in this direction. One possible factor in this attitude is that the majority of the deserters were Iroquois. The attitude of the Iroquois and their unpredictability caused the officers of the Company who had dealings with them many headaches. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Work did not try to attract any of them to return to the service.

³⁰ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 301-02.

³¹ T. C. Elliott, ed., "Journal of John Work, Covering Snake Country Expedition of 1830-31," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XIII (1912), 368.

³² W. S. Lewis and P. C. Phillips, *The Journal of John Work* (Cleveland, 1923), 117.

³³ *Ibid.*, 119.

³⁴ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 308-09.

Another indication of the change in status of the position of the Company in the Snake country and around Flathead Post is found in a letter from Dr. McLoughlin to Heron who was in charge of the post at Colville. Dated June 28, 1831, the letter reads, in part:

If any American wishes to dispose of Furs you will act on the Instructions Gov Simpson gave the late Mr [P. W.] Dease but Keeping in mind that we can only give five Dollars to such as take their payment in Canada and that if they wish to take supplies from us we can only place them on the same footing as our own freemen say Trappers that is pay them eleven Shillings per every made Beaver and allow them their Hunting Implements and personal necessities to the amount of ten or fifteen pounds [sterling] at the price servants pay for their supplies.³⁵

This marks a new and aggressive attitude on the part of the Company. It is not known how much trade came to the Company because of this policy, but Wyeth's party and a party of which Osborne Russell was a member both took advantage of this at a later date.³⁶

In the summer of 1828, the inhabitants of Fort Vancouver were surprised to see the Indians bringing in a badly wounded white man. The surprise turned to consternation when it was discovered that he was an American and a survivor of a party that had come overland from California. Several days later, the leader of the party and two other men arrived at Fort Vancouver. The men were Jedediah S. Smith and two trappers.

Jedediah Smith had led a party of trappers into California and, after resolving his difficulties with the authorities in California, had led his party north through the Sacramento Valley into Oregon. While crossing to the headwaters of the Willamette, the party had gotten into difficulty with the Umpqua Indians with the result that fifteen of the nineteen men were massacred.³⁷

The news of the massacre was gravely received by Dr. McLoughlin, as is evidenced by his report to the Governor and Committee.

The Indians who accompanied Mr. Smith to this place also report that the quarrel originated about an axe & the Natives conceiving them to be a different people from us had acted in this treacherous manner towards them; this unfortunate affair is extremely injurious to us as the success & facility with which the Natives have accomplished their object lowers Europeans in their estimation & consequently very much diminishes our security. As for us

³⁵ Burt B. Barker, *op. cit.*, 199.

³⁶ Osborne Russell, *Journal of a Trapper* (Boise, 1921), 99.

³⁷ For detailed accounts of the expedition see H. C. Dale, *The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific, 1822-29*, revised edition (Glendale, California, 1941), and M. S. Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith* (Santa Ana, California, 1934).

every means in our power will be exerted to assist Mr. Smith in recovering his property.³⁸

The Company had always had difficulty with the coastal tribes, and such an incident could not pass unremarked. The prestige of the whites had to be maintained. Then, too, if the Company did not aid Smith, the Americans would probably claim that it had incited the Indians to the massacre. By sending an expedition to punish the Indians and to recover Smith's property, the Company was forestalling any such repercussions.

The expedition to recover Smith's property was really a dual purpose expedition. The expedition had been planned and nearly outfitted when the Americans arrived at Fort Vancouver, and was even then preparing to conduct a hunt to the south, proceeding, if possible, to the Bonaventura. The party set out on the sixth of September under the leadership of Alexander R. McLeod. Among the members of the expedition was Jedediah Smith. Smith had applied to McLoughlin for permission to accompany the party, and McLoughlin had referred the decision to McLeod.³⁹

While the expedition was on its way, Governor Simpson arrived in the Columbia Department on a tour of inspection. It is to him that we owe the most complete account of the relations of Jedediah Smith with the Company. In two letters to Smith, he states the Company's position and offers the terms under which Smith settled with the Company. The first letter is dated Fort Vancouver, December 26, 1828.

