

Lt. Aemilius Simpson's Survey from York Factory to Fort Vancouver, 1826

Edited by William Barr¹ and Larry Green

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¹ Senior Research Associate, Arctic Institute of North America, University of Calgary,
Calgary AB T2N 1N4 Canada.

PREFACE

The Journal

The journal presented here² is transcribed from the original manuscript written in Aemilius Simpson's hand. It is fifty folios in length in a bound volume of ninety folios, the final forty folios being blank. Each page measures 12.8 inches by seven inches and is lined with thirty-five faint, horizontal blue-grey lines. It is repositied in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is filed among the Fort Vancouver post journals as B.223/a/3. While Barr presented a paper on the topic of Aemilius Simpson's survey at the meeting of the Centre for Rupert's Land Studies at the University of Winnipeg in Vancouver, Washington, in 2000 (later published in a limited edition by that Institution),³ the full text of Simpson's report has not previously been published.

It is written in ink, the handwriting is neat and uniform throughout, and when compared to other examples of Simpson's penmanship (ships' logs, correspondence), it is obvious that it was not written during the rigours of a transcontinental journey by York boat, canoe, horseback and on foot. He probably made daily notes and used them to compose the journal after his arrival at Fort Vancouver. It begins with his departure, on 14 July 1826 from York Factory at the mouth of the Hayes River on the west coast of Hudson Bay and there is a daily entry until his arrival, on 2 November 1826, at Fort Vancouver, about one hundred miles upstream from the mouth of the Columbia River and now the site of Vancouver, WA.

Until his arrival at Fort Carlton on 21 August 1826 each entry is a straightforward narrative occupying part of one page. But thereafter, for the remainder of the journey the entries are arranged in columns, those on the left page being headed Week Days, Courses, Distances, Accompanying Remarks upon the Course of the River etc., and those occupying the whole width of the right page simply Daily Remarks, etc.

Aemilius Simpson's *Journal of a Voyage across the Continent of North America in 1826* is an eloquent account of his journey over what would become one of the HBC's essential transportation and communication routes. It is one of the few journals which describes the entire distance from York Factory to Fort Vancouver. Simpson diligently recorded compass directions, weather, and lengths and conditions of portages. Moreover his education had evidently included the natural sciences, in that he made numerous observations concerning geology, plants and animals he saw during the journey. His senses of awe and wonder are leit-motifs which thread their way through the journal as he describes a variety of new and interesting scenes, experiences and personal impressions which a more seasoned veteran of the fur trade might not have mentioned. As an 'outsider' observing the logistics of the fur trade for the first time Simpson's comments on the trade's transport system are revealing, whether it involved the brutally arduous labour of tracking a York boat or canoe upstream, or the equally arduous work of portaging a York boat by unaided manpower. It is a narrative by a newcomer to North America and to the fur trade, written with the conversational intimacy of a friend describing his travels in a foreign land. It is a document which deserves to be better known.

² Simpson, *Journal of a voyage*.

³ Barr, 'Lieutenant Aemilius Simpson's survey...'

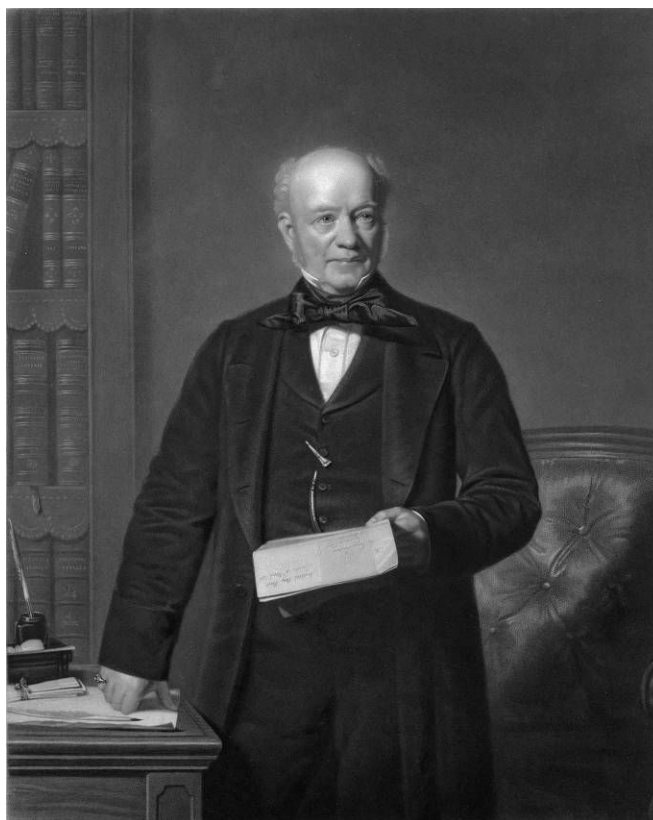


Fig. 1. George Simpson, 1857. Engraving from portrait by Stephen Pearce. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba (P206, neg. N5394).

Editorial practices

Aemilus Simpson's words are presented verbatim, but we have made some changes to present the text in a manner that is more convenient and less distracting for today's reader. The following are the editorial practices followed:

The first instance of a spelling error is followed by [*sic*], e.g. enemys [*sic*], but subsequent misspellings of the same word are not noted. The same principle is applied to words which are now obsolete, but were part of the written vocabulary of Simpson's day, e.g. mosketo [*sic*], shewing [*sic*], or untill [*sic*]. If a word is unclear but some letters are legible and the context suggests a particular word, that word is placed in brackets followed by a question mark, e.g. [laid?]. In a few instances an incorrectly spelled word is followed by the correct spelling in brackets, e.g. lys [lies]. Illegible words are replaced by [illegible]. Misspellings of personal names are noted in footnotes. For the most part Simpson's orthographic errors and variances from modern usage are few and minor and are not obstacles to the understanding and enjoyment of his writing.

