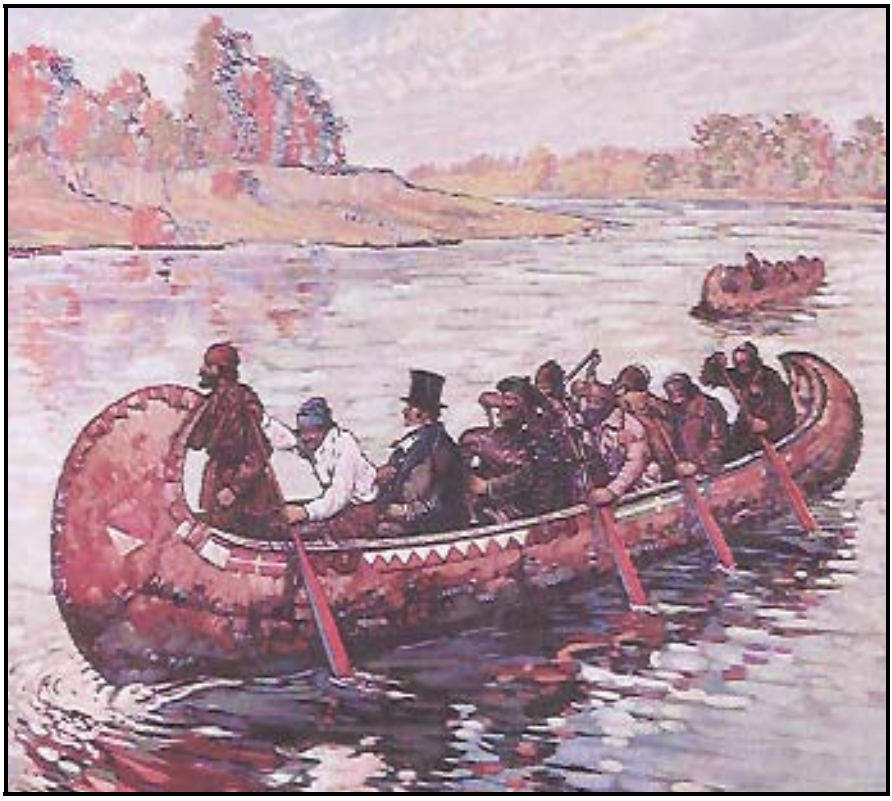
THE MÉTIS

in

BRITISH COLUMBIA

From Fur Trade Outposts to Colony



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Permission has been received from the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba to reproduce the picture (HBCA P-390) which appears on the cover.

Canoe occupants include Governor George Simpson, his Scottish bagpiper and Métis voyageurs. The picture is titled "Governor of Rupert's Land on a tour of inspection". The image is of a painting by Lionel LeMoine Fitzgerald (1890-1956). This artist was a native of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and was a member of the famous Canadian Group of Seven.

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My lovely wife is of the blood of these people [Cree], speaking their language, and well educated in the English language, which gives me a great advantage.

David Thompson on his Métis
Country Wife Charlotte Small

Yesterday, the birthday of British Columbia, was ushered in …. the solemnity of the proclamation of the Colony.

Editor's *Gazette*, Fort Langley
November 20, 1858
Victoria Gazette, Nov. 25, 1858

In this Act "aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

Canadian Constitution, 1982
Section 35(2)

…. the Metis culture, rich in spiritual beliefs and colourful traditions, is an integral part of British Columbia's multicultural character, and

…. throughout history, Metis citizens have made significant contributions to the development and success of Our Province ….

British Columbia Government
Order in Council No. 0697
Dated May 26, 1993.

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This book is dedicated to our Métis children and grandchildren and to the Métis people of British Columbia.

Calgary and Victoria, 2008

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Chapter I

CHILDREN OF THE FUR TRADE – THE MÉTIS

Over majestic snow-capped mountains and along crystal clear waterways the first overland fur trade explorers, with their Métis and French Canadian voyageurs, came to the lands now known as British Columbia. It was over two hundred years ago that they journeyed to the Pacific Northwest on behalf of the North West Company (NWC). Their objective was to expand the fur trade as far as it could reach and always to search for the elusive overland route to the Pacific Ocean.

On crossing the Continental Divide these trailblazers entered into a beautiful and bountiful land of stunning contrasts. They reached a hinterland of virgin forests, pristine lakes and rivers, verdant valleys, and abundant wildlife. They also encountered the indigenous peoples who had lived there from time immemorial with their own unique customs, traditions, languages and cultures.

This quest would take Alexander Mackenzie and his voyageurs to the Arctic Ocean in 1789 and to Dean Channel on the Pacific Ocean in 1793. For Simon Fraser and his men it would mean their 1808 descent of treacherous rapids to the mouth of the river that was to bear his name. It would be up to David Thompson and his crew in 1811 to find a navigable route that would take them to the mouth of the mighty Columbia River with the waves of the Pacific Ocean pounding on the shoreline.

These NWC expeditions saw the establishment of supply depots and forts both east and west of the Continental Divide. While the principal leaders of these exploration parties returned east of the mountains some of their staff, including Métis such as Jean Baptiste Boucher and Jaco Finlay, remained behind to keep the new fur trade posts functioning and to develop trade relations with the Native Indians.

They were soon joined by other officers and employees

that were sent by the NWC to develop its fur trade operations in the west. Many of these recruits brought with them their Métis country wives and children from east of the Rockies.

Before long the initial posts had multiplied into many forts, houses and posts sprinkled throughout the lands west of the Rocky Mountains. These establishments were connected by a network of fur brigade trails that the NWC developed. After the 1821 merger of the NWC and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), the fur trade was further expanded. Subsequently the HBC sent additional trusted and skilled employees, including Métis, from its establishments east of the Rocky Mountains to its newly acquired fur trade posts in the Pacific Northwest.

Métis employees, with their country wives and children, were sent westward over the years because of the qualities and abilities they possessed. In addition to their activities as voyageurs, fur traders and engagés, many Métis employees acted as guides and interpreters.

To adequately appreciate these Métis and their unique indigenous qualities, it is only fitting that some of their notable personalities and notable contributions in the history of British Columbia should be featured. This book concentrates on a number of significant historical highlights concerning the Métis. It is not a genealogical record or tabulation of the many Métis who were present west of the Rocky Mountains during this time period.

In Canada the term "Métis" indicates a person of mixed American Aboriginal and European descent. The historical Métis were a unique indigenous people primarily from present-day Western Canada and areas of Ontario and the northwestern United States.

The ultimate derivation of the word "métis" is from the Latin words *miscere* and *misticius* meaning "to mix" and "mixed race" respectively. The word "métis" is French and one of its literal translations is "half-breed". When English was spoken in the 19th century and earlier "half-breed" was normally used to denote all Métis, whether of Scottish,

English, or French ancestry. On the other hand when French was spoken the term "Métis" was used.

Today some individuals consider the term "half-breed" to be offensive. However, not to be more offensive and in the interest of integrity, it is used in this book in its appropriate historical context.

It wasn't until the 1930s, and more so in the 1960s, that "Métis" started to be used extensively instead of the term half-breed when English was being spoken. In the fur trade era it was often difficult to distinguish between a Métis and a French Canadian; French was then the dominant language in the west. As a result, in many documents and writings a Métis is often referred to as a "French Canadian" or "Canadian".

A number of other words were used in past days to refer to the Métis. They include "bois-brûlé" (burnt wood, because of their dark complexion), "michif" (also a Métis language), and "country born". Other terms were also used including "half white", the description given by Governor James Douglas to the Métis members of the Victoria Voltigeurs, who are discussed hereafter.

The term "Métis" may have different connotations depending on the applicable circumstances. For example the 2003 Powley Case dealt with Aboriginal rights under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* of Canada. In this case the Supreme Court of Canada referred on more than one occasion to the Métis as having "Indian or Inuit and European" forebears and roots. Today various Métis organizations in Canada have specific criteria which an applicant must meet to qualify for membership.

However neither Section 35 nor these organizations were in existence at the time of the historical events and personalities of the fur trade era. Consequently current matters such as these are not discussed herein.

In the historical context of this book the Métis are the mixed-blood **Children of the Fur Trade**, pioneers who contributed to the development of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest. Their paternal ancestors were

primarily French-Canadian voyageurs and Scottish or Irish fur traders with the NWC and HBC. Their maternal ancestors were mainly Indian women from Rupert's Land and Northwestern North America.

Métis were an integral part of the communities that evolved out of the fur trade in these areas. The great Métis icon Louis Riel had this to say about the Métis and the word itself, and in doing so confirmed that they were children of the fur trade:

> The Métis have as paternal ancestors the former employees of the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Fur Companies and as their maternal ancestors Indian women of various tribes The French word, "Métis", is derived from the Latin participle mixtus, which means "mixed"; in French "mele"; it expresses well the idea that is sought to be conveyed. However appropriate the corresponding English expression "Halfbreed" might have been for the first generation of the mixture of blood, now that European blood and Indian blood are mixed in every degree, it is no longer generally applicable….
>
> The French word 'Métis' expresses the idea of this mixture in the most satisfactory manner possible, and thus becomes a suitable name for our race…. Why should we care to what degree exactly of mixture we possess European blood and Indian blood? No matter how little we have of one or the other, do not both gratitude and filial love require us to make a point of saying: 'We are Métis!"

The focus of this book is on the role that Métis played in that part of North America that would eventually become the Province of British Columbia. Due to the complexity of events that unfolded from the first European contact in the Pacific Northwest, it is appropriate to look at a broader picture of the historical events in which the Métis played a notable role.

In his book *British Columbia – the Making of a Province*, F. W. Howay (who has been referred to as "the outstanding historian of the North West coast") wrote:

> It is impossible to confine the story of British Columbia within the four corners of its present boundaries.

The common factors in the historical context of this book are the Métis and the fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains in the Pacific Northwest. Accordingly special

emphasis has been placed on the fur trading operations that occurred in the area of land from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and from Russian-held Alaska in the North to Spanish-controlled California to the South.

This book chronicles some of the notable contributions and notable personalities of Métis men and women who by their pioneering spirit, groundbreaking efforts and indomitable fortitude assisted in laying the foundation for the development of the great Province of British Columbia.

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- *Metis: Memorable Events and Memorable Personalities, The* by George and Terry Goulet, ch. III.

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SECTION A

NOTABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Courtesy of Windermere Valley Museum and Archives

Statue of David Thompson and
his Métis Country Wife Charlotte Small

by Rich Roenisch, Longview, Alberta

Courtesy of Canadian Military Heritage

Victoria Voltigeur
(1851-1858)
by Ron Volstad (CDND)

NANAIMO BASTION
Last Free Standing
Original HBC Bastion.

Chapter II

HISTORY OF THE FUR TRADE

From the earliest days of exploration in North America, the fur trade was uniquely involved in the history and development of Canada and inevitably in that of the Province of British Columbia. As the fur trade moved westward across the North American continent, a new people emerged. They were the historical Métis of Western Canada who have been aptly identified as the "children of the fur trade".

Since the history of British Columbia and Canada was intimately intertwined with the fur trade, it is pertinent to review the early exploration and development in Canada related to this enterprise.

The first recorded explorers to settle in North America were the Vikings in the 10th century. Several centuries after the Vikings discontinued their settlement in the New World, the first explorers of the Americas were searching for a route to the riches of the Orient.

They noted an abundance of fish in the Americas. This led to fishermen from a number of European countries coming to the eastern coast of North America to fish. In time the fishermen started trading European goods with the Indians for furs. In due course they found that the fur trade was more lucrative than fishing.

The fur trade eventually resulted in European settlement in Canada by the French. Over the years the traders traveled further and further inland in order to find new sources of furs.

Early fur traders in New France were unlicensed "coureurs de bois" (runners of the woods) from the Quebec area who, without permission from the colonial authorities, traveled inland to the Lake Superior country in order to engage in illicit fur-trading with the Natives. The most prominent coureurs de bois in New France were Pierre Esprit Radisson and his brother-in-law Médard Chouart des Groseilliers.

In due course, New France initiated a licensing system

in an attempt to control the coureurs de bois. However Radisson and Groseilliers were arrested and fined in 1660 for their unlicensed fur-trading expedition to Lakes Superior and Michigan.

This precipitated their defection to the English and their meeting with King Charles II that resulted in the formation on May 2, 1670 of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), under the governorship of the King's cousin Prince Rupert. The HBC was granted extensive powers over, and a monopoly on trading rights in, a huge area of land - primarily Western Canada east of the Rocky Mountains. This Royal grant consisted of all the land whose waterways drained into Hudson Bay and this area was called Rupert's Land.

The HBC was formed as a fur trading company with a view to reaching the interior of the continent via Hudson Bay. In 1684 York Factory was the first permanent trading post established on Hudson Bay by the HBC. Due to continued disputes between England and France, ownership of York Factory shifted between these two countries from 1684 until 1713.

With respect to fur trading into the interior of the continent, the licensing of fur traders in New France led to Montreal merchants hiring coureurs de bois to travel inland. These "runners of the woods" established more sustained relations with the Natives. The respected licensed traders became known as voyageurs. Subsequently this term was also applied to the other employees of the fur trading companies who transported goods by canoe to and from trading posts in the interior.

A prominent Quebec fur trader in the 18th century was Pierre La Vérendrye who explored westward where he set up fur trading posts between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg in the 1730s. He and his sons were responsible for opening up the west to the mainly French fur traders from Quebec. A distant relative of La Vérendrye was Amelia Connolly Douglas who is profiled in another chapter of this book.

La Vérendrye's son Louis Joseph participated in the Seven Years War between England, France and other countries. The North American phase of this War was known as the French and Indian War. After the War ended in 1763, participation of the French in the fur trade and exploration of the West was greatly decreased for a time.

After the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, New France had fallen into the hands of Great Britain. As a result, many Scottish entrepreneurs settled in Montreal. They effectively took over the French fur trade and became resolute rivals of the HBC. These Scottish entrepreneurs were the precursors of the North West Company (NWC).

The NWC was a syndicate of partners formed in Montreal with a significantly different governing structure than that of the HBC, a royally chartered joint stock company owned and governed by an absentee committee in London, England. As well, the mixed-blood descendants of the voyageurs and staff of the NWC came from different backgrounds than those of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The NWC was organized in the 1770s largely by Scottish Highlanders such as Simon McTavish and another Scot James McGill, whose surname today adorns a prestigious Montreal university. These Scottish leaders hired employees mainly from Quebec to engage in the fur trade. These employees traveled to, and frequently wintered at, the various posts that were established by the NWC throughout western North America, where fur-bearing animals were plentiful.

The NWC Métis emerged from the mostly Quebec voyageurs, coureurs-de-bois, fur traders, engagés, winterers (the wintering partners were also called "hivernants") and, latterly, hunters and provisioning freighters and traders. The voyageurs, engagés, and others traveled to the Indian Country to barter European and other goods for fur pelts and frequently remained there over the winter. This led to the use of the word "hivernant" to also describe others who wintered in the Indian Country.

These Nor'Westers and the voyageurs married Indian women *à la façon du pays* - that is in accordance with the custom of the country and without benefit of the clergy, of whom there were none in the fur-trading country. These men married not only for companionship and conjugal relations, but also to establish kinship with Indian tribes. They did so in order to form alliances and to advance fur-trading with them, especially since the Natives favored this arrangement in their dealings. The Indian women became their "country wives".

Their relationships with the Native women resulted in the birth of many mixed-blood offspring and the embryonic beginnings of the historic Métis people. The Native women and the fur traders were the progenitors of the Métis people. The Métis male children of these unions frequently also became voyageurs and employees of the fur companies as did their children. These progeny normally lived and remained in the Indian Country.

Many of the partners of the NWC also wintered at the various posts and eventually it became a matter of privilege to have been a "winterer" for the Company. Some of these English-speaking partners of the NWC married Native women *a la façon du pays* and fathered mixed-blood children.

The NWC united with its Montreal competitor the XY Company in 1804. This created an even stronger opponent of their fur trading rival, the HBC.

The other main group of Métis that developed was originally called half-breeds or "country born", and was largely English-speaking Protestants in the employ of the HBC. These "English Métis" were primarily of Scottish, not English, descent. Their fathers came mostly from the isles and glens of the Orkney Islands, the Scottish Highlands and also Ireland.

After York Factory had been reacquired by the English from the French pursuant to the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the fur trading of the HBC was centered there. From York Factory the furs were shipped to England and the ships

would bring back European goods to the HBC forts on the Bay. The last stop of the HBC ships traveling to the Bay was to the Orkney Islands where they picked up their last supplies and many young Orcadians before heading across the Ocean.

Officials of the HBC preferred a Scots lad to an English bloke because they viewed the Scots as hardier and more capable of coping with the harsh climactic conditions of Canada. These young men were on the whole honest and industrious with cautious dour natures, ideal for fur-trading with the Indians.

As the prominent Red River resident Alexander Ross stated of the Orkneymen in *The Red River Settlement*:

> In whatever sphere of life they are placed, either high or low, in prosperity or adversity, their well-known habits of industry and frugality follow them.

For a number of decades the HBC employees did not have to journey from the HBC forts constructed on or near Hudson Bay. The HBC had the Indians travel long distances to these forts, rather than sending their employees from the forts to where the Natives gathered the furs. This procedure was gradually changed due to the opposite, more successful, methods of the fiercely competitive NWC, which established trading posts and forts in the Indian Country.

When some forts were established by the NWC and the HBC they were called a House rather than a Fort. For example Kootenae [Kootenai or Kootenay] House was a trading post for furs in British Columbia.

In the early days the London Committee of the HBC was reluctant to assume the expenses and troubles of supporting "country wives" and their children. The HBC discouraged its lower rank employees from such relationships, although the Company turned a blind eye to their officers taking Indian wives. This restriction could not be effectively enforced.

In the early stages the French Métis were more active than their English counterparts; they viewed themselves as

free and easy entrepreneurs with the right to roam the prairies. As hunters they were semi-nomads. They were hardy and hearty and loved to sing and socialize. They were hunters, voyageurs, coureurs-de-bois, trappers, traders, freighters and boat men.

They were also fabulous guides. They helped great Canadian and United States explorers like Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser, David Thompson, and Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on their expeditions across the Rocky Mountains and westward to the Pacific Ocean. They physically lugged canoes and supplies around rapids, blazed trails, and performed an invaluable service as interpreters.

With the help of the Métis, as with that of the Indian, the white men's expeditions were immensely assisted in these guided tours. The Métis of the NWC and HBC were also invaluable in the building of forts and in establishing the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest and in particular in the lands that now form part of British Columbia.

The Red River Settlement (centered in what today is Winnipeg) was to become the heart of the Métis Homeland. Many Métis clerks and engagés who retired from or were let go by the fur trading companies, as well as other Métis, made the Red River area their home. They brought their wives and Métis children with them, and over time the Métis married among themselves rather than with the Indians.

Prior to the HBC and NWC merger in 1821 under the name HBC, the custom of the fur traders had been to have Native or Métis "country wives" (discussed in another chapter of this book) because there were no white women in the West. Since the NWC fathers were mostly from Quebec, their Métis progeny were mainly French-speaking Roman Catholics.

In due course intermarriage occurred between Métis men and Métis women of both French and Scottish-English derivation. Widespread inter-family relationships developed among these groups. Also common traditions

and historical Métis communities evolved among them.

These Métis had become an essential economic and provisioning presence for the NWC prior to the merger. After the merger of the HBC and NWC, many of the Métis as "freemen" later traded furs in contravention of the HBC's monopoly.

The HBC had no forts west of the Rocky Mountains at the time of the merger in 1821. The merged company inherited all of the NWC forts in this area as well as its employees. As the author Richard Somerset Mackie indicated in *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, the HBC acquired from the NWC with this merger:

> …. a vastly experienced pool of French Canadian, Scottish, Native, and Métis traders, labourers and trappers ….

Since the HBC had no fur trading experience west of the Rocky Mountains, it retained most of the NWC employees in that area. Some of the NWC staff who were not retained by the HBC returned to Red River or to the east. Other former NWC employees remained west of the Rocky Mountains as free traders, living and working close to the forts that they had previously been associated with.

In the west Métis identity was in its incipient stages in the latter part of the 18th century since it had an intrinsic tie to the fur trade. It came to fruition early in the 19th century. By this time the fur trade had crossed west of the Rocky Mountains and was to have an immense influence on the future development of British Columbia and the shape of Canada. As Professor Harold A. Innis wrote in *The Fur Trade in Canada*:

> Canada emerged as a political entity with boundaries largely determined by the fur trade.

Métis people played a prominent role in extending this process westward across this vast land to the Pacific Ocean.

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Chapter III

EXPLORATIONS TO THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Over two hundred years ago the Métis, whose genesis was east of the Rocky Mountains, made their first historic appearance in the beautiful lands that now comprise British Columbia. They did so when the fur trade extended westward across the Continental Divide.

As noted herein, these unique native-born people and their descendants were initially the mixed-blood offspring of European men (primarily engaged in the fur trade) and of North American Indian women with whom they mated. Their paternal lineage was primarily French and Scottish and to a lesser degree English and Irish.

The early homeland of the Métis was the northern part of North America extending from the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains and also included parts of Northern Canada, an area that generally encompassed Rupert's Land.

At that time it was a seemingly boundless territory with stunning contrasts and the northern Great Plains abounded with buffalo. This was the land that was later to become the "bread basket of the world".

It was the home and native land of the Métis, a land where their destiny as a unique people, born of many trials, was to be fulfilled. The Métis homeland had no provincial boundaries or international borders and it was the Métis in the fur trade that extended it west of the Rocky Mountains and into British Columbia.

Historically, the Métis developed their own shared culture, customs, traditions, way of life, and collective identity separate from those of their Indian foremothers (many of them Cree, Ojibway, Chipewayan, and Saulteaux) and their European forefathers, primarily French and Scottish.

While they had inherited some cultural and other traits from each of their parental ancestors, the Métis had their own distinctiveness as a people - they were not Indians and they were not Europeans but rather a special blend of white and Native. In time they coalesced into an

independent "New Nation". The historical Métis of Western Canada have been called "the children of the fur trade".

From the mid-1600s and for almost two centuries thereafter, the beaver was the most important pelt in the fur trade. It was used to make high-crown broad-brim felt hats. These hats were highly fashionable in Europe and a mark of one's status in society. During this time the beaver pelt was used as the currency to evaluate furs exchanged by the Indians for the goods that they received from the fur trade companies.

In order to meet the demand for the valuable beaver, as well as other furs, the North West Company (NWC) looked west beyond the Rocky Mountains for new sources of supply. To pursue this objective the NWC sent exploration parties across the Continental Divide and into the Pacific Northwest.

As previously mentioned the great leaders of these expeditions were Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser, and David Thompson. Another goal of their journeys was to search for an overland route to the Pacific Ocean and the potential for trade with the lucrative markets of the Orient.

Their entourages on these expeditions were Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs and Natives from east of the mountains. The daunting and frequently hazardous expeditions of the three NWC explorers and their significant accomplishments would not have been realized without the vital contributions of their crews that consisted of interpreters, guides and boatmen.

Métis and French Canadian voyageurs played a pivotal role west of the mountains and in the eventual birth of the Province of British Columbia. There is a prevailing image of the colorful voyageur in a canoe plying the western waters. He is pictured as a hardy young man whose life was full of exuberant camaraderie, adventurous romance, strenuous work and precarious trips.

However voyageurs and fur traders were hard working. They had to know how to handle and repair a canoe,

confront hostile Natives, build forts, trap and hunt, negotiate for furs, brave the elements and act as guides and interpreters. They had to portage between unnavigable sections of rivers and around waterfalls and rapids. It was then, as Washington Irving wrote in *Astoria or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains*, that the voyageur:

> …. exhibits his most valuable qualities, carrying heavy burdens and toiling to and fro, on land and in the water, over rocks and precipices, among brakes and brambles, not only without a murmur, but with the greatest cheerfulness and alacrity, joking and laughing and singing scraps of old French ditties.

These NWC explorations first brought the Métis of Rupert's Land west of the mountains and to the Pacific Northwest. The following is a brief overview of the three outstanding western exploration leaders and of some of the notable Métis who accompanied and assisted them in their expeditions.

Alexander Mackenzie and Simon Fraser were of Scottish descent and David Thompson was Welsh. They shared a number of common experiences and accomplishments. Each of them:

- traveled west over two hundred years ago from what is now the Province of Alberta across the majestic Rocky Mountains;
- reached the Pacific Ocean by traveling over lands and waters never before traversed by European men;
- left an indelible imprint on the history of Canada;
- had a major river in Canada named after him – the Mackenzie, the Fraser and the Thompson Rivers;
- had an Aboriginal "country wife" (a relationship discussed in another chapter of this book);
- fathered mixed-blood children; and
- established fur-trading posts in the West, many of which later evolved into established settlements in British

Columbia that continue to this day as towns, cities or villages.

A few examples of Métis who took part in the trans-mountain journeys of these explorers were François Beaulieu, Jean Baptiste Boucher and Charlotte Small.

François Beaulieu accompanied Alexander Mackenzie not only to the Arctic Ocean in 1789 but also to the Pacific Ocean in 1793. The Mackenzie party, including Beaulieu and Métis from Fort Chipewyan (a NWC Fort in what is now Alberta), reached an arm of the Pacific Ocean at Dean Channel. There the following words were painted on a rock with a mixture of vermilion and grease:

> Alex Mackenzie, overland the twenty-first of July one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three.

In his Journals, Mackenzie misspelled the surname of François as "Beaulieux". François was a Métis born in Rupert's Land in 1771 to a French-Canadian father Jacques Beaulieu and a Chipewyan mother. His grandmother was a Cree woman.

At different times he was employed by the NWC as well as the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), and frequently acted as an interpreter. He married Ethiba, a Chipewyan woman. François lived a long life of over 100 years, dying in 1872. François Beaulieu has been designated a person of national significance by The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

Names of some of the other voyageurs who were part of Mackenzie's 1793 Pacific expeditions were Baptiste Bisson, Joseph Landry, Jacques Beauchamp, Charles Doucette, and François Courtois. It is not always clear from historical records which of these voyageurs were Métis. Historical records in this as well as in other cases often do not make a distinction between a French-Canadian and a Métis.

Among the Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs on the 1806 NWC expedition of Simon Fraser west of the Rocky Mountains was the Métis Jean Baptiste Boucher, also known by the nickname "Waccan". Because of his extensive notable career in the Pacific Northwest, Boucher

is profiled in another chapter of this book

Simon Fraser, Jean Baptiste Boucher and the others in their party commenced their journey on May 20th by traveling up the Peace River. After crossing the Rocky Mountains they arrived at a lake that Fraser named in honor of his NWC associate and friend John Stuart. There they built Fort St. James and Fraser named the entire area **New Caledonia**.

This fort was to become the principal fur-trading distribution and administration centre for the District of New Caledonia after the 1821 merger of the NWC with the HBC. A village still exists there today. There is also a restored fur trading post operated by Parks Canada called Fort St. James National Historic Site.

In 1805 one of Fraser's men, James McDougall, had preceded Fraser west of the Rocky Mountains and established Trout Lake House on McLeod Lake. It was subsequently renamed Fort McLeod in honor of Archibald Norman McLeod of the NWC. This was the first permanent European settlement and fur trading post in what was to become British Columbia. Today this community is known as McLeod Lake.

On his 1806 trip Fraser and his voyageurs also established Fort Fraser on the eastern side of Fraser Lake, about 60 kilometers southwest of Fort St. James. In addition, the following year his men built Fort George (now known as Prince George) at the junction of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers.

Major incentives induced the NWC to press on with further explorations to discover feasible overland routes to the Pacific Ocean. Besides expanding its fur trading operations west of the mountains, it wished to establish a Pacific Coast foothold for exports to the Far East trade.

Pursuant thereto, the NWC mandated that Simon Fraser find a viable water route to the Pacific Ocean via a southern river. Following these directions, Fraser and his crew set out on May 28, 1808 from Fort George.

He was accompanied by his two lieutenants John Stuart and Jules Quesnel, nineteen voyageurs and two Indian guides. They set out in canoes to explore the river that he mistakenly thought was the Columbia River. It was in fact the Fraser River (so named at a later date by David Thompson in honor of his partner).

The early part of the 1808 journey was relatively calm. Some 110 kilometers south of Fort George, Fraser named a river after Quesnel. Subsequently a settlement (where many Métis in British Columbia live today) and a lake were also named Quesnel.

Much of the trip along the Fraser proved turbulent and hazardous. A number of whirlpools and steep canyons required the portaging of canoes and supplies along dangerous narrow ledges.

The party finally reached the Pacific Ocean on the 2nd of July at the Native village of Musqueam at the mouth of the Fraser River. In calculating the latitude position of this location, Fraser realized that he had followed the wrong river and was not at the mouth of the Columbia River. The expedition immediately commenced its return voyage as a result of their diminishing supplies and hostile coastal Natives that were encountered.

Fraser concluded that the mighty Fraser River was unsuitable for a trade route because it was perilous and not navigable for long stretches. He and his voyageurs were of inestimable significance in building forts and extending the fur trade west of the mountains and in contributing to the future development of British Columbia.

The need for the NWC to find a viable route to the Pacific Ocean was spurred on by the fact that the American Corps of Discovery had crossed the Rocky Mountains and reached the Pacific Ocean in August 1805.

President Thomas Jefferson of the United States had commissioned this expedition after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase from France. He instructed them to study the land, flora, fauna and Aboriginal peoples they encountered. In addition they were directed to find a viable overland

route to the Pacific Ocean.

The Corps was led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Their overland route to the Pacific Ocean was via the Missouri and Columbia Rivers. Among Lewis and Clark's guides and interpreters were Touissant Charbonneau (a Métis or French-Canadian fur trader whose mother is reputed to have been a Sioux Indian) and his teen-age wife, the legendary Sacagawea (a full-blooded Shoshone Indian).

Throughout the expedition Sacagawea carried her new-born mixed-blood baby, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau strapped to her back on a cradle-board. The Corps nicknamed her Métis baby Pomp.

There were at least three other Métis men on the Lewis and Clark expedition – Georges Drouillard, Pierre Cruzatte and François La Biche. Not far from present-day Astoria, Oregon the Corps built a fort which they named after the local Clatsop Indian tribe, and wintered there.

To further its own quest for an overland route to the Pacific Ocean, the NWC commissioned David Thompson to further explore avenues to reach that objective.

David Thompson first started work in the fur trade at the age of 14 as an indentured servant of the HBC in 1784. Because his keen interest in surveying and mapmaking was not being encouraged by the HBC, he signed on with the NWC in 1797.

David Thompson became an explorer, surveyor and partner of the NWC who built many of their forts west of the mountains. He not only explored but charted and mapped the lands through which he traveled. The Natives referred to him as "the man who looks at stars". His cartography was so accurate that some of his maps are still in use today.

The year prior to his expedition of 1807, Thompson sent a crew to clear a trail though the mountains at what was to become known as Howse Pass. He placed the Métis Jaco Finlay in charge of this work. Although in this case

Thompson was not impressed with the clearing that was done, he later wrote in his *Narrative* that Jaco was "a fine half breed."

In 1807, starting from Rocky Mountain House in present day Alberta, Thompson crossed the Continental Divide with his voyageur crew. He also brought along his Métis country wife Charlotte Small and their three young Métis children. The children (two born in the land that was to become Alberta and the other in Manitoba) were Fanny, Samuel and Emma whose ages were six, three and one respectively.

After Thompson, his crew and family reached the Columbia River in 1807, his men built Kootenae House at the north end of Lake Windermere. This was the first fur-trading post in the south-eastern area of British Columbia. It became Thompson's base of operations for the next three years.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada has placed a cairn there, and erected a sign that reads "Kootenae House David Thompson Historic Site". Not far away, at the entrance to the town of Invermere, there is a larger-than-life statue of David Thompson and Charlotte Small. In this depiction they are dressed Métis style, with eyes upraised looking towards the mountains.

Thompson subsequently surveyed and mapped the entire Columbia River basin from its source in the Rocky Mountains to its mouth at the Pacific Ocean. Along his route he nailed to a tree a document claiming the territory including Mount Hood, The Dalles, and the Willamette River for the NWC and Great Britain.

He and his crew reached the Pacific Ocean on July 15, 1811. Some of the Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs with him were Michel Bordeaux, Michel Boullard, Joseph Coté, François Gregoire, and Pierre Pariel. His crew also consisted of several Indians including Charles and Ignace.

However on reaching their destination they found that a fur-trading post had already been established by the Pacific Fur Company (PFC) that was owned by the American John

Jacob Astor. Fort Astoria was under the command of Duncan McDougall and David Stuart, two former employees of the NWC.

Fort Astoria had previously been constructed by Astor's men who had arrived there by ship only a few weeks earlier. They arrived on the *Tonquin* after sailing around Cape Horn.

Nevertheless the arrival of David Thompson and his crew was the climax of his career as an explorer and geographer. He had accomplished what others before him had failed to do. He and his crew had discovered an overland route to the Pacific Ocean via the Columbia River.

During the time that Thompson was west of the mountains, he and his voyageurs built a chain of fur trading posts for the NWC in many of the areas that they explored and he surveyed.

In addition to Kootenae House (also known as Kootenay or Kootenai) he was responsible for the building of Spokane House in 1810, a fort near present day Spokane. There is a cairn at this site stating in part "First permanent white settlement in present State of Washington". Thompson and his men also constructed a post near Pend d' Oreille Lake in Idaho as well as at other locations.

Many of the forts that Thompson built were in the area that at that time the Americans called the Oregon Country (also sometime referred to as the Oregon Territory). It encompassed the lands west of the mountains to the Pacific Ocean stretching from the northern boundary of modern-day California to just south of present-day Alaska. This area today consists of Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and parts of Idaho and Montana. California was then Spanish Territory, while Alaska belonged to Russia.

The War of 1812 was fought between Great Britain and the United States over westward expansion in North America and the rights of ships on the seas. As the result of this war the PFC's forts and merchandise in the Pacific Northwest were sold in 1813 to the NWC. Fort Astoria was then renamed Fort George by the NWC.

Not long after the sale of Fort Astoria to the NWC, Duncan McDougall joined the NWC where he became a partner. Astor was outraged at losing his fort and was determined to take revenge on the NWC. After the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, the dispute over the Oregon Country was temporarily settled under the Convention of 1818. Under a ten-year treaty of joint occupation of the Oregon Country entered into in 1818 by the United States and Great Britain, members of each of these nations were free to trade there.

With respect to British subjects the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was granted a trade monopoly in that land by Great Britain. No such monopoly was granted by the American government to any United States group, leaving individual American traders free to compete against the HBC monopoly.