As you have had a great deal of communication with Mr McLeod on the subject of your affairs in this quarter in the course of your late Journey to the Umpqua and as that Gentleman is now on the eve of taking his departure hence on a Voyage which may occupy him from 12 to 16 Months I consider it proper that we should come to a final understanding or Settlement on all matters relating to business while he is on the spot and in order to guard against any misapprehension that our communications thereon should be in writing instead of Verbal.

You are aware that previous to your arrival here in the Month of Aug^t last Mr McLoughlin the Hon^{ble} Co^{ys} principal representative at this place had determined on sending a party under the command of Mr McLeod on a Trapping & Trading Expedition in a Southerly direction from hence & that the equipment of this party was nearly completed when you to our great surprise appeared at this Establish^t.

The melancholy report you brought of the destruction of 15 Men out of your party of 19 a few days previous on your way from S^t Francisco to the Columbia by the Natives of the Umpqua and of the pillage of your property excited in the minds of the

³⁸ E. E. Rich, ed., *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, First Series, 1825-1838*, 70.

³⁹ Sullivan, *op. cit.*, McLoughlin to Smith, 109, McLoughlin to McLeod, 111.

Gentlemen here the most lively feelings of Sympathy and commiseration and [moved] by those feelings towards you and your unfortunate companions Mr McLoughlin instructed Mr McLeod to proceed with his party to the Umpqua to communicate with the Natives to ascertain the cause of their atrocious conduct, to punish them should it have been considered expedient & found practicable and to endeavour to recover your property.

He accordingly went thither, his party consisting of 38 Servants and Indians and accompanied by you and your surviving followers. While on the spot he learnt that the Melancholy catastrophe was occasioned by some harsh treatment on the part of your people towards the Indians who visited your Camp some of whom they said had been beaten, and one of them bound hands & feet for some very slight offence, which treatment they further said corroborated in their Minds a report that had preceded you from Indians that your party had been conducting themselves with hostility towards the different Tribes you passed in your way from the Bona Ventura (for which it appears there were some grounds) and that as a measure of Self Preservation they determined on the destruction of your party which its injudicious conduct and unguarded situation enabled those savages to accomplish with little difficulty or danger to themselves.

Mr McLeod under all circumstances found that it would be unsafe and unpolitic to take any hostile steps against the Tribe but endeavoured to recover of the property which you had been pillaged and with some trouble and difficulty succeeded in getting nearly the whole of it restored. The property he has thus recovered consists of about 700 Beaver Skins, 39 Horses and a few other articles of little value.

When Mr McLeod and his party took their departure Dr McLoughlin did not conceive that any inconvenience or delay would have been occasioned by their visit to the Umpqua he did not therefore intend to have made any charge against you for the Services of Mr McLeod & his party in the recovering of your property but the time occupied in visiting the different Camps on the River & Coast with that object we now find has occasioned the loss to us of the Services of this Expedition for the whole Season thereby subjecting us to an expense of exceeding £1000 independent of the loss of Profits we had reason to calculate on from the services of the Expedition.

Had you been in the condition of discussing terms with us, we should as a matter of course have insisted on your defraying the expences, that the recovery of your property might have occasioned to us, but you was not in that condition consequently nothing was said on the subject, and altho' we are well aware that either in Law or Equity we should be fully entitled to Salvage, we make no claim thereto, on the contrary place the property which we have recovered at your disposal without any charge or demand whatsoever.

In order to suit your own convenience, you left 38 Horses at our Camp on the Umpqua which the Expedition had not the

least occasion for as Mr McLeod having independent of them about 150 being more than sufficient we conceive to meet his demands; these and a few others expected to be received in order to accommodate you we are willing to take off your hands at 40/St^s p head, which is a higher price than we ever pay for Horses and the same we charge to our Servants & Trappers, but if you are not satisfied with that price, they are still quite at your disposal.

In conferences you have had with me both to Day and two days ago, you told me that you was desirous of taking your Furs up by Water immediately to our Establishment of Walla Walla, that there you wished us to give you Horses in exchange for those left at the Umpqua and that in the event of our complying with that wish you would leave Horses & Furs at Walla Walla while you proceeded across from thence to your Depot on Salt Lake from whence you would in the course of next Summer send for both.