Common abbreviations of compass directions, such as N, SW, NbE and SWbS have been left as originally written by Simpson. He frequently abbreviated words by writing the first few letters in regular script, followed by one or more of the terminal letters in superscript. For example he commonly used ch^r, thermom^r, and alt^{de} for chronometer, thermometer and altitude. These superscripts have been retained. Where such a use of superscripts may have made the meaning unclear, it is followed by the complete word in brackets, e.g. N^d [northward], lat^{de} [latitude].

Simpson followed the early nineteenth-century practice of using the uppercase for the initial letter of some common words within sentences, and we have retained all such uppercase letters. However he was inconsistent in this practice, and there is no discernible pattern. Moreover the only distinction between the way he wrote some upper and lower case

letters, such as ‘c’, ‘d’ and ‘p’ is a slight variation in size, and his intention is often unclear, but in such cases we have made an educated guess.

Some changes have been made to Simpson’s punctuation. Many of his commas have been deleted, and some dashes and periods have been changed to more appropriate commas. He was inconsistent in the use of commas to denote the possessive, so we have inserted the comma in all instances.



Fig. 2. York Factory 1853. From a sketch by Chief Trader Alexander Murray. Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba (P114, neg. N5299)

INTRODUCTION

The man, the project and its background

Aemilius Simpson was born in the village of Dingwall in the Highlands of Scotland on 27 July 1792.⁴ He was the son of Alexander Simpson, a parochial schoolmaster who, in 1784 had married Emilia MacIntosh, the daughter of a farmer from Invernesshire. She died giving birth to Aemilius or shortly afterwards. In 1897 Alexander married Mary Simpson⁵ (younger sister of the father of George Simpson⁶ – the future Overseas Governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Aemilius was thus George Simpson’s half-cousin. Alexander and Mary had two sons, Thomas and Alexander, who were born in 1808 and 1811 respectively. Both pursued careers with the Hudson’s Bay Company and Thomas became a noted Arctic explorer.

On 17 April 1806, at the age of thirteen Aemilius joined the Royal Navy as a first-class volunteer.⁷ His career spanned the last nine years of the Napoleonic Wars, and he served on various ships in the Channel Fleet, the West Indies, Ireland and the Mediterranean. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant on 2 March 1815, the year the war ended and the reduction of the naval establishment began. During his years at sea Aemilius became a competent navigator, with a sound knowledge of nautical astronomy. On 5 December 1816 he retired on

⁴ Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, p. 26.

⁵ Although they shared a common surname, there is no known close familial relationship between Alexander and Mary.

⁶ See biographical sketch, p. 99.

⁷ Smith, ‘Simpson, Aemilius’, p. 720.

half-pay and returned to Dingwall. There he formed a relationship with Margaret McLennan and a son, Horatio Nelson Simpson, was born in 1821.

In that same year Aemilius's father, Alexander, died leaving his widow with a meagre pension of £25 per annum; thereafter Aemilius lived with her. His half-brother, Alexander has described his situation as follows:

Our father died in 1821. His income was too small to have allowed his laying up a store, and the only provision for his family was an annuity to our mother of twenty-five pounds in that excellent institution 'The Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund' which he secured by annual life payments. Our brother Aemilius generously joined his lieutenant's half-pay to his step-mother's slender provision, and cheerfully took a share of the little cottage which she occupied.

He was, as this noble action shows, a man of warm affection, but his exclusion from active employment in the service (the naval) which he idolized, and other disappointments, had soured his temper; he was naturally irascible, and a strong admirer of what is known by men-of-wars men as 'tight discipline', the exercise of which had a long, depressing effect on my brother's mind.⁸

It seems probable that unemployment, straitened financial circumstances and 'other disappointments' combined to make this an unhappy period for Aemilius.



Fig. 3. Artist's impression of George Simpson, approaching a post in his personal North canoe. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba (P390, neg. 7907).

⁸ Alexander Simpson, *Life and travels*, pp. 4–5.

During the decade following Aemilius's retirement from active service the fur trade in British North America was undergoing many changes which culminated in 1821, when the North West and Hudson's Bay companies, both weakened by decades of ruinous competition, amalgamated under the name of the latter, and Aemilius's kinsman, George Simpson was named Governor of the large Northern Department.⁹ (Fig. 1). The new Governor introduced several measures to improve the profitability of the Company's operations: redundant trading posts were closed, excess personnel were discharged or persuaded to retire, waste was reduced and new avenues of commerce such as lumbering, fishing and agriculture were considered. With the amalgamation the Hudson's Bay Company had inherited the North West Company's enormous Columbia District, an area comprising the drainage basin of the Columbia River and the Pacific littoral from the Spanish territories in the south (the northern boundary of present-day California) to the region claimed by Russia to the north (the southern limit of what is now the Alaskan Panhandle). The coastal trade in this region had long been dominated by Americans who sailed from New England. The Hudson's Bay Company had thus inherited the North West Company's posts in the Columbia basin. These included Fort George (the former Astoria) at the mouth of the river, Fort Okanogan, Fort Nez-Percé (Walla-Walla) and Spokane House. A somewhat urgent question which the Hudson's Bay Company's Committee had to resolve, was to select the best route whereby York Factory (the Company's main entrepot on Hudson Bay) and London could maintain contact with these posts by way of regular expresses. Trade goods would be shipped and the furs returned by sea.¹⁰