However, the Oregon Country was disputed territory and there was no effective European or American control of this area. This meant that the Oregon Country was not under the sovereignty of any nation.

In addition to resident fur traders, there were of course many Native tribes (some unfriendly) who had inhabited it from time immemorial. The term "Oregon" itself is derived from the Amerindian word "ouragan", which means a birchbark dish and was the name that the Natives used for the Columbia River.

In 1821 the NWC and the HBC merged under the continuing name of the Hudson's Bay Company. This brought the extensive interests and posts which the NWC had cultivated in the Oregon Country and elsewhere under the HBC umbrella. The northern part of the NWC legacy west of the Rocky Mountains was called New Caledonia and the southern part was called the Columbia Department by the HBC.

As noted Mackenzie, Fraser, Thompson and their Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs played a fundamental role in the inception of the fur trade, and its development, by the NWC west of the mountains and on the Pacific Slope.

There had been an earlier limited fur trade with West

Coast Natives, primarily in sea otters. This developed as a result of explorations in the latter part of the 18th century along the Pacific Coast by Russia, Spain, Britain and the United States.

Among the many notable adventurers who engaged in these explorations and this trade were James Cook, George Vancouver, Bodega Y Quadra, Alessandro Malaspina, Dionisio Galiano, Cayetano Valdes, Vitus Bering, John Meares, John Grey and Charles Barkley. Today in British Columbia there are many place names that honor these early maritime visitors to the Pacific Northwest.

Nootka on the west coast of Vancouver Island became a principal port of call to obtain sea otters in exchange for European and American goods. Occasionally the ships' crews, who did not trap the animals themselves, put up buildings on land.

In 1789 and 1790 the Spanish attempted to establish their presence at Nootka by building Fort San Miguel at Friendly Cove. Due to continuing territorial conflicts with Great Britain this Fort was abandoned in 1795 pursuant to the 1794 Nootka Convention.

The American fur trader Robert Gray erected Fort Defiance in 1791 on Meares Island in Clayoquot Sound (on the western side of Vancouver Island). The following year this Fort was destroyed by the Natives due to his hostility towards them.

Only a few decades later the sea otters were almost exterminated and this trade came to an end. This short-lived maritime trade did not result in any lasting or permanent settlements along the British Columbia Coast.

After trading with the Natives, the sailors would eventually go back to their ships, often sell furs in the Orient, and in due course return to their home country. In his book *British Columbia – the Making of a Province*, F. W. Howay wrote:

> The maritime fur trade …. failed either to make a settlement and leave a permanent mark of civilization, or to exert any influence upon subsequent development.

Unlike the early European coastal explorations, and the overland explorations and fur-trading activities of the voyageurs, this early maritime fur trade had little effect on British Columbia's future.

The Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs were an essential element in the establishment of the fur trade that built the forts around which settlements developed. They wintered and settled west of the mountains and entered into trade relationships with the Natives and conjugal relations with the Aboriginal women from which fur trade families and Métis children evolved.

The NWC and the HBC continued to rely heavily on Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs, traders, interpreters, engagés (employees), free traders and Kanakas (Hawaiians from the Sandwich Islands) to carry on their fur-trading activities west of the Continental Divide and in the Pacific Northwest. For this purpose, as exemplified by David Thompson, they established fur trading posts that they called forts or houses.

Communities soon developed around many of these posts, consisting of the families of the fur traders. Some of these sites evolved into permanent settlements that exist today throughout various areas of British Columbia and south of the 49th parallel from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific shores.

The establishment of this fur trade and the forts occurred in the period before the United States became militant in claiming ownership of the entire Oregon Country. In the 1840s there was an American movement for territorial expansion labeled "Manifest Destiny". This cause was inflamed by British interference in a number of areas such as Texas and California.

In relation to the Oregon Country, Manifest Destiny meant expansion to the Pacific Ocean. In his inaugural address in 1845, President James Polk declared American title to the disputed Oregon Territory to be "clear and unquestionable". An American slogan at the time was "Fifty-four/Forty or Fight". Since that degree of latitude

was the southern border of Alaska, this belligerent claim would have included most of what is now British Columbia.

This may have cowed Great Britain into submission. Its foreign secretary Lord Aberdeen set out to convince (or manipulate) by the use of propaganda the then adverse British public opinion into accepting the preconceived decision of the British government. This decision was to cede to the Americans that part of the disputed territory which today is Oregon, Washington and the lands east of these States to the Rocky Mountains.

Lord Aberdeen succeeded in his propaganda. This was so not withstanding that an earlier British foreign secretary George Canning had presented a convincing argument for resisting American claims to the area due to Britain's more authoritative claim to this land under international law. Canning also stated that the issue raised a question of British national honor.

An 1846 article from *The Topic* (London) that was reprinted in the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* issue of March/Dec. 1935 advocated the British side of the Oregon dispute. This article stated that under doctrines of international law, territorial or sovereign rights could only be acquired by discovery and settlement, conquest or cession. The analysis in the article is convincing and indisputably established the much stronger claims of Britain over that of the Americans to the disputed lands in the Oregon Country.

In effect, Great Britain gave away its superior right to this enormous area of land which it ceded to the United States. Great Britain did so in return for the northern boundary of the United States being set at the 49th parallel. This happened pursuant to the *Oregon Treaty* of 1846.

Many of the men who had worked for the HBC in the Oregon Country were upset with Great Britain for not driving a harder bargain with the Americans. Chief Factor James Douglas of Fort Vancouver, later Father of British Columbia, referred to it as "this monstrous treaty".

Thankfully for Canadians today, the British did not also relinquish their rights to that part of the Oregon Country now encompassing most of British Columbia. This was probably due to the fact that the British and the HBC needed a shipping port on the Pacific Ocean to service the lucrative Asian market.

As John S. Galbraith indicated in his book *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor 1821-69*, British Columbia did not become part of the United States or Russia:

> …. because of the work of a small number of fur traders and of the capitalists they represented.

By their activities and presence west of the mountains, the Métis and French Canadian voyageurs and engagés, led by their leaders of primarily Scottish descent, played a critical role in British Columbia and Canadian history. They contributed in no small measure to ensuring that the current lands of British Columbia and its Pacific coastline were later to become an integral part of Canada, and not be assimilated by the United States.

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Chapter IV

FUR-TRADING FORTS AND POSTS

The very earliest fur trading establishments in what was to become British Columbia were two coastal forts that only survived for a short period of time. **Fort San Miguel** was built at Nootka Sound in 1789 by the Spanish in response to the visit to that area by James Cook in 1778.

Due to the controversy over ownership of this territory the English sent Captain George Vancouver and the Spanish sent Captain Bodega y Quadra to Nootka in 1792 to negotiate the conflict. Under the terms of the Nootka Convention of January, 1794, the Spanish and English agreed to discontinue having establishments in the area and the Spanish abandoned their fort in 1795.

In the interim an American fur trader Robert Gray established **Fort Defiance** in 1791 in Clayoquot Sound on the western side of Vancouver Island. Due to mismanagement of relations with the Natives in the area, the Fort was burned by them after Gray and his men had left the fort in 1792.

In order to extend its exploration and fur trading operations in the 1790s the North West Company (NWC) inaugurated the first permanent fur trading establishments in what was to become British Columbia. Over the next number of years they opened a network of posts west of the Rocky Mountains.

After arriving by sea at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1811, the Pacific Fur Company (PFC) established Fort Astoria nearby and proceeded to build several forts. The PFC was largely staffed by former NWC employees including Duncan McDougall and Alexander Ross.

In 1813 all of the PFC forts were sold to the NWC. Great Britain and the United States agreed to a temporary joint occupancy of the Oregon Territory in 1818. The NWC carried on the management of the former PFC forts.

At the time of the merger of the NWC with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1821, the HBC did not own one establishment west of the Rocky Mountains. All of the

forts in the New Caledonia and Columbia Districts that became part of the merger were owned by the NWC. Consequently this amalgamation allowed the HBC to take over control of the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest.

The pivotal center around which the fur trade operated was the fort, house, or post that the fur trading companies established for that area. The main means of transportation was by bateau or canoe along the waterways of the Pacific Slope that provided a series of highways to various locations. Consequently the posts were always strategically located on the banks of a river, lake or stream.

Besides being used as trading houses and depots, the forts provided living quarters for the staff of the company and their families. In some cases they also functioned as collection and distribution centers for other posts in the district. It was in the area surrounding these forts and posts that settlements grew and developed into communities.

The working language of the forts west of the Rocky Mountains was French since this was the language of most of the traders. On the other hand the mother tongue of most of the bourgeois was English since they were mostly Scottish. Many of the bourgeois brought with them from the Prairies their Métis country wives who were usually fluent in both Michif and French. Michif was the language of the fur trade in dealing with the Natives east of the Rocky Mountains.

West of the Rocky Mountains Chinook Jargon was developed as the trade patois with the Natives. Both Chinook Jargon and Michif had as their root language French. With the Michif language, French was combined with Cree or Ojibwa and a few English words. Chinook Jargon combined the Native Chinook language with French and also added a few English words.

Although the authors of this book have not studied these two languages they did note one word that was common to both Michif and Chinook Jargon. The word was “hooch”.

Together with their children, the country wives and the Métis who worked at the forts also brought with them their unique Métis culture and heritage that had been part of their lives east of the Rocky Mountains. This included their languages, sash, fiddling, jigging, moccasins, snowshoes, food, and festive celebrations.

They followed the same work patterns for feasts and holidays and lived in a similar fashion to that which they had experienced at fur trading establishments east of the Rocky Mountains. The birth of a baby, or a country marriage, or a visit from other fur traders or guests were each an occasion to celebrate.

Although Christmas was a holiday, the major festivities for this season of the year occurred on New Year's Day as was the custom in the Métis settlement of Red River. Fur company employees at the posts were given the day off work on November 1st in observance of All Saints Day.

The following provides a brief description of various fur-trading posts, houses and forts that resulted from the expansion of the fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains. These establishments were located either in what would become British Columbia or had an impact on the exploration and development of that territory.

Where possible the names of the bourgeois who established these forts are given. With these explorers and company officers were the Métis from the Great Plains and the voyageurs. The Métis and French Canadian servants of the fur trade physically built the buildings and were active in the day to day operations of these forts.

- **Rocky Mountain Fort** (sometimes mistakenly referred to as **Rocky Mountain House**) is the oldest non-Native establishment on the British Columbia Mainland. It was founded by Alexander Mackenzie for the NWC in 1794 and was located on the Peace River upstream from Moberly River and southwest of present day Fort St. John.

In *Thompson's Highway*, John Stuart is quoted as writing in 1823 that:

> …. we encamped on the site of the Old Beaver [Moberly]

> River, first established in 1794, and where ten years afterwards I wintered.

Although this Fort was initially closed in 1805, over the years it was relocated and renamed a number of times.

Significant archeological findings have been located in this region of British Columbia. The oldest find is the Charlie Lake Cave that dates back 10,500 years. It is located seven kilometers north of present day Fort St. John. A further archeological dig located 100 kilometers north of Charlie Lake at the Pink Mountain has discovered a settlement that was inhabited over 3,000 years ago.

- **Fort of the Forks** was established as a fur trading post by the NWC in 1803. Located in the Mackenzie River Basin on the east side of the Rocky Mountains in what is now the Northwest Territories, it was closed in 1812.

Nearby that site the HBC constructed a post in 1822 and named it **Fort Simpson** after George Simpson who was then in charge of the Northern District of the HBC. It remained a Company town until 1910. The community that developed there gained the status of Village in 1973.

- **Rocky Mountain Portage Fort** was established by Simon Fraser of the NWC in 1805. It was located on the north bank of the Peace River at the foot of the Rocky Mountain Canyon. This establishment was also known as **Fort Hudson's Hope** as well as **Black River Post**. In 1825 the HBC closed the Fort in retaliation for a massacre of HBC employees at Fort St. John in 1823.

In 1875 the HBC rebuilt the fort and named it **New Hudson's Hope** at a location some miles upstream from the original Fort. It was later relocated to the site of the present day town of Hudson's Hope in 1880.

- **Trout Lake Fort** was built in 1805 by James McDougall of the NWC for the Simon Fraser expedition. McDougall preceded Simon Fraser as this expedition traveled west of the Rocky Mountains. McDougall was the father-in-law of Jean Baptiste Boucher (Waccan) who is profiled in another chapter of this book.

Trout Lake Fort was located at McLeod Lake and was 32 kilometers northeast of present day Carp Lake Provincial Park. It was the first permanent non-Native settlement west of the Rocky Mountains in the lands that were to become British Columbia. The NWC renamed it **Fort McLeod** in honor of Archibald Norman McLeod.

• **Fort d'Epinette** was erected by the NWC in 1806 on the north side of the Peace River downstream from the junction of the Pine River (now called the Beatton River) as a replacement for Rocky Mountain Fort. As competition to the NWC, the HBC built **Fort de Pinette** (also called **Fort George**) in 1820. Under the supervision of James Murray Yale, it was built on the south bank of the Peace River.

After the merger of the NWC with the HBC in 1821, the HBC post was closed in favor of the NWC Fort and was renamed **Fort St. John**. It was closed in 1823.

In 1860 another **Fort St. John** was built by the HBC on the south side of the Peace River. After its closure, a new establishment was built across the river from it and named **Fort St. John** in 1872 and lasted until 1925. A new **Fort St. John** was built on the Fish Creek on the new trail to Fort Nelson. It was located northwest of the present-day city of Fort St. John. This Fort was closed in 1975.

• **Fort Nelson** was established by George Keith for the NWC in 1805 and was named after the British naval hero Admiral Horatio Nelson. It was located on the Nelson River near that river's formation from the Muskwa, Prophet and Sikanni Chief Rivers. Although the NWC abandoned it in 1814, it was re-opened in 1865 by the HBC on the opposite side of the river from the present site of the town of Fort Nelson.

• **Fort Clatsop** was built in 1805 by the American Corps of Discovery under the leadership of Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark as a post for the winter of 1805-06. It was located on the south side of the Columbia River near its mouth on the Pacific Ocean.

As previously noted among the members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition were a number of Métis who came

from the Dakota country and acted as guides and members of its crew. The guides included Touissant Charbonneau, his wife Sacagawea and their Métis son Jean Baptiste Charbonneau (Pomp).

• **Fort St. James** (originally called **Stuart's Lake Fort**) was built in 1806 by the NWC on the shores of Carrier Lake (now known as Stuart Lake). The discovery of this Lake was made by James McDougall while he was an assistant to Simon Fraser during the winter of 1805-06. It was at this location that Simon Fraser built the Fort and named the entire area **New Caledonia**.

James Douglas was serving at this Fort in 1828 when his young Métis bride Amelia with the help of Nancy McDougall Boucher (Métis country wife of Waccan and daughter of James McDougall) saved his life during the Kwah incident. Amelia, who is profiled in another chapter of this book, was the daughter of NWC Chief Factor William Connolly and the wife of James Douglas.

This Fort became the center for the overland transportation route for the fur trade in New Caledonia. It was the depot for receiving furs from the outposts in the surrounding area for shipment to the east and as a distribution centre for goods arriving from Great Britain and eastern Canada. Today memories of the fur trade live on in the restored Fort that has been designated as a National Historic Site.

• **Fraser Lake Post** was established by Simon Fraser of the NWC in 1806. It was located on Fraser Lake. This Lake was named after Simon Fraser by John Stuart. Over the next few years the Fort was relocated a number of times. It became more prominent in the fur trade during the 1820s after which it was called **Fort Fraser**. Over the years it was closed and reopened a number of times prior to its final abandonment by the HBC in 1914.

• **Fort George** was established in 1807 at the junction of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers under the supervision of Simon Fraser. This area had previously been explored by Alexander Mackenzie and James McDougall a dozen years

earlier.

Placer miners came here in 1861 to pan for gold on the nearby rivers. Named after King George III, this Fort was the origin of the present day vibrant city of Prince George that has been called "BC's northern capital".

• **Fort Raymond** was built in 1807 at the confluence of the Bighorn & Yellowstone Rivers by Manuel Lisa of the Lisa, Mennard and Morrison Fur Company. In 1809 the company that Lisa represented evolved into the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company. It was located in what is now Montana and was an early American Fort.

• **Kootenae House** (also known as **Kootenay** or **Kootenai**) was built by David Thompson, Finan McDonald and eight voyageurs of the NWC in 1807. Thompson's Métis wife Charlotte Small and their children were with this expedition and spent the winter of 1807-08 at this location. Although it ceased operations in 1812, today there is a plaque at the site that commemorates this post.

The Fort was located on the north side of Lake Windermere on the outskirts of the present day town of Invermere. Today there is a statue erected by the Windermere Historical Society commemorating David Thompson and his Métis wife Charlotte Small at the entrance to the town.

• **Kullyspell House** (spelled **Kalispell** by Thompson) was a trading post established in 1809 under the supervision of David Thompson of the NWC. Located at the north end of Lake Pend Oreille, it was not far from the present day town of Sandpoint, Idaho. It was the earliest fur trade post in the American Pacific Northwest. It was only used for a few years.

• **Spokane House** was built in 1810 by Finan McDonald and the Métis fur trader "Jaco" Finlay of the NWC on instructions they received from David Thompson. This was the first non-Native settlement in what would later become the State of Washington.

This Fort was located on the Little Spokane River west

of the present day city of Spokane. For the next number of years Spokane House became the center of the fur trade in the area until it was closed by the HBC in 1824. Jaco Finlay, who had left the NWC and was acting as a free-trader, then moved on to this site. He lived there with his family until his death in 1825.

• **Salish House** (also known as **Saleesh House**) was another post established by David Thompson for the NWC. It was built in 1810 and located at what is now Thompson Falls, Montana. It was relocated to Plains, Montana and called **Flathead House** after the merger of the NWC with the HBC in 1821. The HBC continued to operate it as a post until its closure in 1872.

• **Henry's House** was a post established in the Athabasca Valley in 1811 by William Henry of the NWC as a base camp for travel through the Athabasca Pass and used until 1814. This Pass is located north of Howse Pass and south of the Yellowhead Pass. William Henry arrived there with the expedition of David Thompson that was guided by an Iroquois named Thomas. Although the exact location of this House is not known, it would most likely have been near present day Jasper, Alberta.

• **Fort Astoria** was built by employees of the PFC who arrived there by sea in 1811. A number of the staff of the PFC had previously been employed by the NWC. It was named after John Jacob Astor who founded the PFC and it was located on the south side of the mouth of the Columbia River in what is now the State of Oregon

As a consequence of the war of 1812 between the English and the Americans, this Fort and the other PFC forts, were sold to the NWC. Under that Company's ownership it was renamed Fort George.

At the end of the war the Treaty of Ghent established the Anglo-American Convention that was created to determine the fate of the boundary dispute between these two countries. The dispute was settled under the Joint Occupation Agreement of 1818 on a ten year renewable basis. It included a provision that Fort George/Astoria was

to be returned to American interests upon demand.

This Joint Occupation continued until the *Oregon Treaty* of 1846 determined that the boundary between the two countries was the 49th parallel. The city and port of Astoria, Oregon is today located at the site of this Fort.

• **Fort Okanogan** (American spelling) was established in 1811 by David Stuart and Alexander Ross of the PFC. It was located on the Okanogan River a mile upstream from the Columbia River in what is now the state of Washington. It was one of the forts purchased from the PFC by the NWC in 1813. Joseph McGillivray (a partner of the NWC) was put in charge of the post.

After acquiring **Fort Okanagan** (Canadian spelling), the NWC collected its furs from southern New Caledonia and took them by horse brigade through the Okanagan Valley to Fort Okanagan. From there the furs were transported by bateaux down the Columbia River.

In the fall, goods and supplies were brought upstream to this Fort for distribution to posts in the southern parts of New Caledonia. In 1816 the original buildings were replaced by the NWC and in 1823 it was moved to a new location by the HBC. It ceased operations shortly after the fur brigade reached Fort Okanagan in 1847.

• **Fort Champoeg** (**Fort Champooick)** was originally called **Cantonment du Sable** and later called **Willamette Post.** It was built in 1811 by clerks of the PFC and located at Willamette Falls in what is now the State of Oregon. The area near this depot was later called French Prairie. After the War of 1812 it was purchased by the NWC and by 1814 they had 32 employees at this Post.

During the hunting brigade of 1818 to the source of the Willamette River, the party encountered trouble with the local Indians. The brigade was under the leadership of the Métis Thomas McKay (a former PFC employee and son of a Métis mother, Marguerite Wadin McKay McLoughlin) of the NWC. McKay's "mostly Iroquois (or mixed race) hunters" killed 14 Indians in a confrontation on the Upper Umpqua River.

A number of Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs of the brigade remained in the area as free traders. Among them were Louis LaBonte, Joseph Gervais, Etienne Lucier, Louis Kanota and Louis Pichetee dit DuPre. They became the nucleus that developed into the community of Champoeg that consisted of mostly Métis retirees and ex-employees of the NWC and (after the 1821 merger) the HBC. The citizens of Champoeg and French Prairie were to play a significant role in the formation of the Provisional Government in the Oregon Country.

- **Fort Kamloops** (**Fort Shewaps**) was established as the 1811-12 winter location for David Stuart, Alexander Ross, two French Canadians, and a Native employee of the PFC. A short time later, Joseph Laroque of the NWC built a trading post at a location north east of the river junction.

This post built by Laroque was called **Fort Thompson** and was also known as **Fort Cumcloops** (Cume-loops). After the purchase of the PFC assets by the NWC in 1812, the PFC Fort Shewaps and the NWC Fort Thompson were merged under the name of **Fort Kamloops**.

After the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821, it was re-named **Thompson River Post** but still referred to as Fort Kamloops. In 1826 Archibald McDonald was placed in charge of this post and brought with him his Métis bride Jane Klyne who is featured in another chapter of this book.

The Fort was rebuilt in 1842 on the west bank of the North Thompson when John Tod was placed in charge of Fort Kamloops. A Métis Joseph William McKay (featured in another chapter of this book) was placed in charge of this Fort from 1860 to 1866. This early fur-trading post has evolved into the present day city of Kamloops.

- **Fort Spokane** (also called **Fort Spokan**) was built by the PFC in 1812 near the NWC trading post of Spokane House. The PFC had 32 employees at Fort Spokane. After the sale of the PFC forts to the NWC, the NWC moved their operations to the site of the larger Fort Spokane and renamed it Spokane House. After the merger of the NWC and the HBC in 1821, the name was changed back to Fort

Spokane. It was closed in the spring of 1826.

• **Fort Ross** was a Russian establishment built in 1812 at Bodega Bay in California. It was known as Ross Settlement and was used to grow food for the Russian fur trading posts in what is now Alaska. In 1841 it was sold to John Sutter of Sutter's Fort in the Sacramento Valley.

• **Wallace House**, another PFC trading post, was built during the winter of 1812-13 by William Wallace and John C. Helsey. It was erected at the location of the present day city of Salem, Oregon. This outpost was also purchased by the NWC in 1813 and later was run as an HBC establishment after the merger of the NWC and HBC.

• **William Henry Fort** also known as **Henry House** was built by the NWC in 1813. It was located at the present day site of Newberg, Oregon.

• **Rocky Mountain House** was built on the Brûle River in 1817 as a depot for the NWC. After the arrival of Jasper Hawes in 1817, it was renamed **Jasper House** in order to distinguish it from the NWC's Rocky Mountain House on the Saskatchewan River in present day Alberta.

After the merger of the NWC with the HBC, this Fort was relocated in 1829 further up the Athabasca River north of Jasper Lake. It was utilized as a depot for the HBC overland fur brigades traveling by the Athabasca Pass to and from the Pacific. The HBC officially closed it in 1884.

• **Fort Nez Perce** also called **Fort Walla Walla** was located on the Columbia River (between the Walla Walla and Snake Rivers). It was established in 1818 by the NWC under the supervision of Donald Mackenzie. By the time of the NWC and HBC merger in 1821, this Fort had developed into a supply depot for fur hunting expeditions.

Fort personnel were involved in several confrontations with the Indians in the area. It was rebuilt and moved a number of times before it was destroyed by fire. The HBC vacated the Fort in the 1850s. The site of the original Fort Walla Walla is now underwater due to flooding by the Columbia River.

• **Fort Alexandria** was the last post built by the NWC prior to the merger of the NWC with the HBC. It was built in 1821 on the Fraser River approximately 28 miles downriver from the present day community of Quesnel. Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden had the first flour mill in British Columbia erected at this location.

John Tod served as Chief Trader at this post from 1839 to 1842. His country wife was Sophia Lolo, the Métis daughter of Jean-Baptiste Lolo.

As a result of the Cariboo Gold Rush in the late 1850s, Fort Alexandria became a huge tent city for the thousands of miners heading to the Cariboo. This activity resulted in the building of the Cariboo Wagon Road in the 1860s.

• **Fort Babine** also called **Fort Kilmaurs** was built on Babine Lake under the direction of William Brown of the HBC in 1822. This location had previously been visited in 1812 by Daniel Williams Harmon and James McDougall of the NWC during an expedition for food for Fort St. James and Fort McLeod.

In 1823, when the HBC realized that furs from the Skeena River were being directed to the coastal trade, it decided to move this operation westward. Today there is a Native reserve located at the top of Babine Lake approximately 100 km north of the town of Smithers.

• **Fort Vancouver** was established by the HBC in 1824 on the north side of the Columbia River near its junction with the Willamette River. Governor Simpson instructed Dr. John McLoughlin (a former employee of the NWC) to build this Fort and relocate the operations of the HBC from Fort George/Astoria to this new location.

Fort Vancouver became the official headquarters for all operations west of the Rocky Mountains. As the only Chief Factor on the Pacific Slope, Dr. McLoughlin became the superintendent of the HBC's Columbia operations.

It was moved from its original location closer to the Columbia River in 1829 due to its role in the HBC coastal fur trade operations and its expanded role in international

shipping. It was also the centre for freighting supplies to and furs from the HBC establishments in the southern part of the New Caledonia and Columbia Districts.

Other facilities developed by the HBC at this Fort were a saw mill, grist mill and a blacksmith shop. A large farming and ranching operation consisting of 3,000 acres of land was established outside the walls of the Fort.

Due to conflicting policy views, friction developed between McLoughlin and Simpson. After the 1842 murder of Dr. McLoughlin's son John, this animosity increased. The Council of the Northern Department of the HBC set up a triumvirate board of management to run the affairs of the Columbia District in June 1845. The three appointees were McLoughlin, Peter Skene Ogden and James Douglas. All of these prominent appointees were former NWC men and all had Aboriginal wives.

In 1846 McLoughlin left the service of the HBC and moved to Oregon City with his Métis wife Marguerite Wadin McKay. After McLoughlin's departure, the HBC named John Work to replace McLoughlin on the three-man management committee. Work's Métis country wife Josette Legacé is profiled in another chapter of this book.

With the settlement of the boundary dispute by the *Oregon Treaty* of 1846 the site of Fort Vancouver became part of the United States. Fort Vancouver was dismantled and moved and the HBC permanently left the site in 1860. A large community had developed around the Fort and it continued to grow into the present day city of Vancouver, Washington.

Today there is a reconstructed Fort Vancouver to commemorate the early fur trading days in the Columbia District. It has been designated as a United States National Historic Site.

- **Fort Colvile** was built by the HBC in 1825 at Kettle Falls to replace Fort Spokane. The original exploration of this area by non-Natives was made by David Thompson and his NWC crew in 1811. This Fort was named after Andrew Colvile, a London governor of the HBC.

This Fort became the center for fur trade in the area and was second only to Fort Vancouver as the most important establishment in the Columbia District. It had a large farm to supply produce to the posts and to implement the self-sufficiency policy of the HBC. It also played a key role in the Snake Country Expeditions.

John Work moved to Fort Colvile with his bride Josette Legacé in 1825. He replaced Peter Skene Ogden. From 1835 to 1844 Archibald McDonald was manager of this Fort.

After Fort Colvile was abandoned in 1871 it was renamed the Mission of St. Paul. Today there is a town called Colville a few miles east of the Fort's Kettle Falls location. Although the farmland of this Fort is now underwater, there are a number of interpretive plaques commemorating its fur trading days at the Mission.

• **Fort Langley** was constructed by the HBC on the Fraser River in 1827 on instructions from Governor George Simpson. This Fort and the farming operations assigned to it by the HBC were rebuilt and relocated over the years due to flooding, deterioration and a fire in 1840.

Fort Langley was located near the fishing grounds of the Cowichan and Nanaimo communities. Each year these Natives harvested their food supplies for the winter months from the Fraser River before returning to their villages on Vancouver Island.

The original intention was that this Fort would be a central depot for the HBC establishments further upstream from its location. Soon after the folly of this plan became apparent when Governor Simpson visited Fort Langley and personally experienced the hazards in transcending the perilous rapids of the Fraser River.

Archibald McDonald was with Simpson on this journey and shortly thereafter was made a Chief Trader and placed in charge of Fort Langley. After his new posting in 1828, McDonald, his Métis country wife Jane Klyne and their children moved from Thompson's River to Fort Langley.

Although not overly successful as a fur trade post, it developed into an agriculture and fish processing center. Soon it was shipping goods and produce to the Pacific Northwest as well as internationally. Its importance as a supply depot returned during the gold rush of the 1850s.

The most significant moment in the history of Fort Langley occurred on November 19, 1858. On that date in the "Big House" of Fort Langley, Governor James Douglas read the proclamation making New Caledonia into the Colony of British Columbia.

Although the HBC closed the Fort in 1886 a town grew up nearby and was named Fort Langley. A replica of the Fort has been built around one of the original buildings, and this site has been designated as a National Historic Site of Canada.

The HBC's farm was some distance from the Fort on the south side of what is now the Trans-Canada Highway. Over the years farming communities grew up around this location. Today the ever-growing city of Langley has expanded into much of this farmland.

- **Fort Connolly** was built by James Douglas of the HBC in 1826. It was named after Chief Factor William Connolly whose Métis daughter Amelia became the country wife of James Douglas in 1828.

This Fort was located on the north end of Bear Lake at the foot of the Peak Mountains. It was closed in 1900. Today the settlement of Bear Lake, in the Cassiar Land District, is located near the site of this post.

- **Fort Chilcotin** was built by the HBC at the junction of the Chilcotin and Chilco Rivers in 1829. It operated as a fur trading post on the Cariboo Trail until 1844 when it was moved north to **Fort Kluskus**.

The Chilcotin Plateau Region of the Fraser River became famous during the gold rush that started in 1858 and reached its peak in 1865. Today the major communities in this area are Quesnel, Williams Lake, and 100 Mile House.

- **Fort Halkett** was established by the HBC in 1829

although fur trading had been carried on in this area since the early 1800s. This Fort was located on the Liard River near the Fort Nelson River. In 1832 it was moved to the junction of the Liard and Smith Rivers. It was operational until 1875.

• **Port Simpson** also called **Fort Nass** was a short lived post erected by the HBC at the mouth of the Nass River in 1830. It was named after Capt. Amelius Simpson of the HBC's Marine Department. In 1834 the HBC moved the location of this post to McLoughlin's Bay and renamed it **Fort Simpson**.

As a Chief Trader from 1834 to 1846 John Work (Josette Legacé's husband) was in charge of the coastal trade and stationed at Fort Nass. Today it is the home of Nine Tribes from the Skeena River who have made it an indigenous community. The city of Prince Rupert is located nearby this village.

• **Fort Wrangell** was built by the Russian American Co. on Wrangell Island circa 1830. As a result of a trade agreement between Russia and the HBC that was negotiated by James Douglas, the HBC rented this post from the Russians and renamed it **Fort Stikine.** In 1840 William Glen Rae of the HBC was sent by Dr. John McLoughlin (his father-in-law) to manage the post. It ceased operations in 1849.

• **Fort McLoughlin** was established in 1833 by Chief Trader James McMillan of the HBC on Campbell Island in Milbanke Sound (Millbank Sound), British Columbia. This post was named after Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin.

When it was determined in 1842 that fur traders on board the steamship *Beaver* could handle most of the coastal fur trade, it was dismantled in 1843. This location developed into a fish processing center in the 1880s.

• **Fort Nisqually** located on Puget Sound in the disputed Oregon Country was built by Archibald McDonald of the HBC in 1833. Due to the dangerous sand bars at the mouth of the Columbia River, it became an important shipping alternative to Fort Vancouver.

Its importance as an agricultural center developed after the HBC formed a subsidiary that they named the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company (PSAC). It was to this area that the Red River Expedition (consisting of mostly Métis immigrants and discussed in another chapter of this book) was sent by the HBC in 1841 with a view to protecting their interests in the disputed Oregon Territory. **Cowlitz Farm**, a subsidiary agricultural center, was established by the HBC south of Fort Nisqually.

The end of the HBC rule over this area occurred when the border between the United States and Great Britain was determined as the 49th parallel in 1846. In 1869 a Joint Commission awarded the HBC and the PSAC $200,000 for the land south of the 49th parallel that it had lost to the United States due to this Agreement.

• **Honolulu Post** was established by the HBC in the Sandwich Islands (now called Hawaii) in 1834. Although its main purpose was to sell lumber from the Pacific Northwest and to purchase goods from the Hawaiian Islands, it was also used to recruit native Hawaiians (whom they called Kanakas) to work in the Pacific Northwest.

• **Port Essington** was established by the HBC at the mouth of the Skeena River in 1835. Although the HBC was headquartered at Port Simpson, Port Essington was used as a port by the HBC.

• **Fort Umpqua** was not established by the HBC until 1836 although Company fur trappers had visited the area as early as 1826. It was situated at the junction of Elk Creek and the Umpqua River near the present day town of Elkton, Oregon. This Fort became the center for trade in the area. It was staffed by "French-Canadians" who were mainly Métis. One of the Métis employees was William McBean. Although the original post burned down in 1851, the HBC kept it in operation until 1854.

• **Dease Lake Post** was built on Dease Lake by the HBC in 1838 and was abandoned in 1839. The Cassiar gold rush of 1872 resulted in the formation of a town named Dease Lake near the site of the original Fort. This Post was

named after the Métis Peter Warren Dease who was a Chief Factor for New Caledonia. His Métis brother, Chief Trader John Warren Dease, married the widowed Genevieve Beignet (author George Goulet's great great grandmother).

• **Fort Durham** also called **Fort Taku** was established by James Douglas of the HBC in 1840. It was located at the mouth of the Taku River and was closed in 1843.

• **Yerba Buena Post** was established in 1841 by William Glen Rae of the HBC under the direction of his father-in-law Dr. John McLoughlin. The community that grew up around this post developed into the City of San Francisco, California.