In reply I now beg to state that we should consider it the height of imprudence in you to attempt going up the Columbia with only your two followers either light or with property. We altho' perfectly acquainted with every Indian on the communication rarely venture to send a party even with Letters, and with property never less than from 30 to 40 Men; such a measure on your part would therefore in our opinion be sporting with Life or courting danger to madness; which I should not consider myself justified in permitting without pointing out to yourself and followers in presence of witnesses the desperate hazards you would thereby run.

I should consider it equally imprudent to attempt a Journey from Walla Walla to Salt Lake on many considerations, the most prominent of which are, the great danger to be apprehended from roving War parties, your total ignorance of the Country, the difficulty you would have in finding your way across the Blue Mountains, the inexperience of your people in Snow Shoe Travelling (one of whom I believe never saw a Snow Shoe) and the danger from Starvation as it is impossible you can carry provisions such a distance and the chase in some parts of the country through which you would have to pass is at this Season even to a hunting party a very precarious means of subsistence. In reference to your demand upon us for Horses at Walla Walla it cannot be met by any possibility as by the last advices from thence we [have] none at that Establishment and our own business in the Upper parts of the Columbia requires at least five times the number we are likely to be able to collect in the course of the next Season.

You are well aware that we have already experienced much inconvenience incurred many sacrifices, and exposed the Concern to heavy loss through our anxious desire to relieve, assist and accommodate you we are willing nevertheless to do whatever else we can without subjecting ourselves to further loss or expense in order to meet your wishes, I shall now suggest what I conceive to be the safest course you can pursue and the most eligible plan you can adopt.

Your Beaver which is of very bad quality the worst indeed I ever saw, having in the first instance been very badly dressed & since then exposed to every storm of Rain that has fallen between the Month of April & the 22nd Inst. consequently in the very worst state of Damage, I am willing to take off your hands at 3 Dollars p Skin payable by Bill at 30% sight on Canada, which I conceive to be their full value at this place, and your Horses I will take at £2 St^s p Head payable in like manner. But if these terms are not satisfactory to you the Furs may be left here until you have an opportunity of removing them & the Horses are at your disposal where you left them.

In either case yourself and followers shall be made welcome to a continuance of our hospitality while you choose to remain at our Establishment—and if agreeable you shall be allowed a passage free of expense to the Red River Settlement with me in the course of next Spring & Summer from whence you can proceed to St Louis . . . or you may accompany our Snake Country Expedition next Autumn by which means you will in all probability have a safe escort until you fall in with your people at or in the neighbourhood of Salt Lake.⁴⁰

The second letter, dated December 29, 1828, finishes the negotiations.

In reference to your valued communication of 26th Inst and to our subsequent conferences I beg it to be distinctly understood that we do not lay claim to, nor can we receive any remuneration for the services we have rendered you, any indemnification for the losses we have sustained in assisting you, nor any Salvage for the property we have recovered for you, as whatsoever we have done for you was induced by feelings of benevolence and humanity alone, to which your distressed situation after your late providential escape & the lamentable & melancholy fate of your unfortunate companions gave you every title at our hands. And I beg to assure you that the satisfaction we derive from these good offices, will repay the Hon^{ble} Hudsons Bay Comp^y for any loss or inconvenience sustained in rendering them.

I am exceedingly happy that you have consented to abandon the very hazardous Journey you contemplated and that you have allowed yourself to be influenced by my advice to pursue the safer yet more circuitous route by Red River, which notwithstanding the increased distance, will in point of time be the shortest, as thereby you will, barring accidents, be at St Louis in the month of July next.

With regard to your property, we are willing in order to relieve you from all further concern respecting it, to take it off your hands, at what we consider to be its utmost value here, say horses at 40/ each which you know to be a higher price than we ever pay for any, and Beaver at 3 \$ p Skin Land Otters at 2 \$ p^r Skin and Sea Otters at 10 \$ p^r Skin which from their damaged

⁴⁰ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 302-06.

state I conceive to be their utmost value here, fully as much as they will net to us in England, and after making a fair deduction for risk and expence of transport hence to St Louis, more than they would yield you if taken to and sold in the States.