This was part of the reason for George Simpson's trip from York Factory (Fig. 2) to Fort George and back in 1824–5,¹¹ in that it was typical of his *modus operandi* that he was keen to inspect the various establishments personally. It was also typical of the man that he had experimented as to his route and made significant changes on the basis of that experience. Instead of the standard route as far as Ile-à-la-Crosse, namely from York Factory south up the Hayes River, down the Echimamish to Playgreen Lake and Norway House, round the north end of Lake Winnipeg, up the Saskatchewan River to Cumberland House, up the Sturgeon Weir and over Frog Portage and up the Churchill River, Simpson, travelling in a North canoe (Fig. 3), attempted an alternate route that was significantly shorter. That route ascended the lower Nelson River to Split Lake¹². From there Simpson headed southwest up the Burntwood River and over a portage to the Churchill a short distance downstream from Frog Portage (Map 1). He rated this route quite highly: 'the portages are frequent but tolerably good and none exceeding half to $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of a Mile in length'.¹³ Despite this assessment, and the considerable saving in distance as compared to the standard route Simpson found that it was far from popular among the Company's officers and men, on the basis that there were no posts such as Norway House or Cumberland House along the way where there was the opportunity for 'indulging themselves in taking a few holydays ... en passant'.¹⁴ Moreover there were few large lakes along the Burntwood route where they might enjoy rest-days due to head-winds. Simpson typically remarked 'and this very objection on their part is to me the strongest recommendation'.¹⁵ Ultimately, however, Simpson nonetheless decided not to use the Burntwood route on a regular basis because, while he found it quite manageable in a North canoe, the numerous portages would be an obstacle to its use by York boats.

⁹ Galbraith, *The Little Emperor*, p. 53; Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, p. 127.

¹⁰ Rich, *History of the Hudson's Bay Company*, II, p. 445.

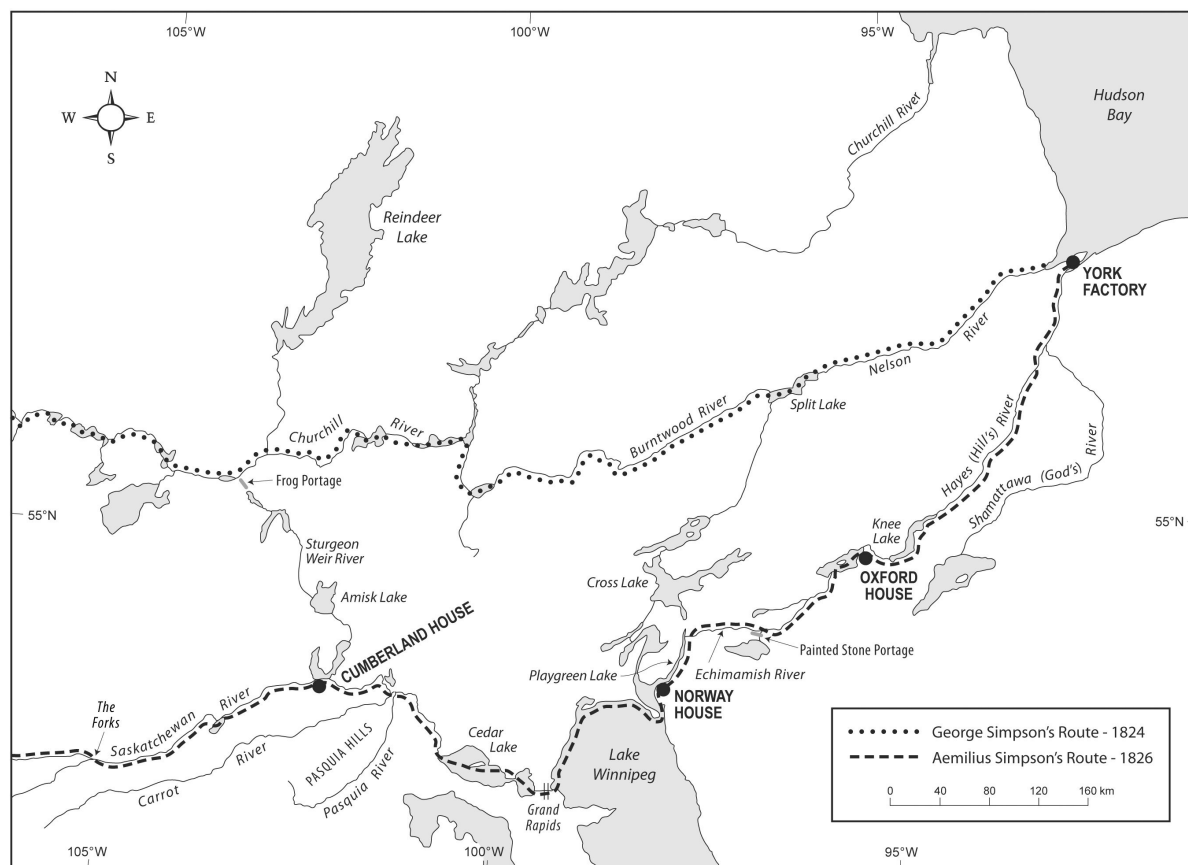
¹¹ Merk, *Fur trade and empire*.

¹² Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, p. 169.

¹³ Merk, *Fur trade and empire*, p. 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*



Map 1. York Factory to the Forks of the Saskatchewan River.