• **Fort Frances** was established by the HBC in 1842 on Frances Lake in the Yukon Territory. Although it was closed in 1851 after being looted by Natives, it was reopened for a short time in 1880.

• **Fort McPherson** was built by John Bell of the HBC in 1845. It was located on the Peel River, Northwest Territories, in the Mackenzie watershed. Today the Community of Fort McPherson is situated a few miles from the site of the original Fort.

• **La Pierre House** was built by Alexander Murray of the HBC in 1846. It was located on the Bell River (previously called Rat River) in the Yukon River watershed.

• **Fort Victoria** was built in 1843 by the HBC under the supervision of Trader Charles Ross who was assisted by Roderick Finlayson (Josette Legacé's future son-in-law). The previous year James Douglas had chosen the location for this Fort at Camosun Inlet at the southern end of Vancouver Island.

The HBC had leased Vancouver Island from Great Britain for seven shillings a year. Under its lease the HBC was to develop settlement of the Island in addition to using it for trading and shipping purposes. Although settlement was not actively pursued by the HBC, a number of employees from this Fort and other posts did retire to this area after leaving their service with the HBC.

After the determination of the border between the United States and Great Britain, Vancouver Island was made a colony in 1849. The HBC moved its western headquarters from Fort Vancouver to Fort Victoria.

PSAC, the HBC's subsidiary company, was also moved to Vancouver Island. To handle its operations, PSAC established a sheep operation on San Juan Island, and four farms in the vicinity of Fort Victoria. Included in these was Craigflower Farm near Portage Inlet. Craigflower Manor and Craigflower School House (established in the 1850s) are today designated National Historic Sites by the Government of Canada.

The settlement that developed around Fort Victoria was for many years known as a Company town. In 1850 the main language spoken was French and, other than religious missionaries, there was only one non-Native, non-HBC family that had settled on Vancouver Island.

The fur trading area of New Caledonia was renamed British Columbia when it became a colony of Great Britain in 1858. The two colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were merged in 1866 under the name of British Columbia and Victoria became its capital in 1868. British Columbia became a province of Canada and Victoria reached its pinnacle as the capital of the Province of British Columbia in 1871.

- **Fort Pelly Banks** was erected by the HBC on the Pelly River in 1846. It was destroyed by an accidental fire in 1850 after which this location was abandoned.

- **Fort Yukon** also called **Fort Youcon** was erected by Alexander Murray of the HBC in 1847. It was at the junction of the Porcupine and Yukon Rivers in what is now Alaska.

When the Russians sold their Alaska territory to the United States in 1867, the HBC was forced to move this Fort. The HBC built **Rampart House** on the Porcupine River as a replacement for Fort Yukon. The new post was closed in 1894.

• **Fort Yale** was built on the Fraser River in 1847 by John Ovid Allard under instructions from Chief Trader James Murray Yale of the HBC.

This Fort became an important provisions depot during the gold rush of 1858. The community that had developed around the location of this Fort grew into the town of Yale, British Columbia.

• **Fort Gilliam** was built by the HBC in 1848. It was a short lived supply post for the portage at the Cascade Rapids of the Columbia River.

• **Fort Hope** was also built by John Ovid Allard and was located on the Fraser River. It was established in 1848 due to difficulties in accessing Fort Yale. Simon Fraser first reached this location in 1808 after his treacherous trip through the Fraser Canyon.

After the international border was settled in 1846, Fort Hope developed into an important location on the fur brigade route from Fort Kamloops to Fort Langley and then by ship to Fort Victoria. Later it became a supply depot during the 1858 gold rush. Although the HBC closed Fort Hope in 1892, the settlement developed into the town of Hope, British Columbia.

• **Fort Selkirk** was built by the HBC at the junction of the Pelly and the Yukon Rivers in 1848. The Natives burned this Fort in 1852.

• **Fort Rupert** was developed in 1849 as a post for mining. It was located at the northern end of Vancouver Island close to the present day town of Port Hardy. A few years later the mining operations were closed down as the vein of ore was found to be narrow and of poor quality.

• **Fort Nanaimo** was built by the Métis Joseph William McKay of the HBC in 1852 under the instructions of James Douglas. The prior year McKay had learned from "Coal Tyee" of the existence of coal at this site.

The location was at Wentuhuysen Inlet (now called Nanaimo Harbour) on the eastern coast of Vancouver Island. Coal mining at this location proved to be very

successful in fulfilling the needs of the HBC as well as for exporting purposes. Consequently Fort Nanaimo became a replacement for Fort Rupert.

The settlement that developed around this mining post has developed into the City of Nanaimo. The original Bastion is still standing today and bears a plaque honoring Joseph William McKay as founder of the City of Nanaimo. McKay is profiled in another chapter of this book.

- **Little Fort Post** was built in the North Thompson area by the HBC in 1851 but only lasted a short time due to the decrease in the trade of furs.

- **Fort Cascades**, **Fort Raines** and **Fort Lugenbeel** were built by the United States Army between 1855 and 1856 after Oregon had obtained Territorial Status. They were located along the Oregon Trail to act as protective garrisons for the fur traders. It was at the fort located at The Dalles on the Columbia River where James Sinclair was killed in 1856. Sinclair was the leader of Red River Expedition to the Oregon Territory that is featured in another chapter of this book.

After 1858 other establishments were built for the fur trade in British Columbia. These forts included Little Fir Post, Fort Berens, Fort Dallas, Fort Esquimalt, Little Fort, Fort Shepherd, Fort Similkameen, Fort Stager, and Fort Ware. Some of the other HBC posts established were Barkerville Post, Bella Coola Post, Glenora Post, Kitwanga Post, Lower Post, Osoyoos Post, Perry Creek Post, Quesnel Post, Stoney Creek Post, Telegraph Creek Post, Wild Creek Post and Westwold Post.

From their earliest beginnings the forts and houses also served as post offices, using the fur company's mail system. The outward mail bag carried items such as account books, reports, requisitions, journals, and other company notices and correspondence. The inward mail bag brought company orders and instructions, staffing appointments and transfers, and company rules and orders.

Although the corporate reporting system was standard among the fur trading companies, the HBC took it to new

heights. Their system required that all corporate documents had to be manually transcribed four times. One copy was sent to the district office, one copy was sent to the Canadian head office in Lachine, one copy was sent to the HBC's London office and the final copy was retained at the fort or house that produced the documents.

The transmission of information was not like our present day instant worldwide communications systems. The delivery of mail bags was slow and ponderous due to the lengthy distances and travel times required to reach their destinations.

The officers and servants at the forts and houses were allowed to send and receive their personal correspondence through the company's mail bag service. This afforded them the opportunity to keep in touch with their friends, families, and associates east of the Rocky Mountains.

Whether at one of the larger forts, or at a small outpost in the hinterland, the arrival of the mail bag was a joyous occasion at the Company establishments. Although it was considered by some as the gossip pipeline of the fur trade, it did provide a continuous flow of news and information from one side of the Rocky Mountains to the other.

The foregoing attests to the dynamic activities that occurred in the early days of the fur trade in these areas. The Métis were deeply involved in the fur trade and in the construction of the various forts that are noted herein.

Many of these posts were to evolve into permanent communities that still exist in British Columbia today. The Métis also contributed to the early stages of farming, fishing, mining, forestry and the other commercial enterprises that grew up around these forts.

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Chapter V

COUNTRY WIVES
Marriage *à la façon du pays*

"Country wives" played a momentous role in the fur trade as it progressed westward across the North American continent. This was particularly evident west of the Rocky Mountains where they made unique contributions to the development of British Columbia from fur trading outposts to colony and eventually to provincial status.

Country wives brought invaluable attributes and benefits to their relationships with the voyageurs, explorers, engagés, and fur traders in the Pacific Northwest. A country wife in Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest was an Aboriginal woman who became the spouse of a man of Métis or European ancestry who was connected with the fur trade. "Country marriages", as they were known, were a natural outcome of fur-trade society and human nature.

Since there were no white women in the west, it was natural for explorers and fur traders to enter into marital unions with Aboriginal women. The majority of the men were employees of one of the two great fur-trading companies – the North West Company (NWC) and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). The country marriages were made *à la façon du pays*, i.e. in accordance with the custom of the country and without benefit of the clergy of whom there were none in the Indian Country in the early days of the fur trade.

In a number of instances, a fur trader may have entered into a country marriage with the unexpressed intent of having a short-term liaison. However many of these marriages were made pursuant to solemn promises and gift giving and lasted for life.

The gift giving was undoubtedly adopted from Indian marriage customs. Alexander Ross in his book *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River* discusses Native rites of marriage. They included the exchange of gifts.

In the early days of European contact, country wives

were Indian women. The genesis of Métis had not then occurred since by definition an essential component of being Métis is having an Aboriginal ancestry. However, in due course the Métis daughters of these early country marriages became the wives of choice for the younger generation of fur traders.

In the early 1800s marriages of the fur traders with Métis women were hastened by the merger of the NWC with the XY Company in 1804. The normally permissive NWC perceived additional family dependents resulting from the merger as a financial burden. Consequently within two years of the amalgamation, it prohibited its employees from taking Indian wives to live within its forts or to be supported at its expense.

However according to *Documents Relating to the North West Company*, it made an exception in the case of:

> …. taking the daughter of a white man after the fashion of the country.

This policy was not always rigidly enforced by the NWC. The London Committee of the HBC enacted a similar policy, which was also frequently ignored.

Without Aboriginal wives there would have been no genesis of the Métis people. No Métis organizations would exist in Canada today.

When the young virile fur-traders came into the West there were no white women. They did not bring white females with them to the uncivilized hinterland. A white woman would have been raised in a culture that did not provide her with the skills or with the advantages that a country wife brought to her marital relationship and to the fur trade.

The non-Aboriginal women were not acclimatized to endure the difficult conditions of wilderness existence. For example John Tod, a Chief Trader of the HBC, did bring his British wife Eliza to the Canadian West in 1835. However she had a nervous breakdown and he had to take her back to Britain in 1837 where she was institutionalized. She never returned to Canada and he later took a Métis

country wife named Sophia Lolo. They lived together until they were parted by death.

A country wife was at home in a frontier or backcountry environment. It was the life into which she had been born and raised, the only life that she had ever known. A country wife straddled two cultures – Aboriginal and white. As such she provided unique qualities to her country marriage.

These women brought to their spouses in the Great Lone Land of the West the same comforts that most wives around the world bring to their husbands – companionship, love, affection, conjugal relations, child-bearing and rearing, as well as homemaking. These were integral aspects of fur trade society.

Daniel Williams Harmon, a NWC fur-trader at Stuart Lake in New Caledonia, was initially reluctant to take a country wife. However the loneliness of wilderness life caused him to forego his religious scruples and to marry without the benefit of clergy.

In 1805 he married *à la façon du pays* fourteen year old Elizabeth Duval, the Métis daughter of a French Canadian father and a Cree mother. In his Journal Harmon wrote:

> …. it is customary for all gentlemen who remain, for any length of time, in this part of the world to have a female companion, with whom they can pass their time more socially and agreeably, than to live a lonely life, as they must do, if single.

David and Elizabeth (also called Lizette and Lisette) lived together until the day he died over 35 years later.

Archibald McDonald, Chief Trader of the HBC at Fort Langley, encouraged his men to enter into country marriages. In his letter of February 25, 1830 to the Governor and Council, he wrote that he did so because:

> It has the effect of reconciling them to the place and removing the inconvenience and indeed the great uncertainty of being able to get them year after year replaced from the Columbia ….

The significance of mixed marriages was pointed out by James Douglas when he wrote of the insufferable vapid

monotony of an inland trading post being:

> …. softened as it is by the many tender ties which find a way to the heart.

Because of their upbringing and Aboriginal ancestry, a number of advantageous attributes were brought into a marital relationship by country wives. With their dual Aboriginal and white cultures, they forged kinship ties between the Indian tribes and the fur traders. This made them ideal intermediaries to facilitate business relationships between the Natives and the white men. The Natives preferred to interchange with traders with whom they had family ties.

In his book *The Métis in the Canadian West*, Marcel Giraud wrote of Alexander Henry, William McGillivray, Patrick Small and others that:

> The bourgeois appointed to the control of posts in the West …. were untouched by any racial bias and were in fact convinced of the advantages ….

The traders were convinced that the fur trade and their forts would benefit from the country marriages. Giraud added:

> …. it was seldom that one of them failed to have, like the Canadians, a native companion and Métis children.

The Indian Country east and west of the Rockies was a vast and often forbidding wilderness. Many of the young men who entered the fur trade and were assigned there were ill-equipped to cope with life in the wild.

However, their country wives were. These women possessed skills that were of incalculable assistance to their spouses, especially with respect to survival skills in the Western hinterland.

Among the more valuable chores of a country wife were making moccasins and the netting for snowhoes for her husband and other traders. In traveling cross-country by foot in the winter time, snowshoes were essential. Without them a person's feet would sink into the snow and severely impede one's progress.

The fur traders soon found that moccasins were the most sensible form of footwear in the Indian Country. However on overland treks they were not very durable. Alexander Mackenzie noted in his journals that the wives of two of his voyageurs on one of his expeditions were:

> …. continually employ'd making shoes of moose skin as a pair does not last us above one Day.

At another time Mackenzie wrote:

> I have not a single one in my fort that can make Rackets [a snowshoe resembling a tennis racquet]. I do not know what to do without these articles see what it is to have no wives."

When Alexander Mackenzie was en route to Fort Chipewyan in 1785, he stopped at Île-à-la-Crosse in northwest Saskatchewan. It was there that he took an Aboriginal woman called the Catt as his country wife. Little is known of the Catt although she has been referred to as being Métis or Cree.

Sometime before the Catt died in 1804 at least one child was born of their union, probably his Métis son Andrew. In due course, Andrew Mackenzie entered the fur trade and became a NWC clerk. In *The Letters and Journals of Simon Fraser*, it is made clear that Fraser had had more than one country wife. In 1807 he wrote John Stuart at Fort St. James that he had "once more entered into the matrimonial state".

There is little information given about his country marriages. However in his correspondence that winter with James McDougall (who was in charge of Fort McLeod) Fraser intimates that he had fathered children with another country wife. He also advised McDougall to give the children anything that they:

> are in want of and to charge it to my acct.

In 1799 at Île-à-la-Crosse, David Thompson married *à la façon du pays* a *young* Métis girl named Charlotte Small. David and Charlotte had many Métis children. Their first three children accompanied them west of the Rocky Mountains in 1807.

Charlotte was born in 1785 at Île-à-la Crosse on the

Churchill River in what is now Saskatchewan. Her parents were Patrick Small, a Scottish-born fur trader and wintering partner of the NWC, and a Northern Woods Cree woman.

She was 14 when she became the country wife of David Thompson. A brief entry in Thompson's journal for June 10, 1799 simply states:

> This day married Charlotte Small.

His use of the word "married" indicates the significant commitment with which he viewed his marriage "according to the custom of the country". Many of the fur traders who married Métis and Native women without the benefit of clergy showed the same dedication to their country wives. David and Charlotte eventually had 13 children and both were loving, thoughtful parents.

Charlotte's upbringing in the fur trade together with her Aboriginal ancestry made her familiar with the Native way-of-life. Consequently she was ideally suited to fulfill the role of a fur trader's wife. According to Jack Nisbet in *Sources of the River*, David Thompson wrote in one draft of his *Narrative*:

> My lovely wife is of the blood of these people [Cree], speaking their language, and well educated in the English language, which gives me a great advantage.

She was proficient in the art of making Aboriginal garments and moccasins for her family and others. In addition she assisted her husband on some of his expeditions.

During their marriages she traveled over 12,000 miles with her husband. David and Charlotte were married for over 57 years, dying within months of each other.

Métis country wives also became proficient in making other apparel besides moccasins and snowshoes. Their creations frequently reflected the dual Native and white cultures of Métis people. They made garments out of leather and European cloths and decorated them with appliqués of beads and embroidery and in some instances porcupine quills.

These designs frequently embellished mittens, jackets, leggings, caps, accessories and especially the moccasins made by them. In due course floral patterns became a prominent feature of Métis beadwork.

Country wives carried on other valued activities. They often acted as interpreters, teachers, midwives, guides and go-betweens. They harvested berries and fish, prepared food, set traps for small animals, dressed pelts and hides, sewed seams and mended canoes, and performed other useful roles for their fur-trading spouses.

In his *Narrative* David Thompson wrote that on one occasion after killing seventeen "Moose Deer":

> …. all the Skins were useless, there being no woman to dress them.

The women were often responsible for the processing of foods to carry the employees of the fort through the winter months. For example on the Great Plains they processed the buffalo acquired on the hunt; this included making pemmican. This was comparable to the women west of the Rocky Mountains curing salmon as well as other fish to provide sustenance for the fur traders and the staff at the forts. Some country wives in the far west had their own trap lines that they ran during the winter months to catch small game.

Besides the abundant skills that country wives brought to their relationships, many of the traders found the Aboriginal women quite attractive. Alexander Mackenzie referred to them as "comely".

Alexander Ross was a Scottish fur trader and explorer who spent over a dozen years in the Pacific Northwest. He commenced his service in the fur trade with John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company at Fort Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1811. He continued on with the NWC after the Fort was purchased by the NWC and renamed Fort George.

Later he was with the HBC after the merger of the NWC and HBC, where he served in the Columbia River Country. He married an Okanagan Indian princess. In his 1855 book

titled *The Fur Hunters of the Far West* he wrote that a country wife brightened the gloom of a solitary post and:

> …. her smiles add a new charm to the pleasures of the wilderness…. many of the females …. are as fair as the generality of European ladies …. their delicacy of form, their light yet nimble movements…. render them objects of no ordinary interest.

Ross and his Okanagan country wife eventually moved to the Red River Settlement. It is worthy of note that one of their mixed-blood children, James Ross, later became the leader of the Red River English Métis during the Red River Resistance. James Ross served as Chief Justice in the Provisional Government of 1870 of which Louis Riel was the President.

In November 2006 the *Vancouver Sun* published a series of newspaper stories on "The Birth of Modern Day British Columbia." written by Stephen Hume. One of these articles, dated November 23, 2006, was titled "Métis Bridged the Gap". Hume wrote that fur trade journals and other documents were noteworthy in the intensity of their comments:

> …. upon the beauty of aboriginal women….

The noted early Canadian artist Paul Kane traveled and painted in Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest during his epic trip from 1846 to 1848. During his travels he spent a significant amount of time on the Pacific Coast from the Columbia River northward to Fort Victoria where he stayed for a number of weeks.

His paintings and sketches provide a visual record of the people and culture of that time. One of his paintings now in the Royal Ontario Museum is a portrait of an attractive Métis woman that he met during his travels. In his book *Wanderings of an Artist*, Kane wrote of her that he danced with:

> …. a half-breed Cree girl: and I was so much struck by her beauty, that I prevailed upon her to promise to sit for her likeness, which she afterwards did …. holding her fan …. in a most coquettish manner.

Many of the Métis country wives who came west of the

mountains from the Rupert's Land area were of Cree ancestry on their Aboriginal side. In *Many Tender Ties: Woman in Fur Trade Society 1670-1870* by Sylvia Van Kirk, there is the following quote from "Observations and Notes" by James Isham (written in the mid-18th century) that Cree girls were:

> …. very frisky when Young …. well shap'd …. their Eyes Large and Grey yet Lively and Sparkling very Bewitchen.

Many Métis country wives accompanied their partners west of the Rocky Mountains and to the Pacific Northwest in the early days of exploration and development of the fur trade in that area of North America. These women brought with them the customs, culture and languages that they had grown up with on the western plains.

They taught these values and skills not only to their children but also to their spouses. In doing so they greatly facilitated their husbands in their activities and played an integral part in the development of the fur trade.

These women were role models and significantly contributed to the economic and social development of the settlements that grew up in and around the forts. Many of these communities evolved into permanent cities, towns and villages that today still exist in the Province of British Columbia, a lasting tribute to these indispensable female partners.

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Chapter VI

RED RIVER EXPEDITION TO THE OREGON COUNTRY

In 1966 the Government of British Columbia erected a plaque two kilometers south of Radium Hot Springs (formerly Sinclair Hot Springs). This plaque overlooks the beautiful Columbia Valley and reads as follows:

JAMES SINCLAIR

In 1841, Sinclair guided 200 Red River settlers from Fort Garry through the Rockies to Oregon in an attempt to hold the territory for Great Britain. By 1854 he had recrossed the mountains several times by routes which later were followed by trails and highways -- a tribute to this great pathfinder, traveller, free trader, and colonizer.

Province of British Columbia
1966

This Government plaque commemorates one of the most spectacular feats in the history of the Métis people. In 1841 a group of Métis families led by their intrepid Métis leader James Sinclair journeyed overland from the Red River Settlement to the Oregon Country in an attempt to save that disputed territory from being taken over by the Americans. They traveled to this destination by crossing the majestic and lofty Rocky Mountains through passes previously unknown and never before traversed, except by Natives.

As noted earlier, the disputed Oregon Country was the area west of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean stretching from the northern boundary of modern-day California to the southern boundary of present-day Alaska. This included New Caledonia, which would later become part of British Columbia. After the Northwest Company (NWC) merged with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1821, this became part of the fur trade empire of the HBC.

Some years later in the 1830s Governor George Simpson became concerned about American settlers moving into the Oregon Country. He realized that the inflow of American settlers to the area, including the Columbia and Willamette Valleys, would imperil not only the claim by the British to the area but also the fur trade of the HBC.

At the time it was believed that the international boundary of the Oregon Country (also called the Oregon Territory) might well be determined by which nation had the most citizens settled and living there. To offset the effect of a number of American wagon trains bearing immigrants to these lands, the HBC knew that countermeasures would have to be taken by the HBC and Great Britain.

Governor Simpson, with the support of HBC headquarters in London, decided to send a group of Red River residents to settle in the Oregon Country and establish farm communities there. The Puget's Sound Agricultural Company was formed for this purpose. Simpson's first choice for the leader of this trans-mountain expedition was Alexander Ross.

Ross, who then lived in the Red River Settlement, had previously been in the service of the Pacific Fur Company, the NWC and the merged HBC in the Columbia River area. He is the same person whose writings have been mentioned elsewhere in this book. However Ross declined because of his age, requiring Simpson to look for another leader who was up to this momentous task.

Simpson also realized that he could achieve not one but several objectives by arranging for a number of Red River settlers to travel to the Oregon Country. At the time the non-Native population was less than 1,000 with a minority of Americans. Such an expedition would serve the HBC in a number of ways:

- It would create a larger population of British subjects in the Oregon with a view to enhancing HBC and British claims to the area.
- The Red River Settlers together with the existing HBC population would be a significant majority percentage of the total non-Native population.
- It would reduce excess population in the Red River Settlement.
- It would provide an opportunity to arrange for settlers

unsympathetic to or competitive with the HBC in Red River to leave.

The latter objective was achieved, at least temporarily, by the selection of a prominent Scottish Métis free trader James Sinclair as leader of the Red River Expedition to the Oregon Country. At that time Sinclair, together with Andrew McDermot, was one of the leading private traders and freighters in the Red River Settlement.

James Sinclair was a Scottish Métis born in 1806 in Rupert's Land probably at Oxford House, an HBC post (in present day Manitoba). His father William Sinclair was born in the Orkney Islands of Scotland and came to the North West in the late 18th century as a servant of the HBC. The senior Sinclair rose quickly in the HBC service and became a Chief Factor in 1810.

The mother of James Sinclair was a Cree or Métis Cree woman named Nahoway (or Nahovway) whom William Sinclair had married according to the custom of the country. William Sinclair and Nahoway became the parents of 11 children of whom James was the seventh. William stayed with Nahoway until the day he died in April 1818.

In his will he gave directions that his son James (not yet a teenager) should be sent to Great Britain to be educated. Not long thereafter, James along with one of his brothers embarked for their father's ancestral home in the Orkney Islands.

James stayed with his father's siblings in an Orcadian village. He attended school there for several years prior to being enrolled in 1822 in the University of Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland. Over the ensuing four years, he received an advanced Arts education with some law at this University. During this time he also learned a great deal about life in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Edinburgh.

On completion of his education, James Sinclair returned to Rupert's Land arriving at Moose Factory in 1826. He initially worked for the HBC at Fort Albany and at Chickney Goose Tent (both in present day Ontario). Goose

tents were in more than one area. At these tents wild geese acquired from the fall hunts were salted and sent as provisions to nearby posts.

Sinclair was not enamored of transporting supplies from this wild goose chase. He quit the HBC in 1827 and became a partner of Andrew McDermot, a Red River merchant and free trader.

Governor George Simpson knew James Sinclair, not only from his days with the HBC but also because Governor Simpson had fathered a child by his short-term Métis country wife Betsey Sinclair, the sister of James. Their child was born in 1822 at York House.

By sending Sinclair off to the Oregon, Simpson would be removing one of the HBC's principal competitors in the Red River. However Simpson also knew that Sinclair was an outstanding individual, a born leader, an intelligent and well-educated person who could take charge and successfully complete the arduous journey that lay ahead.

In Governor Simpson's absence, Chief Factor Duncan Finlayson of the HBC at Red River negotiated terms with the proposed emigrants. He also finalized the arrangements for their journey.

In 1835 the jurisdiction of the Bishop of St. Boniface (Juliopolis) had been extended to the Pacific Ocean. Some of the Catholic Métis who joined the expedition may have been encouraged to do so knowing that they could continue to practice their religion at their destination.

No one in the Sinclair party kept a journal of this Expedition. However John Flett, who was a member of the Expedition, wrote an account of it some 44 years after the event. Flett was a Métis and he was married to Charlotte Bird who was also a Métis.

His report appeared in an article in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger Newspaper* of February 18, 1885. In this report Flett stated that in addition to James Sinclair being named Captain of the venture the terms of the Agreement made by the HBC with the emigrants were to the effect that each

family head was to receive £10 sterling in advance, goods for the journey, and horses and provisions at the forts en route.

On arrival at Puget Sound the Company was to furnish them with houses, barns, fenced fields, 15 cows, one bull, 50 ewes, one ram, and oxen or horses, farm implements and seed. In turn, the colonists were to deliver to the Company one-half of their crops yearly for five years and, at the end of that period, one-half of the increase in their flocks.

This arrangement with the settlers meant that they would lease the land from the Company on halves - i.e. they would be required to give the Company half of what they produced. Effectively they would be sharecroppers and not land owners.

Because of the unsettled state of the Oregon Country, the Agreement did not provide that the HBC would sell the lands to the settlers. Although the HBC were occupants of the land and to a large extent governed the trading in this area, the HBC did not have title to these lands. As a consequence a crucial element in successful colonization was missing - the right to own the land, to dispose of it or bequeath it was unavailable to the settlers.

These factors undoubtedly caused the proposed emigrants to have serious concerns with respect to this venture. As a result Finlayson took it upon himself to promise them that when the international border was finalized the HBC would sell the farms outright to the settlers.

This adventurous group, mainly Red River Métis many of whom were rugged buffalo hunters, consisted of 23 families. Many no doubt treasured the prospect of leaving behind the frigid Red River winters for an evergreen land with a mild climate where roses bloomed year-round. Many of the men were known personally by Sinclair. Some had familiarity with farming and livestock, a definite asset for this first attempt by the HBC to settle farmers in the Columbia region.

One of these immigrants was Sinclair's Métis sister-in-law Letitia Bird. She and her four children accompanied her Métis husband Charles McKay on this Expedition. Charles was the uncle of Joseph William McKay, the founder of Nanaimo who is featured in another chapter of this book. Charles McKay was to take a prominent role a few years later in the establishment of a Provisional Government in the Oregon Country in 1843.

Another family in the Red River Expedition was that of the Métis Joseph Klyne with his wife and child. Joseph Klyne was the brother of Jane Klyne McDonald who is profiled in another chapter of this book. Jane Klyne was the wife of Archibald McDonald, who at this time was in charge of Fort Colvile.

The party left Fort Garry on June 5, 1841 and met up with additional emigrants at White Horse Plain. In all there were 121 men, women and children, although the plaque erected by the British Columbia Government in 1966 near Radium Hot Springs states that Sinclair "guided 200 Red River settlers" to the Oregon.

Each family had Red River carts and brought along dogs, horses and cows. The women and smaller children rode in the canvas-topped carts, the men and older sons on horses.

The women wore sensible homespun dresses, shawls, with bright head-coverings or neckwear, and moccasins. The men clothed themselves as they did on the buffalo hunt - i.e. buckskin jackets and shirts, homespun pants, and moccasins. They brought along with them capotes and fur robes for the cold mountain passes that they were to encounter.

En route to Edmonton House, some 1500 kilometers distant, they were frequently attacked by swarms of mosquitoes and other insects. They hunted wild fowl and game along the way. These were a welcome change from the pemmican that they had brought with them.

At night they usually slept in or under the Red River carts which had been circled for protection, although some slept under the starry skies on buffalo robes. Sentinels

were posted each night to provide for the security of the party.

The journey to the Oregon Country took so long that three babies were born en route. River crossings were often dangerous, particularly the Saskatchewan, where the River was sometimes almost a mile wide and the current was very swift.

While fording with their carts and belongings on a large raft of dry logs, one family was swept towards the rapids. In a moment of high drama they were saved by their compatriots who threw a rope to them and dragged them to shore.

The Expedition arrived at Fort Carlton in the last week of June. From there on, they had to keep guard night and day for warring Indian tribes. They arrived at Fort Pitt on July 10th and, after resting for a couple of days, they continued on to Edmonton House arriving towards the end of July. They had taken this indirect somewhat circuitous route for safety reasons.

Governor Simpson had left specific instructions for James Sinclair as to the route that the party was to take to cross the Rockies. After receiving Simpson's orders, Sinclair promptly ignored them. He was determined to discover new paths across the formidable mountains, paths that no one other than the Natives had previously traversed.

When the cavalcade left Edmonton House it had to wend its way through perilous territory that the Blackfoot, Assiniboine, Peigan, and Cree frequently fought over. John Flett reported that when he and his younger brother had been out hunting they had a hair-raising experience. They found themselves amid unfriendly Indians. They hid out until nightfall and then, with their horses, swam across a frigid river and escaped danger.

After traveling south the Expedition rested at Lake Minnewanka (near present-day Banff). They next reached an area close to what is now Canmore, Alberta and saw the majestic Three Sisters Peaks, below which today an

upscale residential and resort development has been built.

After crossing the Bow River they approached the east side of the towering Rocky Mountains, some of them still snow-capped. They realized that soon they would have to abandon the Red River carts. The mountainous terrain would have been impassible with the carts.

Their effects were then loaded on the backs of the horses and oxen. The women and children rode on the horses, while the men and older boys walked and climbed the mountainous trails.

With the pack train assembled, the group started on the daunting high-country challenge. What happened next is best described by John Flett in his *Tacoma Daily Ledger* article:

> The oxen, however, were unused to this mode of traveling, and were frightened, and a stampede ensued. Then what a sight, oxen bellowing, kicking, running; horses neighing, rearing, plunging; children squalling; women crying; men swearing, shouting and laughing; while the air seemed full of blankets, kettles, packs of pots, pans and jerked buffalo. At last the cattle were again secured, all our goods that could be found were gathered up, and the remnant repacked and we again started.

Shortly after entering the mountains the Métis guide James ("Jemmy Jock") Bird left the party. Jemmy Jock was the son of Chief Factor James Curtis Bird of the HBC and his sister Elizabeth Bird was married to the leader of the Expedition James Sinclair. He was also the brother of three Métis women on the Expedition - Letitia Bird McKay, Charlotte Bird Flett (the wife of John), and Chloe Bird Flett (the wife of James).

James Sinclair had arranged for Mackipictoon, (a Cree Chief also called Crooked Arm in reference to his physical deformity), who knew the various mountain passes, to escort them through the towering peaks and beyond. Because of the lofty heights and majestic views, it was a breathtaking experience.

Crooked Arm successfully led them through the Continental Divide at White Man Pass, not far from the

headwaters of the Kootenay River. The party emerged from the Rocky Mountains nine days after they had entered them.

On the west side of the Continental Divide, the exhilarated group followed an old Indian trail and nearby stream southwestward to the Kootenay River. A little further along as they traveled west they came to a wondrous site along the trail. It was a narrow canyon of red rock precipitously carved by nature through the looming mountains.

Four years later in 1845 a Belgian pioneer priest, Father Peter J. De Smet, who was associated with St. Louis University, crossed the Rocky Mountains from west to east. He reached this same site and in his writings described it as:

> .... a narrow mountain defile where the light of day almost vanished from view amidst the huge, bold barriers of colossal rocks.

Wending their way through this confining dark gorge, Sinclair and the Expedition emerged into the Columbia River Valley, into the Great Lone Land of the west. They were at the Kootenae Plain. It should be noted that Kootenae is spelled a number of ways.

As noted in Marjorie Wilkins Campbell's book *The North West Company*, the great explorer and mapmaker David Thompson wrote of this Plain:

> Here among their stupendous and solitary wilds covered with eternal Snow, and Mountain connected with Mountain by immense glaciers, the collection of Ages and on which the Beams of the Sun makes hardly an impression when aided by the most favorable weather, I stayed fourteen days more ....

In defying Governor Simpson's orders, Sinclair pioneered his own trans-mountain path to the Columbia, a route which was easier going than that dictated by the Little Emperor (George Simpson). In fact in a letter dated November 25, 1841 to the HBC headquarters in London, Governor Simpson wrote that the Red River party pursued a pass that was:

> .... not only shorter [than the one Simpson had taken] but better in every respect, so that even with families and encumbered with baggage as they were, they effected the passage of the Mountains with infinitely less labor and in a shorter time than we accomplished it.

The Expedition next traveled south along Lakes Windermere and Columbia. Father De Smet wrote that in 1845 he found numerous swans, cormorants, ducks, cranes, and other birds on these Lakes. He also saw salmon spawning and witnessed eagles, coyotes, deer, wild goats, and bears nearby.

The Red River emigrants soon reached Canal Flats, originally named McGillivray's Portage by David Thompson in 1808. These flats were a narrow waterway that connected Columbia Lake to the Kootenay River.

After leaving Canal Flats the emigrants arrived at and followed the route of the Kootenay River southward. They passed by Moyie Lake and through rich grassy lands until they reached Lake Pend d'Oreille in present day Idaho. In his account of their journey, John Flett told of a horse and a female rider accidentally falling into Lake Pend d'Oreille and being rescued with some difficulty.