But if these prices be not satisfactory to you, and that you prefer leaving your property here until a favourable opportunity should present itself for removing it, we shall with pleasure retain it for you, and deliver it when and to whom you may direct.⁴¹

Jedediah Smith sold his furs and horses to the Company on the terms offered by Governor Simpson and journeyed with him to Colville, whence Smith went to Flathead House and returned to the States. Nor was Smith unappreciative of the treatment he had received from Hudson's Bay Company. In a letter from the firm of Smith, Jackson, and Sublette to John Eaton, Secretary of War, written in October, 1830, he reported as follows:

It is an act of justice to say also that the treatment received by Mr. Smith at Fort Vancouver was kind and hospitable, that personally, he owes thanks to Governor Simpson and to the gentlemen of the H. B. company for the hospitable entertainment which he received from them, and for the efficient and successful aid which they gave him in recovering from the Umpqua Indians a quantity of furs.⁴²

The Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company also approved of the conduct of Dr. McLoughlin in aiding Smith. In a letter to him dated October 28, 1829, they write:

19. We are much gratified to learn that every hospitable attention and assistance were afforded to Mr. Smith the American and his Companions in distress after the horrible massacre of his party by the natives of the Umpqua, and from the humane feeling you have already manifested it is scarcely necessary to desire, that you will on all occasions render any protection in your power to Americans, Russians, or any other strangers who may be in the Country against the treachery or violence of the natives whatever may be the objects of the visits of such strangers, be they competitors in trade or otherwise, as all feelings of self interest must be laid aside when we can relieve or assist our fellow creatures.⁴³

Shortly after the arrival of Dr. McLoughlin on the coast in 1824, another problem arose to confront the Company, a problem that caused serious concern for several years. American ships began coming to the Northwest Coast to engage in the fur trade. Opposition from these Coasters was more serious than land opposition. The ships did not have to make a profit in trading with the Indians for furs, for they disposed of the furs they obtained in China and made a con-

⁴¹ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 306-07.

⁴² 21st Congress, 2nd Session, *Senate Executive Documents* No. 39 [Serial No. 203], 23, as quoted by H. C. Dale, *op. cit.*, 280 n.

⁴³ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 318.

siderable profit. The resulting price wars of the Coasters and the Company seriously depleted the stores of trade goods on several occasions and forced the Company officers in the Northwest to strenuous effort in carrying on the trade and maintaining an opposition.

The first mention in McLoughlin's letters concerning the Coasters occurs in his report to the Governor and Committee dated October 6, 1825. It is interesting, for it delineates his policy of opposition to them.

... we might apply some of the Goods in Depot for the Inland trade to the Coasting trade. I think it would be preferable to do so even if the Inland trade suffered a little than to allow the Coasters to pick a Sufficient quantity of Furs at a Reasonable rate to induce them to come again ... as they have only this market for their Goods, they will sell for what they can get while having an Extensive Inland trade we would be certain of disposing of Ours and would be always ready to take every advantage in the Market.⁴⁴

The first mention of any specific opposition in McLoughlin's letters occurs in his report of July 6, 1827, to the Governor and Committee. He mentions that Captain Dominis (McLoughlin spells it Dominie) is giving twice as much for furs as the company price. "... this of course Excited a great sensation amongst the natives but fortunately he did not remain Long."⁴⁵

This appearance of the American Coasters was met with a determined program of opposition which included an expansion of trading facilities. Fort Langley was constructed on the Fraser River in the summer of 1827 for the purpose of collecting furs in that area in order to prevent there being any large amount in the hands of the Indians at any one time. Simpson felt, also, that Fort Langley would serve as a principal depot for the Columbia Department in case the Company had to withdraw from Fort Vancouver.⁴⁶

The following year brought additional ships to the coast. As McLoughlin did not have sufficient trade goods on hand to meet the low prices of the increased opposition, he was able to offer little opposition to them. Simpson, in the Department on an inspection trip, reported to the Committee in detail. He gave them the results of his investigations and recommended a course of action that he felt would drive all Coaster opposition from the Department. His recommendations included a post to be built at the port of Nass, "which is the grand mart of the Coast both for Sea Otters and Land Skins." This would enable the Company to drain the country east of the Russian boundary which was, at this time, tapped by a Russian post on Norfolk Sound.⁴⁷ In this same letter, Simpson reported on his voyage down the Fraser River. This trip proved to him that the Fraser would never replace the Columbia as a route of communication.