From Frog Portage George Simpson headed up the Churchill to Ile-à-la-Crosse and thence by the standard route west to Fort Assiniboine on the Athabasca River by way of the Beaver River. He and his party, however, ‘made very slow progress on the Beaver River, on account of its lowness, the people almost constantly in the Water dragging the canoe’.¹⁶ Indeed Simpson concluded that the Beaver River portion was the greatest obstacle on the route. It was ‘extremely harassing (*sic*) to the people requiring much expensive and precautionary arrangement in regard to provisions assistance from Freeman &c &c....’¹⁷ He reached Lac la Biche via a series of long portages between lakes with very muddy shores. Heading down the La Biche River to the Athabasca he encountered little improvement ‘and a more disagreeable navigation or piece of Road I never travelled; the River itself was nearly dry so that it became necessary to carry the Baggage at least four fifths of the way’ two Men took down the Canoe light with great difficulty...¹⁸

In light of this experience on the Beaver/La Biche route, on reaching Fort Assiniboine Simpson had probably already decided on selecting a different route. This decision was undoubtedly influenced by his learning that Chief Factor John Rowand,¹⁹ in charge of Fort Edmonton, had travelled from there to Fort Assiniboine on horseback to see Simpson, but had been unable to wait for Simpson to arrive. Seeing the potential for the Fort Edmonton to Fort Assiniboine route becoming the standard route Simpson gave instructions that ‘a good Horse road be cut in the course of this winter’ from Fort Edmonton to Fort Assiniboine.²⁰

From Fort Assiniboine George Simpson continued up the Athabasca River to near the site of the present town of Jasper. There he and his party switched to horseback, travelling up

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 18.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 25.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 22.

¹⁹ See biographical sketch, p. 98.

²⁰ Merk, *Fur trade and empire*, p. 27.

the Athabasca and Whirlpool rivers, over the continental divide at the small lake which he named the 'Committee's Punch-bowl' and down the steep slope of the 'Grand Cote' to Boat Encampment on the Columbia River.²¹ From there he travelled almost the full length of the Columbia River by bateau to Fort George.

Simpson started back east on 16 March 1825, but closed Fort George before leaving.²² Anticipating that the impending settlement of the Oregon question between Britain and the United States might result in the Columbia River being selected as the boundary, and Fort George being on the south side of the river, Simpson decided to move the post to the north side. The site he chose was Belle Vue Point, the site of the present city of Vancouver WA. On his way up the river, on 19 March Simpson formally opened the new post which he named Fort Vancouver and 'Baptised it by breaking a Bottle of Rum on the Flag Staff'.²³

As far as Fort Assiniboine he retraced his outward route, but from there he headed south on horseback for Fort Edmonton, to assess the route which François Cardinal had cleared during the winter and spring.²⁴ And from there he travelled by boat down the North Saskatchewan to Fort Carlton and then on horseback across country to Red River (Fort Garry). He had, however, travelled the whole of the Hayes/ Saskatchewan rivers route during his circuit of posts east of the Rockies in 1823, and hence was completely familiar with that route. Simpson felt that the real danger of attack by Indians of the Blackfoot confederation on the North Saskatchewan route could be averted by combining the Columbia express with the combined brigades bound for Edmonton and Lesser Slave Lake, which would amount to a total of 43 men.²⁵

On the basis of what he had seen at Fort George over the winter, especially the fertile soil, temperate climate and abundant resources of timber, George Simpson saw great opportunities for increased profits from the Columbia River District. Nor was he content to leave the riches of the coast trade to his competitors. However his plans would require ships and experienced mariners, two resources which were in short supply within the Hudson's Bay Company.

On 10 November 1825 George Simpson (by then in London) wrote to Governor J. H. Pelly and the London Committee to explain some of the arrangements that were being undertaken by the carpenters at Fort Vancouver to build two sailing vessels, one 'of between 50 & 60 Tons intended for the Coasting Trade'²⁶ and another 'of about 20 Tons intended to run between Frazers River and the Columbia'.²⁷ The Company was also building a new schooner, *Cadboro*, in England for service on the Northwest coast. Clearly experienced officers would be needed for these vessels, and it was only natural that George Simpson thought of his half-cousin Aemilius, as being a suitable officer on board one of the vessels. Having languished on shore for a decade it must have come as a great relief to Aemilius when this opportunity opened. Also in his letter of 10 November to J. H. Pelly George Simpson wrote:

If you approve of my name-sake Lieut^t Simpson being taken into the service I think he could be usefully employed in the Columbia this ensuing season about those vessels and should be sent to the interior by the Spring Express Canoe; he is now in communication with Capt. Mathews on the subject of joining him as his 1st Lieut^t (if the former succeeds in getting a ship; it would therefore be desirable that he should have early intimation whether the Comp^y will accept his services or not.²⁸

²¹ Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, pp. 174–5.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 122.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 149–50.

²⁵ Rich, *History of the Hudson's Bay Company*, II: 445.

²⁶ HBCA D.4/11, fos. 23r–24v.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

It is noteworthy that he diplomatically did not mention that Aemilius was related to him, if only by marriage.

George's recommendation was accepted and on 23 February the Governor and Committee replied:

We have engaged Lt. Simpson of the R.N. to act as Surveyor and Hydrographer when such services are required and at other times to take the Command of the Companys Vessels or to be otherwise employed where his services may be useful. He is now sent out for the purpose of fitting and commanding the coastal vessel to be employed in the Columbia department and we anticipate important benefits in many points of view from his scientific knowledge. He is placed on the list of clerks with a salary of £150 p an^m so as to render him eligible for promotion, to which we think he may confidently look as we have every reason to believe that his talents, habits and requirements are such as will render him a valuable acquisition to the service. His promotion, however, like that of all other Clerks, must depend on merit alone.²⁹

For his expenses and travel Aemilius was voted £50.