At some distance from Fort Colvile, Joseph Klyne was sent ahead to that Fort by James Sinclair to arrange to have their rapidly depleting provisions replenished. Klyne was the most appropriate person for this task as his brother-in-law Archibald McDonald was at that time the Chief Trader at Fort Colvile. McDonald's Métis wife was Jane Klyne McDonald, the sister of Joseph Klyne.

The Expedition reached Fort Colvile (now called St. Paul's Mission near Kettle Falls, Washington) on the Columbia River, where they rested and stocked up. Their next destination was Fort Walla Walla (also called Fort Nez Perce) on the Columbia River between the mouths of the Walla Walla and Snake Rivers. As much as possible the authors of this book followed the route of the Red River Expedition and found cairns for the historic Fort Walla Walla adjacent to the Columbia River.

The great flood of 1890 submerged its exact location and

it is now under the waters of Lake Wallula. Its site was some 20 miles west of present day Walla Walla, Washington and the military fort of the same name.

The Sinclair party entered Fort Walla Walla on October 4th but the original buildings of this Fort were burned in a fire the very next day. The settlers quickly moved on. It was a wise move since Walla Walla was in an area of hostile Indian tribes who resented the intrusions of the white man and Métis into their native lands and ruthlessly showed it some years later during the Indian Wars.

Heading west along the Columbia River towards their Fort Vancouver destination, the Expedition pushed on past The Dalles and the Cascades. Fort Vancouver was on the north side of the mighty Columbia River across from what is now Portland, Oregon. They finally arrived at the HBC's impressive western headquarters on October 13, 1841.

More than four months after their departure from Red River the tired but elated Sinclair entourage of men, women and children (including newborn infants) had successfully reached the Oregon Country, their Promised Land. However, they were in for a big shock. Governor Simpson was then at Fort Vancouver. He delivered a crushing message to the adventurous colonizers.

His devastating news was that neither the Company nor Dr. John McLoughlin (the powerful head of the HBC's Columbia District and the Chief Factor of the Fort) were able to honor the glowing promises that the HBC had given the colonizers prior to their leaving Red River.

When the HBC reneged on its promises to the Red River emigrants in 1841, James Sinclair was outraged with Governor Simpson and with the deplorable outcome faced by the courageous men, women, and children who had made their monumental and valiant trans-mountain trek. However a number of years later Sinclair and Simpson were reconciled.

The HBC commitments had enticed the members of the 1841 Expedition to leave their homes, their friends, and their way of life. Under frequently hazardous conditions,

they had traveled half a continent away through uncharted territory to reach a "Land of Broken Promises".

Several years earlier McLoughlin had made a suggestion that the HBC send settlers to the Puget Sound area. This fit in with Governor's Simpson's plan of making all the HBC trading posts self-sufficient with respect to produce. Because of HBC bureaucratic red tape, a requirement for authorization from London, and organizational time in Red River, it had taken several years to implement the plan.

During this time McLoughlin had become friendly with the American settlers who were immigrating to this area overland along the Oregon Trail. His views with respect to the HBC settlers had dampened. He had come to believe that an eventual American takeover of the area was inevitable.

However when the Red River Expedition arrived at Fort Vancouver, Chief Factor John McLoughlin had treated James Sinclair with respect as they were related through marriage. Sinclair's older brother William had married McLoughlin's stepdaughter Mary Wadin McKay. Mary was the daughter of Marguerite Wadin McKay, the Métis country wife of Dr. McLoughlin.

John Flett wrote in his article that the Company failed to provide them with houses, cattle, plows, and other items. This was not their Promised Land after all. After their arduous overland journey, the emigrants were disappointed, dismayed, disheartened and discontented to hear the calamitous news from Governor Simpson.

Simpson did state that some help would be provided to those who went north to Fort Nisqually and Cowlitz, and a number took him up on this proposal arriving there in November 1841. However, Dr. McLoughlin himself acknowledged that the land at Nisqually was "very indifferent". Its light, sandy soil was not conducive to abundant crops.

Others refused to go to these places and left on their own for the rich farm lands of the Willamette Valley southeast of what today is Portland, Oregon. As well most

of those who initially went to Nisqually and Cowlitz abandoned those areas in less than two years to also go to the Willamette Valley.

Many Métis descendants of the Red River Expedition live there today. The end result was that due to crop failure and lack of HBC support most of the Red River emigrants dispersed and, contrary to the HBC's plan, eventually became American citizens.

In addition to fertile agricultural lands, there were existing Métis and French-Canadian settlements in the Willamette Valley, particularly at an area called French Prairie. These communities had priests, missionaries and churches as well as other facilities. It was considered the most desirable region for settlement by Dr. McLoughlin.

Simpson's early bold design of enhancing British claims to the Oregon Country did not survive. His enthusiasm for an agricultural settlement there faded quickly and in addition wagon trains of Americans started streaming into this area in the early 1840s.

Simpson's turnabout may have been influenced by the 1840s American movement for territorial expansion called "Manifest Destiny" - expansion of the United States west of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

The Joint Occupation Agreement of the disputed Oregon Country was only a temporary measure with respect to the territorial dispute between the United States and Great Britain. Many of the settlers in this area were unhappy with the status quo, especially the Americans who had recently arrived in the area.

Meetings of citizens were convened to discuss the situation. Representatives of the HBC attended some of these gatherings. Besides the complaints of the members of the Red River Expedition, there were also earlier Métis settlers of this area who had long-standing grievances with the HBC. In particular, the free traders and trappers had not appreciated the scorched earth policy that was first imposed by George Simpson during the Snake Country

Expeditions in the 1830s.

The climax to the growing unrest was a meeting held in Champoeg on May 2, 1843 at which 102 settlers were present. At this meeting a Provisional Government was voted on and formed. The representatives included English-speaking and French-speaking Métis, French-Canadians, and American immigrants.

Among those who voted in favor of forming a government was the Métis Charles McKay, who had come west as a member of the Red River Expedition. His nephew was the Métis Joseph William McKay, later the founder of Nanaimo.

A further family tie was to the Métis Thomas Bunn Jr. who was a first cousin of Joseph William McKay. Thomas Bunn was the Secretary of State in the Provisional Government during the Red River Resistance of 1869-70 led by Louis Riel. Perhaps the methods and procedures used in Oregon may have had an influence on the course of events as they unfolded in Red River a generation later.

At the Champoeg meeting in 1843 a Legislative Committee was created to form a constitution. At a public meeting on July 5th a vote was taken on the constitution and it was adopted. Charles McKay was elected captain of the militia.

Subsequently the Provisional Government of Oregon made application to become part of the United States. The land claim of the Provisional Government of Oregon extended eastward to the Rocky Mountains and as far north as the international border of Russian Alaska at 54°40°. This land mass included the area then known as New Caledonia.

The matter of control of these lands was finally settled by the *Oregon Treaty* of 1846. This Treaty brought to an end the Joint Occupation Agreement of 1818. Even though it had a more authoritative claim under international law to the territory south of the 49th parallel, Great Britain gave up its right to this enormous area of land which was

relinquished to the United States.

The northern boundary of the United States was set at the 49th parallel in return for Great Britain retaining the lands that were to become part of British Columbia including Vancouver Island.

Oregon was declared a Territory of the United States in 1848. It would take until 1858 for Great Britain to designate New Caledonia and the mainland area south of it to the 49th parallel as the Colony of British Columbia.

Dr. John McLoughlin, who had been the Chief Factor of Fort Vancouver, retired from the HBC in 1846. He and his Métis wife Marguerite settled in the Willamette Valley in Oregon City, a suburb of present day Portland, Oregon where many of the Métis settlers of the Red River Expedition were then living.

His house has been designated a National Historic Site by the American Government. Dr. McLoughlin is known as the Father of Oregon, a title conferred on him by the House of Representatives and the Senate of Oregon in 1957, the centennial of his death.

Even though this part of the Oregon Country had been ceded to the United States, the HBC still carried on fur trading activities there. In 1853, Governor George Simpson of the HBC again approached James Sinclair to lead another group of Red River residents to the Oregon Country.

Simpson also offered Sinclair a position with the HBC which included responsibility for reinvigorating Fort Walla Walla. Sinclair entered the HBC service with a five year contract. He was appointed an HBC clerk, but asked for and was granted the same allowance as that of a Commissioned Officer.

Sinclair intended to establish a stock farm at Walla Walla and the HBC agreed to assist him in this venture. Simpson told Sinclair that he would receive 200 head of cattle at a reasonable price. Sinclair wrote Simpson on August 28, 1853 that he intended to leave the following

spring and that he would bring his family with him.

On May 5, 1854 one hundred emigrants, mostly Métis, left Red River for their new American homeland. Details of this trip across the mountains were given by John V. Campbell whose sister Mary was the second wife of the now widowed Sinclair. Campbell's account appears in The Washington Historical Quarterly of July 1916.

Much of the route and other aspects of this trans-mountain journey were similar to that of the 1841 Expedition led by Sinclair, including the same Indian guide Crooked Arm (Mackipictoon). His guide told Sinclair that he knew of a better pass through the mountains than that which they used in the 1841 trip. However the opposite proved to be the case. According to Campbell, it took "the whole of September in getting through the mountains", much to Sinclair's annoyance.

In a letter of January 3, 1855 to his son-in-law in Red River Dr. William Cowan (husband of Sinclair's daughter Harriet), Sinclair mentioned a number of reasons why the journey took so long. One reason he gave was that en route "Mrs. Brown had a son" causing a 15 day delay; another was that their guide took a new route through the mountains that took 30 days rather than the 10 days that it took "by my old route."

It is believed that this Expedition took the south Kananaskis Pass through the Rocky Mountains. This was the first time in history that this more difficult Pass had been traversed by non-Natives. The pass that John Palliser took four years later was the easier north Kananaskis Pass.

The Sinclair party did not reach its destination until December 1854. Sinclair arrived at Fort Vancouver on December 30, 1854 and left for Walla Walla about two weeks later. He and his family then settled there.

However Indian troubles were brewing in the area. In October 1855 the United States Government Indian Agent Nathan Olney ordered Sinclair, his family, the employees and others to leave Walla Walla immediately. Olney believed "…. that a War with the Tribes of Indians in your

immediate vicinity is unavoidable".

In November Sinclair returned to Walla Walla under the protection of volunteers dispatched by Governor Currie of the Oregon Territory. There was a battle between the Natives and this volunteer force. The Natives retreated but they had damaged the Fort and seized all its property.

On February 5, 1856 Sinclair returned from Walla Walla to Fort Vancouver and remained there for about seven weeks. He headed east again on March 24, 1856 intending to go to The Dalles on the Columbia River to attend to business matters.

En route he stopped at the settlement at the Cascades. He was there two days later when an armed group of hostile Cascade Indians attacked the settlement, killing 18 men, women and children. They also shot and killed the 50 year old James Sinclair as he helped in bringing a woman to safety, thus bringing to a tragic end the life of this distinguished and well-regarded Métis leader.

Notwithstanding the ultimate failure of its prime purpose, the first Red River Expedition of 1841 had been a stupendous achievement. It was a trail-blazing undertaking by a stout-hearted mostly Métis people forging their way west close to 2,000 miles under daunting and primitive conditions.

They were spearheaded by a leader par excellence, James Sinclair. This Métis stalwart led the historic mission overland through fair weather and foul, through glorious lands, hazardous back-country, threatening water, hostile tribes, and in some instances uncharted mountainous terrain on which no foot other than that of an Indian had ever before trod. This Red River Expedition to the Oregon Country was truly an adventure of epic proportions.

In addition to the plaque dedicated by the British Columbia Government to James Sinclair overlooking the Columbia Valley, there is today a landmark passageway in British Columbia that honors the bold-spirited Métis chief of the Red River Expedition. The "narrow mountain defile" described by Father De Smet is named Sinclair

Canyon.

This great pathfinder James Sinclair is also commemorated in the names of a nearby rushing mountain stream and in a mountain. They are respectively named the Sinclair River and Mount Sinclair. The springs, originally called Sinclair Hot Springs, have since been renamed Radium Hot Springs. All of these impressive British Columbia sites are adjacent to or close by the modern-day Banff-Windermere highway.

While his life was snuffed out at a relatively early age James Sinclair left a memorable legacy, albeit one that has too frequently been overlooked by historians. Rather astonishingly, *The Canadian Encyclopedia* fails to profile James Sinclair, and Douglas MacKay's book on the HBC titled *The Honourable Company* does not mention James Sinclair by name. As well the three-volume series on the HBC by the noted journalist/historian Peter C. Newman makes no mention at all of Sinclair leading the momentous 1841 Red River Expedition.

James Sinclair was a great Métis leader, explorer, trailblazer, advocate, adventurer, and pioneer. He was a stellar champion of free trade and Métis rights. He is one of the most remarkable and memorable Métis personalities in history.

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Chapter VII

VICTORIA VOLTIGEURS
British Columbia's First Militia and Police Force

The first militia and police force formed in what is now the Province of British Columbia was the Victoria Voltigeurs. It came into existence less than two years after the Colony of Vancouver Island was established in 1849. It consisted of volunteers who had been Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) employees. Most of the members of this force were Métis.

The first governor of the Colony was Richard Blanshard who arrived at Fort Victoria in March 1850. He soon told Chief Factor James Douglas of the HBC that he thought a military force was needed for the Colony's protection. Initially Douglas was not keen on the idea, realizing that the expense of maintaining it would have to be borne by the HBC.

However he later changed his mind on this matter and wrote a letter to Archibald Barclay (Secretary of the HBC) on March 21, 1851. In it Douglas stated that to meet Governor Blanshard's views he had proposed:

> …. the formation of a rural police to be effected by granting a certain number of 20 Acre lots on the Fur trade Reserve to the company's retiring servants.

During his tenure Blanshard had little to do as the Colony was in effect being run by the HBC and its Chief Factor James Douglas. As a result in November 1850 Blanshard requested his own recall to England.

When the disillusioned Blanshard returned to England in September 1851, Douglas replaced him as the Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island. He kept in place the police force he had formed under the name of the Victoria Voltigeurs.

Although the Voltigeurs were primarily Métis, a few of them were Kanakas. The latter were natives from the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) who had been brought to this area as employees of the HBC. The historian B. A. McKelvie and the provincial archivist Willard E. Ireland, in an informative 1956 article, wrote of the Voltigeurs that

they were:

> …. largely recruited from French-Canadian half-breeds, some with Iroquois blood in their veins ….

In the 19th century and (as evidenced by the McKelvie/Ireland article) well into the 20th century the term "Métis" was rarely utilized in English. In French the term "Métis" was used, and when speaking English it was "half-breed" or "bois brûlé".

Because so many of the voyageurs were of French-Canadian extraction, the Métis were sometimes referred to as "Canadians". However Douglas provided his own term to describe the Métis. He referred to them as "half whites".

In his correspondence with Archibald Barclay, Douglas referred to the Voltigeurs a number of times as "half whites". In his diary he used the term "Voltigeur" on more than one occasion. Voltigeur is a French word that literally translates as "light infantryman".

Perhaps Douglas preferred the term "half white" as he himself was of mixed-blood. He was born in British Guiana of a Scottish father and a mother who was Creole (mixed-blood).

The Victoria Voltigeurs conducted routine tasks during their tenure. These included sentinel duties, making rounds on horseback to settlers' homes to inquire about their well-being, checking out thefts of cattle, and incidents that Douglas described in a report as "petty depredations".

In her diary a Metchosin woman Martha Cheney Ella noted on April 15, 1855 that they came every two weeks and:

> The Voltizeurs payed [sic] us their usual visit last Tuesday.

The number of active Voltigeurs differed from time to time. This is known from payments made to them and recorded in the HBC account books. There are specific entries with respect to payments to the Voltigeurs.

In a letter to William G. Smith on April 1, 1855, Douglas wrote of the Voltigeurs:

> The Militia, about 16 in number, have been of great service, in maintaining the peace and detachments are frequently sent to visit the isolated settlements for their protection.

The assignments of the Voltigeurs were not generally dangerous. However this was soon to change. A shepherd with the HBC named Peter Brown was murdered at Saanich on November 5, 1852 by two Natives. One was from the Cowichan area and the other was from Nanaimo.

Douglas, who then held the dual posts of Governor of the Colony and Chief Factor of the HBC, realized that he must act forcibly to avenge Brown's death. Failure to do so could lead to other serious incidents. Consequently he determined to go after the culprits.

Before taking any action he asked Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken, who was engaged to his daughter Cecilia, to marry her prior to his departure. He did so because he wanted to ensure that his Métis wife Amelia and his children would be looked after if he should meet with disaster while hunting for the murderers. Accordingly the wedding took place on December 27, 1852.

Douglas assembled an imposing group of men to seek out the culprits. The ship *HMS Thetis* was visiting Esquimalt at this time. It was commanded by A. L. Kuper and manned by a large number of British sailors and marines. Kuper made 130 members of his crew, under the leadership of Lieutenant Arthur Sansum, available to Douglas.

Governor Douglas reinforced this contingent by the addition of a number of Victoria Voltigeurs. They were, of course, far more familiar with the land and the Natives than the visiting English seafarers. Douglas wanted the Voltigeurs in the forefront if a pursuit was required. In his report to Archibald Barclay of the HBC dated January 20, 1853 relating to this episode Douglas referred to the Voltigeurs as:

> …. a body of 11 half whites, enlisted in the Colony for that service..

"The force for field operations" left Esquimalt on

January 4, 1853. It traveled to Cowichan on the HBC's steamships *Beaver* and *Recovery*. In tow were a launch, a barge, and a pinnace (a small boat) from the *Thetis*.

En route a stop was made at Saanich where the shepherd had been killed. Here Douglas lectured the Natives on obeying the law and then distributed gifts to the local Chiefs.

At Cowichan Douglas demanded that the Indians meet with him. The relatives and friends of the fugitive that he was seeking arrived in canoes chanting warlike songs and drumming on their canoes. Their faces were decorated with paint. They rushed towards Douglas shouting and waving their arms in great excitement, attempting to intimidate him.

Governor Douglas, (whose Voltigeurs and marines were mustered about him) held a conference with the tribal representatives. As a result the man they were after was peacefully surrendered without the necessity for combat. Douglas then gave a lecture to the assembled Natives on their relations with the Crown and with the Colony. He also gave them some tobacco as gifts. This surrender without bloodshed was termed by Douglas:

> …. an epic in the history of our Indian relations.

The prisoner was taken on board the *Beaver*. There has been some suggestion that he was not the real culprit. In fact Graham Brazier in an article in *The Beaver* magazine wrote that the prisoner surrendered by the Cowichan chiefs was a slave. However in his report and in his diary Douglas referred to the prisoner as the "murderer" and not as a slave.

The expedition next departed for Nanaimo to apprehend the second culprit. It arrived there on January 9th and Douglas asked to meet with their chiefs. Suspecting that the Indians would not voluntarily release their compatriot, Douglas sent 21 Voltigeurs and five marines in the pinnace and a canoe to search for him.

His diary indicates that Joseph William McKay (a Métis

profiled in another chapter of this book) was placed in charge of this advance party. Douglas specifically instructed McKay to have this group conceal themselves and at the appropriate time to search the Indian village and seize the murderer if found. However he was not located.

The Natives kept Douglas waiting for a few days and the weather turned cold with heavy snow. The next day it rained. When their Nanaimo representatives finally met with him, he demanded that they surrender the murderer. They did not.

Instead they endeavored to ransom their kinsman's life by an offering of a gift of furs. This was in keeping with the Indian custom that acceptance of a peace offering amounted to reparation for a wrong-doing.

This Indian tradition had been successful for Amelia Connolly Douglas in saving the life of her husband James Douglas in the Kwah Incident. However it was not the custom of non-Aboriginals. Douglas rejected the Nanaimo offer out of hand and seized the offender's father and another influential tribe member. He did so to pressure them to comply with his demand.

After a suspenseful time, the wrongdoer was brought close to the ships to be surrendered. On seeing Douglas he suddenly took to his heels and disappeared into the forest. Douglas immediately sent nine "half whites" (Voltigeurs) and 16 sailors after him. Douglas wrote Barclay that:

> …. after a long chase in the woods in which the half whites took a principal part, the wretched man was finally captured., ….

The two prisoners, one from Cowichan and the other from Nanaimo, were tried for murder. The trial took place on the *Beaver*. A jury of officers present found them guilty. The same day they were summarily hanged in front of the whole tribe on Protection Island in the Nanaimo Harbour. Today the location where they were hanged is called Gallows Point.

These two Indians hold the grim distinction of being the first persons executed in British Columbia after trial by jury. It was obviously not a jury of their peers. One may

question the legal procedure used and the impartiality of jurors who were officers accompanying the expedition. Perhaps if some Indians had been on the jury, the jury would have "been hung", rather than their kinsmen.

In early 1856 Douglas appointed 35 men to travel to Canal de Arro in the San Juan Islands to check on pillaging. The records do not state that these men were Voltigeurs. However, since this undertaking was also led by Joseph William McKay it seems most likely that many of them were.

As a result of this episode and concerns about northern Indians arriving in the Fort Victoria area, the Colony's militia force was increased that year to 30 men. This was pursuant to a Legislative Council resolution. In addition to being paid, each of the men was to receive a uniform.

Although the Council had authorized payment to the lower ranks of $30.00 per month plus rations, the thrifty Douglas paid them only £2 sterling per month. Not all Voltigeurs were on full-time duty. The accounts of the HBC showed variations in payments to different members at different times.

Another potentially precarious expedition that involved the Victoria Voltigeurs occurred in August 1856. It again involved the Cowichan tribe. At that time an Englishman Thomas Williams had become enamored of a young Indian woman and allegedly attempted to seduce her.

Unfortunately for him she had been promised to Tathlasut, the Chief of the Somenos Village. The amorous advances made by Williams were considered a grave insult to the dignity of the Chief and against Native law.

On August 20, 1856 Williams was shot and suffered potentially fatal wounds to his chest and right arm. Williams was initially treated by a medicine man with Native folk medicine before being taken by canoe to Victoria for further medical attention.

When Douglas heard of this attack on Williams he determined to take action. He intended to demonstrate to

the Indians that they could not treat colonial settlers and British subjects in such a manner. He wanted to intimidate the Cowichans, a tribe he had previously termed the most numerous and warlike on Vancouver Island.

Consequently Douglas assembled a huge force of 400 armed men from two ships that were in the Colony at that time. To this large force he purposely added 18 Victoria Voltigeurs. As in the 1853 expedition, in this instance he knew that the Voltigeurs were far more familiar with the land, the language and the customs of the Indian tribes than were the itinerant English seamen and marines.

It was a custom of the Cowichans to travel to the Fort Langley area each year to harvest fish for the winter months. As a result when the task force arrived at its destination, three-quarters of the Cowichan warriors were fishing on the other side of the Straits of Georgia. Douglas would have known of their absence from their traditional territory at this time.

He demanded that Tathlasut be delivered over to him and after some hesitation this was done. Tathlasut was charged "with maiming with intent to murder" Williams. He was tried before officers of the force and found guilty. He was immediately hanged with members of his tribe witnessing the execution.

When Douglas and his force returned to Victoria, he was shocked to find out that Williams had survived his injuries and was on the road to recovery. In fact he lived on for a number of years and later returned to Cowichan to become a farmer. Consequently one may question the severity of the punishment imposed on Tathlasut.

Governor Douglas reported on this Tathlasut event on September 6, 1856 to Henry Labouchere, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies. He wrote that his personal staff of Joseph William McKay and Richard Golledge accompanied the Voltigeurs through "thick brush and almost impenetrable forest". They searched the woods and took precautions to ensure safety. He stated:

> In marching through the thickets of the Cowegin [sic] Valley the

> Victoria Voltigeurs were with my own personal staff, thrown well in advance of the seamen and marines….

While on duty, the Voltigeurs wore uniforms. Their uniforms consisted of the same type of clothing worn by Métis men east of the Rocky Mountains. Chief Factor John Work (a Victoria Councilor at the time) gave a description of their dress to his son-in-law William Fraser Tolmie in a letter dated July 30, 1855. Work wrote that on passing Government House he saw Joseph Charbonneau on duty as a sentinel. Charbonneau was wearing:

> …. His Cap & tassel hatband sky blue Capot, red belt and Moleskin trousers ….

Work jibed about the Voltigeurs that Douglas could probably not:

> arm them with anything better than trading Guns, horn & pouch,…

McKelvie and Ireland in their article in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* also described the uniforms the Voltigeurs were wearing when they departed for Cowichan in January 1853. The clothing was similar to that described by Work. However they also mention a white regatta shirt, buckskin trousers, long worsted stockings, boots, moccasins and bright ribbons.

They added that each had a trading (hunting) gun, and that a powder horn was attached to a "broad scarlet belt or sash". The Canadian Military Heritage web site page titled "The Victoria Voltigeurs" states that the uniform of the "first military unit and police force in British Columbia" included "a sky-blue Canadian capote with a red woollen sash".

The sashes referred to are undoubtedly the traditional sashes commonly worn by the Métis. The capote referred to was a long coat without buttons. It was held together by the red Métis sash (sometimes called an Assomption sash from the Quebec town where it was first made).

The uniform of the Victoria Voltigeurs was similar to the clothing described in *Métis Legacy Volume II*. This book refers to the traditional garb of the Métis worn on the

eastern side of the Continental Divide. It includes the blue capote, the Assomption sash, beaded moccasins, moleskin trousers, cap with a tassel, and ribbons.

The Victoria Voltigeurs shared not only their Métis blood with their kinsmen east of the Rocky Mountains; they also shared their clothing styles.

One of the principal Métis Voltigeurs was Basil Bottineau. He was the sergeant of the troop under the command of another Métis Joseph William McKay in the 1853 expedition to Cowichan and Nanaimo. Bottineau was also the sergeant in charge of 30 Voltigeurs in 1856 and remained in that position until the Voltigeurs were disbanded sometime later.

Members of the expeditions included men with mostly French-Canadian surnames. As noted, Douglas referred to them as half whites, although they were actually French Métis. The names of some of the retired HBC men who served as Victoria Voltigeurs were Joseph Charbonneau (spelled Charbonna by John Work); Pierre Versailles; Tapisse Montigny; Georges Bouché; Louis Maurice; L. Lavoie; Max Lavoie; Léon Morel; Celeste Auger; Tom Keavé; Timothy Blayan; Nicholas Auger; John Lemon; and Jean Baptiste Jollibois.

Many of the Voltigeurs are commemorated today in the bricks bearing their names that are imbedded in the sidewalk at the entrance to Bastion Square on Government Street in Victoria. These bricks and others are part of a memorial to some of the early pioneers of the city and of the HBC.

The last three Voltigeurs named above were referred to in a letter of March 2, 1859 from Douglas to Joseph Despard Pemberton. In that letter Douglas wrote that Nicholas Auger, John Lemon, and Jean Baptiste Jollibois were entitled to a grant of 20 acres each on Portage Inlet (part of present-day Greater Victoria).

A number of Métis who had been servants of the HBC had retired to that area in 1851. A small settlement close

by the Colquitz River had sprung up there.

The authors have visited the location where the Colquitz River (now called a Creek) flows into Portage Inlet and were impressed by its beauty. This location is nearby the HBC's Craigflower Farm and the Craigflower Schoolhouse that were established in the 1850s. Today the Craigflower Manor and the Schoolhouse are National Historic Sites of Canada.

The authors obtained from Calvin Woelke (Unit Head of the Land Title and Survey Authority of the Province of British Columbia) a copy of the "Victoria District Official Map 1858". This Map shows the lands then owned by a number of prominent citizens of Victoria.

These included James Douglas, John Sebastian Helmcken, John Work, William Fraser Tolmie, Roderick Finlayson, and John Tod. All of these people had been closely connected to the HBC and all of them had Métis wives. Among others named on the Map were Joseph Despard Pemberton, Joseph William McKay and Isabella [Mainville] Ross (the Métis widow of Charles Ross, the first Chief Trader of Fort Victoria).

This fascinating Map of early Victoria also shows that in 1858 a number of locations were already named after some of these people. Sites included Mount Douglas, Work's Rocks, Mount Tolmie, and Finlayson Point. As this book is being written, the authors have a view of Mount Finlayson in Langford on the outskirts of Victoria.

In establishing the Victoria Voltigeurs as a rural police, James Douglas had written to the HBC Secretary Archibald Barclay that their formation would be effected by a grant of 20 acre lots. The Voltigeurs were to be retiring HBC servants, and the 20 acre land grants were to come from the HBC Fur Trade Reserve.

The acreages received by Jean Baptiste Jollibois, John Lemon and Nicholas Auger near the entrance to Portage Inlet are identified on the "Victoria District Official Map 1858". On this Map their acreages are identified by Roman numerals and their names with their lot numbers are listed

in the right-hand column of land owners.

There is a small display relating to the Victoria Voltigeurs at the Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum in Greater Victoria. It depicts the uniform worn by the Victoria Voltigeurs. The accompanying plaque, which refers to them as "mixed bloods", reads in part:

> The Voltigeurs were the first colonial militia on Vancouver Island …. duties consisted of local protection, scouts for the Royal Marines and Bluejackets [sailors in the Navy] as required and carried out local protection of the settlers.

In 1858 the Colony of Vancouver Island was inundated with gold seekers heading for the discoveries in the Cariboo. This significantly changed the dynamics which led to the creation of the Victoria Voltigeurs. The gold rush was to lead to the founding of the Colony of British Columbia in 1858 and the loss by the HBC of its control over Vancouver Island.

New means and a larger force would now be required for protection of the settlers and to maintain law and order. Consequently the "first military unit and police force in British Columbia" was disbanded in 1858.

During its lifetime, the Victoria Voltigeurs played an invaluable role in the early history of British Columbia. The contributions of this mainly Métis group of police and militia to the safety and protection of the first settlers, and to the maintenance of law and order, are historical achievements truly worthy of commemoration.

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SECTION B

NOTABLE PERSONALITIES

Image A-02833 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Amelia Connolly Douglas

First Lady of British Columbia

Image A-02831 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

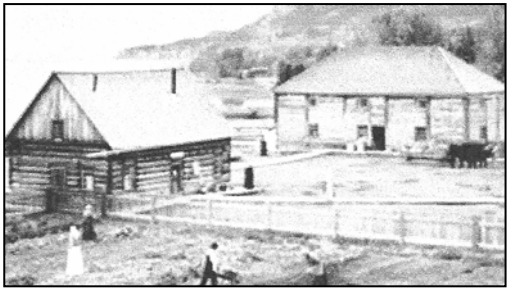
Joseph William McKay
Métis Founder of Nanaimo

Image A-01827 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Josette Legacé Work
Pioneer Métis Matriarch

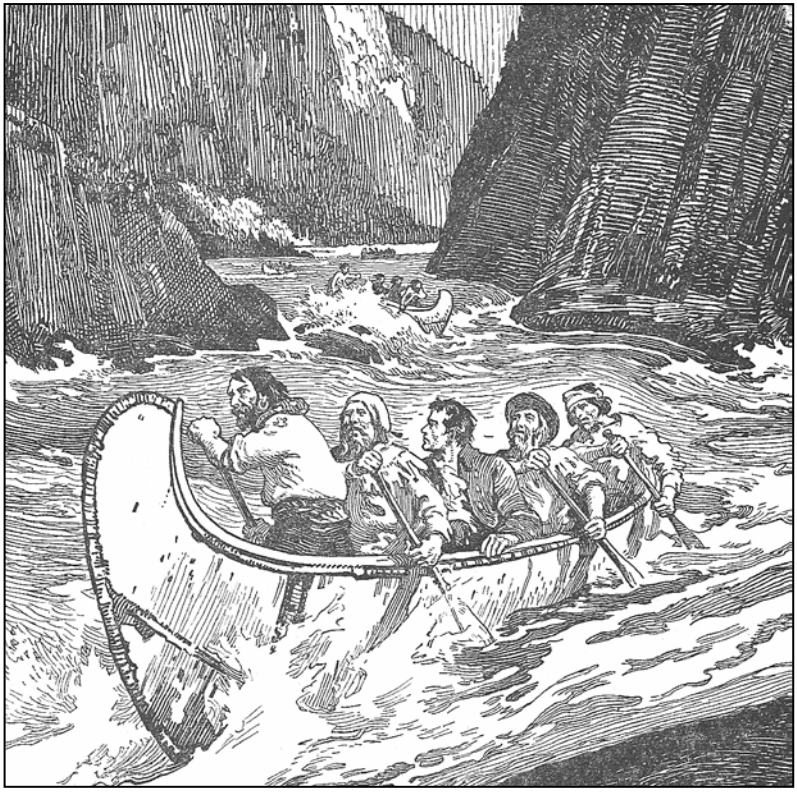
Images Associated with Jean Baptiste Boucher

Multi-Talented Métis Pioneer



Fort St. James National Historic Site

Fort S. James Historic Site



Simon Fraser Descending the Fraser River, 1808

by Charles W. Jefferys (1869-1951)

Library and Archives Canada

Jane Klyne McDonald

Leading Lady of Fort Langley

Image HP002272 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Captain John Swanson

Métis Master Mariner

Chapter VIII

AMELIA CONNOLLY DOUGLAS
First Lady of British Columbia

Amelia Connolly Douglas was a remarkable Métis woman who had a profound impact on the course of events in British Columbia. In 1828 she became the country wife of James Douglas, later renowned as the "Father of British Columbia".

When Douglas was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1863 Amelia became the "First Lady of British Columbia". She was also the first Métis woman who bore the title of "Lady".

Amelia was a New Year's baby. She was born on the 1st day of January 1812 at Nelson House, a North West Company (NWC) trading post. At that time her father was a trader at this outpost located approximately 225 kilometers north of Lake Winnipeg and a few kilometers northwest of Thompson in what is now the Province of Manitoba. However, there is some conjecture that she may have been born at Norway House in Manitoba.

Amelia was the mixed-blood daughter of William Connolly and his Cree country wife Suzanne Pas-de-Nom. Her father had married Suzanne (also called Miyo Nipiy) *à la façon du pays* in the winter of 1803-04 at Rat River House, also in northern Manitoba.

Suzanne was a Cree Indian born near Lake Winnipeg around 1788. For almost three decades, she lived with William in the west as his country wife from 1803 to 1831. During this period they had six children.

Amelia's father William Connolly was a fur trader who later rose to high office with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in New Caledonia in what is now British Columbia. He was born of Irish descent at Lachine, Quebec in 1786.

He joined the NWC as a clerk in 1801 at the age of 15. Until 1824, he and his family, including Amelia, were stationed at different posts in the Indian Country east of the Rocky Mountains at such locations as Nelson House,

Norway House, and Cumberland House.

After the merger of the NWC with the HBC in 1821, Connolly continued on with the Company as a Chief Trader. In 1824, when Amelia was 12 years old, he was transferred west of the Rocky Mountains.