⁴⁴ E. E. Rich, ed., *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, First Series, 1825-1838*, 18.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

⁴⁶ E. E. Rich, ed., *Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia*, 41.

⁴⁷ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 299-300.

Simpson also felt that the only effective means of opposing the Coasters was by sea. The cost of the venture shows the determination of the Company to eliminate all opposition. Simpson proposed a large ship to replace the *Cadboro* in the coasting trade. The Indians of the Northwest Coast were not only ferocious but were well supplied with arms by the Americans. In addition, there were many Indian war canoes on the coast that were not only higher out of the water than the *Cadboro*, but carried more men.⁴⁸

The year 1829 found the brig *Owhyhee*, Captain Dominis, again in the Columbia River. The opposition of Captain Dominis proved to be even more difficult to meet this year than it had been previously. This did not prevent Dr. McLoughlin and his guest, Jedediah Smith, from visiting the brig however. The log of the *Owhyhee* under the date of March 2, 1829, mentions that

a boat with Captain Smith and the Doctor of the English came down. Bought some potatoes, traded for a few furs. In the morning they returned up the river. Bought 41 beaver and 3 land otter.⁴⁹

But relations were not always so cordial. Shortly after this visit, the Company supply ship *William and Ann* was wrecked at the mouth of the Columbia. Captain Swan and several others of the survivors were believed to have been murdered by the Clatsop Indians. Captain Dominis refused to aid Lieutenant Simpson, captain of the *Cadboro*, in punishing the murderers even though several of his men volunteered. In addition, he agreed to suspend the sale of arms to the village for only one day.⁵⁰

With the loss of the *William and Ann*, the trade situation became critical. Donald Manson, who was at Fort George endeavoring to oppose Captain Dominis, requested guns for trading. McLoughlin replied that he had no guns to trade but suggested that Manson tell the Indians that McLoughlin was planning to lower the price of guns to two skins but not to commit himself.⁵¹ This was half the American price. McLoughlin hoped, by this maneuver, to get the Americans to lower their prices. This would mean less returns for their stock and was the only means that McLoughlin had of opposing Dominis.

By August, McLoughlin was able to make a more optimistic report. In his August 5 report to the Governor and Committee, he says that while the cost of maintaining an opposition is exhausting his stock of goods, the Americans had been able to get only about two hundred furs.⁵²

⁴⁸ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 301.

⁴⁹ F. W. Howay, "The Brig *Owhyhee* in the Columbia, 1829-30," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XXXV (1934), 10-11.

⁵⁰ E. E. Rich, ed., *Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia*, 107.

⁵¹ Burt B. Barker, ed., *op. cit.*, 10-11.

⁵² E. E. Rich, ed., *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, First Series, 1825-1838*, 77.

As a result of the stay of the *Owhyhee* in the mouth of the Columbia, there arose another problem of opposition. McLoughlin's letter to Samuel Black, Chief Trader stationed at Walla Walla, informing him of the event, is the best account.

An American (Bache) and two Society Island natives is passed here Bound for the Dalles some say his object is to buy horses others again say that he is to winter in his father in laws Lodge in both cases he will interfere with your trade. I therefore send Mr Birnie with three men to oppose—to do which effectually he must adopt the reduced prices of our opponents but you must still keep up your prices as you well know if your [*sic*] lowered yours the whole trade of Colville Dist^t would be ruined.⁵³

Bache, seemingly, was not too successful with his venture, whatever it was, for the next mention of him by McLoughlin is in a letter to Mr. Birnie, in March of 1830, in which he states that the Company can have no dealings with Bache until he has definitely settled with his former employers, Dominis and Thompson.⁵⁴

The last mention of Bache is in a letter from McLoughlin to Birnie dated April 1, 1830. Birnie is told to return from The Dalles if Bache leaves. In case Bache still desires to enter the Company service, McLoughlin states the conditions. As the conditions seem to have been standard for such cases, they are worth quoting.