George Simpson and Aemilius sailed from Liverpool for New York on board *Manchester* on 5 March 1826 and arrived on 6 April. They then proceeded to Montreal by a circuitous route, the usual passage down Lake Champlain being still blocked by ice.³⁰ From Montreal they travelled west to Lake of the Woods where they parted company; George probably had business to attend to in the area. Meanwhile Aemilius proceeded westwards with Chief Factor John Charles³¹ to Fort Garry at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, the site of present-day Winnipeg. On 'June 4th Sunday Mr. Chief Factor Charles and Lieut^t Simpson arrived [at Fort Garry] in a light canoe manned by eight men from Canada'.³²

Three days later Aemilius set off on his first surveying task. 'Mr. Chief Factor Charles and Lieut^t Simpson set out to Pambina [Pembina] in their light canoes for the purpose of ascertaining the boundary line in that quarter'.³³ The treaty of Ghent (1818) had established the forty-ninth parallel, from the northwest corner of the Lake of the Woods to the crest of the Rocky Mountains as the international boundary dividing American and British territories. Pembina was the HBC post located within a few meters from the boundary. In 1823 the American, Major Long had established that Pembina was on the American side of the boundary. Charles and Aemilius Simpson returned to Fort Garry on 10 June having confirmed 'the correctness of observations taken there by Major Long....'

On 12 June Aemilius and Chief Factor Charles departed for York Factory, in order for the latter to attend the annual Meeting of Council.³⁴ They arrived there on the 27th. As a newcomer to the Company with the relatively low rank of clerk Aemilius would not have participated in the meeting. His presence at York Factory appears to have been connected with another major task which George had in mind for his half-cousin, namely to produce a detailed survey of the entire route from York Factory to Fort Vancouver. Rather frustratingly, however, we have been unable to find in the Archives any letter of instructions from George (or the Committee) to Aemilius, directing him to complete a survey of the route. Such a letter may not have survived or, conceivably, George's instructions may have been verbal. It was undoubtedly on the basis of his own experiences on his journey of 1824–5 that George Simpson instructed Aemilius as to the route for which he wanted him to complete a detailed survey on his way west in 1826. His report would provide George (and the Committee) with a

²⁹ HBCA A 6/21, f. 136v.

³⁰ HBCA D.4/7, f. 181v.

³¹ See biographical sketch, p. 91.

³² HBCA B235/a/7, fo. 41v. Fort Garry Journal.

³³ HBCA, B235/a/7, fo. 41r–41v. Fort Garry Journal.

³⁴ HBCA, B235/a/7, f. 41v, Fort Garry Journal.

more professional description of the route, complete with compass directions and geographical coordinates, than his own journal.

Travelling with the regular west-bound brigade of York boats Aemilius headed up the Hayes River via Knee Lake and Oxford House, then down the Echimamish to the Nelson River, Playgreen Lake and Norway House. From there his route was round the north end of Lake Winnipeg to Grand Rapids and up the Saskatchewan River to Cumberland House, Fort Carlton and Fort Edmonton. Leaving their York boats the brigade then travelled with pack horses overland to Fort Assiniboine on the Athabasca River, then by canoe up that river to just beyond Jasper's House. There they switched to horses again, travelling up the Athabasca and Whirpool rivers to the Committee's Punch Bowl, the small lake sitting on the continental divide in Athabasca Pass. Dropping down the Grand Côté they reached Boat Encampment on the Columbia River. Here they transferred to bateaux for the rapid trip down the Columbia River via the Arrow Lakes, Fort Colville, Fort Okanogan and Walla Walla to Fort Vancouver, arriving on 2 November. The entire trip (2817 miles) took Simpson 112 days, of which only eighteen days were spent on the trip down the Columbia River.

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE ACROSS THE CONTINENT OF NORTH AMERICA IN 1826 BY AEMILIUS SIMPSON

York Factory to Norway House

July 1826

Friday 14th. The Saskatchewan [*sic*] Brigade, which I was appointed to accompany (as were all the party bound for the Colombia [*sic*]) being now equiped [*sic*], and the number of men required for the latter department being made up the Dispatches closed and all other arrangements being completed, we Embarked from York Factory ³⁵ at 3 PM and Commenced our Journey across the Continent of North America. Our Brigade consisted of about sixty persons in all for the several departments viz. Saskatchewan, Colombia & New Caledonia, including Mess^{rs} J^{no} Stewart C.T. [Chief Trader], Rowan[d] C.T., M^oMillan C.T., Macgillivray C.T. MacDougal Clerk, Birnie Clerk, Sinclair mate of vessel building in the Colombia, and myself for the purpose of taking command of that vessel.³⁶ We Embarked in five Boats which were fully laden with the Supplies for the Interior.³⁷ Our Crews were in high spirits & commenced this laborious Journey with as much apparent indifference as if a few days was to bring it to a conclusion. On Embarking we were accompanied to the Wharf by all the gentlemen and Servants assembled at York Factory, which at this time was very numerous.³⁸ To bid farewell to so many was therefore a very formidable task, and altho' my mode of life from an early period has exposed me to frequent changes and seperation [*sic*] from friends, yet it has not been able to divest me from feeling very acutely such seperation when the hour arrives, and on the present occassion [*sic*] I could not divest myself of such a feeling when parting with my valuable friend the Governor of Ruperts Land.³⁹ I was now entering among strangers and upon entirely a new mode of life, two considerations which were calculated to create a good deal of anxiety, as I was a stranger to the habits of the former and doubtfull [*sic*] of my Capacity to perform the duties of the latter. On the other hand I did not commence the Journey without feelings of satisfaction at the prospect it held out to me of seeing a variety of new and interesting Scenes, tho' I sincerely regret'd my own incapacity to make a proper use of my opportunities in the way of observation and description. On leaving Norway House for