He took with him his country wife Suzanne and his children as well as supplies and 24 men from Norway House to his new posting at Fort St. James on Stuart Lake. In 1825 he became Chief Factor of the entire New Caledonia District with its headquarters at Fort St. James.

Some of the fur traders later called Amelia the "Little Snowbird" due to the lightness of her complexion. She grew up being more proficient in Cree and French than in English.

As a child at various forts on the Great Plains she would have been introduced to Michif, the language of the Métis east of the mountains. This would have been helpful to her when her family moved west of the Rocky Mountains where Chinook Jargon was a mixed language used in the fur trade.

In 1831 William took Suzanne and his younger children (but not Amelia who was now married and living in Fort Vancouver) to Lower Canada. The following year he disowned (but did not formally divorce) Suzanne and married his second cousin, Julia Woolrich, in the Catholic Church. Prior to this marriage to Julia, Connolly had received dispensation from the Catholic bishop on the basis that his country marriage to Suzanne was not valid.

After William Connolly's "marriage" to Julia, the abandoned Suzanne remained in Montreal for a while. However after a time she decided to go to Fort Vancouver to be with her daughter Amelia Connolly Douglas. En route she missed her connection with the Company traders leaving Norway House for the Columbia and returned to the Red River Settlement.

Suzanne had brought her youngest daughter Marguerite with her, and the two settled in the community of Red

River. Suzanne and Marguerite (Amelia's youngest sister) later moved into the Grey Nuns Convent in St. Boniface in 1844, the year that the Grey Nuns first arrived in the Red River Settlement.

Marguerite eventually was to be the first Métis woman in the Red River to enter the Order of Grey Nuns, although Sara Riel (sister of Louis Riel) was the first Métis nun from Red River to make her final vows.

As relatives of the great explorer and fur trader Pierre La Vérendrye, there was a family connection between Marie-Marguerite d'Youville and Amelia and Marguerite Connolly and their siblings. La Vérendrye was the uncle of Madame d'Youville who founded the Order of Grey Nuns (originally called the Sisters of Charity) in 1737. She was the first Canadian born woman to be named a saint by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Grey Nuns Convent in Metro Winnipeg is today the site of the St. Boniface Museum, and has a large collection of artifacts that belonged to the great Métis hero Louis Riel. There is a large bust of Riel near the entrance to this Museum, which is situated across the road from the burial site and tombstone of Riel.

During her life at the Convent, William Connolly provided some financial support for Suzanne. After William's death in 1848, Julia continued to give financial aid to Suzanne. Suzanne died on the 14th of August 1862.

Connolly's dismissal of Suzanne as his wife later became "a cause célèbre" in a court case that tested the validity of their country marriage. The Court ruled that the country marriage of William Connolly and Suzanne Pas de Nom was legal and valid.

When William Connolly was in charge of Fort St. James in the 1820s, James Douglas joined his staff in 1826 as a young clerk and trader. Douglas became attracted to William's charming Métis daughter Amelia.

In her book *Wilderness Women*, Jean Johnston stated that when 12 year old Amelia arrived at Fort St. James she

was:

> …. modest, very shy as most Métis and Indian women were, and already becoming beautiful.

According to Coats and Gosnell in their book *Sir James Douglas*, Amelia as a teenager was considered:

> …. a shy, sweet and lovable girl, "modest as the wood violet," and having in addition to personal beauty, the blood of native heroes in her veins…. Beautiful and accomplished, the sisters were admired of all.

When Douglas first met Amelia she was only 14 years old. They fell in love but William Connolly would not permit Amelia to marry until she was 16 years of age. At the time they became enamored with each other, Amelia had already been promised by her father to another one of his traders, James Murray Yale. The competition for Amelia's affections was to have an adverse and lingering effect on the relationship between Douglas and Yale.

Not long after Amelia turned 16, she and James Douglas were married *à la façon du pays* on April 27, 1828. William Connolly would have been the witness for the exchange of marital vows according to the tradition in the Indian Country. Following this country marriage, there would have been wedding festivities at the post including jigging and fiddling in the Métis tradition.

James Douglas was also a person of mixed-blood but not a Métis like Amelia. He was born in British Guiana in the summer of 1803 of a Scottish father, John Douglas, and a Creole woman. He never spoke publicly about his ancestry.

He and his brother received their education in Great Britain. Like Amelia, James Douglas was fluent in French. The working language of the fur trading forts west of the Rocky Mountains was Canadian French because that was the language of their mainly Métis and French Canadian voyageurs.

In 1819 Douglas had joined the NWC and was sent to Fort William where he worked under Dr. John McLoughlin, who was then in charge of that Fort. This first contact was to grow into mutual respect and a long-time friendship

between these two men who were destined to become giants in the fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains.

The following year Douglas was posted to Île-à-la-Crosse (in what is now Saskatchewan). On the amalgamation of the NWC and the HBC in 1821, he was engaged as a clerk with the merged Company. His talents were recognized and when only 22 years of age he was placed in command of Fort Vermilion in the Peace River Area of what is now Alberta.

He crossed west of the Rocky Mountains in 1826 to serve at Fort St. James under Chief Factor William Connolly. It was there two years later that he took Amelia Connolly as his country wife, marrying the beautiful teen-ager in accordance with the custom of the country.

Amelia, her mother and the other women of the fort played an important role in its operations. Besides making moccasins and snowshoes and performing other activities, the women were responsible for dressing pelts and curing salmon and other fish that provided food for the winter months. These functions were comparable to the services performed by the Métis women on the Great Plains who played such an important role in the buffalo hunt.

Shortly after their wedding a momentous event involving Amelia occurred that would have a significant impact on the future history of what was to become British Columbia. Due to her knowledge of Indian customs (acquired through her Aboriginal heritage) and her quick actions the sixteen year-old Amelia saved the life of her husband James Douglas.

This episode is sometimes referred to as the "Kwah Incident" since it involved Kwah, the Chief of the Carrier Indians of the north central area of New Caledonia. There are several versions of this affair, but all agree that Amelia played a central role in it.

The initial circumstance leading to the incident had occurred five years earlier at Fort George (now Prince George). At that time during the absence of James M. Yale, who was in charge of the Fort, two HBC men were killed by

two Carrier Indians. One of the perpetrators was soon caught and executed, but the other Tzill-ne-o-lay remained at large.

Five years later in the summer of 1828 (only a few months after his marriage), Douglas discovered that Tzill-ne-o-lay was in Kwah's Carrier village. The historian Jean Barman indicated that the fugitive had taken refuge in Kwah's vacant house, considered a sanctuary in Carrier tradition.

A group of HBC employees led by Douglas went to the Carrier village and arrested Tzill-ne-o-lay and he was immediately executed in a harsh display of frontier retribution. Douglas and his men then returned to the HBC Fort, which was under his interim charge in the temporary absence of his father-in-law William Connolly.

The Carriers were infuriated at the summary execution of one of their kinsmen. A few days later, a horde of them invaded Fort St. James seeking revenge. According to Peter C. Newman in *Caesars of the Wilderness* they overpowered Douglas. Kwah's assistant Tloeng:

> ….. held a knife to the HBC clerk's throat, ready to pierce the jugular.

Amelia was a witness to what was happening and to the imminent danger that her husband was in. It was at this critical juncture that her Métis upbringing in a world of two cultures (Aboriginal and white) enabled her to dramatically rescue her husband and save his life. So too did her quick-as-lightning response to the grave peril that Douglas was in.

Amelia knew from her Aboriginal heritage that a peace offering was a traditional form of reparation accepted by Indians for a grievance or wrongdoing done to them. Amelia together with Nancy McDougall Boucher (the Métis country wife of Jean Baptiste Boucher, the Fort's interpreter) acted post-haste.

They loudly pleaded with Kwah to spare the life of Douglas. These courageous Métis women then started throwing tobacco, blankets, trade goods, clothing and other

items at the vengeful warriors.

Kwah accepted the gifts as a peace offering, ordered the dagger which was held against the neck of Douglas to be withdrawn, and called off his followers. Without the quick and knowledgeable actions of Amelia and Nancy, Douglas would not have lived on to provide the insightful leadership in British Columbia that led to it becoming a colony and eventually a Province of Canada.

Douglas subsequently made the following terse statement in his journal on August 6, 1828 concerning this matter "Tumult with the Indians".

Alexander Ross was a fur trader in the Pacific Northwest for many years before moving to the Red River Settlement. He was a contemporaneous writer of many events in the fur trade and particularly his experiences west of the mountains. In his book *Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River 1810-1813*, he confirmed what Amelia and Nancy well knew. An Indian would brood over taking revenge for an injury done to him. Ross wrote that the only way to prevent retaliation was:

> …. by a peace-offering or present; for here property pays for all offences.

Two intrepid Métis country wives had saved the life of James Douglas at the outset of his brilliant career. There is no doubt that if they had failed to do so, the subsequent history of British Columbia would have been significantly different in many material respects including:

- The outstanding contributions and leadership that Douglas later provided to the people and to the lands that became British Columbia would not have occurred.
- The site of the city of Victoria, personally selected by Douglas for Fort Victoria in 1842, might have been located at an entirely different place.
- There would have been no swift response by James Douglas to assert British authority over the British Columbia mainland and over the tens of thousands of American gold seekers streaming into it in 1858 and

after.

- In the absence of such response the presence of so many Americans may have seen the mainland west of the Rocky Mountains absorbed by the United States. This is what had happened in the disputed Oregon Territory in the 1840s after American settlers started flooding in.
- Douglas would not have become the "Father of British Columbia".
- The numerous places and sites bearing his name today would not have been named after him.

Amelia Douglas and Nancy Boucher, two stalwart Métis women, deserve recognition for the indirect but quintessential role which they played in the historical development of British Columbia that resulted from their actions.

At the time of this episode, James Douglas was loathed by many Indians in the area. This was because he had a fierce temper when provoked. William Connolly, fearful that his son-in-law might be assassinated, requested Governor George Simpson of the HBC to transfer Douglas to another post.

Simpson had been impressed with Douglas when Simpson visited Fort St. James not long after the Kwah Incident. He heeded Connolly's warning and arranged to have Douglas transferred to Fort Vancouver.

Situated on the north side of the Columbia River (across from modern-day Portland, Oregon), this was the grandest fur-trading fort west of the Rocky Mountains. It was the HBC headquarters on the Pacific Slope. All trading and shipping operations of the HBC west of the Rocky Mountains were centered at Fort Vancouver. This Fort was then under the command of Chief Factor and Superintendent Dr. John McLoughlin.

In the early 1830s Fort Vancouver was a huge complex. It was enclosed in a stockade 20 feet high, 750 feet long and 450 feet wide. It was self-sufficient with its own fishing, farming, saw mills, flour mills and other facilities.

The farm comprised about 3,000 acres and included crops, orchards, cattle, sheep and hogs.

This Fort was the center of a permanent, self-sustaining community. This settlement mainly consisted of Métis, French-Canadians, Iroquois, Kanakas (Hawaiians) and their Aboriginal and Métis wives and families. Inside the enclosure, there were various buildings, including comfortable accommodations for James and Amelia Douglas. This Fort was to be home for them and their family for almost two decades.

James left for Fort Vancouver in January 1830 where his initial function was that of an accountant. However Amelia did not accompany her husband as she was expecting the birth of their first child. The baby died at Fort St. James shortly after its birth, and the young Amelia had to bear the loss of her first born child without the presence and comfort of her husband.

That summer Amelia left Fort St. James with her father and his voyageurs on the 1,700 kilometer trip to Fort Vancouver. William Connolly was conveying the furs acquired in the New Caledonia District by means of one of the fur brigade trails.

The expedition traveled by canoe to Fort Alexandria via the Stuart and Fraser Rivers. There they switched to pack horses for the trek to Fort Kamloops and on to Fort Okanagan (in what was to become the United States).

Amelia was enraptured by the beautiful lands through which she passed with their forests, valleys, lakes, mountains, rivers and streams. Many years later she narrated this momentous trip to her grandchildren.

On this journey, the clothing she wore was similar to that worn at the time by Métis women on the Great Plains. Her skirt was made of fine broadcloth. She had on moccasins and buckskin leggings embroidered with beads and porcupine quills. Her long hair was braided with ribbons. The horse on which she rode was gaily fitted out with little bells and fringes.

After several weeks of travel this fur brigade arrived at the confluence of the Columbia and Okanagan Rivers. Here Amelia's life almost came to a tragic end while she was still a teenager. Her horse slipped. It and Amelia were carried away by the fast-flowing current of the river towards perilous rapids.

Fortunately she and the horse were briefly snagged by a huge rock. One of her father's men was able to grab the horse's reins and led it and Amelia to safety. She then promptly fainted. From Fort Okanagan the fur brigade traveled down the Columbia River to Fort Vancouver by bateaux.

Amelia later recounted how, on arrival at her destination, her husband was disappointed. At Fort Vancouver he had been bragging about his "Little Snowbird" with her fair complexion. However her journey during the warm and sunny summer weather had tanned her skin to a color more like that of her Cree mother Suzanne than that of her pale-skinned Irish father.

The Métis country wife of Dr. John McLoughlin (the tall magisterial Chief Factor of Fort Vancouver) was Marguerite Wadin McKay. Like Amelia, Marguerite had been born in Rupert's Land.

Amelia, still a teenager when she moved to Fort Vancouver, would no longer have her parents close by. The older Marguerite immediately befriended her. They were kindred spirits. Both had high-ranking husbands with the HBC (Douglas became a Chief Trader in 1835) and both had servants to assist them in their daily functions.

Another HBC Métis country wife that Amelia met and became friendly with at Fort Vancouver was Josette Legacé Work. Josette's husband was John Work, a Chief Trader with the Company. From 1834 to 1836 Josette and their children remained at Fort Vancouver while her husband was at Fort Simpson. A number of years later, Amelia and Josette were to renew their friendship when they were both residing in Victoria.

Fort Vancouver was like a sanctuary for Amelia.

However it was not all sweetness and light. Although ten of their children were born in Fort Vancouver, five of the children died there at birth or at a young age causing Amelia and James much sorrow.

A few years after she came to the Fort, Amelia's life was to be jarred as a result of the arrival in 1836 of two pompous prigs from England, Reverend Herbert Beaver and his wife Jane. Reverend Beaver was the HBC's Anglican chaplain. He and his wife looked contemptuously on country marriages and, in particular, on country wives. To them mixed-blood and Indian country wives were instruments of "vice and immorality".

Jane Beaver refused to socialize with the country wives living in the Fort. She was appalled that not only the Chief Factor (Dr. McLoughlin) but also the second highest official at the Fort (James Douglas) were "living in sin". Jane Beaver and her husband were horrified that the two top officials of Fort Vancouver were each cohabiting with a mixed-blood woman without having been married by a member of the clergy.

Reverend Beaver referred to James Douglas living in "a state of Concubinage". Beaver was also outraged to find that he was "in the stronghold of Popery". He was prohibited from meddling with the Roman Catholic upbringing of the 60 pupils that he was supposed to instruct.

In fact Dr. McLoughlin would not permit Reverend Beaver to teach these students. Notwithstanding their apt surname Reverend Beaver and his wife, with their uncontrolled snobbishness, displayed a complete ignorance of fur trade society and culture. However in 1837, James and Amelia Douglas did agree to formalize their country marriage by having Reverend Beaver perform an Anglican ceremony.

On the other hand Dr. McLoughlin would not dream of having a sanctimonious Reverend Beaver perform a marriage ceremony for him and his Métis country wife Marguerite. He figuratively "cocked a snook" at Reverend

Beaver by shortly afterwards having a civil service performed by James Douglas to solemnize McLoughlin's country marriage to Marguerite.

Reverend Beaver's rancor towards Dr. McLoughlin ("the White-Headed Eagle") and Marguerite was evidenced by Beaver's correspondence to Benjamin Harris, an HBC official in London. Beaver referred to Marguerite as a "notorious loose character" and "a kept mistress of the highest personage" in the HBC service. He considered a country marriage to be a scandal to religion and that it retarded morality.

Somehow, Dr. McLoughlin learned about these detestable comments about his wife Marguerite. This led him to administer a sound thrashing to Reverend Beaver with his fists and with Beaver's own walking stick for the scurrilous views that he had so flagrantly expressed.

James Douglas soon became disgusted with Beaver and his outspoken remarks. He said in his October 18, 1838 Report that Beaver libeled people by his discolored statements. He added that these statements were being spread throughout the settlement and were designed:

> …. not to reprove vice, but to blast reputations and procure expulsion from the service.

Eventually the Beavers realized that they were *persona non grata* and soon left Fort Vancouver for England. After their departure, Douglas led the church services at the Fort for a period of time.

When Dr. McLoughlin visited England in 1838, Douglas was left in charge of the Fort. As a result he was the one to greet the two Catholic priests, Father Modeste Demers and Father Norbert Blanchet when they arrived at the Fort. These missionaries had come overland just a few weeks after the departure of Reverend and Mrs. Beaver.

En route to Fort Vancouver, Father Demers had spent some time at Red River with Bishop J. N. Provencher. While there Father Demers had studied the customs and languages of the Métis and Indian servants of the HBC and

according to the book *French Presence in Victoria, BC*, he

> acquired a certain facility for their languages and for Chinook, the lingua franca of the west.

The reception provided to the priests by James Douglas upon their arrival at Fort Vancouver was to develop into mutual respect and friendship. When Amelia gave birth to Jane in 1839, Father Demers performed the baptismal service. Father Blanchet performed the service at the baptism of two of their other daughters, Agnes and Alice.

In 1841 Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, commander of the United States Exploring Expedition of 1838-1842, noted that at Fort Vancouver:

> A small manual labour school is kept here for the education of the orphans & 1/2 breeds of the Company's servants and will be of much service to the rising flock. There are at present 23 boys…. It was pleasing to see the interest that Dr. McL & Mr. Douglas took in them and much credit is due to them....

The school was for boys only, of whom most were the Métis sons of HBC servants. Amelia's older children, Cecilia and Jane, were originally home-schooled by their father. From 1844 to 1847 they were tutored at the Fort and then were sent to a private school in Oregon City.

Shortly after McLoughlin's return from England in 1839, Douglas was promoted to Chief Factor. Not long after his promotion, he was sent by the HBC to Sitka to negotiate an agreement with the Russians for an HBC trading presence in what is now Alaska. Shortly thereafter he also negotiated a trading agreement with the Spanish authorities in California. Both of these agreements resulted in the HBC establishing forts in these areas.

About this time American settlers started to come in larger numbers to the Oregon Country. The HBC became concerned that when the international border was fixed, Fort Vancouver might end up in American territory.

Douglas was directed to scout out a possible location on Vancouver's Island (as it was then called) for a new major HBC establishment. He did so in 1842 and selected the site

that he called Camosack (Camosun) which today is the city of Victoria and the capital of British Columbia.

In a February 1843 letter to his fellow HBC officer James Hargrave, Douglas gave high praise to the location he selected stating:

> The place itself appears a perfect "Eden" …. One might be pardoned for supposing it had dropped from the clouds into its present position….

He even noted that this Eden was free from the torment of many fur traders and voyageurs:

> Not a musquitoe [sic] that plague of plagues did we feel….

Construction of the impressive Fort Victoria was commenced the following year. It was a wise decision. In the United State presidential election of 1844, James Polk's motto was "Fifty-four/Forty or Fight".

The American claim was for the entire Oregon Country including the Pacific Coast from the California border to the southern boundary of Alaska (then held by Russia). All of present-day mainland British Columbia west of the Rocky Mountains was included in this far-reaching threat to the domain of the HBC and Great Britain.

After ensuring that the development of Fort Victoria was well under way, James Douglas left Charles Ross to supervise the construction. Ross (whose Métis wife was Isabella Mainville) died before the fort was completed, and was replaced by Roderick Finlayson.

However, matters in the Oregon Country were fast coming to a head. American settlers south of the Columbia River went so far as to establish a Provisional Government and purported to enact a number of laws, including land laws.

The dispute over land ownership was finally settled by the *Oregon Treaty* in 1846. Under this Treaty, the British government gave up its superior claim to the area south of the 49th parallel except for southern Vancouver Island. Britain considered the area too remote to fight for all of it. However it did insist on having a port on the Pacific Coast

and the British did not surrender the lands that were to become British Columbia.

On Dr. McLoughlin's retirement from the HBC in 1846, James Douglas became the senior member of the Board of Management of the Columbia Department. The other members of the Board were Chief Factors Peter Skene Ogden and John Work.

James Douglas and Amelia remained at Fort Vancouver after the *Oregon Treaty* was signed. In their book *Sir James Douglas*, Coats and Gosnell wrote about Amelia that:

> …. the later years of Fort Vancouver show her ripened into a comely matron.

However the writing was on the wall for their life at Fort Vancouver. On January 13, 1849 the HBC received from Great Britain a royal grant to Vancouver's Island for a ten year period at a rent of seven shillings per year. The royal grant also required the HBC to establish a settlement on the Island within five years.

The HBC directed that Fort Victoria replace Fort Vancouver as its western headquarters. In 1849, James and Amelia moved to Fort Victoria where they were to spend the rest of their lives.

At that time Douglas was placed in charge of Fort Victoria, replacing Roderick Finlayson. Richard Blanshard was appointed the first Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island in 1849 and arrived there in March 1850.

Originally Douglas had been appointed titular Governor of the Island and told by the HBC that he would receive additional remuneration for his services. With the appointment of Blanshard, Douglas was informed that he would not be paid the increase in salary that the HBC had promised him. In addition, Amelia and James suffered the death of baby Rebecca in November of 1849.

As well as being ineffectual, Blanshard had many disagreements with Douglas and the HBC. Blanshard resigned and returned to England in 1851. His brief sojourn as the first governor of Vancouver Island has been

commemorated by a principal street in Victoria being named after him.

Douglas was designated as Blanshard's successor in 1851. James Douglas then held the dual offices of Chief Factor of the HBC and Governor of the Colony of Vancouver Island. This twofold role had a built-in potential for a conflict of interest between the antipathetic requirements of the fur trade and of colonization.

For the most part Amelia led a quiet life in Victoria. In 1851 she gave birth to her son James Jr. and in 1854 to Martha. She centered her activities around her growing family.

Reverend Robert Staines, with his wife Emma, arrived in Fort Victoria in 1849 to be the chaplain at the Fort. A similar scenario to that which had occurred with the McLoughlins and the Beavers at Fort Vancouver soon developed involving Douglas, Amelia, Staines and his wife.

Staines petitioned against the appointment of Douglas as Governor alleging that he was in a conflict of interest. He also shouted nepotism when David Cameron, a non-lawyer, was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Civil Justice for the Colony. Cameron was the husband of Cecilia, the sister of James Douglas. Douglas considered Staines disagreeable and a fomenter of mischief.

To compound matters, Mrs. Staines was a haughty woman. She would not socialize with Amelia or with Josette Legacé Work, both of whom were "half-breeds". Regardless of the fact that each was the spouse of an important personage in the HBC, she snubbed them.

Amelia's future son-in-law, Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken, noted that Mrs. Staines was "uppish" and did not chum with Amelia:

> …. she [Mrs. Staines] being the great woman – the great complaining – and the great school mistress ….

Obviously the hoity-toity attitude of Mrs. Staines was based on Amelia's mixed-blood heritage. Notwithstanding the snobbery of the chaplain's arrogant wife, Amelia

adapted well to her new location.

In 1851 James Douglas commenced the construction of their private home outside the Fort on acreage that he had acquired from the HBC. This was not only the first home that they personally owned; it would turn out to be their last. Amelia and James each lived in it until the day they died.

For its time it was an impressive two storey building. It was erected south of James Bay near the tidal mud flats. Today there is situated on this site the Royal British Columbia Museum and the British Columbia Archives in the heart of downtown Victoria.

Dr. Helmcken, who had come to Fort Victoria from England in 1850, described Amelia as "a very active woman, energetic and industrious". According to him, she was a considerate lady who visited the sick and "in fact nursed them more or less".

Helmcken had ample opportunity to observe Amelia because he later married her daughter Cecilia. During his courtship of Cecilia he observed that Amelia:

> …. was awfully particular at home and did not like to lose her daughters.

Jane, another daughter of Amelia and James, married Alexander Grant Dallas on March 9, 1858. Dallas was an officer with the HBC, who was to succeed George Simpson as Governor of the HBC after Simpson's death in 1860. Today there are streets in Victoria that bear the surnames of Helmcken and Dallas, the sons-in-law of Amelia and James.

Shortly after James and Amelia had moved there, Amelia was happy to welcome to Victoria Josette Legacé Work, another of the prominent Métis country wives. Josette's husband John Work was the Chief Factor of the HBC at Fort Simpson and was a member of the Board of Management of the Columbia District of the HBC with James Douglas and Peter Skene Ogden.

In 1849 John Work brought his family to Fort Victoria to

enable his younger children to receive an education from Reverend Staines and his wife. In doing so, he did not realize the discriminatory attitude of the Staines towards Aboriginals.

On the other hand Amelia and Josette had much in common – both were Métis children born in the Indian Country; both had been country wives in fur trade society; and both had husbands who were prominent Chief Factors in the HBC. They renewed a friendship that had started when they were both at Fort Vancouver in the 1830s. They became devoted friends for the remainder of their lives.

Another welcome arrival to Victoria for Amelia and James was Father Modeste Demers, who they had first met in Fort Vancouver and who had baptized their daughter Cecilia in 1839. Demers was appointed Roman Catholic Bishop of Victoria and arrived there on August 29, 1852.

At the request of Bishop Demers, the Sisters of St. Ann came to Victoria in 1858 and opened a convent and boarding school for girls. Among the first students of St. Ann's Academy were two of the daughters of Amelia and James Douglas, Agnes and Alice. They only remained a short time due to a disagreement between the nuns and Douglas over the girls attending a dance. Today St. Ann's Academy is an historical landmark in downtown Victoria. It is owned and cared for by the Provincial Capital Commission of British Columbia.

In 1858 there was a huge influx of American gold seekers passing through Victoria en route to the discoveries in New Caledonia. Douglas was fearful that the same lawlessness that had happened during the California gold rush would occur.

He was also concerned about the possibility of a future American annexation of the mainland. He had personally witnessed this happen to the lands south of the 49th parallel after the establishment in 1843 of the Provisional Government in Oregon. At that time the settlers there had included in their claim the lands now comprising most of mainland British Columbia. Douglas did not intend to

allow this to happen again.

Consequently unilaterally and without legal authority, Douglas promptly proclaimed jurisdiction on behalf of the Crown over the mineral rights on the mainland north of the 49th parallel and west of the Rocky Mountains. He required all miners to obtain licenses.

Great Britain's Colonial Office subsequently approved of his actions, and later that year the mainland was declared a Crown Colony. The Bill doing so initially designated the colony as "New Caledonia". However someone discovered that there was a French colonial island east of Australia bearing that designation. As a result Queen Victoria selected "British Columbia" as the name for the Crown Colony on the mainland.

In 1858 James Douglas was appointed Governor of the Colony of British Columbia as well as a Companion of the Order of the Bath. These appointments required that he sever any connections with the HBC.

Douglas and his entourage traveled from Victoria to Fort Langley for his swearing-in ceremony. On the wet, rainy day of November 19, 1858, Douglas received an eighteen gun salute from the HBC steamboat *Beaver* on which he had arrived at Fort Langley. The Captain of the *Beaver* was the Métis Mariner John Swanson, who is profiled in another chapter of this book.

Douglas first swore in Matthew Baillie Begbie as the Judge of British Columbia. Subsequently Begbie read the Crown's Commission appointing James Douglas as the Governor of British Columbia and administered the Oath of Office to him. With this ceremony, Douglas was now Governor of both the Colony of Vancouver Island and the Colony of British Columbia and Amelia was the First Lady.

This dual capacity brought Amelia and her children more into the limelight, but comments about her and her daughters were not always pleasant. Some were crude, discriminatory and racist. In *Vancouver Island: Letters of Edmund Hope Verney, 1862-65*, James Douglas was called a "drag-downwards" on the colony. Verney venomously

wrote about Amelia and her daughters that:

> I do not conceive that I can do any good by recounting instances of their ignorance and barbarism.

He also stated that Agnes Douglas was a "fat squaw", and that her sister Cecilia was a:

> fine squaw…. married to …. Dr. Helmkin [sic], an infidel;

and that Amelia was:

> …. a good creature, but utterly ignorant: she has no language but jabbers in french or english or Indian, as she is half Indian, half English, and a French Canadian by birth.

Amor de Cosmos arrived in Victoria in 1858 and became the editor and printer of the *British Colonist* newspaper. He was a Nova Scotian by birth and had changed his name from the more pedestrian Bill Smith to one meaning "Lover of the Universe". However, he showed little love for the Douglas family and wrote disparaging comments concerning them in many of his articles. In one of his remarks, he wrote of James Douglas:

> Were a good Indian agent required, over whom could be extended a "reign triumphant" it would not be too difficult to discover a suitable incumbent, qualified by long experience and intimate associations.

Besides de Cosmos there were others who made prejudicial observations. One of them was John Robson, who founded the *British Columbian* newspaper in 1861 at New Westminster. Robson later became a premier of British Columbia.

Other critics included Douglas Charles Wilson in his contemporary diary and the historian Hugh H. Bancroft. According to Bancroft, mixed-blood marriages of the leading fur traders "greatly debased" their European blood and resulted in "a degenerate posterity".

Scurrilous remarks about Amelia and her children undoubtedly came to Amelia's attention. A number of years later Dr. Grant Keddie (Curator of Archeology at the Royal British Columbia Museum) accurately wrote that many accounts about Aboriginals were made through "eyes

of culturally biased observers".

Much of the discrimination arose due to the influx of settlers and the arrival of religious missionaries in the Colony. Amelia Douglas was a sensitive person and would have felt the various slights personally. For some years she did not appear frequently in public.

Undoubtedly the chauvinistic and prejudicial comments and an anti-Aboriginal bias in many segments in the growing community also affected James Douglas. He told his teen-aged daughter Martha to conceal her mother's Aboriginal blood while at school in England. He may have faced discrimination when, as a young Scottish Creole lad, he was sent to Scotland and England for his schooling.

Douglas cautioned his daughter Martha:

> I have no objection to your telling the old stories about "Hyass" [sic] but pray do not tell the world they are Mamma's.

When her children were small, Amelia Douglas told them Cree legends that were part of her heritage. Amelia had brought these stories with her from Rupert's Land when as a young girl she crossed west of the Rocky Mountains into New Caledonia. The Douglas children were brought up to speak French, English and the Cree language of their maternal grandmother. As children of the fur trade, they would have learned Chinook Jargon.

One of Amelia's Cree legends was "The Adventures of Hyas", about a twelve year-old boy by that name. Many years later Martha Douglas Harris published this and some of her mother's other Cree legends in a book titled *History and Folklore of the Cowichan Indians*. They appeared in the section of the book that Martha titled "Folk Lore of the Cree Indians". She wrote the following introduction to that section:

> As a little girl I used to listen to these legends with the greatest delight, and in order not to lose them, I have written down what I can remember of them. When written they lose their charm which was in the telling. They need the quaint songs and the sweet voice that told them, the winter gloaming and the bright fire as the only light – then were those legends

beautiful.

A different perspective on Amelia and her daughters was expressed in a letter written by Charles Coulson Gardiner on November 17, 1858 to the *Islander* newspaper. He wrote of his visit to Victoria that he met Governor Douglas and stated:

> His wife is a lady from Red River Settlement, a half breed, between French and Indian. His daughters are rather nice looking and seem to have a great deal of attention paid them by the officers of the Man-of-war ships ….

In 1861 the widow of Sir John Franklin made one of her visits to the Pacific Northwest with her niece Sophia Cracroft. Sophia's letters are quoted in *Lady Franklin Visits the Pacific Northwest*. She wrote of attending a luncheon at the home of the Governor, and said of Amelia Douglas:

> …. her mother was an Indian woman …. she speaks English with some difficulty; the usual language being either the Indian, or Canadian French wh [which] is a corrupt dialect.

In 1863 James Douglas was knighted by Queen Victoria when he was named a Knight Commander of the Bath. Henceforth he was formally addressed as "Sir James Douglas". His wife was now "Lady Amelia Douglas". She had become the First Lady of British Columbia as well as the First Lady of Vancouver Island. As Jean Johnston wrote in *Wilderness Women*:

> She, the little Métis who had been snubbed by the fine, white ladies …. was now Lady Amelia.

Douglas retired from his positions as Governor of the two Colonies in 1864. Banquets were held in his honor in Victoria in March and in New Westminster in April. Amelia attended the latter banquet at which she was also honored and was presented with a memorial medallion of her husband.

Two years after his retirement, the two Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were united into one Colony. This occurred on November 19, 1866 under the name of British Columbia. Victoria was named the capital of the united Colonies in 1868.

After his retirement, James and Amelia led a relatively quiet life in Victoria. They enjoyed their home with its eight acre garden. Nearby, the government buildings known as the Birdcages had been built. They entertained at lunches and dinners and attended various functions.

Several years later these activities came to a sudden halt for Amelia and she went into seclusion. The underlying source of her withdrawal from public activities was a family legal matter. Amelia's oldest brother John was claiming a share of the estate of their deceased father.

A Superior Court in Montreal was hearing the case of *Connolly v. Woolrich*. This case involved the legitimacy of their father William Connolly's country marriage to their mother Suzanne Pas-de-Nom.

An adverse ruling would mean that, in the eyes of many, "Lady Douglas" had been born out of wedlock and had been an illegitimate child. This status carried a much greater stigma in Victorian Society than it does today. This public dispute, which would have been the subject of gossip in Victoria, must have caused her great agitation.

In effect, the ruling of the Court in this Case was that a country marriage, such as that of Amelia's parents, was valid. When all proceedings including an appeal were complete in 1869, Amelia seemed reinvigorated and she returned to an active life.

Her days were filled with her family, her garden, outings, entertaining and playing card games. In 1870 she again entertained Lady Franklin, the widow of Sir John Franklin (the English Arctic explorer). As a seven year-old child Amelia had met Sir John at Cumberland House (in present day Saskatchewan) where her father was in charge of the fort.

About a year later on July 20, 1871, British Columbia entered the Confederation of Canada as a Province. This completed the full circle from fur trading outposts to colonial status and then to union with Canada. Sir James and Lady Douglas had witnessed and actively participated

in the evolutionary development of this great Province.

James Douglas unexpectedly died on August 2, 1877. A giant in the history of British Columbia had passed on. He was buried in the Ross Bay Cemetery in Victoria. In 1930 Walter N. Sage, one of his biographers wrote:

> With all his shortcomings of which he had his share, Sir James Douglas was a great man, the greatest in the history of British Columbia …. It is not too much to term him "the Father of British Columbia.

