

For
Chris Relander.



Written by DELLA GOULD EMMONS, Author of "Sacajawea of the Shoshones"
and "Nothing in Life is Free."



WELCOME

THE SAGA OF OLD FORT NISQUALLY

The fight for ownership of the Oregon Country was on when Fort Nisqually was built in 1833. Since 1819 Great Britain and the United States had held the territory under joint occupation, but who would be the ultimate victor of land that stretched between Russian Alaska and Spanish California?

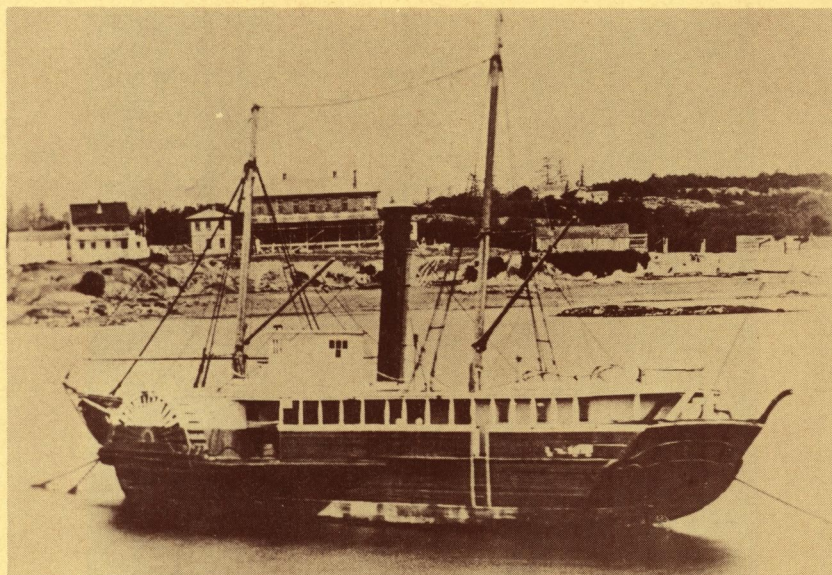
The main reason for establishing Fort Nisqually was not farming, so wrote Dr. John McLoughlin, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver, but "... it is formed in consequence of the American Coasters of later years frequently visiting the Strait of Juan De Fuca which obliged us to keep a party constantly in Puget Sound, and if by being stationary it can also attend a farm so much the better ..."

In addition to building forts to secure the Oregon Country and the Indian trade for Great Britain, Governor George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company applied to the London office for a steamer, declaring "a steam vessel would afford incalculable advantages over the Americans, as we could look into every creek and cove while they are confined to a harbour by head winds and calms, we could ascend every stream of any consequence upon the coast ... a steam vessel would, in our opinion, bring the contest to a close very soon, by making us masters of the trade ..."

The company used still another means of winning the country—they entrenched themselves in the hearts of the Indians by dealing with them fairly and by



STOUT PALISADES, TWO BASTIONS AND HEAVY GATE
GAVE PROTECTION FROM INDIANS



THE "BEAVER," THE FIRST STEAMSHIP ON
THE PACIFIC

marrying their women. This was done not only by their French Canadian employees but by the factors themselves.

Fort Nisqually controlled one hundred and sixty thousand acres extending along the shores of Puget Sound between the Nisqually and Puyallup Rivers, acreage highly adaptable for grazing and cultivation. A great cattle industry was begun in a small way in 1834 when the Brig Llama unloaded seven head of stock. These thrived exceptionally well on the luxuriant grasses



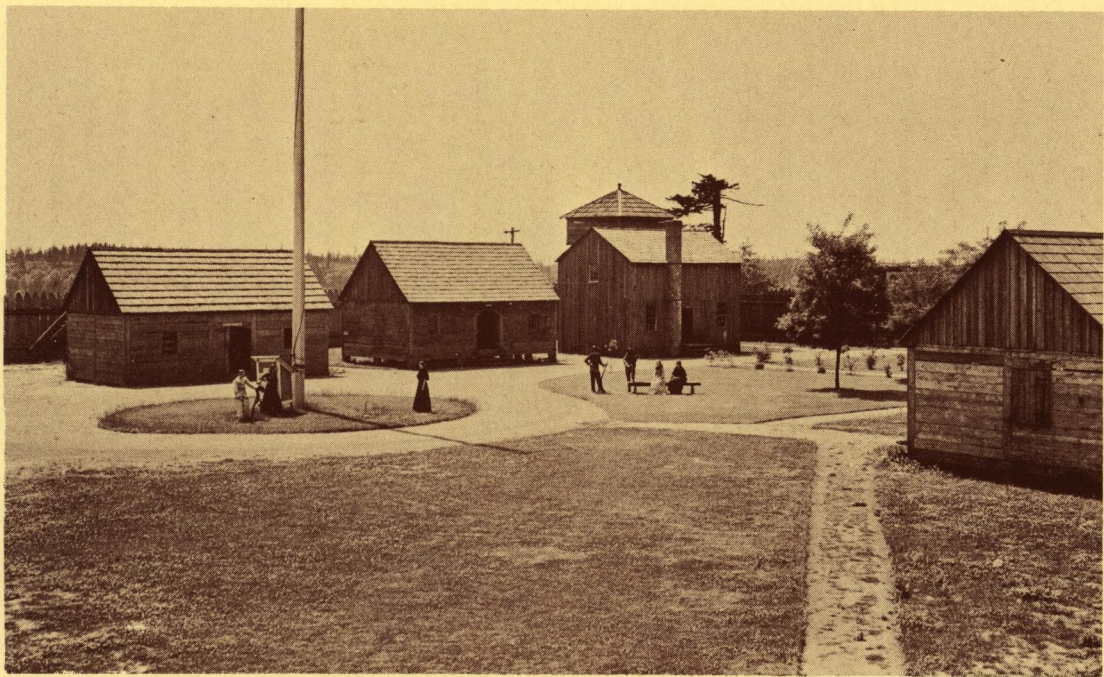
CALLING DAY AT THE FACTOR'S HOUSE

of the Nisqually Flats and as a result long-horned Spanish cattle were driven up from California; herds plodded through mountain passes; high bred stock and merino sheep were shipped from England to improve the strain.