³⁵York Factory, the HBC's port of entry to Rupert's Land, was located on the north bank of the Hayes River on a marshy peninsula between the mouths of the Nelson and Hayes rivers. The first post was built there by the HBC in 1682 and named in honour of James, Duke of York (later James I). It was captured by the French in 1685, recaptured by the British in 1696, only to be lost to the French again the following year. In 1713 it was awarded to the British by the Treaty of Utrecht, and James Knight of the HBC took possession of it in 1714. York Factory was captured and burned by the French in 1782, but was reestablished by the HBC the following year. It became the headquarters of company's Northern Department in 1810. After the amalgamation of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies in 1821, most of the annual Meetings of Council were held there until 1833. It is now administered by Parks Canada as a National Historic Site. [Morton, *The Canadian West*, pp. 94, 116–17, 126–7, 333; Parks Canada, 'York Factory: National Historic Site'; Wilson, 'Forts on the Twin Rivers', pp. 4–11; Payne, *The Most Respectable Place*.]

³⁶Simpson's travelling companions were Chief Factors John Stuart (to whom Aemilius Simpson invariably refers as 'Stewart') and John Rowand; Chief Traders James MacMillan and Joseph MacGillivray; Clerks James or George McDougall and James Birnie; and mariner Thomas Sinclair. Simpson identified Stuart and Rowand as Chief Traders; they were, however, Chief Factors. For biographical sketches for all these individuals see pp. 90–100.

³⁷York Boats, constructed of wood, with pointed and upturned bows and sterns, and flat bottoms. They had a shallow draft, which made them suitable for the low water levels often encountered on some rivers and lakes. The boats varied in length, but in the 1820s most had a keel length of 24 to 27 feet. [Glover, 'York Boats', pp. 19–23.]

³⁸Chief Factors, Chief Traders, and Clerks were 'gentlemen' and addressed as 'Mr.'

³⁹George Simpson.

York Factory, I considered it unnecessary to carry along with me my heavy Caset [*sic*] containing my Instruments,⁴⁰ as this Track was already Surveyed by much abler hands, and for the same reason I shall forbear making an entry of my Track except in a general way, & any positions as to Latitude and Longitude &c. introduced between here and Norway House are upon Franklin's Authority. On Embarking at 3 PM we had a favourable breeze which assisted us in our ascent of Hay's [*sic*] River,⁴¹ but on its dying away our Crews were obliged to commence Tracking by line,⁴² which was a very laborious duty, the path in many places being along the face of steep cliffs of adhesive clay. Yet such is the spirit of emulation among these Voyageurs that they are regardless of every obstacle & perform their severe duty with a cheerfulness & perseverance that cannot be exceeded.⁴³ We continued our ascent of Hays River until [*sic*] a short distance below Eighteen Mile Creek,⁴⁴ when we encamp [*sic*] for the night at 9.20 PM. The Weather throughout the day was fine, but we were very much persecuted by Mosketos.

Saturday 15th. The morning commenced Hazy but cleared up on the Sun's rising when the Weather became fine & pleasant. We Embarked at 2.50 AM and continued our ascent of Hay's River, which we completed at 5 PM when we arrived at the confluence of the Shamattawa,⁴⁵ Making the estimated Distance from York Factory 56 miles, which exceeds Capⁿ Franklins a few miles.⁴⁶ As we continue our ascent the current gains additional force, which adds very much to the labour of Tracking, but we were occasionally [*sic*] favoured with a breeze which gave us assistance, & the Tracking path was in many places very good, having a beach covered with rounded stones, as compactly [laid?] as if done by human labour

⁴⁰Simpson was embarking on his second journey on the Hayes River route. Along with George Simpson he had arrived in North America earlier in the summer, and after reaching the Selkirk Settlement (the site of present-day Winnipeg) he travelled via Red River, Lake Winnipeg, Norway House, and Hayes River to York Factory. When he passed through Norway House, located near the northeast corner of Lake Winnipeg, he left his instruments to be retrieved when he returned with the brigade. Therefore, he was unable to make astronomical observations for latitude, longitude, or magnetic variation on the York Factory - Norway House portion of the journey.

'Caset' is a misspelling of 'cassette,' a sturdily constructed pine box measuring 28 inches in length, 16 inches wide and 15 inches deep. [Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express Journal', p. 103n; Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Hudson's Bay Company Museum Collection, 'Curiosities of the Country,' pp. 40-1.]

⁴¹The Hayes River was the principal route from York Factory to the Interior. It was named in honour of James Hayes, 'an unlovable character not to be suspected of devotion to anything which did not hold promise of rewards.' He was Prince Rupert's secretary and a charter member of the HBC.

During the years of its use as a transportation artery for the fur-trade various sections of the river were identified as individual rivers, and only the lower section of 54 miles, from Shamattawa (Gods) River to Hudson Bay, was called the 'Hayes.' In 1902, the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names assigned the name 'Hayes River' to the entire length of the waterway from York Factory to Painted Stone Portage, a distance of about 300 miles. Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest*, p. 29; Morse, *Fur Trade Canoe Routes*, p. 37.]