After his death his daughter Martha Harris, her husband Dennis and their children moved in with Amelia. This did much to relieve her loneliness. A few years later, in 1883, she was saddened by the death of her only son James William Douglas who was only 32 years old. The younger James left a widow Mary Rachel Elliott, the daughter of Andrew Charles Elliott who had been Premier of British Columbia from 1876 to 1878.

In her article "The Lady Nobody Knows", Marion B. Smith mentioned that she had a conversation in 1957 with Mrs. Hughes, a great-granddaughter of Amelia. Mrs. Hughes told her that as children she and the others looked forward to saying goodnight to Amelia because:

> …. she told such wonderful stories, mostly Indian legends.

She also said that her:

> Granny was very kind, especially to old people and Indians.

In a manuscript written in the 1880s by Angus McDonald (a retired HBC employee and a nephew of Archibald McDonald) the author observed about Amelia:

> She often expresses a desire to see the Indian country before she died. She married her Knight when a maid of sixteen. She is very fond of bitter root and Kamas and of a buffalo tongue, when she can have them. I sometimes send her some from Colvile…. Roots and buffalo tongue for this lady while she is much bored by the compound dishes which the rank and wealth of civilization offer her table everyday

Buffalo tongue, of course was a prized delicacy of the Métis buffalo hunt on the Great Plains. It obviously lingered in her memory from her childhood in what is now

northern Manitoba. Amelia may even have been on buffalo hunts in those early days.

In January 1887 in her 75th year, Amelia hosted a great feast at the Assembly Hall in Victoria. According to the *Daily Colonist*:

> The scene was a brilliant one – a midsummer night's dream …. And the one opinion voiced was that the ball was the social event of the season.

Amelia died at Victoria on January 8, 1890. She had spent most of her life in British Columbia during the era that spanned pre-colonial, colonial and provincial times. Her body was laid to rest in her adopted land that she loved so much and that had become her home. Her obituary in the January 9, 1890 issue of the *Victoria Daily Colonist* called her "Lady Nelia Douglas" and referred to:

> …. her unvarying kindness and her unostentatious Christian charity ministering to thousands….

She was buried beside her husband James Douglas in the Ross Bay Cemetery. This Cemetery is in a beautiful location overlooking the Straits of Juan de Fuca and the snow-capped Olympic Mountains. Today Amelia Island and Douglas Island in British Columbia commemorate her memory. So too does the Amelia Douglas Gallery at Douglas College in New Westminster.

Amelia was a devoted wife, a loving mother and grandmother, a caring person, and an honorable Lady in both senses of that word. Her upbringing straddled two cultures – Aboriginal and white.

Her Aboriginal Cree heritage and knowledge had enabled her to save the life of her young husband. If she had not done so, the history of British Columbia without the enormous influence and contributions of James Douglas would have been significantly different. In this respect Amelia had a profound impact on the unfolding history and development of British Columbia.

The young Métis girl, born in what is now Manitoba, became the First Lady of British Columbia. She was an outstanding example of her dual heritage. Amelia was not

First Nations and she was not white. She was Métis, a special blend of those two cultures.

She added a colorful dimension to the annals of British Columbia. Her life, as that of the lives of the Métis generally, truly enriched the cultural mosaic and the history and heritage of this Province. Amelia Connolly Douglas was a remarkable British Columbian and she was a notable Métis personality.

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Chapter IX

JOSEPH WILLIAM McKAY
Métis Founder of Nanaimo

A Métis who played a number of notable roles in a lifetime spanning the period from pre-colonial through to and after provincial status in British Columbia was the enterprising Joseph William McKay. His stellar contributions to the development of the Province included activities in the fields of exploration, fur-trading, mining, politics, civil service, and business.

McKay was a quintessential child of the fur trade, born on January 31, 1829 at Rupert's House in Rupert's Land to two Métis parents, William McKay and his country wife Mary Bunn. Joseph's fur-trade lineage followed in the steps of his father William and his grandfathers John McKay Sr. and Thomas Bunn. His father William was employed by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC).

Thomas Bunn, the father of Joseph William McKay's mother Mary, was born in England. As a young man he was employed in the building of the Drury Lane Theatre in London. He left Great Britain in 1797 to become an apprentice clerk with the HBC in what was to become Canada. He was then 31 years old, a relatively advanced age for an apprentice.

The following year Thomas Bunn entered into a country marriage at Fort Albany with Sarah McNab, the Métis daughter of Chief Factor John McNab. Before Sarah died in 1806 she gave birth to two children, John and Mary Bunn. They were the uncle and mother respectively of Joseph William McKay.

In 1838 William McKay and his wife Mary Bunn sent their nine year old son Joseph William to the Red River Academy to be educated. He attended this Academy for five years. His time there overlapped (and he undoubtedly knew) three other students of this Academy, the older sons of Chief Factor Archibald McDonald and his Métis wife Jane Klyne McDonald (who is profiled in another chapter

of this book).

While attending school, young Joseph lived with his grandfather Thomas Bunn. Bunn, who had served at Brandon House among other places, had moved to the Red River Settlement on his retirement from the HBC.

After completing his education, Joseph joined the HBC in 1844 at the tender age of 15 years. In the following year he became an apprentice sailor with the HBC based at Fort Vancouver in the Oregon Country. He was to spend the rest of his life and career west of the Rocky Mountains.

His Métis ties to the Red River Settlement ran deep. After his grandmother's death, his grandfather Thomas Bunn married Phoebe Sinclair who was half his age. Phoebe was James Sinclair's younger sister. James Sinclair was the outstanding Métis leader of the Red River Expeditions to the Oregon Country described in another chapter of this book.

McKay's uncle John Bunn had been sent to Scotland as a teenager to study medicine. After his training, Bunn returned to his homeland and became the Aboriginal physician in the Red River Settlement. He later returned to Edinburgh for one year in 1831 to enhance his medical knowledge in order to better serve the Settlement.

Another of Joseph's uncles was John Richards McKay, also a fur trader with the HBC. This uncle served at various posts including Brandon House, Qu'Appelle and Pembina.

A third uncle Charles McKay (a brother of John Richards McKay) left Red River for the Oregon Country in 1841 with the James Sinclair Expedition of that year. Uncle Charles brought his wife Letitia Bird (daughter of the prominent Chief Factor James Bird) and their four children on this trans-mountain migration. Letitia was the sister of Elizabeth Bird, the wife of James Sinclair. Only a few years later in 1843 at Champoeg in the French Prairie area, Charles McKay took an active role in the formation of the Provisional Government of the Oregon Country.

Another notable Métis relative of Joseph William McKay was Thomas Bunn Jr., the son of Joseph's uncle John Bunn and his Métis aunt Catherine Thomas. This member of the Bunn family was born in 1830 and was also educated at the Red River Academy. He was a student there at the same time as his cousin Joseph William McKay and the older sons of Archibald McDonald and Jane Klyne.

In later years Thomas Bunn was to become deeply involved in matters relating to the Red River Resistance of 1869-70. He backed Louis Riel, was a member of the Convention of Forty, and was Secretary of State in the Provisional Government of which Riel was the President. In the photo of the members of Riel's Provisional Government, Bunn is shown immediately to the left of Pierre Delorme, the author George Goulet's great grandfather.

Notwithstanding these strong family ties in the Red River Settlement, Joseph William McKay's destiny lay west of the Rocky Mountains. Except for his first year at Fort Vancouver, the remainder of his life was to be spent in what was to become British Columbia.

His career as a sailor at Fort Vancouver was short-lived. In November 1846 he was re-assigned to land duties at Fort Victoria. This was likely as a result of the *Oregon Treaty* of 1846 which established the International Boundary at the 49th parallel. With the signing of that Treaty the land on which Fort Vancouver was located became part of the United States. At his new posting, the seventeen year old McKay was given the task of exploring the lands between Fort Victoria and Esquimalt with a view to the establishment of a road to a millstream.

His obvious talents were quickly recognized by Roderick Finlayson who was in charge of Fort Victoria. In 1848 McKay was appointed postmaster of Fort Victoria while still a teenager. A year later he became an apprentice clerk at the Fort at a salary of £30 per annum. This latter position breached the HBC's unwritten "ceiling policy" east of the Rockies that prevented mixed blood males from rising above the position of postmaster. It apparently was

not applied as rigidly in the New Caledonia and Columbia Districts.

James Douglas became the Chief Factor of Fort Victoria in 1849 and McKay acted as his clerk. Douglas considered McKay to be an "active, faithful, and trusty servant". McKay performed more than simply clerk's duties for the Chief Factor.

Likely due to his abilities to converse with the Natives in Chinook Jargon, McKay participated in a number of the talks leading to the *Fort Victoria Treaties*. These Treaties were made by Douglas with the Songhee and surrounding Native peoples between 1850 and 1852. Their intent was to extinguish First Nations title to the lands covered by them.

McKay was also valuable to Douglas and the HBC as an explorer. He provided informative maps, charts, and reports related to his activities. In 1850 he explored the south coast of Vancouver Island and reported on its features. He even drew a multi-colored sketch showing the layout of "woods, and water, hill and plain".

Joseph William McKay has deservedly gone down in history as the first non-Native discoverer of the Nanaimo coal fields. His discovery on behalf of the HBC occurred by happenstance.

In December 1849 the Nanaimo Chief Kiet-sa-kum (also called Che-wich-i-kan) went to Fort Victoria to have his gun fixed. On noting some coal being used to replenish the fire in the Fort's forge, he told the blacksmith that there was "Hyou" (plenty) of the "black stone" in the region where he lived.

The blacksmith had the Chief meet with McKay. The Chief was told by McKay that if he brought some black stones from his home to the Fort to be tested he would receive a bottle of rum and his gun would be repaired for nothing. The Chief left but failed to return that winter, and it appeared that nothing would come of this encounter.

However the Chief showed up at the Fort in April 1850

and explained that he had been unable to come earlier because he had been sick over the winter months. As McKay wrote 28 years later, the Chief:

> …. brought a canoe load of coal which proved to be of fine quality. I fitted out a prospecting party at once and about the first of May we landed near the place where the town of Nanaimo is now.

He received from McKay the bottle of rum that had been promised to him. Chief Kiet-sa-kum was thereafter known as "Coal Tyee". The word "tyee" is the Chinook Jargon word meaning chief or elder brother.

The prospecting party led by McKay located a coal vein on the shores of Wentuhuysen Inlet where the Nanaimo Indians lived. McKay gave a favorable account of the find to Chief Factor James Douglas, after whom the vein was named.

Nothing was immediately done to develop this discovery. However two years later, when the coal from Fort Rupert proved to be of poor quality and uneconomic, Douglas directed McKay to return to Nanaimo in 1852 to review the prospects for coal mining at this location.

From that time on during McKay's stay in Nanaimo, he and Douglas kept up an active correspondence concerning affairs there. The dozens of letters that they exchanged give an insight into McKay's leadership in this HBC coal venture. In his explorations McKay found several other seams of coal in the area. One outcrop was 37 inches thick. Douglas was so taken by McKay's report to him that he personally traveled to the site to examine it.

What Douglas observed exceeded his expectations. He realized that a successful coal mining operation would be a significant benefit to the HBC during a period of business diversification. The advent of the steamship at a time of declining sales of furs had provided the incentive to the HBC for coal mining. In addition to meeting its own requirements, the HBC was able to commercially exploit this commodity by exporting the coal for use in naval and commercial shipping and other enterprises.

In an uncharacteristic glowing manner Douglas wrote to Archibald Barclay, Secretary of the HBC, on August 18, 1852 stating in part:

> This discovery has afforded me more satisfaction than I can express.

He indicated that the Colony would receive considerable benefit from McKay's discovery. Douglas promptly followed up with the following instructions to McKay on August 24, 1852:

> You will proceed with all possible diligence to Wentuhuysen Inlet commonly known as Nanymo Bay and formally take possession of the Coal beds lately discovered there for and in behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company.

McKay was directed to ensure that all persons taking coal were to be licensed by the HBC and pay a royalty of two shillings six pence per ton.

The essential role played by Coal Tyee in informing McKay of the "black stones" is commemorated to this day. A bronze bust of Coal Tyee was unveiled on June 29, 2002 at Mark Bate Memorial Tree Plaza in Nanaimo. Besides naming him, the plaque on the monument states in part:

> Revealed Nanaimo Coal Deposits to
> Hudson's Bay Company in 1849

The plaque also reads that Hay-Wa-Kum, the young cousin of Coal Tyee, remembered Joseph William McKay:

> … dancing on top of the coal seams with great joy.

McKay's joyous dance on the coal seams would most likely have been the Red River Jig. During his youthful days living in the Red River Settlement, he would have become acquainted with this traditional Métis dance.

In 1852 McKay acted energetically and without delay in implementing the orders from Douglas. To get operations underway, he immediately had local Indians employed to mine the coal. He had docks built for loading ships; he had houses constructed for the incoming miners; and he opened a trading store. He greeted visiting ships and had them loaded with coal. In September 1852 (the month

after McKay's arrival at Nanaimo) the *Cadboro* and the *Recovery* ships sailed away with tons of coal.

In addition to locating additional seams of coal, McKay found a salt spring nearby. Salt was produced from this spring in order to prepare salmon and game for the winter.

A sawmill was built in 1853 to cut timbers for the mine and lumber for the bastion and buildings that were to be built. Although John Muir was placed in charge of mining operations, McKay oversaw the construction of various buildings. In the spring of 1853 McKay directed and supervised the construction of the Bastion, and further accommodations for miners that were coming that year from England.

The Bastion, which was erected on the Nanaimo waterfront, is a landmark that exists to this day. Its purpose was to intimidate the Natives with a view to protecting HBC employees and miners from harm in Colvile Town (as Nanaimo was then known). Two six pound carronades (cast iron canons manufactured by the Scottish Carron Company) formed part of the Fort's armaments. However they were mostly used for show and to fire salutes for visiting dignitaries.

For the most part the Bastion was built by two expert axmen Jean Baptiste Fortier and Leon Labine, with the assistance of a crew. It was wholly built without the use of metal nails. Fortier boasted of his skills in cutting timber that he could be dragged naked over his timber without a splinter piercing his body.

On June 2, 1853 McKay reported to Douglas:

> The Bastion is nearly finished, we have three dwelling houses 20 x 30 ft habitable, 4 houses 25 x 15 and the wood raised for three houses 20 x 30 ft.

The construction of the Bastion, homes and other buildings under McKay's industrious leadership led to the development of a settlement at Nanaimo. It also increased the capacity for coal production by the HBC. In less than one and a half years after McKay's arrival:

> …. no less than two thousand tons were shipped, one-half of which was taken out with the assistance of Indians.

This flurry of activities in that brief period of time manifests the remarkable talent and skills of the man that masterminded them, Joseph William McKay. As a young man of 23 years, he had taken charge with zeal of this assignment entrusted to him by the Governor.

This mining venture which McKay spearheaded resulted in additional revenue for roads, schools, and other improvements in the Colony. Historian B. A. McKelvie wrote in an article entitled "The Founding of Nanaimo":

> The marvel of the first year of Nanaimo's history is how the capable McKay accomplished so much. He was a man of outstanding ability.

McKay's accomplishments in that short time were remarkable by any measure. However they were even more impressive when one considers that, in the midst of all the hustle and bustle, James Douglas appointed McKay to the command of twenty-one Victoria Voltigeurs. This was in January 1853. The Voltigeurs, mostly Métis, were a military police force formed by Douglas. They are discussed in more detail in another chapter of this book.

In June 1854 McKay applied to Douglas for a three-month leave of absence. He had invested heavily in the Steam Saw Mill Company on Vancouver Island and wanted to get it operational. With reluctance Douglas declined granting him his request as a matter of principle.

As a result McKay left the HBC to attend to the affairs of the sawmill company. Douglas was sorry to lose McKay's services. Subsequently in November 1855, McKay rejoined the HBC. He was assigned to duties in the Indian and general trade stores at Fort Victoria.

About this time he purchased 255 acres of the North Dairy Farm at Cadboro Bay (then known as Cadborough Bay). This land purchase secured for him the property qualification of a candidate for the Colony's newly established House of Assembly. This legislature had recently been organized by James Douglas on instructions

from the British Government.

In the first election that was held in 1856, McKay ran but did not win a seat. However Edward E. Langford's election was nullified due to the fact that he did not meet the necessary land-holding qualification.

McKay, who at that time was an HBC officer, was elected to replace Langford as one of the three members for the Victoria District. Among the other Councilors were Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken (a doctor for the HBC and the son-in-law of Chief Factor and Governor Douglas) and Joseph Despard Pemberton (a surveyor for the HBC).

The Assembly first met for the conduct of business on November 13, 1856. McKay showed his independence as a Councilor. After Douglas had submitted to the Assembly estimates for road construction and postal services, McKay introduced a resolution on May 5, 1857 requesting from the Governor an Abstract of the Annual Income and Expenditure of the Colony to the end of 1856. He wanted particulars of the Colony's debt and to whom it was owed, what interest was paid on it, and the rate of interest.

Douglas, undoubtedly wearing his HBC Chief Factor's hat, apparently did not respond to this request. The HBC still held the Royal Grant to Vancouver Island for a yearly rent of seven shillings. Consequently Douglas likely took the view that the HBC had authority over the finances of the Colony. He was not yet ready to open the doors to a full-fledged democracy for Vancouver Island.

Notwithstanding McKay's attempt at independence he was later criticized for his ties to the HBC. Amor de Cosmos, the bombastic editor of the Victoria *British Colonist* newspaper, looked upon McKay, Helmcken and Pemberton as a HBC triumvirate and labeled them the "Family-Company Compact."

In March 1856 Douglas placed McKay in charge of 35 men to travel to Canal de Arro, one of the San Juan Islands. There was concern that a band of northern Indians might be pillaging the abandoned homes of American settlers. McKay and his force descended on this Indian camp and

captured it without any fatalities.

On another occasion, although he was not in command, McKay and the Victoria Voltigeurs were again involved in an undertaking to avenge harm done to a white settler. This was an attempt by a member of the Cowichan band to murder Thomas Williams and Williams was seriously wounded in the attack. This incident, which occurred in August 1856, is discussed in more detail in the chapter of this book on the Victoria Voltigeurs.

On January 14, 1857 a number of HBC men presented an amateur theatrical performance in Victoria. The play was *The Rivals*, a comedy of manners written in 1775 by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. A lead character in this comedy was Mrs. Malaprop, giving rise to the word "malapropism" (the unintentional misuse of a word resulting in a comic effect).

Among the actors in this play was the surveyor John D. Pemberton who played the role of Sir Lucius O'Trigger. John Swanson (who is profiled in another chapter of this book) played the role of a character named Thomas. The versatile Joseph William McKay took on the persona of Sir Anthony Absolute.

As a result of the frantic gold rush of 1858 in New Caledonia, James Douglas wished to find an overland passage from the Coast to the Interior of the new Colony. Doing so would give Victoria the upper hand in trade and commerce related to the goldfields.

He contemplated the construction of a Cariboo road. With this in mind, he instructed Joseph William McKay to explore the area between Howe Sound and Lillooet Lake to check out a possible route. A trail to the Upper Fraser was soon completed and later a wagon road to the Cariboo was built.

June 1860 was an eventful month for the 31 year old McKay. On June 1st he was promoted to the position of Chief Trader, an officer rank with the HBC. Two weeks later on June 16th he wed Helen Holmes who had come to

Victoria from England.

Not long after, he was made head of the Thompson's River District based at Fort Kamloops. The original Fort had been built in 1812 at the confluence of the North Thompson and South Thompson Rivers.

McKay arrived at Kamloops only a couple of months after his marriage to Helen. He found the Fort in a ramshackle condition, but made do with it for the next four years.

His management of the District impressed his new superior Chief Factor Dugald Mactavish (also spelled MacTavish) in Fort Victoria. James Douglas was no longer in charge. He had severed all association with the HBC in 1858 when he became the first Governor of the Colony of British Columbia.

Chief Factor Mactavish reported to HBC officials in England concerning McKay's activities in the Thompson's River District that:

> McKay manages there very well indeed ….

In September 1862 Mactavish indicated that under McKay Fort Kamloops had become a provisioner to the gold miners and others traveling in that area. Under McKay's guidance the profits had increased for that year.

The run-down condition of Fort Kamloops was not pleasing to McKay. Consequently he commenced construction of a new fort in 1862 on the south bank of the Thompson River to replace the old fort. This site was destined to become an integral part of the present-day city of Kamloops.

About this time McKay was on hand to greet a mixed group of gold-seeking Overlanders in 1862 who were seeking their fortunes in the Cariboo goldfields. This party, many of whom were from eastern Canada, had set out for the west from Red River led by Thomas McMicking. For part of their trip west of the Rocky Mountains from Tête Jaune Cache their guide was the Métis, André

Cardinal from St. Albert in present-day Alberta.

This party was happy to reach a semblance of civilization at Fort Kamloops as they had suffered severely on their westward trek. Catherine Schubert, the only woman on this journey, gave birth at or near the Fort in mid-October 1862. This was the first white-child born in this area.

The following year two Englishmen Viscount Milton and W. B. Cheadle traveled across Western Canada and later wrote about this in *The North-West Passage by Land*. After a very hazardous journey they arrived at Fort Kamloops on August 29, 1863. They wrote that Joseph William McKay:

> …. very kindly engaged to find us horses and accompany us as far as Yale, the head of navigation on the Fraser ….

In *Cheadle's Journal* of this same trip he described his first impression of McKay as follows:

> Undersized man in cowhide coat and breeches, jack-boots & large-peaked cap; like an overgrown jockey; dark complexioned, but features remarkably like Fanny Essex. He made himself particularly agreeable, sympathized with our hardships, & told us all the news in which he was very well up indeed.
>
> …. In evening McKay showed us specimens of Opal found on Kamloops lake, & gave us each one.
>
> …. McKay full of talk on all kinds of subjects.

The following year Cheadle wrote a letter to McKay dated December 31st stating in part:

> Will you remember me kindly to Mrs. MacKay & my sister wishes me to send her love to the Miss Helen Holmes [McKay's wife] of her school days.

During his time as Chief Trader of the Thompson's River District, McKay continued to engage in exploration. In 1864 he checked out the area between Osoyoos Lake and Shepherd and marked out a path. A pack-trail was subsequently built from Osoyoos Lake to Kootenay via Shepherd.

In 1865 McKay was selected to explore and survey a route in the interior area of the Colony for part of the

telegraph line that was to be built from Red River (present-day Winnipeg) to the Pacific Coast.

In April of that year McKay set out to inspect the upper Fraser River area to Fort George. From there he traveled south to Fort Alexandria, and he also investigated in the vicinity of Tête Jaune Cache. In his report he recommended that the telegraph line run from Tête Jaune Cache along the North Thompson River, then via Richfield.

The following year, after six years at Fort Kamloops, McKay was posted to Fort Yale and was the supervisor of its business. He ran its affairs until 1870 after which he spent a year at the HBC operations at Kootenay and was soon transferred to Victoria as head of the HBC Sale Shop.

Three weeks after his move to Victoria a momentous event occurred. The Colony of British Columbia entered Confederation and became the seventh Province of Canada on July 20, 1871.

Another highlight of McKay's career was his appointment as a Chief Factor of the HBC in June 1872. He continued to superintend the Sale Shop in Victoria for a further two years.

McKay's exploration skills and business acumen were again recognized in April 1874. He was asked to investigate commercial possibilities for the HBC as a result of the latest gold rush in the areas of the Stikine River and Dease Lake. As usual he prepared an informative written report giving his findings and opinions. Consequently he was placed in charge of an HBC trading operation in the Stikine District.

The varied talents of McKay were once more called into play in the summer of 1877. William Charles, the new Chief Factor at Victoria, requested McKay to move to Fort Simpson to oversee the HBC's coastal trade.

However the following year his association with the HBC was discontinued due to his extensive external business interests. McKay had personally invested in fish, forestry, and mineral ventures. According to Richard

Mackie in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* McKay also managed a salmon cannery on the Stikine River for a two year period starting in September 1878.

In the 1880s and 1890s McKay became a Federal Government civil servant. His first position was that of Census Commissioner for the Province of British Columbia. This lasted for two years and was followed by his appointment as Indian Agent on November 1, 1883. He served in that capacity in various areas of British Columbia well into the 1890s.

During the years 1886 to 1888 McKay personally vaccinated some 1,300 Indians in British Columbia against smallpox. This was the dreaded disease that had decimated the Indian population all across North America. By his efforts he undoubtedly contributed in a significant way to saving the lives of many First Nations people.

McKay was fluent in Chinook Jargon, a patois used in the Pacific Northwest in the fur trade. He had learned this language as a result of his dealings with the Natives over the years. Chinook Jargon was the regional language used west of the Rocky Mountains by the fur traders in their dealings with the Indians.

McKay became the Assistant Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia in 1893. He was ideally suited for this position as a result of his dealings with First Nations people over many years and his practical knowledge of their customs and traditions.

During the later part of his life McKay wrote several articles. These included "Recollections of a Chief Trader in the Hudson's Bay Company" *circa* 1878; "The Fur Trading System" in 1897; and "The Indians of British Columbia, a Brief Review of their Probable Origin, History and Customs" in 1899.

Joseph William McKay died at Victoria on December 21, 1900 at 71 years of age. He was survived by one son and four daughters.

On September 16, 1945 a crowd gathered at the historic

Bastion in Nanaimo to honor this great British Columbian. The occasion was the unveiling of a bronze plaque commemorating Joseph William McKay as the Founder of Nanaimo. It was undraped by his daughter Agnes Mackay [sic]. This plaque is firmly affixed to the outside wall of the Bastion in a prominent position, and reads:

IN MEMORY OF
JOSEPH WILLIAM McKAY
MACKAY
1829-1900
FUR TRADER, EXPLORER, LEGISLATOR
FOUNDER OF NANAIMO 1852
HE BUILT THIS BASTION
IN 1853

In addition to a number of dignitaries at the ceremony, McKay's four daughters were present. Also present were two daughters of the deceased Joseph Despard Pemberton and a granddaughter of James and Amelia Douglas.

In much smaller print under McKay's name on the plaque appears "Mackay". There was some suggestion that that was the original spelling of Joseph William's surname, and it was the spelling that had been used by his daughters after his death.

It was McKay's daughters' belief that the HBC, for the sake of simplicity, required all "Mac" surnames of its employees to be spelled "Mc". However this seems unlikely as there were HBC employees with the prefix "Mac" in their surnames.

At the commemoration ceremony in 1945 it was announced that from that time on Mount J. W. McKay was to be the new name of Buffalo Observation Point. This is a high peak situated between Victoria and Ladysmith.

Other memorials to McKay are McKay Point on Newcastle Island in the bay at Nanaimo, and McKay Reach on Princess Royal Island on the North Coast of British Columbia.

The death of Joseph William McKay a few days before Christmas 1900 brought an end to the multifaceted and outstanding career of a memorable trail-blazing Métis

pioneer in British Columbia's history. As a teenager he had commenced his career west of the Rocky Mountains as an apprentice sailor. From there he progressed into many different spheres of endeavors that continued for the rest of his life.

His activities extended to various occupational and geographic areas in the lands now forming the Province of British Columbia, the land he loved. His career extended from the early outposts of pre-colonial British Columbia, through its colonial eras, and into the time of provincial status.

Joseph William McKay's overall contributions to the development of the Province of British Columbia as a fur trader, trailblazer, explorer, miner, community founder, legislator and civil servant are truly notable. The exceptional life of this extraordinary Métis pioneer is a prime example of the many contributions made by the Métis during the early history of British Columbia.

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Chapter X

JOSETTE LEGACÉ WORK
Pioneer Métis Matriarch

There was a remarkable pioneer couple in the early days of fur trade society west of the Rocky Mountains - John Work and his Métis country wife Josette (sometimes called Suzette) Legacé. They left a lasting mark on the history of the Province of British Columbia

In 1825 John and Josette were married *à la façon du pays* at Fort Colvile in the Oregon Country. Work was then the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) clerk in charge of that Fort. At the time of their country marriage he was in his mid-thirties, while his bride was only sixteen years old.

Josette and John eventually had eleven children, three sons and eight daughters. Their marital union lasted until the day of John Work's death in 1861.

Work was born with the surname Wark about 1792 in Taughboyne, County Donegal, Ireland. At the age of 22 he embarked from the Orkney Islands for Hudson Bay to work for the HBC.

Until 1823, he served in several areas of Rupert's Land, including York Factory in present day Manitoba. In that year he was transferred west of the Rocky Mountains where he was to live the rest of his life. He crossed the Continental Divide to the Columbia District with Peter Skene Ogden, a fur trader with the HBC. Their paths would cross frequently in the future.

John's Métis country wife Josette was born about 1809 in the Oregon Country. Her mixed-blood lineage was derived from her father Pierre Legacé, a French Canadian voyageur and her mother, a Nez Perce woman. Her father was known as "Old Pierre".

In the Indian Country, Josette's Aboriginal blood brought the same advantages to her husband as that which other country wives brought to their marital relationships. This proved particularly advantageous in their early days when Josette accompanied John on many of his fur-trading ventures. Their young children also traveled with them.

This was so even though the expeditions sometimes entered into the territory of hostile Indians, and frequently involved long and distant travel over many months.

In 1830 Work was promoted to Chief Trader in charge of the Snake Country Expedition, succeeding Peter Skene Ogden. Ogden had succeeded Alexander Ross as leader of these Expeditions. It is likely that the free trader identified as "Old Pierre" in the 1824 Expedition to the Snake Country, led by Alexander Ross, was Josette's father.

Even though she was pregnant, John Work took Josette and their children with him on the 1830-31 Expedition. During this combined hunting and fur-trading trip into the Snake Country, their daughter Letitia was born on June 15, 1831 in what was to become Idaho.

The following year Josette and the children traveled with him and his crew on another trapping expedition. During this 1832-33 Expedition they went southward into what is now California.

Confirmation of dangers sometimes encountered on these expeditions appears in a letter from George T. Allen (a clerk on the Columbia) to James Hargrave who was then in Rupert's Land. Concerning one of Work's expeditions, the letter states in part:

> You have no doubt heard that Mr. Work in his last trip to the Snake country had some fighting with the Blackfeet & had some of his people killed.

Work was sent in the fall of 1834 to Fort Simpson (previously Fort Nass) on McLoughlin Bay in what is now North West British Columbia. He was placed in charge of the coastal trade, again succeeding Peter Skene Ogden.

Josette and their children stayed at Fort Vancouver until they were reunited with him at his new posting. During her two year period at Fort Vancouver Josette would have socialized with other country wives at the Fort. These included two other Métis women, Amelia Douglas and Marguerite McLoughlin, the spouses of the top two officials at the Fort.

However in late 1836 Josette and her younger children joined John Work in Fort Simpson. Two older daughters were left behind to attend school. During the thirteen years that Josette was at Fort Simpson, she gave birth to six of their children – three boys and three girls.

Josette, with her Aboriginal blood, was sympathetic to the Indian women at her new location. According to N. de Bertrand Lugrin:

> By precept and example, by earnest teaching and loving care, she began to make her influence felt. She taught the little girls and the young women to cook and to sew, to keep themselves and the other children neat and clean.

As her influence among the Natives grew, she decided to use it to persuade them to give up the slavery that was prevalent among them. She contributed to the discontinuance of this practice by many of them.

In their book *British Columbia Chronicle: 1778-1846*, G. P. V. and Helen B. Akrigg noted that suspended from the walls of the living room of the Work home at Fort Simpson was a variety of stuffed birds. These writers explained that Josette was "an expert taxidermist".

The Akriggs also added that notwithstanding Josette was "a half-Indian fur-trade wife", she was treated with the deference due to a Chief Trader's wife. As an example, Josette had staff to prepare meals for her and her family.

John Work was devoted to his country wife and children. In February 15, 1841 he wrote a letter to his old HBC cohort Edward Ermatinger, who was then living in St. Thomas, Upper Canada. In it Work wrote that Josette had given birth to a son:

> …. like most old fogies I am quite proud of the little fellow, I had given up hopes of having a boy…. The little Wife and I get on very well, She is to me an affectionate partner simple and uninstructed as she is and takes good care of my children & myself[.] We enjoy as great a share of conjugal happiness as generally falls to the lot of married people.

Sylvia Van Kirk, a leading authority on women in fur trade society, noted in *Many Tender Ties* that John Work

often affirmed his

> … esteem for his Métis wife Josette Legacé.

John Work received a promotion in 1846 to Chief Factor. He remained at Fort Simpson in charge of the coastal trade. In that same year the 49th parallel became the international boundary for the area west of the Rocky Mountains.

As well Work was appointed to the three-man Board of Management of the HBC's Columbia District. With him as part of this triumvirate were his long-time associates Chief Factors James Douglas and Peter Skene Ogden.

John Work replaced Dr. John McLoughlin who had retired from the HBC and moved to Oregon City in the Willamette Valley. There was an established Métis community of mainly retired fur-traders and their families in this area that was called French Prairie.

John, Josette and their family lived in Fort Simpson until 1849. In order that his younger children could attend school, he took Josette and the children to live in Fort Victoria in that year. Until then he had been home-schooling them.

In Victoria Josette renewed her old acquaintance with Amelia Douglas, her Métis friend from Fort Vancouver. This close friendship would last for many years.

Notwithstanding that they had been married *á la façon du pays* for 23 years, John and Josette had Reverend R. J. Staines marry them in a religious ceremony in Victoria on November 6, 1849. This may have been motivated by the fact that Staines was soon thereafter to preside at the weddings of two of their children. A short time later their older daughters were married. Sarah married Roderick Finlayson (who later became a Chief Factor); and Jane wed another HBC official Dr. William Fraser Tolmie.

After the weddings, John Work returned to Fort Simpson as District Manager where he remained until 1852. In the summer of that year he moved to Victoria to rejoin Josette and the younger children.

He purchased a large tract of farmland on which he built a substantial home which he called "Hillside". It was located at a distance from Fort Victoria in what is today the Hillside District of the City of Victoria.

He carried on his functions as a Chief Factor of the HBC and in 1858 he was appointed to the Board of Management of the HBC headquartered at Victoria. With him on this Board were Alexander Grant Dallas (a son-in-law of James Douglas) and Dugald Mactavish.

Prior to that his long time HBC comrade Governor James Douglas had appointed Work to the Council of the Colony of Vancouver Island in 1853. This further enhanced the status of John and Josette in Victoria's society.