I am told Basche had a good deal of property if he comes under arrangements to us he must not trade his property with the natives as that would be interfering with the trade, but we would take it off his hands at a fair valuation and allow him trade it at the Old Tariff, allow him $\frac{1}{4}$ of the skins he trades at freemens prices, to pay him for the trouble of trading them.⁵⁵

The *Owhyhee* left the mouth of the Columbia in July, 1830, but it seemed to make very little difference in the conduct of the trade. McLoughlin reports in October that he was obliged to keep parties running to the Indians so that no great quantity of skins would be in their hands if the *Owhyhee* returned.⁵⁶

In the rest of the Department, however, the Coasters were cutting into the trade rather deeply. In February, Archibald McDonald reported from Fort Langley that the lack of trade goods prevented him from attempting to oppose the Americans.⁵⁷

Lieutenant Æmilius Simpson, commander of the *Cadboro*, reported encounters with American vessels. With his two small vessels, the *Cadboro* and the *Vancouver*, he attempted to oppose the Americans. In September, 1830, he states that "I regretted being under the neces-

⁵³ Burt B. Barker, ed., *op. cit.*, 57.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁵⁶ E. E. Rich, ed., *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, First Series, 1825-1838*, 92.

⁵⁷ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 320.

sity of selling a quantity of the latter spirits as I found it impossible to trade without it nor do I see how it can be avoided till opposition is done off the Coast. . . ."⁵⁸

Though McLoughlin's efforts in opposing the Coasters were commended by the Governor and Committee, at least one American did not seem to think much of them. John C. Jones, an American commercial agent in Hawaii, in a letter to Josiah Marshall, co-owner of the *Owhyhee*, wrote, "The N. W. Coast is now deserted, there is good business to be done there if well managed."⁵⁹ This seems to mark the end of the Coasters on the Northwest Coast.

Hudson's Bay Company's relations with American fur traders were not, however, confined to opposing them. There were the independent traders with whom the Company had a working agreement. The most notable of these is Nathaniel J. Wyeth of Boston, who founded Fort Hall.

Previous to the coming of Wyeth, Governor Simpson had had an offer from an American named Joshua Pilcher. Pilcher offered to lead a party of trappers into the Blackfoot country. The party would be actually a Hudson's Bay Company party, but theoretically it would be an independent party under the leadership of Pilcher. It would operate from Flathead House. Governor Simpson declined the offer on the grounds that it would be unethical for the Company to operate on American territory, even in this fashion, for it had no license to trade or trap there.⁶⁰

In 1831 the American trader, Nathaniel Wyeth, decided to outfit a group of his friends and proceed with them to the Oregon country, where the group would engage in trapping and in trading with the Indians. On arriving in the Oregon country, the group was going to go into the business of curing salmon for shipment and supplying American trappers. With trade supplies filling the ship on its outward passage and salmon and furs on its return, the scheme looked fine. Wyeth interested a number of his friends, neighbors, and relatives in the project.

The party left in 1832. Before it reached South Pass, internal dissensions had split it. Several of the party returned to the States. On the way out, the party had traveled with Fitzpatrick. On reaching the rendezvous, Wyeth and his company joined a Hudson's Bay party and proceeded to Fort Vancouver, where Wyeth intended to locate a suitable place for his salmon fisheries.

Wyeth spent the winter at Fort Vancouver, where he was a recipient of Dr. McLoughlin's famous hospitality. Wyeth's letters tell nothing of his decisions concerning business, for he felt that he could not trust such matters to the mails, which were carried by the Com-

⁵⁸ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 330.

⁵⁹ Samuel E. Morison, "New England and the Opening of the Columbia River Salmon Trade, 1830," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XXVIII (1927), 129.