⁴²A boat or canoe is tracked upstream when the current is too strong to permit progress by oars or paddles or by poling. A line is run from the vessel to men on shore who tow it. One or two remain onboard to steer clear of obstructions and free entangled lines.

⁴³Voyageurs were usually *Canadiens*, Métis or Natives recruited to man canoes and boats and portage their cargoes over portages. They were predominantly men, but a few were Indian women. [Eccles, *The French in North America*, p. 162.]

⁴⁴'Eighteen Mile Creek' suggests a creek of that name 18 miles above York Factory. If that is so, the name is no longer in use and no other reference to it has been found. However, Blackwater Creek flows into the Hayes River from the southwest at that location.

⁴⁵The Shamattawa is now named Gods River. It flows into the Hayes from the southeast.

⁴⁶Captain John Franklin (for a biographical sketch see p. 93) had travelled this same route at the start of his first overland expedition to the Arctic in September 1819. Simpson expressed distances in English statute miles of 5280 feet. He was apparently unaware that Franklin recorded the distance in nautical (also known as 'geographic' or 'sea') miles, each of which was 6080 feet, and he estimated the distance to be 'forty-eight miles and a half from York Factory, including the windings of the river.' Forty-eight and one-half nautical miles equals fifty-six statute miles. [Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 29; Back, *Arctic Artist*, p. 27].

& forming a good causey.⁴⁷ We continued to ascend Steel's River until 9.30 PM,⁴⁸ when we were 12 Miles above the junction of the Shamattawa, & having made a distance in the course of the day of 50 Miles by my estimation in a very Winding course but in a SW^{ly} direction.

Sunday 16th. The morning commenced Hazy with a cold Dew followed by a warm day. At 2.30 AM Embarked & continued our ascent of the Steel River until Noon, when we arrived at the confluence of the Fox and Steel Rivers making the latter by my estimation a distance of 29 miles. We now commenced our ascent of Hills River,⁴⁹ which we continued until 8.30 PM Having ascended it 12 miles & making a distance in the course of the day of 29 miles in a Winding course to the SW, when we Encamp, our Men having had a hard days Tracking over a very indifferent path, it being in many places along the face of perpendicular clay cliffs affording frequently a very unsafe footing. These cliffs often attain a height of a hundred feet, with their Summits perfectly level and bearing a stunt'd growth of Pines.⁵⁰

Monday 17th. The Morning Hazy but fine Weather during the day. We Embarked at the usual hour & continued our ascent of the Hill River by Tracking, the path generally better than yesterday, as those steep clay Cliffs no longer occur, but its being flooded in some places still renders it a very laborious duty. We do not travel therefore at a rate exceeding two miles p^{er} hour. At 4.45 PM we arrived at the Rocky Portage, which I estimate is 34 miles above the Mouth of the Hill River. Making this Portage occupied us until 6 PM, when we proceeded for 2 miles & got to Borrowicks Falls,⁵¹ & having hauled above them at 8.15, we continued our ascent for a mile, When we Encamp for the night at 9 PM. On getting above the Rock Portage we discontinue Tracking and proceed by Poling, an operation at which our Canadian Voyageurs are very expert. The face of the Country assumes a different character along our Days Track. The Hills are now rounded taking their rise gradually from the Banks of the River, & forming a chain or ridge of Hills runing [*sic*] parallel with the course of the River, bearing a stunt'd growth of Pines with Birch and a variety of shrubs. The Scenery about the Rock Portage is very picturesque & romantic.

Tuesday 18th. Commenced a heavy Fog, which cleared up at 5 AM. At Noon the Weather was hot and sultry. The Thermometer up to 80°⁵², which ended in the Evening with rain and Thunder. At 3 AM we continued our ascent of the Hill River, which now presents a constant chain of rapids, obliging us to make frequent discharges and Portages, viz. the White Mud Portage, Rocky Point Discharge,⁵³ 1st & 2nd Brassa Portages,⁵⁴ & minor rapids, & at 7 PM we arrived at the Lower Burnt Wood Portage where we Encamp for the night, Having after a day of great labour & fatigue come a distance of only 13 miles. M^r Alex^r Stewart⁵⁵ passed in the

⁴⁷Still the standard Scots word for a cobbled street or a cobble-stone.

⁴⁸The Steel River, 36 miles in length, was the name of the section between the mouths of the Shamattawa and Fox rivers.

⁴⁹The Hill River began at the mouth of the Fox River, extended 65 miles to Swampy Lake and traversed the transition zone between the Precambrian Shield and the Hudson Bay Lowlands. The difference of elevation between the foot and head of the river is about 250 feet, and it is a constant succession of fast currents, rapids, and waterfalls. It is one of the most scenic portions of the Hayes River route, and Robert Hood, a member of the John Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition, reported their astonishment 'at the delightful prospects of Hill River. It . . . would find admirers from every climate.' [Morse, *Canoe Routes*, p. 37; Hood, *To the Arctic*, p. 27.]

⁵⁰The route from York Factory to Fort Vancouver is bounded by a variety of coniferous trees, such as tamarack, cedar, white and black spruce, and jack, ponderosa, and lodgepole pines. Simpson usually referred to all evergreen conifers as 'pines.' Here almost certainly black and white spruce.

⁵¹Berwick Falls.

⁵²Fahrenheit. On the Fahrenheit scale 32° is the freezing point of water and 212° the boiling point.

⁵³The term 'discharge' implies unloading the boat and tracking or poling it upstream unloaded.

⁵⁴Brassey Portages.

⁵⁵See biographical sketch, p. 99.

afternoon in his Light Canoe.⁵⁶ My travelling Companion M^r MacMillan accompanied him, being anxious to get to Norway House this afforded him a more expeditious means of getting [sic] there. I was offered [sic] a seat but declined it.