Josette and John Work entertained at their Hillside home on many occasions. An English naval officer Richard Charles Mayne (after whom Mayne Island is named) came to Victoria in 1857 as a surveyor. In his *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island*, he wrote:

> In fine weather, riding parties of the gentlemen and ladies of the place were formed, and we returned generally to a high tea or tea-dinner at Mr. Douglas's or Mr. Work's, winding up the pleasant evening with dance and song.

The demeaning comments (noted in another chapter of this book) which Charles Wilson had made in his diary about "half-breed" ladies did not deter Wilson from accepting the hospitality of Josette and John. On Saturday September 3, 1859, he wrote:

> Directly I landed I started off to spend the evening with the Works & thank them for all their kindness …. They got up an impromptu hop immediately & we danced till Sunday commenced ….

Perhaps Wilson did not know of Josette's Métis lineage since he added:

> The Works are about the kindest people I ever came across.

Wilson also attended a large dinner party at the home of Josette and John Work on January 2, 1860. His diary entry stated;

> This evening kept as New Year's Day …. There were about 30

> at dinner …. We danced away till 12 & then all hands sat down to a sumptuous supper & then set to work dancing again until a very late hour.

The presence of the attractive daughters of Josette and John in Victoria did not take long to draw male suitors to their Hillside home. In due course all of their eight daughters were married, but their three sons died without issue.

In addition to the marriages of Sarah to Roderick Finlayson and Jane to Dr. William Fraser Tolmie during the winter of 1849-50, Mary Work wed Chief Commissioner of the HBC James Allen Grahame in 1860.

In that same year Sarah and Roderick Finlayson had a party on February 13th. Charles Wilson attended it and noted in his diary:

> …. we had great fun there, an old gentleman playing on the fiddle for us to dance to …. Scotch reels and Irish jigs to an immense extent.

Josette and John's youngest daughter Suzette, who was born at Fort Victoria in 1854, married Edward Gawler Prior in 1878. After the death of Josette's son-in-law Roderick Finlayson in 1892, Edward replaced his deceased brother-in-law as one of the trustees of the Work Estate. Prior was later to become Premier of British Columbia in 1902 and Lieutenant Governor of the Province in 1919.

Josette and John were the grandparents of a future Premier of British Columbia. Simon Fraser Tolmie was one of the children born to their daughter Jane and her husband William Fraser Tolmie. Simon was to become Premier of the Province of British Columbia on August 21, 1928. He served in that capacity for over five years.

John Work died in Victoria in December 1861. At the time of his death he was not only one of the wealthiest men and largest landowners in the Colony, he was also one of its most highly respected citizens.

Josette was a widow for 35 years. She lived out her life as a matriarch of Victoria society and continued her long and close friendship with Lady Amelia Douglas. It is

interesting to note that on August 18, 1874 she entered into an Indenture with the Registrar General of British Columbia in which she signed her name Suzette Work rather than Josette Work. Her signature was in good and legible handwriting.

There is a photograph of Josette in her later years in which she is sitting in a chair dressed like, and appearing similar to, pictures of Queen Victoria from the same time period. In this photograph, her demeanor is that of a self-assured lady.

On January 30, 1896 Josette died at the advanced age for that time of 87 years. She is buried in the Ross Bay Cemetery in Victoria. On her tombstone her name appears as Suzette Work.

On the day after her death the British Columbia Legislature paid a special tribute to her. Premier John H. Turner stated that Josette was an honored pioneer of British Columbia. He referred to her sympathy to those in sickness and in trouble and her kind works and charitable actions.

The Legislature then adopted the following resolution:

> That the Members of this Legislature having heard with regret of the death of Mrs. Work, wife of the late Hon. John Work, a member of the Council of Vancouver's Island from 1853 to 1861, who before her demise was the oldest resident of British Columbia, and who will be remembered for her usefulness in pioneer work and many good deeds, beg to express their sympathy with the relatives of the deceased.

Josette's life in British Columbia had spanned several eras – from the fur trade society of the frontier outposts through colonial times to provincial status – from the wilderness days to civilization.

There is a profile of Josette Légace in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, but surprisingly there is not one of Amelia Connolly Douglas.

Josette was a true pioneer who had participated in and contributed to the growth of this beautiful Province. Like her close friend Amelia Connolly Douglas, Josette Work

was an outstanding Métis and British Columbian.

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Chapter XI

JEAN BAPTISTE BOUCHER *(*WACCAN)
Multi-Talented Métis Pioneer

Jean Baptiste Boucher was a French-Cree Métis child of the fur trade. He played a number of important roles in the pre-colonial era of British Columbia.

He was born about 1789 in the Athabasca District of what is now the Province of Alberta. His surname was sometimes spelled Bouché, although he is best known by his nickname "Waccan".

He was a talented guide, interpreter and explorer in the fur trade. He also acted as an avenger, and an intermediary with the Natives. He initially served with the North West Company (NWC) and subsequently with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) after the 1821 merger of these two fur-trading rivals.

The prelude to Boucher's career west of the Rocky Mountains was the decision by the NWC to extend its operations to that area. Boucher was a teenager when he traveled west of the Rocky Mountains in 1806 with the great explorer and NWC partner Simon Fraser.

Besides exploration, this Fraser expedition was to include the construction of fur-trading posts. As a result of being a part of this journey, Boucher was to spend the rest of his life in the land that was to become the Province of British Columbia.

The NWC wanted Simon Fraser and his crew of voyageurs to explore to its mouth the Great River (the Fraser) that Alexander Mackenzie had descended in 1793. They were undoubtedly spurred on by word of the American Corps of Discovery's overland expedition (led by Lewis and Clark) to the mouth of the Columbia River in 1805.

In the autumn of that year Fraser and his crew established Rocky Mountain Portage Fort. This post was located on the Peace River near Rocky Mountain Canyon and not far from current-day Hudson's Hope. It was to serve as a base for the westward thrust of the NWC to the

Pacific Ocean.

Fraser's 1806 journey west of the Rockies with Boucher and other Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs led to the establishment of Fort St. James on Stuart Lake in 1806. This Fort later became the administrative center of the fur trade in New Caledonia.

Fort Fraser was established by Simon Fraser's crew on the Fraser River in 1806. The following year they built Fort George (now Prince George) at the junction of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers. In Fraser's various interactions with the Carrier Indians in these areas, Jean Baptiste Boucher was of invaluable assistance to him and the NWC as an interpreter and go-between.

In 1808 Simon Fraser put together an exploratory team consisting of John Stuart, Jules Quesnel, 19 Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs and two Indians. Surnames of the voyageurs included Boucher (Waccan), LaChappelle, Baptiste, D'Alaire, LaCerte, LaGarde, Gagne, and Bourbonnais.

This crew set out from Stuart Lake on May 28 on their expedition in search of the Pacific Ocean. After a number of harrowing experiences and traveling over hazardous waterways, they reached their destination on July 2, 1808.

Due to the hostile attitude of some Natives they encountered in the area, they did not linger. They quickly left for Fort George and arrived there on August 6th. During this expedition Fraser would have made frequent use of Boucher's interpretive skills and his ability to communicate with the Natives.

On completion of this epic trip, Boucher was posted to Fort St. James. There he was employed as an interpreter and voyageur for the NWC and later, after the merger of the two companies, for the HBC. He was also an emissary to the Indians in order to develop the fur trade for the Company. His role was to persuade them to hunt for furs which they could then trade with the company for various goods.

One of his other functions was as a provisioner. This included acquiring sufficient salmon and other foods from the Natives for the needs of the Company employees stationed at the Fort.

Because of his unflinching courage, his size, his strength, and his ability to communicate with the Indians he had an influence over them that was unequaled. Depending on the circumstances of a particular situation they highly respected Waccan or highly feared him.

It was the Indians who gave him the nickname "Waccan". His reputation as a man to be reckoned with became widespread throughout the whole area of New Caledonia.

Boucher married a Carrier woman in 1811 according to the custom of the country (*á la façon du pays*). Their marriage did not endure for any length of time. He next entered into a country marriage with a young Métis woman named Nancy McDougall. Nancy was the daughter of James McDougall, a NWC officer.

In 1805 James McDougall had participated in the establishment of Fort McLeod (north of present day Prince George) and was placed in charge of it. Prior to that time James McDougall, while in charge of Fort McLeod, was the first white man to discover and ascend the Nechako River, a tributary of the Fraser River. He then explored along the Stuart River to its source at Carrier Lake. That lake, whose name was soon changed to Stuart Lake after the NWC's John Stuart, was in the heart of the Carrier (Dakelh) Nation.

Jean Baptiste Boucher likely met Nancy McDougall at Fort St. James since her father was for several years the assistant to John Stuart at the Fort. During their long union they had 17 children, all born in New Caledonia. Their country marriage lasted until they were parted by death.

Nancy McDougall Boucher is the same person who in 1828 played a vital role with Amelia Connolly Douglas in saving the life of James Douglas. This was in the notable Kwah Incident that is described in the chapter of this book

on Amelia Connolly Douglas. In his *History of British Columbia*, Alexander Begg called Nancy a "heroine" for her presence of mind and boldness in responding to the dire threat to the life of Douglas.

Nancy's timely and courageous participation in the Kwah Incident with Amelia Connolly Douglas had a momentous impact on the future history of the Province of British Columbia. These two Métis country wives, with their knowledge of Indian customs, had interceded to save the life of the man who was to become the "Father of British Columbia".

In 1811 the NWC inaugurated a brigade system for the transportation of furs and other commodities within New Caledonia. On taking over John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company (PCF) in 1813, the NWC acquired a number of forts in the Columbia District including Fort Okanogan and changed the spelling to Fort Okanagan.

As a result the NWC expanded its fur trading routes to include these former PFC forts. Jean Baptiste Boucher was commissioned on a number of occasions to act as the guide and interpreter for these trips.

After the merger of the NWC and the HBC in 1821, the HBC fur trade brigades took over the transportation of furs from southern New Caledonia to the mouth of the Columbia River. This was done by a combination of pack horses, canoes and bateaux. At their destination the furs were unloaded and the brigade picked up provisions, goods and supplies to take to various posts in New Caledonia. The round trip took about four months.

Boucher stayed on with the HBC after the merger and continued to act as a guide and interpreter, coming and going, on these brigades. As noted earlier, after crossing the Rocky Mountains as a teenager Boucher spent his entire fur trading career in New Caledonia, primarily at Fort St. James.

Jean Baptiste Boucher outlasted a number of NWC partners and HBC Chief Factors posted at that Fort. These included John Stuart, William Connolly (the father of

Amelia Connolly Douglas), Peter Skene Ogden, and the Métis Peter Warren Dease.

He also knew many of the younger Company employees that were on staff there over the years. Among them was James Douglas when he served as assistant to Chief Factor William Connolly. Although Boucher and Douglas were serving together at Fort St. James at the time of the Kwah Incident, Boucher was temporarily absent from the Fort when his wife Nancy and Amelia Connolly Douglas saved the life of James Douglas. As noted hereafter Boucher was away performing one of his enforcement roles.

Because the HBC realized the esteem with which the Carriers and other Natives regarded him, and the invaluable services he provided, the HBC accorded Boucher privileges which were not granted to other HBC employees working in similar positions. His unique situation with the HBC was not that of a servant or an officer.

A prime example of his status was that the HBC granted him a private residence for himself, his wife Nancy, and their children. Their first home was at Fort St. James and later he received a home at Fort Alexandria when he was stationed there.

In *The Lifeline of the Oregon Country*, James R. Gibson referred to the 1827 leather brigade. He wrote that Waccan (Boucher) was in charge of this 13 person brigade. He quoted Chief Factor Connolly as rating Boucher:

> …. the best interpreter in New Caledonia ….

He was obviously fluent in both Michif and Chinook Jargon, the pidgin languages used to communicate with the Indians in the fur trade. Michif was the language used on the Great Plains, and Chinook Jargon was used on the Pacific Slope.

Jean Baptiste Boucher was mentioned a number of times by the Reverend A. G. Morice in his work *The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia (formerly New Caledonia)*. Among other matters Morice wrote that at

Fort St. James Boucher:

> …. was the perpetual right arm of the successive managers, their *ex officio* lieutenant who was repeatedly entrusted with the charge of the main fort during the absence of its official head.

Waccan was the faithful steward who protected the salmon and fur convoys and obtained food from the Natives for the staff at the Fort. He was also deputized by the HBC to persuade the Natives in the area to discontinue their gambling and to hunt for furs for his employer.

Morice added:

> Waccan, the terrible Waccan, was the Company's gendarme and chief executioner in New Caledonia; he was the official avenger of the killed, the policeman ….

One example of his enforcement role that contributed to his notoriety in this respect occurred in 1828. Boucher's half-brother Duncan Livingston was murdered by a Babine Indian. Waccan was determined to avenge Livingston's death. He immediately set out to track down the murderer and as a result was not at the Fort at the time of the Kwah Incident.

When Waccan found the Babine Indian with several of his comrades, he shot and killed the murderer of his half-brother on the spot. He also wounded one of the other Indians who had come to help his tribal member. The other onlookers were overawed by Waccan's boldness and fierce demeanor and did not attempt to intervene.

It was after that incident that Waccan acted as an interpreter during a visit by Governor George Simpson to the Fort St. James area in 1828. This was while Simpson and Archibald McDonald were en route to Fort Langley. While there, Simpson lectured the Carrier Indians about their conduct. His "address was made to them through" the "Linguist" Waccan and Chief Factor William Connolly.

In 1843 the HBC postmaster William Morwick was killed at Babine Lake. Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden, then in charge of Fort St. James, sent an expedition to take revenge. In *British Columbia Chronicle, 1778-1846*, G. P. V. and Helen Akrigg wrote that the group was accompanied

by:

> …. the dreaded "Waccan" (Jean Baptiste Boucher), a sort of master-of-arms who disciplined the Company's employees [and] handled the Indians when they got unruly ….

In this instance a Babine Indian was shot and killed to avenge the death of Morwick. Another of Waccan's functions was to enforce discipline among the HBC employees. If a servant deserted the Company, the tenacious Waccan was the person designated to go after him and bring him back to the Fort.

In *French-Canadians of the West*, the author notes that in 1841 Fathers François-Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers received a contribution from Jean Baptiste Boucher to assist them in the Catholic Missions of the Columbia on the Pacific Coast. Father Blanchet was later to become the first Bishop of Oregon (including Nisqually, later called the Diocese of Seattle). Father Demers was later named the first Bishop of Vancouver Island.

In 1842 Father Demers visited Jean Baptiste and Nancy Boucher. In that year Father Demers "baptized and taught" the 17 children of the Bouchers. In the 1846 Parish records for the St. Paul Mission in Willamette the name "Wakan" Boucher is recorded.

On August 26, 1849 Jean Baptiste Boucher (Waccan) died of measles. The last survivor of Simon Fraser's epic trip to the Pacific Ocean in 1808 had spent over four decades of his life in the New Caledonia District, mostly at Fort St. James.

As A. G. Morice wrote in *The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia*:

> Chief Factors came and Chief Factors went, but Waccan stayed under all governments. Finally, he was by regular appointment the interpreter of the central post, and by birth nothing else than a poor French Cree half-breed.

Jean Baptiste Boucher had helped to open up the interior of British Columbia to trade, commerce, and non-Aboriginal settlements. His career covered many aspects - explorer, guide, interpreter par excellence, middleman, fur-

trade brigade leader, negotiator, guardian, enforcer and provisioner.

His many talents were recognized by his employer in the unique status the HBC accorded to him and his family. Waccan the "poor French Cree half-breed" was a notable example of Métis contributions to pre-colonial days in British Columbia.

This pioneering Métis couple, the multi-talented Jean Baptiste Boucher and his faithful country wife Nancy McDougall Boucher, merit a special place in the history of New Caledonia as it evolved into the Colony of British Columbia.

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Chapter XII

JANE KLYNE McDONALD
Leading Lady of Fort Langley

Jane Klyne was the notable Métis country wife of Archibald McDonald, a fur-trading officer of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) west of the Rocky Mountains.

When McDonald was appointed Chief Trader of the HBC at Fort Langley in the late 1820s, Jane became the Mistress of Fort Langley and a role model for the country wives at that Fort.

Jane's father Michel Klyne was of Dutch-Canadian ancestry. A former voyageur with the North West Company (NWC), Michel was eventually appointed to the position of Postmaster at Jasper House by the HBC. This was the highest position that a servant, who was not an officer, could attain in the HBC. Michel married Suzanne la France, a Métis woman, in accordance with the custom of the Indian Country.

Jane Klyne was born on August 23, 1810 at an HBC post in the Athabasca District in what is today the Province of Alberta. As a child Jane and her sisters accompanied their parents on various trips that their father Michel took in performance of his duties in the fur trade.

Francis Ermatinger, a trader with the HBC, recounted in one of his letters a trip that he took with the Klyne family from Edmonton House to Jasper House. He noted that the group, including young Jane, rode horses and traveled by canoe and on foot in order to reach their destination.

As with other Métis girls, Jane acquired the art of making moccasins and netting thongs to make snowshoes. As she grew older she also assisted her parents in looking after her younger siblings.

Jane first met her future husband Archibald McDonald when she was a young teenager. They met when her father Michel took his family with him west of the Rocky

Mountains on one of his Company trips. It was probably at the Boat Encampment located at the junction of the Columbia and Canoe Rivers that they met.

Before long they fell in love and soon referred to each other fondly as Jenny and Archy respectively. The 15 year old Métis girl married her handsome fur trader in September, 1825 *à la façon du pays*. Archy was then some twenty years older than Jenny.

She was Archy's second country wife. He had previously been married *à la façon du pays* in the Oregon Country in 1823 to Princess Raven (also known as Princess Sunday), one of the daughters of the powerful and famed Chinook Chief Concomly. Princess Raven's father had over 100 slaves and was dominant in the area near Fort George (formerly Fort Astoria).

Chief Concomly had a number of daughters, all of whom were referred to as princesses. Other prominent fur traders married other daughters of Concomly. One of them was Duncan McDougall, who had become a senior partner in John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company (PFC) after leaving the employ of the NWC.

McDougall was in charge of Fort Astoria when he sold the business operations of the PFC west of the Rocky Mountains to the NWC after the war of 1812. This transaction resulted in McDougall rejoining the NWC and becoming one of its partners. He subsequently retired to the Red River area.

A number of McDougalls who are Métis had their ancestry in the Red River Settlement. These include several Métis ancestors of George Goulet, one of the authors of this book, whose mother's maiden name was Laura McDougall.

Chief Concomly's daughter Princess Raven died about one year after her country marriage to Archibald McDonald. She and Archy had one son Ranald who was born on February 3, 1824 on the 34th birthday of his father.

Archibald McDonald was born at Leechkentium,

Scotland on February 3, 1790. His father was Angus McDonald and his mother was Mary Rankin.

He studied some medicine, likely at the University of Edinburgh, but did not become a physician. As a young man he acted as a clerk and recruiting agent in Scotland for Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk.

Lord Selkirk was then the largest shareholder in the HBC. In 1811 the HBC had granted Selkirk a huge tract of land in Rupert's Land equaling about 116,000 square miles in what now is known as southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the northern parts of North Dakota and Minnesota.

Selkirk wished to establish an agricultural colony and people it with poor Scottish and Irish immigrants and their families. At that time the HBC was undergoing financial difficulties. The Company had stopped issuing dividends and the price of its shares had significantly dropped,

In setting up the Settlement Selkirk was prompted by his ambitious mercantile nature, the corporate designs of the HBC to expand its trade in the Indian Country in opposition to the NWC, and perhaps by humanitarian concerns.

Because of the close connections between Selkirk and the HBC, his altruistic motives may have been somewhat tenuous. According to Glyndwr Williams in an article in *The Beaver* magazine:

> …. the first recruits for Red River signed for service with the Company …. The distinction between colony and Company was a fine one.

Miles Macdonell, who was selected by Selkirk to be the first Governor of the Settlement, was also given a commission by the HBC. In 1812 one of the recruiters in Scotland that Lord Selkirk engaged to find settlers for the Red River Settlement was 22 year old Archibald McDonald.

The following year Archy left Stromness on the ship *Prince of Wales* as second-in-command of over 90 immigrants to the Red River Settlement. Wintering near

Fort Churchill, the group finally arrived at Red River in the summer of 1814.

The establishment of Selkirk's colony and the arbitrary dictates proclaimed by Governor Miles Macdonell angered the NWC and the Métis of this area. The Métis saw these matters as a threat imposed by foreign intruders to their economic well-being and their traditional way of life. The NWC viewed it as a scheme by the HBC, controlled by Selkirk and his brother-in-law Andrew Colvile, to do serious damage to the NWC's fur-trading operations.

The animosities that had developed led to an unpremeditated outbreak of hostilities in 1816 in which the recently appointed Governor Semple of the Selkirk Colony and 20 of his men were killed by the Métis. Subsequently W. B. Coltman was appointed as a Royal Commissioner to investigate this Battle of Seven Oaks.

He reported that "next to certainty" the first shot was fired by Semple's men. This occurrence (together with Selkirk's death in 1820) was a factor that led to the merger of the NWC with the HBC in 1821 under the continuing name of the HBC.

Archibald McDonald was caught up in a bizarre incident in an aftermath to the Battle of Seven Oaks. In addition to W. B. Coltman the other Commissioner was the eccentric John Fletcher. Archy was in charge of a brigade of Selkirk mercenaries (the de Meuron Regiment) and HBC servants that were heading from Sault Ste. Marie to Fort William and to Red River. Backed up by a militia, Fletcher ordered that the departure of Archy's group from the Sault be delayed. Fletcher apparently feared that the de Meurons intended to cause trouble.

When Archy went to Fort William to talk to Fletcher about the matter, Fletcher (who had likely been imbibing brandy) ranted to Archy about his extensive powers and that he could have Archy hanged within an hour. Fletcher even referred to drawing and quartering. He then had the incredulous Archy arrested. Fortunately Archy was released the next day and he and his entourage were

allowed to proceed to Red River.

Archibald McDonald became a clerk with the HBC in 1820. After a short time at Île-à-la Crosse (in what is now Saskatchewan) he was posted to Fort George (formerly Fort Astoria) in the Oregon Country.

Within a year of Jane Klyne's country marriage to Archibald McDonald in 1825, Governor George Simpson placed Archy in charge of the Thompson's River District at Fort Kamloops in New Caledonia.

Archy's chief clerk at this posting was François Noel Annance (who was one of the HBC employees who had built Fort Langley). A few weeks after giving birth to her first child Angus at Fort Okanagan on August 1, 1826, Jenny arrived at Fort Kamloops. Another son Archibald Jr. was born at Fort Kamloops on February 3, 1828.

Later that year McDonald made a trip with Governor George Simpson from Norway House to west of the Rocky Mountains. They traveled in the same boat down the Fraser River to Fort Langley where they arrived on October 11, 1828.

Their guide was the experienced Alexis L'Esperance then stationed at Norway House but prior to that he had been employed by the HBC in the Columbia District. According to the author Dennis F. Johnson, L'Esperance became a "legendary guide" with the HBC. L'Esperance is the great great grandfather of George Goulet, one of the authors of this book.

Simpson appointed McDonald to the position of Chief Trader and transferred him from Thompson's River to take charge of Fort Langley. It was Simpson's intent that McDonald would make Fort Langley self-sufficient and he expected that there would be "Cultivation and the rearing of Cattle" at that location. The diminutive James Murray Yale, who was to be McDonald's second-in-command at Fort Langley, had also accompanied Simpson and McDonald on their trip down the Fraser River.

Jane and the children were then at Fort Vancouver and

only reached Fort Langley the following summer in 1829. Her husband's position of command and her taking up residence at the Fort meant that she was now the "Leading Lady of Fort Langley".

McDonald has left a vivid description of the Fort as it then was. In *Peace River: A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific*, McDonald wrote in his Journal that the Fort was 135 feet by 120 feet, had two good bastions and was surrounded by a gallery four feet wide.

There was a building with three compartments to house the servants and a small log house of two compartments for the gentlemen. There were also two other houses, one of which had two square rooms with a fireplace in each, and an adjoining kitchen made of slab.

Fort Langley had been built in 1827 under the leadership of James McMillan by, among others, Métis servants of the HBC. Today Fort Langley is designated as a Canadian National Historic Site. One of the plaques on the wall of the Visitor Centre at the Fort reads in part:

> In 1827, a group of twenty-five men – British, Hawaiian, French Canadian, Métis and Iroquois – were sent by the Hudson's Bay Company to establish Fort Langley.
>
> …. within a year relationships were established through the marriage of the fort's men to local Stólö women.

Jane Klyne's husband Archy was a resourceful and intelligent steward of the Fort. He also maintained informative journals in which he gave accounts of the Indians, rivers, climate, soil, births of children and other matters.

Under McDonald's shrewd leadership, good relations were established with the Native tribes. As a consequence Fort Langley soon played a significant role in the Pacific Slope fur trade on the Fraser River, Puget Sound and Vancouver Island.

With the depletion of fur-bearing animals in the area, McDonald successfully engineered a change in Fort Langley's function from that of furs to provisions. Fish, farm produce, cranberries, and lumber became the focus of

activities.

McDonald expanded the farm operations at Fort Langley and doubled its output of potatoes to over 2,000 bushels. After witnessing the large number of salmon being brought to the Fort by the Natives to trade for buttons and other trinkets, he realized that an export market could be generated from a salmon fishery at the Fort.

He and his deputy James Murray Yale implemented a large scale processing system for curing salmon. McDonald prevailed on Dr. John McLoughlin of Fort Vancouver, his superior, to send him a qualified cooper to make barrels for shipping the salmon and other goods.

McDonald had a storehouse and cooper shop erected at the Fort. In due course thousands of tons of preserved salmon as well as other goods were shipped out of Fort Langley to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), Alaska and other locations such as California. On January 15, 1831 McDonald wrote to John McLeod of the growing fishery trade;

> Our salmon, for all the contempt entertained for everything outside of the routine of beaver at York Factory, is close up to 300 barrels.

Fort Langley also saw the embryonic beginnings of the lumber industry in British Columbia under McDonald and his staff, including the Métis employees. Staves were made out of felled trees and barrels were manufactured from them in the cooperage building. Thousands of cedar shingles and many planks were also produced.

It was into this busy work atmosphere that Jane Klyne McDonald and their children came to Fort Langley. At that time their children were Angus, Archibald Jr. and Jane's stepson Ranald. In *Peace River: A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific* there is a description given of a dwelling house described by Archy in his journal as:

> …. a good dwelling house, with an excellent cellar and a spacious garret, a couple of well finished chimneys are up, and the whole inside now ready for wainscoting and partitioning, four large windows in front, one in each end, and one with a corresponding

door in the back.

In her book Jean Murray Cole states that this was the "Big House" intended for the Chief Trader and his family. This home had a kitchen and bake oven in which Jane would have utilized her cooking skills. All was in readiness when Jane arrived at Fort Langley in the summer of 1829.

Jane had come from modest origins and grew up with little education. Archy was determined that not only his children but also Jenny should be taught to read and write. He personally tutored them at Fort Langley and later at Fort Colvile.

Edward Ermatinger had served with the HBC west of the Rocky Mountains for a number of years before retiring to St. Thomas, Upper Canada. After his retirement many of his former HBC cohorts carried on an active correspondence with him. This correspondence provides an insight into many of the personal experiences of the bourgeois fur traders and of the activities of the HBC west of the mountains during this time period.

Archy, for some reason, usually addressed Ermatinger as "Sir" in his correspondence. On the other hand John Work addressed him as "Ned". On February 20, 1831 Archy wrote from Fort Langley to Ermatinger stating:

> Now two words about Jenny and the Boys …. She brought her third son [Alexander] to this world on the 28th of Octr. last & that she is become an excellent Scollar [sic].

Even though she was busy with her young family, Jenny continued with her pursuit of learning. Archy wrote to his friend John McLeod on January 15, 1832 about his efforts to teach his family:

> What I regret most is the condition of the Boys – for there is nothing like early education – however I keep them at it Mother and all. My chinook [Ranald] now reads pretty well and has commenced cyphering [an archaic word for arithmetic].

She gave birth to her fourth son, Allan, at Fort Langley on May 19, 1832. The following year Archy wrote about Jane and his children:

> …. so that with herself and Toole at the head of the class I am in a fair way of having a thriving school.

Toole was the nickname for Jane's stepson Ranald. In that same letter, McDonald added that his duties would:

> …. put an end to this agreeable and interesting pastime.

He indicated that in order to further their education he would soon send his older boys to an academy that had recently opened in the Red River Settlement.

Jane's tenure as mistress of Fort Langley was to end in 1833. During her time there she had brought with her to the Fort and its community the Métis heritage and culture that she had grown up with in the Athabasca area.

Archy intended to take a leave of absence from his duties with the HBC to travel back to Great Britain in 1834. In anticipation of that trip he first went to Fort Vancouver. Prior to his furlough he was sent in May 1833 to the Puget Sound area to select a site for Fort Nisqually.

Before he left for Scotland and England, he arranged for Jane and their four sons to stay with her parents at their Jasper House home. En route there, Jane gave birth to her only daughter Maryanne at Rocky Mountain House (in present day Alberta) on February 3, 1834. She was now the mother of six children including her stepson Ranald.

Later that year Jane and the children traveled to the Red River Settlement to enroll the older boys in school there. It is likely that her parents accompanied them on this journey, since that same summer her father Michel Klyne relocated to the Red River Settlement on his retirement from the HBC.

At Red River Jane and the children lived with the Anglican priest Reverend William Cockran and his wife Ann. The older boys were enrolled in the Red River Academy. Another Anglican missionary Reverend David Jones and his wife Mary had opened the Academy in 1832.

While staying with the Cockrans, Jane made a decision to formally join the Episcopalian faith of her husband Archy. Reverend Cockran christened Jane, their four sons,

their daughter and her stepson Ranald on November 2, 1834.

Archy returned from his European journey in June 1835 and met up with Jenny and his offspring at Red River. While there, Jenny and Archy decided to formalize their country marriage by undergoing a religious ceremony. Reverend Cockran performed the service on June 9, 1835.

Archy wrote to Edward Ermatinger on April 1, 1836. After first referring to the insanity of Trader John Tod's wife Eliza, Archy drolly added of his own wedding:

> I thought the safest & least bothersome course for me to pursue was to close in with the old woman tout de bon.

In view of his faithful ten year marriage to Jenny and their many children, he wittily added that in the presence of the HBC Council (which had just completed a meeting at Red River):

> Archy and Jenny were joined in holy wedlock …. [and] of course declared at full liberty to live together as man & wife & to increase & multiply as to them might seem fit.

In that same letter Archy revealed that he had finished "an American Sledge [sled]", and that:

> …. in company with my wife & little Children have enjoyed myself with last winter to my hearts content.

His return from Great Britain also witnessed a new assignment for him. He was appointed the head of Fort Colvile in the Oregon Country. He and Jenny made a heartfelt decision to leave the five older children (aged five to eleven) in the Red River Settlement to carry on with their schooling. This meant that they would likely not see their parents for upwards of five years

As events unfolded, when Jane's stepson Ranald was fifteen year's old he went to St. Thomas to work for Edward Ermatinger as a bank apprentice for a short time. Later as an adult, Ranald proved to be an interesting character in his own right. Wanting to see Japan, he arranged to be marooned there. He spent a year in Japan teaching English before he was unceremoniously evicted.

In the fall of 1835, Archy and Jenny arrived at Fort Colvile. This Fort had substantial farm and livestock operations. It was also the center for the construction of bateaux. These boats were essential for river freighting along the HBC fur-brigade transportation system.

Jenny once again became the chief mistress and role model for the women of a thriving fort. In addition to the male servants of the HBC, there were dozens of women and children then living there.

Jane had staff to help her with her activities at this Fort. This was helpful since she and Archy entertained visitors, guests, and traveling HBC officials on a regular basis. She took a lead role in providing hospitality to them.

The height of Jane's generosity and openheartedness and that of her husband occurred at Fort Colvile. When the missionaries Cushing Eells and Elkanah Walker and their wives and a young baby Cyrus Walker arrived in the Oregon Country in 1838, the dwellings that they were to occupy were in a sad state of disrepair. Jane and Archy invited them to reside in their home at Fort Colvile until the home for the missionaries could be made fit to live in.

On September 17, 1838 Reverend Walker wrote in his journal:

> Received a cordial welcome from Mr. McDonald and lady.

They referred to Jane as "a jewel …. of rare excellence", and her children as "living testimony to her maternal efficiency".

In *Exile in the Wilderness* by Jean Murray Cole, Jane is quoted as writing to Rev. Walker and his wife Mary:

> Although I have more attendants than you have, still they leave me quite enough to do.

Due to Archy's increased duties at Fort Colvile, it became necessary for Jane to assume the education of their younger children that were with them. Within a few years, her role had changed from that of a student to that of a teacher. This was a tribute to her innate intelligence and

her ability to learn quickly.

In an article by Cole in the 1972 Summer issue of *The Beaver* magazine there is a quote by George Allan, an accountant employed at Fort Vancouver. He is quoted concerning Fort Colvile and the sociability of Jane and Archy:

> …. nothing I have yet seen in the Indian country can equal the beauty of its situation…. When seated at table with Mr. and Mrs. McDonald and their family, one cannot help thinking himself once more at home enjoying a tête-à-tête in some domestic circle.

Archy dining with his wife and children differed from the usual practice of HBC officers dining with other officials of the fort and not with their families. When officials and guests visited the Fort, Jane would supervise the meals and sit down to eat and chat with their guests.

In the summer of 1841 Governor George Simpson was traveling in the Oregon Country on a leg of his journey around the world. Before the Governor reached Fort Colvile, Archy and some of his men rode a distance from the Fort to meet Simpson and his party.

Archy brought a delectable and nutritious meal to them. Undoubtedly Jane would have played a significant part in the arrangement and preparation of this festive banquet that was prepared for Simpson and his entourage.

In his *Narrative of a Journey Around the World*, Simpson wrote about this feast:

> Just fancy, at the base of the Rocky Mountains, a roasted turkey, a sucking [sic] pig, new bread, fresh butter, eggs, ale, &c.; and then contrast all these dainties with short allowance of pemmican and water. No wonder that some of our party ate more than was good for them.

Obviously this was an eloquent tribute to Jenny's culinary talents.

Archy was very proud of Jenny's domestic and culinary abilities. On January 25, 1837 he wrote to Edward Ermatinger about Jane:

> At Colvile, the wife & myself are in excellent practice - her Butter, Cheese, Ham, & Bacon would shine in any ordinary

market….