⁶⁰ Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 307-08.

pany.⁶¹ Further evidence of Wyeth's suspicions concerning the Company is an entry in his *Journal* dated January 30, 1833.

Today a party sent to enquire after another reported to be cut off beyond the Umquoi . . . returned. . . . I requested to accompany him but the Gov. would not consent alledging the[y] would conceive that I came to avenge the death of Mr. Smiths party . . . all which I interpreted into a jealousy of my motives this party brought back 200 skins which they had traded. . . .⁶²

But Wyeth did appreciate the hospitality extended to him by the officers of the Company. An entry in his *Journal* dated February 3, 1833, expresses his feelings thus:

I parted with feelings of sorrow from the gentlemen of Fort Vancouver their unremitted kindness to me while there much endeared them to me more so than it would seem possible during so short a time Doct McGlaucand the Gov. of the place is a man distinguished as much for his kindness and humanity as his good sense and information and to whom I am so much indebted as that he will never be forgotten by me. . . .⁶³

The winter at Fort Vancouver seems to have changed Wyeth's mind about competing with the Hudson's Bay Company in supplying trappers, for he wrote to Governor Simpson from Fort Colville in March, while on his way home, offering the following terms:

1st The Hon. H. B. C. to furnish at their store at Vancouver to N. J. W. such goods as he may select at the same rate that the clerks of the said Co pay for the goods supplied them viz 50 pr ct on their original cost

2d The said Co to lay no obstruction in the way of the said Wyeths trading at any post or place for provisions of animals to be used in his business or to his trading furs anywhere south of the Columbia and not within 100 miles of their posts and generally in matters indifferent to their interest to forward his views and operations and to give him such information as may be in their power and not inconsistent with their immediate interest

3d The said Co to Cr the acc. of said Wyeth at the rate of \$5 for full Beavers and in proportion for kittens and yearlings and for all other furs and skins usually secured by the said Co. as merchandise at the same prop. to their market value in London or wherever that Co. dispose of their furs as \$5 is to the market value of the Beaver skin

4th The said Wyeth to deliver all Furs and skins of every description of which he may get possession to the Co.

5th Said Wyeth to continue the arrangement for five years and in case of his not doing so to be bound not to do a Fur business in any country to which the H. B. Co. have access

⁶¹ F. G. Young, ed., *The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1831-36*, Sources of Oregon History, I (Eugene, 1899), 52-53.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 181.

⁶³ *Idem.*

6th In case said Wyeth faithfully performs this said agreement, then the H. B. Co. at the end of the time agreed on is to pay over to him any balance that may be due him in cash or goods as the said W. may elect and at all times he is entitled to claim from them in cash any balance which may be due him over and above \$1000.⁶⁴

Wyeth returned to the Northwest in 1835 with another party and founded Fort Hall. He also attempted to set up salmon fisheries on the Columbia but was not too successful with either venture. He sold Fort Hall to the Hudson's Bay Company and retired from the scene.

An interesting sidelight on this second expedition of Wyeth is found in the journal of John K. Townsend, a young naturalist who accompanied Wyeth. Wyeth and his party had arrived at Fort Walla Walla in the company of Captain Bonneville. Townsend relates that Pambrun, in charge of the post, "showed many courtesies to the overland emigrants, but refused supplies to Captain Bonneville as being a rival trader; he appears, however, to have had no such feeling with regard to Captain Wyeth."⁶⁵

The end of the Wyeth enterprise marked the end of active opposition between the American traders and the Hudson's Bay Company in the Pacific Northwest. The Snake country was virtually trapped out and, as Simpson had predicted, offered no inducements to American traders. Also, the American fur-trading industry to the east of the mountains was declining. The last of the rendezvous had been held. The next period is that of immigration and colonization. In 1846, the Oregon country was split in two by the boundary treaty. The Hudson's Bay Company retired to the north of the line where it had a monopoly. To the south of the line, the country was virtually trapped out. The great period of the fur trade was over.

⁶⁴ F. G. Young, ed., *op. cit.*, 58.

⁶⁵ John K. Townsend, *Narratives of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River*, ed. R. G. Thwaites (Cleveland, 1905), 280.