In 1839 the Puget Sound Agricultural Company was formed, and in December, 1840, it took over Fort Nisqually but left the fort's fur trade in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company. The busy steamer *Beaver*, the first of its kind on the Pacific, chugged around the northwest coast carrying dairy products to the Russians in Alaska, stock to Vancouver Island, furs to Fort Vancouver, while in exchange mail and supplies were transported from the mother fort, Vancouver, to the outlying coastal stations. For thirty-eight years the *Beaver* served in this capacity.

Certainly it would seem that Fort Nisqually was destined to become part of the British Empire. But it was the missionaries, that peaceful band of earnest men headed by Jason Lee, who were the first Americans to gain a foothold in that region. Before going to Washington to present the first memorial to Congress begging the United States Government to extend its jurisdiction over the Oregon Country, Jason Lee visited Fort Nisqually and in April, 1839, Reverend David Leslie and Doctor William Holden Willson began building a Methodist Mission just northeast of the fort.

When Lee returned on the *Lausanne* accompanied by fifty-two people, he sent to Fort Nisqually Dr. Willson and Miss Chloe Clark, a Connecticut school teacher, and a family bristling with patriotism—the Richmonds headed by the Reverend Doctor John P. Richmond; his wife, America, and their three children, the last one named Oregon since he was born enroute to their new



ASSEMBLY GROUND OF OLD FORT NISQUALLY

home in the west. With the former couple mutual interests and love led to the first American marriage in the Puget Sound region. The Richmonds, not to be outdone in establishing a record, fostered the first white child, Francis Richmond, born to them in February, 1842.

This small band of Americans was considerably reinforced and enheartened one May day in 1841 when Captain Charles Wilkes anchored his two ships, the Vincennes and Porpoise, at the mouth of the Nisqually River. He had been sent to chart the waters of Puget Sound and explore the Oregon Territory for the United States Government. With patriotic fervor Dr. Richmond delivered the address when the two ships' crews held the first official Fourth of July celebration west of the Mississippi.

But the mission did not live long. The Willsons returned to the Willamette Valley while the Richmonds, a year later, due to a family affliction, went back to Illinois, thus bringing to a standstill American activities at the fort.

Thus far the Hudson's Bay Company had been able to keep out the American trader but with the arrival of the American settler in 1845, it found itself unable to cope with the latter and the tide definitely turned toward American ownership.

In 1846 the boundary line was established at the 49th parallel and Fort Nisqually was now in American territory. Although the Puget Sound Agricultural Company moved its headquarters in 1859 to Victoria, it still kept its holdings at the fort. Friction grew bitter between the company and the pioneers settling around the fort until finally in 1867 the United States Govern-



GRANARY—OLDEST (1843) STANDING STRUCTURE IN WASHINGTON

ment purchased the company's holdings for \$325,000. So ended British control of old Fort Nisqually.

But two buildings of the old fort, the granary and the factor's house, remained when in 1934 the Young Men's Business Club of Tacoma removed them to a spectacularly beautiful eminence in Point Defiance Park. There, following the old specifications, they rebuilt the other buildings of Fort Nisqually, using in their construction the pioneer hand-adzed uprights, whipsawed planks, hand-split cedar shakes with heavy hand-forged hardware, nails and oak pegs. Today, due to the co-operation of Tacoma's Metropolitan Park Board and the Fort Nisqually Restoration Council, the broad gate of the high stockade swings hospitably open to visitors who would transport themselves to the nineteenth century when the fort was under Hudson's Bay supervision.

A picture of past activity is visualized. We see at the store the Indians haggling, trading their furs for a fathom of tobacco, a five-point Hudson's Bay blanket, or a string of blue beads. Sparks are flying in the blacksmith shop and the clang of hammer on anvil is heard as the French-Canadian retainers repair a broken plow. The appetizing smell of fresh bread lures to the cook house where the Hawaiian cook is taking voluminous loaves of bread from the Dutch oven. At the factor's house, Mrs. Tolmie, assisted by her Indian-women help, is entertaining Dr. Tolmie's distinguished guests—Dr. John McLoughlin and Governor George Simpson.

A visit to one of the bastions is rewarding. From the lookout stretches a breathless panorama—the Narrows

in the foreground whose swift swirling waters the Tacoma-Narrows Bridge spans; the purple Olympics to the northwest, and to the east the Cascades. Attention is held transfixed at the sight of Mount Rainier, The Mountain that Was God, that reigns supreme over the unsurpassed scenic northwest. Today, the city of Tacoma, standing at its base, offers an opportunity to combine the present with the past by visiting its modern factories, its noted smelter, its huge lumber mills and its historic OLD FORT NISQUALLY.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF OLD FORT NISQUALLY

Data furnished by Arthur A. Cook
Secretary of the Young Men's Business Club

Front Cover Furnished by Lee Merrill . . . Picture of Granary
furnished by Turner Richards . . . Other full-page pictures
furnished by Seattle Times

All profits from sales of this 25c booklet, souvenirs, etc., are used to maintain the fort and museum. Booklets will be mailed promptly on receipt of 30c. The Fort Nisqually Restoration Council is a non-profit organization open to men and women, twenty-one years of age or older. Membership is \$1.00 per year.

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