In this letter he also referred to Frank (Edward's brother) staying with him and Jenny at Fort Colvile in December 1836. Before Christmas, Frank left the Fort, but at the Spokane Forks he became ice bound. He and his men returned to Fort Colvile. Obviously they arrived in time for Christmas dinner with the McDonald family since Archy stated in his letter that they came back again:

> …. just in time for the Roast Beef & plum pudding…. After doing ourselves & about five & thirty men all the justice …. of good things at Colvile …. he & party again left….

After the banquet with Governor Simpson in 1841, McDonald was expecting the arrival of James Sinclair and the Red River Expedition of Métis immigrants to the Oregon Country. One of them was Jane's brother Joseph Klyne. The Expedition did not arrive at Fort Colvile until the autumn of 1841 as they had taken a different route than expected and also encountered delays.

Some months later in March 1842 in his letter to Edward Ermatinger, Archy wrote about the Red River Expedition:

> Another memorable event is the migration this way of some of the Red River Settlers under the conduct of Mr. James Sinclair.

This "memorable event" of the Red River Expedition to the Oregon Country is profiled in another chapter of this book.

Notwithstanding her Métis blood, Jane was generally accepted by clergy wives in the area. This differed from the disdaining attitudes of missionary wives at Fort Vancouver and Fort Victoria. Two other prominent Métis women, Marguerite Wadin McKay McLoughlin and Amelia Connolly Douglas, experienced racial discrimination from the spouses of other missionaries.

Several wives of the clergy in the area of Fort Colvile formed the Columbia Maternal Association in 1838. It was a Christian organization of women established for prayer, conversation, to help the members in their maternal duties, and for other activities. Jane was welcomed by them as a

member of this Association.

Jane and Archy lived at Fort Colvile from 1835 to 1844. In that period they heeded Reverend Cockran's words at Red River "to increase and multiply as to them might seem fit". During this time six children were born to them at the Fort.

Jane and Archy felt great sorrow when their son John died shortly after his birth in April 1836. Their next son, born the following year, was also named John. Twins named Donald and James arrived on July 23, 1839 and Samuel saw the light of day on September 28, 1841. Joseph was born in the autumn of 1843 while they were still mourning the death of their first child Angus who had died earlier that year.

Archy was appointed to the coveted position of Chief Factor in 1842. However, he was now 52 years old and tiring of the fur trade life in the Indian Country. He retired from active duty with the HBC in 1844. In September of that year Archy, the again pregnant Jenny and their children that were with them (three others were still away at school) left Fort Colvile with the intention of retiring in Montreal.

The family crossed the Rocky Mountains, intending to winter at Edmonton House. While en route a son Benjamin was born in November, two months after their departure from Fort Colvile.

In 1845 misfortune struck Edmonton House while the McDonalds were there. In May of that year scarlet fever took the lives of three of their children – two year old Joseph and the twins Donald and James, who were not yet six years old.

These deaths were very difficult for the family. Jane had always been so proud of her twins. In his March 30, 1842 letter to Edward Ermatinger, Archy had referred to "my whole brood of ten" and stated of the twins

> …. the mother to a thread keeps them in the Same kind of garb.

The McDonalds reached Montreal later that year. Their

last child, also named Angus, was born there on November 27, 1846. The family did not remain long in Montreal.

In 1847 Archy purchased a farm near St. Andrews East on the Ottawa River in Canada West (formerly Upper Canada and now Ontario). Although she was a Métis, Jane had no trouble fitting into "white society" in their new community.

The Métis blood in Jane's veins was also strong in that of her brothers George and Adam. They were living in the Red River Settlement at the time of the Red River Resistance of 1869-70. In the initial stages they backed the notorious Dr. John Schultz and opposed the Louis Riel supporters. At one point Riel even had George Klyne arrested for a brief time.

Shortly thereafter in January 1870, George Klyne was elected as one of the French (not English) delegates to the Convention of Forty. This Convention, consisting of 20 English-speaking and 20 French-speaking representatives, was formed to discuss the admission of Red River into the Canadian Confederation. It resulted in the formation of a Provisional Government with Louis Riel elected as its President.

After they settled in Canada West, Jane and Archy led a quiet and a happy life. On January 15, 1853 Archy suddenly passed away. He was then just short of his 63rd birthday.

The country marriage made west of the Rocky Mountains over a quarter of a century earlier between a young Métis woman and an aspiring Scottish fur trader had come to an end. Professor W. L. Morton in the introduction to *Exile in the Wilderness* wrote of Jane and Archy's marriage:

> The family ties were close and enduring, and the marriage an exemplar of fur trade marriages.

The widowed Jenny lived out the remainder of her life in Canada West in a quiet manner. At some point Jenny, her children and her stepson Ranald commenced spelling

their surname "MacDonald" rather than McDonald.

In writing to Edward Ermatinger on November 14, 1856 seeking a position for her 19 year old son John, the widowed Jane signed her name "Jane, Klyne, MacDonald".

Her letter contained well-structured sentences, a fine vocabulary and no spelling errors other than "their" instead of "there". Her clear handwriting is easier to read than Archy's script. This letter provides tangible proof of Archy's teaching and Jane's ability as a bright, intelligent student.

Jenny died on December 15, 1879. As a wife and mother she represented the role of a country wife in an exemplary fashion. Her death brought to an end the life of this remarkable Métis woman, who has left her mark on the history of British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest.

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Chapter XIII

CAPTAIN JOHN SWANSON
Métis Master Mariner

Like the other prominent Métis men and women profiled in this book, John Swanson was born into a family deeply involved in the fur trade. All of those profiled had Aboriginal mothers and non-Native or Métis fathers. Each of the men worked for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), although Waccan had also been a North West Company man. The women who are profiled were all born of fur-trading fathers and each of these Métis women married fur traders who became high officials with the HBC.

However, the role that John Swanson performed for the HBC differed from that of these other Métis men. Both his father William and his maternal grandfather Joseph Brown were mariners with the HBC in its fur trade activities. Young John was to follow in their footsteps.

John Swanson (also called John Swanston) was born at the HBC's fur-trading post of Moose Factory in Rupert's Land on September 30, 1826. His father William Swanson was born in South Shields in Durham, England in 1784.

John's mother was Anne (Nancy) Brown, William's country wife. Anne was the Métis daughter of Joseph Brown. Her father was born *circa* 1772 at Aldborough, Suffolk in England. As a teenager, he arrived at Moose Factory in 1789 as a crewman on the ship *Seahorse*.

Joseph Brown initially served as a sailor for the HBC at Moose Fort, later called Moose Factory. There were no white women in Rupert's Land in the 18th century and Joseph married, *à la façon du pays*, a Cree woman whose name is not recorded in the HBC records. One of their Métis children was Anne (Nancy) Brown, the mother of John Swanson.

Joseph Brown moved up the ranks with the HBC. He became a Sloops Mate and in 1811 a Schooner Master. He retired from the HBC in 1816 and took up residence in the Red River Settlement (modern-day Winnipeg). He moved there only a few months after Cuthbert Grant had led the

Métis of that Colony in the Battle of Seven Oaks.

William Swanson, John's father, was also a teenager when he became a sailor for the HBC at Moose Factory in 1812. He continued in that capacity until 1821 when he was promoted to Sloopmaster.

Consequently he would have served for a period of time under his father-in-law Joseph Brown who was the Schooner Master there from 1813 to 1816. No doubt William received the blessing of Joseph Brown to take the hand of his daughter Anne as William's country wife.

In addition to his position as Sloopmaster, William Swanson subsequently became a Postmaster in 1836. From 1852 to 1863 he served as Master Schooner on the *Lady Frances Simpson* and from 1863 to 1865 on the *Otter*. The *Lady Frances Simpson* was named after the wife of HBC Governor George Simpson.

Prior to his 16th birthday, the young Métis John Swanson became an apprentice sailor for the HBC in 1842. He remained a mariner for the HBC until the day he died. However, his entire career took place west of the Rocky Mountains.

John was likely influenced to go west because his older brothers Joseph and William Jr. were then working for the HBC in the Columbia District. Both of John's brothers were also born in Rupert's Land.

Joseph was an apprentice in the Columbia District in 1841, a midman in 1842-1843 and (according to the HBC Archives) a "Slooper" at "Vancouver Est. [Establishment] Columbia District" from 1843 to 1845. He was discharged at California in 1846.

William Swanson Jr. was a sailor and Slooper for the HBC in the Columbia District from 1841 to 1843. However, he drowned at The Dalles on the Columbia River in July 1843, less than a year after his brother John arrived in the Pacific Northwest. Young John must have been devastated by the tragic death of his older brother.

The first posting of John's career was in 1842 to Fort

Vancouver, then the administrative center of the HBC's activities on the West Coast including its maritime operations. At that time the HBC's operations along the Pacific Coast extended from Alaska (under the control of Russia) to California (under Spanish control). At Fort Vancouver Swanson was assigned to the schooner *Cadborough*.

In the previous autumn of 1841, Governor Simpson had told Dr. John McLoughlin (the head of the Columbia Department) that henceforth the northern coastal trade of the HBC was to be conducted primarily by ship.

Much to his dismay, McLoughlin was directed by Simpson to close many of the northern posts on the Pacific Coast. McLoughlin viewed this as an unwarranted attack on the trading organization that he had established along the West Coast. This and Simpson's callous attitude toward the murder of McLoughlin's Métis son John at Fort Stikine not long after were factors that contributed to the ensuing animosity between these two giants of the fur trade industry.

However as a result of Governor Simpson's unilateral order, emphasis was now placed on shipping activities in the HBC's Pacific maritime fur trade. Simpson's view was that fur traders on ships could perform the same services as those at the coastal forts. This economical move would eliminate the need for many forts along the coast, and also facilitate the transportation of furs from that area. The teenaged John Swanson would not have been privy to these corporate decisions, but they were to have a significant effect on his future career with the HBC.

According to Lloyd J. Bailey in his article titled "Captain John S. Swanson: Historical Unknown", Swanson received the higher pay of a steward rather than that of an apprentice. Perhaps this was so because before moving west he would have learned the ropes of being a sailor when he unofficially accompanied his father on sailing trips. That experience would have prepared him for "advanced duties in charting waters and tallying traded

skins" in the Pacific Northwest.

The year after he arrived at Fort Vancouver, Swanson was given further duties. He was sent to help assist in the construction and to clear the brush and prepare the site that Chief Factor James Douglas had selected for Fort Victoria.

The HBC Archives indicate that John Swanson was subsequently an Apprentice Sailor on the *Vancouver*, *Columbia* and *Cowlitz* vessels until 1848. While serving on the barque *Cowlitz*, he was promoted to the position of Seaman in 1848 and thereafter to Second Mate.

Swanson traveled to England on the *Cowlitz* shortly after his assignment to that barque. However on the ship's return voyage to Fort Victoria, a number of sailors deserted the ship when it reached the Sandwich Islands.

On April 3, 1850 Chief Factor James Douglas wrote a letter to Archibald Barclay (Secretary of the HBC in London) concerning this matter. In it he wrote that in addition to desertions in "the Sandwich Islands" 13 other seamen refused to work on the terms that they had agreed to. Douglas stated that when the ship arrived at Fort Victoria, Captain Weynton spoke to him:

> …. in the highest terms of the conduct of his Officers Mr. Miller, Swanston [sic], and Sinclair.

In 1850 Swanson was posted to the historic ship *Beaver* as Second Mate. The *Beaver*, an appropriate name for an HBC vessel, was a wooden paddle wheeler and the first steamship in the Pacific Northwest. Built in London, England it was placed in the service of the HBC in 1836. It became a water-borne trading post and penetrated into remote and previously inaccessible fur-trading areas.

This steamer continued in that capacity until the 1850s when the HBC replaced it with the *Otter*, a more powerful propeller steamship. The *Beaver* was then employed for some years to transport freight and passengers between the Mainland and Victoria. After several other uses, it was shipwrecked on July 25, 1888 in Burrard Inlet off Prospect

Point in what is now Stanley Park in Vancouver.

Swanson's Métis blood proved to be no impediment to his progress within the HBC. Realizing his talents as a mariner, the HBC promoted him to Mate on the *Mary Dare* in 1852. Eventually in 1854 he attained the high rank of Master.

He held this position of Master until the day of his death. In turn he was Master of the *Otter* (1854-56) and the *Beaver* (1856-58). His HBC service record indicates that in 1859 he was assigned to the steamer *Labouchere* (named after the British Secretary of State for the Colonies) and served on it until 1866. He then became Master of the *Enterprise* and commanded it until the date of his death.

During the time he served as Master of the *Otter* from 1854 to 1856, several of his travels were noted in the diary of Martha Cheney Ella. Her entries for December 22, 1855 and January 12, 1856 respectively refer to the *Otter* sailing for California and then returning from California. Her subsequent entry for January 30, 1856 states that it had left for the north piloted by Captain Swanson.

At the onset of the Cariboo gold rush in the spring of 1858, the *Beaver* was away on one of its trading ventures. On its return it and the *Otter* were enlisted by Governor James Douglas to act as enforcement vessels at the mouth of the Fraser River. He did so to prevent American vessels, with their prospective gold miners, from bypassing Victoria and also to ensure the payment of duties and fees.

In November 1858 it was the *Beaver* that was chosen to carry James Douglas and his entourage, including Matthew Baillie Begbie, to Fort Langley for the inauguration of Douglas as Governor of the new Colony of British Columbia. John Swanson was the captain of the steamer *Beaver* on this momentous journey.

On November 19th Douglas disembarked at Fort Langley in pouring rain to an 18 gun salute. Judge Begbie then swore in James Douglas in the "Big House" of the Fort. The Colony of British Columbia was officially a reality.

John Swanson showed an unexpected facet to his personality in 1857. On January 14th of that year he and a number of other residents of Victoria associated with the HBC performed in an amateur theatrical production of "The Rivals", by the British playwright Richard B. Sheridan. Swanson took the role of Thomas. Another Métis member of the cast was Joseph William McKay, who is profiled in another chapter of this book. The "Prologue" that was written by the theatrical group for this performance wittily refers in part to Swanson's role of Thomas:

> Who can extract a Captain from a store,
> Deep in details of outfit fifty four?
> Instead of steering coaches with his whip
> Thomas was thinking where he'd steer his ship.

In 1859 Swanson was elected the first member of the House of Assembly for the Colony of Vancouver Island for the constituency of Nanaimo. The election took place in front of the Bastion in early July 1859 in the presence of 12 to 15 witnesses. However there was only one qualified elector, Captain Charles E. Stuart, an HBC officer.

There were no candidates other than John Swanson. In fact he was not in attendance since he was in the north on HBC business. Swanson was elected with one vote – that of Captain Stuart.

An observer George Robinson, the Mine Agent, addressed the audience and Captain Stuart. He told them that he considered such an election a disgrace to the place. He added that he had the highest feelings of respect for Swanson and he believed:

> …. Captain Swanson entertained too high an opinion of himself to accept the proffered seat.

Qualification for election to the Assembly was restricted to men holding freehold land valued at £300. At that time the eligibility requirement to vote was ownership of 20 acres of freehold land. Women were excluded from voting and from election.

Robinson's assessment of Swanson was right. Swanson

considered that his election was not done pursuant to a proper representative process and declined to take his seat.

In 1860, while he was Master of the *Labouchere*, Swanson received another significant promotion from the HBC. He was made a Chief Trader for the fur trade.

In the 1850s Swanson's home base was Victoria and he acquired land there. The "Victoria District Official Map 1858" discloses that he was the owner of Lot XXXIX. This landholding was near Mount Tolmie. However he only constructed his own home in Victoria some six years later. It was built at a different location close to the harbor. He subsequently acquired other landholdings in and around the Victoria area.

About this time he participated in a group formed to acquire a large tract of land on Deans Canal (now known as Dean Channel) and North Bentinck Arm. The location was over 100 miles north-east of the northernmost point of Vancouver Island.

In earlier years this area had been an abundant source of furs for the HBC. An Indenture (signed by William Murray) dated December 24, 1861 relating to these lands indicated that John Swanson held a one-twelfth interest.

An interesting aspect was that this was the same location at which the great explorer Alexander Mackenzie and his voyageurs ended their overland expedition to the Pacific Ocean in 1793. It was on Mackenzie Rock in Dean Channel that he inscribed his name and the date of his arrival. Today Bella Coola, named after the local Indian tribe, is a town at the head of North Bentinck Arm.

The Deans Canal and North Bentinck Arm project had been formed to establish a settlement and a town site on these lands. Like some of the other land and mining ventures in which Swanson had been involved, this project did not succeed.

The year 1860 was an eventful one for John Swanson. In addition to his being named a Chief Trader of the HBC, he married a member of the Tlingit tribe in that year. The

Tlingit were a First Nations people living in northwest British Columbia. The Coast Tlingit controlled dealings by other Natives with the HBC fur traders.

Over the years Swanson had piloted HBC ships to Tlingit territory. There he would have met and become attracted to the teenage Indian girl who became known as Catherine and whom he took as his wife.

Marriage by a man involved in the fur trade to an Aboriginal woman had by that time fallen out of favor. This was precipitated by the arrival in the prior decade of missionaries and settlers, including white women. However their condescending attitude did not deter Swanson from taking an Aboriginal bride as he personally had Métis blood in his veins. Nevertheless, their union must have been happy since they fostered many children and lived together until John's death.

Swanson's talents as an expert seaman received further recognition in the 1860s. According to Willard E. Ireland in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Swanson was a member of the British Columbia Pilot Board in 1866, and he was also a Pilot Commissioner in 1867.

On November 19, 1866 the two colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were united as one Colony under the name British Columbia. In the immediately ensuing years, a movement was underway for British Columbia to join the Dominion of Canada. However there was some opposition. Among the opponents were John Swanson and John Sebastian Helmcken (the widower of Cecilia, the daughter of Amelia and James Douglas).

Swanson supported annexation to the United States, while Helmcken preferred the *status quo*. Helmcken subsequently supported the entry of British Columbia into the Canadian Confederation. In 1870 Helmcken was one of the three delegates from British Columbia to Ottawa that negotiated the terms of union with Canada. British Columbia became a Canadian Province on July 20, 1871.

In that same year Swanson was a witness in the San Juan Boundary conflict. This confrontation had been

preceded by the infamous Pig War of 1859 when a pig owned by a HBC farmer was shot by an American on one of the disputed San Juan Islands.

Swanson and other HBC shipmasters argued that Rosario Strait was always considered the Channel between the Straits of Georgia and Juan du Fuca. This argument was not accepted by Kaiser Wilhelm I, the German Emperor who had been appointed to arbitrate this border dispute. As a result the Americans won the arbitration and several of the Gulf Islands came under American ownership.

Swanson died suddenly on October 21, 1872 while he was still Master of the *Enterprise*. He had turned 46 only three weeks earlier. His obituary in the *Daily British Colonist* newspaper of October 22, 1872 stated:

> In him the Company has lost an honest and faithful servant and one whom they will not easily replace.... The flags at the Government Buildings, City Council Chambers and those of many citizens were flying at half-mast out of respect to his memory.

James Grahame (Chief Commissioner of the HBC and a son-in-law of Josette and John Work) wrote the London Secretary of the HBC concerning John Swanson's death:

> He is a heavy loss to us, and it will be difficult to find as good a master to take his place on the steamer "Enterprise".

John Swanson's name is inscribed on a tombstone in the Ross Bay Cemetery in Victoria where other members of his family are also buried. After his death, his Aboriginal widow Catherine returned to her Tlingit homeland.

Swanson spent his entire adult life west of the Rocky Mountains. Like many of his contemporaries, Swanson's career in the fur trade spanned pre-colonial, colonial and provincial eras in British Columbia.

The memory of his services to the HBC and his contributions to the Province of British Columbia live on today in the place names bearing his surname. The following listings are provided in *British Columbia Coast Names*:

- Swanson Bay - located in Graham Reach on the Inside Passage;
- Swanson Channel - in Haro Strait; and
- Swanson Island - on Blackfish Sound, Broughton Strait (off the east coast of Vancouver Island).

These coastal names are a fitting tribute to a mariner *par excellence*. John Swanson was a Métis pioneer who rose from humble beginnings in Rupert's Land to the heights of his profession as a Master Seaman plying the waters that he loved along the coast of British Columbia.

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Chapter XIV

FROM SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAINS TO SHINING SEA

Deep in the interior hinterland one can vividly imagine the spirit of adventure that brought the first explorers and fur-traders over the majestic Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Northwest. While the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) sat on the Bay waiting for the Natives to bring furs to them, the North West Company (NWC) pushed westward through the Great Plains and across the Continental Divide hunting for furs, building forts, and trading with the First Nations.

They were men of vision: not only were they expanding the fur trade frontier, they were also seeking the elusive overland route to the Pacific Ocean with its potential for trade in the lucrative markets of the Orient. But the great explorers of the NWC such as Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser, and David Thompson did not come alone.

Their exploration parties consisted of Métis and French Canadian voyageurs and engagés who had assisted the NWC in the development of the fur trade on the Great Plains. They were the servants of the Company who manned the bateaux, who built the forts, who hunted for furs, who traded with the First Nations, and who tilled the land after they set up trading establishments.

This is a book to honor the Métis men, women and children of the fur trade who dared to seek new horizons, to start new lives, and to build a new home and native land west of the Rocky Mountains. Métis individuals and events discussed herein tell of fascinating pioneer personalities and the significant contributions that they made to the history of the lands that were to become the Province of British Columbia.

They were the children of the fur trade of Rupert's Land who climbed the highest snow-capped mountains in order to reach the Promised Land on the Pacific Slope. As the voyageurs traveled westward to the shining sea, the rhythmic sound of their oars splashing through the streams and rivers was in harmony with the hearty paddling songs

that were part of their culture and traditions.

Many of the explorers and employees of the NWC also brought with them their Métis country wives and children from the Prairies. These Aboriginal women were to make significant contributions to the development of the lands west of the Rocky Mountains. Besides devoting themselves to providing a nurturing home life and bearing children, they also played an important role in the daily workings and activities at the posts that the NWC established.

Because of their dual heritage, the Métis were able to act as middlemen between the original indigenous inhabitants of these lands and the white fur traders. They did so with goodwill towards the First Nations people whose ancestors had occupied the land from time immemorial.

Nowhere was the affinity of the Métis with the First Nations exhibited with more rapport than by some of them taking young Aboriginal women as their country wives and fathering many mixed-blood children by them. In doing so the Métis contributed to the multicultural mosaic that is a hallmark of the Province of British Columbia today.

The Métis were in the vanguard of a semi-nomadic fur-trading society that developed soon after their arrival over two centuries ago. The presence and activities in the West of this distinct Aboriginal people were an integral and essential component of the ultimate expansion of Canada to the Pacific Ocean.

After the establishment of outposts by the first trans-mountain exploration parties in the late 1700s, there were many occurrences over the years that would affect the growth and development on the west side of the Continental Divide. Some took place in the Pacific Northwest, while others transpired east of the Rocky Mountains and in other areas.

Many of these events were to have an impact on those lands that would become the Colony of Vancouver Island in 1849, the Colony of British Columbia in 1858 and the Province of British Columbia in 1871. The dates of some of the pertinent occurrences can be found in Schedule “A” of

this book.

Through involvement in the fur trade and its related activities, Métis men and women had a pervasive influence on significant aspects of British Columbia's pre-colonial and colonial history. They played a vital role in the transformation of British Columbia from a hinterland to the early stages of development of its communities and commercial and economic activities. The Métis were an invaluable bridge between the past and present.

Many of the cities and towns that exist in the Province today evolved from the fur trade outposts and forts that the Métis helped to build for the NWC and later for the HBC after their 1821 merger. Some commercial enterprises that grew out of the fur trade included agriculture, fishery, freighting, shipping, forestry, and mineral resources.

In addition the early Métis pioneers paved the way for all of the other Métis men, women and children who over subsequent years would migrate to beautiful British Columbia and would also make it their home. These Métis men, women and children have enriched this province with the romantic and colorful aspects that are an intrinsic part of their culture, customs, traditions and heritage.

In recognition of the role of the Métis people in the history of this Province, the Proclamation of the British Columbia Government dated May 26, 1993 perceptively stated:

> …. the Metis culture, rich in spiritual beliefs and colourful traditions, is an integral part of British Columbia's multicultural character, and
>
> …. throughout history, Metis citizens have made significant contributions to the development and success of Our Province.

This book is dedicated to those early pioneer Métis people who, whether in a memorable or minor way, played a notable role in the development of British Columbia and in its history. They were active contributors to historical events that brought this great land into the Confederation of Canada, extending it from sea to sea – to shiny sea.

APPENDIX "A'

Dates Affecting Metis History – 1789-1871

1789 ALEXANDER MACKENZIE'S NORTH WEST COMPANY (NWC) EXPEDITION REACHES THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

1793 ALEXANDER MACKENZIE'S NWC EXPEDITION REACHES THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

1805 LEWIS AND CLARK'S UNITED STATES CORPS OF DISCOVERY EXPEDITION REACHES THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

1807 DAVID THOMPSON'S NWC PARTY CROSSES WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE.

1808 SIMON FRASER'S NWC EXPEDITION REACHES THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

1811 PACIFIC FUR COMPANY (PFC) ESTABLISHES FORT ASTORIA.

1811 DAVID THOMPSON'S NWC EXPEDITION REACHES THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

1812 THE WAR OF 1812 BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN.

1813 THE NWC PURCHASES ALL THE FORTS AND ASSETS OF THE PFC IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST.

1814 THE TREATY OF GHENT ENDS THE WAR OF 1812.

1818 JOINT OCCUPATION TREATY OF THE OREGON COUNTRY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

c.1818 INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FREE TRADE IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST.

1821 THE MERGER OF THE NWC WITH THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY (HBC).

1830s ARRIVAL OF MISSIONARIES AND AMERICAN SETTLERS IN THE DISPUTED OREGON COUNTRY IN THE MID 1830s.

1835 THE POPE EXTENDS THE EPISCOPAL JURISDICTION OF BISHOP J. M. PROVENCHER OF THE DIOCESE OF ST. BONIFACE (JULIOPOLIS) TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

1843 PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED IN OREGON.

1846 THE OREGON TREATY ESTABLISHES BORDER IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST AT THE 49TH PARALLEL.

1848 OREGON NAMED A TERRITORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

1849 VANCOUVER ISLAND DESIGNATED AS A BRITISH COLONY, AND THE HBC LEASES IT FROM GREAT BRITAIN.

1849 HBC RELOCATES ITS WESTERN HEADQUARTERS FROM

FORT VANCOUVER TO FORT VICTORIA.

1849 THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH STARTS AT SUTTER'S MILL.

1858 THE CARIBOO GOLD RUSH STARTS IN NEW CALEDONIA.

1858 NEW CALEDONIA DESIGNATED A BRITISH COLONY UNDER THE NEW NAME OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

1866 COLONIES OF VANCOUVER ISLAND AND BRITISH COLUMBIA ARE UNITED AS ONE COLONY NAMED BRITISH COLUMBIA.

1871 BRITISH COLUMBIA ENTERS CONFEDERATION AS A PROVINCE.

APPENDIX "B"

Talks on the Métis by the Authors - George and Terry Goulet

April, 2000	Kappa Kappa Gamma University Alumni, Calgary, AB.
Sept. 01,2000	Montana Metis Days, Lewistown Montana, USA.
Oct. 19,2000	Lindsay Thurber High School, Red Deer, AB.
Oct. 19,2000	Central Alberta Historical Society, Red Deer, AB.
Nov. 14,2000	First Nations Longhouse, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC,
Nov. 14,2000	Secondary School Teachers, School District #35, Langley, BC.
Nov.15,2000	Main Branch, Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver, BC.
Nov. 16,2000	Main Branch, Port Moody Public Library, Port Moody, BC.
Nov. 21,2000	Main Branch, Greater Victoria Public Library, Victoria, BC.
Mar. 15,2002	Debate v. Thomas Flanagan, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB.
Mar. 26,2002	Métis Youth Group Métis Nation of Alberta Region, Calgary, AB.
Apr. 24,2002	St. Paul's High School, Winnipeg, MB.
Apr. 24,2002	R. B. Russell Vocational School, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Apr. 25,2002	Manitoba Historical Society at the St. Boniface Museum, St. Boniface, MB.
Jan. 20,2004	Students of Springbank Middle School, Springbank, AB.
Nov. 16,2004	Métis Flag Raising Ceremony at City Hall, St. Albert, AB.
Jan. 12,2005	University of Manitoba, Continuing Education Program, Winnipeg, MB.
Jan. 22,2005	Southern Ontario Métis Round Table, Métis Nation of Ontario, Hamilton, ON.
Jan. 26,2005	Aboriginal Student Program, York University, Toronto, ON.
Feb. 02,2005	Four Separate Talks at Brookswood Secondary

School, Langley, BC.:
(1) Grades 9 and 10 Classes;
(2) Grade 8 Class;
(3) Grade 10 Class, and
(4) Grades 8 and 12 Classes.

Feb. 03,2005 Waceya Métis Council Monthly Meeting, Fort Langley, BC.

Feb. 06,2005 Vancouver Island Cowichan Valley Métis Meeting, Nanaimo, BC.

Feb. 23,2005 Grade 10, Collége Louis Riel, St. Boniface, MB.

Feb. 23,2005 Grade 11, Collége Louis Riel, St. Boniface, MB.

Feb. 23,2005 Aboriginal Youth Rebuilding Program, Winnipeg, MB.

Feb. 23,2005 Manitoba Métis Federation Dinner honoring George and Terry Goulet in Winnipeg, MB.

Feb. 23,2005 Public Meeting, St. Boniface College, St. Boniface, MB.

Feb. 24,2005 Grade 11 Students, Dakota Collegiate, St. Vital, Manitoba

Feb. 24,2005 Grade 11, R. B. Russell School, Winnipeg, MB.

Mar. 04,2005 Saskatchewan Urban Native Teachers Education Program, University of Regina, Regina, SK.

Mar. 16,2005 Musée Héritage Museum, St. Albert, AB.

July 08, 2005 Red River West Rendezvous, Malahat, Vancouver Island, BC.

July 09, 2005 Red River West Rendezvous, Malahat, Vancouver Island, BC.

July 10, 2005 Red River West Rendezvous, Malahat, Vancouver Island, BC.

July 22, 2005 Back to Batoche Days, Batoche, SK.

July 23, 2005 Back to Batoche Days, Batoche, SK.

July 29, 2005 Hivernant Métis Festival, Big Valley, AB.

July 30, 2005 Hivernant Métis Festival, Big Valley, AB.

Aug. 12, 2005 AGM Meeting Workshop Métis Nation of Alberta Peace River, AB.

Aug. 13, 2005 AGM Meeting, Workshop Métis Nation of Alberta Peace River, AB.

Sep. 21, 2005 Grade 11, South Peace Secondary School, Dawson Creek, BC.

Sep. 21, 2005	Grade 9 & 10, South Peace Middle School, Dawson Creek, BC.
Sep. 22, 2005	Grade 10 & 11 North Peace Secondary School, Fort St. John, BC.
Sep. 22, 2005	Grade 12 North Peace Secondary School, Fort St. John, BC.
Sep. 22, 2005	Grade 11 North Peace Secondary School, Fort St. John, BC.
Sep. 23, 2005	AGM Meeting workshop Métis Nation of B. C. Fort St. John, BC.
Oct. 13, 2005	Thunder Bay Métis Council, Thunder Bay, ON.
Oct. 14, 2005	Aboriginal Studies Class at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, ON.
Oct. 14, 2005	Education Students Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, ON.
Oct. 19, 2005	University of Sudbury, Laurentian University, Sudbury, ON.
Oct. 26, 2005	Law Students University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB.
Nov. 01,2005	History Class at University of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, PEI
Nov. 01,2005	Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB.
Nov. 02,2005	St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS.
Nov. 03,2005	History Class at St. Mary's University, Halifax, NS.
Nov. 04,2005	Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax, NS.
Nov. 07,2005	Class at University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON.
Nov. 26,2005	Fraser Valley Métis Association Dinner Abbotsford, BC.
April 12,2006	Class at Bow Valley College, Calgary, AB.
June 15, 2006	Class at Riel Institute for Education, Calgary, AB.
July 15, 2006	Métis Local 87 Stampede Barbeque, Calgary, AB.
Sept.02, 2006	Montana Metis Days, Lewistown Montana, USA
Sept.09, 2006	Delia Historical Museum, Delia, AB.
Sept.19, 2006	Lethbridge Public Library, Lethbridge, AB.
Sept.22, 2006	Gabriel Dumont Conference Panelists, St. Boniface University College, St. Boniface, MB.
Sept.29, 2006	AGM Morning Workshop Métis Nation British

	Columbia, Kelowna, BC.
Sept.29, 2006	AGM Afternoon Workshop Métis Nation British Columbia, Kelowna, BC
Jan. 09, 2007	Okotoks Public Library - Louis Riel Presentation, Okotoks, AB.
Jan. 16, 2007	Okotoks Public Library – Metis Presentation, Okotoks, AB.
Feb. 09, 2007	Education Forum Métis Nation of British Columbia, Victoria, BC.
Feb. 17, 2007	AGM Okanagan Métis Family Services, Kelowna, BC.
Mar. 22, 2007	Dr. J, K. Mulloy Elementary School, Calgary, AB.
April 19, 2007	Windsor Park Collegiate, St. Vital, MB.
April 23, 2007	Northwest Métis Council, Dauphin, MB.
April 24, 2007	Yorkton Friendship Centre, Yorkton, SK.
April 26, 2007	Conference Workshop Saskatchewan Aboriginal Teachers "AWASIS" Saskatoon, SK.
June 09, 2007	Annual Dinner Interior Métis Family & Child Services, Kamloops, BC.
June 12, 2007	Class at Calgary Waldorf School, Calgary, AB.
July 09, 2007	Red River West Rendezvous, Malahat, Vancouver Island, BC.
July 28, 2007	Delia Michif Festival Days, Delia, AB.
Sept. 21, 2007	AGM Workshop Métis Nation British Columbia, Kelowna, BC.
Oct. 09, 2007	Métis Studies Class at University of Winnipeg - Louis Riel Presentation, Winnipeg, MB.
Oct. 10, 2007	Louis Riel Institute Manitoba Métis Federation, Winnipeg, MB.
Oct. 11, 2007	Métis Presentation, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB.
Nov. 16, 2007	Algoma University College & Sault Ste. Marie Métis Association - Louis Riel Lecture, Sault St. Marie, ON.
May 16, 2008	Malaspina University College, Nanaimo, BC.

In addition to these presentations, the Goulets have given numerous media interviews at various locations in Canada on the Métis and Louis Riel for television and radio programs, a documentary, and for newspaper articles.

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