Wednesday 19th. We had a considerable fall of rain during the night. Some of our Boats having fallen in the rear, we were detained in our Encampment until 6 AM, when we pursued our Journey, opposed by a constant succession of strong rapids requiring the utmost exertion, alternately at the Poles, hauling line & oars, & making frequent Portages, viz. South Handing Place, Morgans Rocks, Portage des Isle, Upper Burnt Wood, Smooth Stone portages, above which we Encamp for the night, Having only come a distance of five Miles from our Mornings Encampment. The fatigue from the great labour attending this mode of travelling is very great, and notwithstanding the fine scenery presented by many of these falls & rapids, which are well calculated to please either the Eye or imagination of the Traveller, yet their frequent repetition & the serious obstacles accompanying them Divests them in a great measure of that interest which under different circumstances they must create. The attention of the traveller is principally directed to his progress, & you hear a constant repetition of the query, how far distant is the next Portage? Occasionally the Portages remunerate us by a supply of Wild Fruit, viz. strawberries, gooseberries, &c.

Thursday 20th. Fine clear Weather. Some of our boats being still in the rear we did not proceed on our Journey until 4.30 AM. We were occupied until 8.40 in getting above the rapids of the Mossy Portage. At noon we were making the 2nd Portage, the day extremely warm. Thermometer 81°. Notwithstanding our increasing exertions our advance today has been very trifling in Point of distance being only 4½ Miles. But taking Portages and rapids as an equivalent we have certainly made a fair days March, having made four Portages two of them launching places for Boats, besides hauling by line thru' several strong shoots⁵⁷ & rapids, some of these dangerous & the best tedious & fatiguing, the Crews being frequently obliged to leap overboard in the Rapids to Launch the Boats over Rocks. The Heat of the day was followed by Showers in the Evening. Two of our Boats having fallen in the rear, we Encamp at 8 PM above the Rapids of Ground Water Creek.

Friday 21st. The Morning Gloomy with Drizzling rain. We continued in our Encampment until 9.30 AM, in consequence of two of the Boats being still behind, when we Embarked & continued our ascent of the Hill River by Poling, hauling by line & rowing alternately, as circumstances required. At 3 PM we arrived above the upper rapids of Hill River which River by my estimation is 64 Miles, the last 30 above the Rock Portage a continued chain of rapids and spouts, which has occupied us four days in ascending them. We now entered Swampy Lake, & being favoured with a sailing Wind we landed on the Sail Island a short distance from the Dram Stone,⁵⁸ & furnishing ourselves with Masts we made sail up this Lake, an agreeable change in our mode of travelling. On completing our ascent of Swampy Lake, which is about 10 miles NE and SW we entered Jack Tent River at 5 PM,⁵⁹ & having Carried

⁵⁶A 'light canoe' was a lightly laden canoe used for rapid communications and the transportation of senior company officers.

⁵⁷*Chute*: French for rapids or a waterfall. Simpson consistently used the phonetic 'shoot' throughout his journal.

⁵⁸Dramstone Portage marked the upper end of Hill River. The crews were customarily rewarded for their labours with a dram of liquor. John Franklin, for example, recorded on 23 September 1819: 'We arrived at the *Dramstone*, which is hailed with pleasure by the boats' crews, as marking the termination of the laborious ascent of Hill River. We complied with the custom from whence it derives its name.' [Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 34.]

⁵⁹The section between Swampy and Knee lakes was called 'Jack River,' 'Little Jack River' or 'Jack Tent River.' [Hood, *To the Arctic*, p. 29; Manitoba, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, 'The Middle Track' ,Map.]

across the first Portage, which is about 1 mile up the River we proceeded on to the Long Portage, where we Encamp for the Night. Two of our boats still in the rear. The Weather today has been rather Cold and Cloudy. Wind NE. Thermometer at noon 57°.

Saturday 22nd. Fine clear Weather. Having remained in our Encampment for the Arrival of our two sternmost Boats, we did not Embark till 6.45 AM. When carrying on the 2nd Portage, M^r MacDonnel for Timmiscamaing in a light Canoe came up with us from York Factory bringing along with him M^r Barnstone, Clerk, to join the Colombian Brigade.⁶⁰ At 3 PM we completed our ascent of the Jack Tent or Lower Jack River, which presents a constant chain of rapids & altho' only 9 miles in extent there are four Portages within a distance of two Miles & it may be considered one of the worst parts of the Track from York Factory. We now Entered Knee Lake,⁶¹ which we continued to ascend with a fine fair breeze untill 8 PM, when the two boats again falling out of sight behind we Encamp for the night upon a small Isl^d [island], having ascended the Lake 21 Miles in a WSW direction & having come during the day a distance of 28½ miles. We had fine clear Weather throughout the day. Thermom^f [thermometer] at noon 67°, Wind NE. M^r Ferris⁶² passed on his way to Montreal from York Factory in three Canoes.

Sunday 23rd. Commenced Fine clear Weather. Wind NE. We remained in our Encampment untill the arrival of our sternmost Boats at 7.30 AM, when we continued our ascent of Knee Lake. At 9.20. We arrived at the Magnetic Island, mentioned by Franklin.⁶³ I estimate it to be 27 miles from the lower entrance of the Lake. It is in latitude 55° & at the upper termination of the Knee. On a close approach to this Small Islnd, which was hardly above the surface of the Lake, I found the compass became greatly agitated, veering about with great rapidity, untill at last it became stationary, the North Point being fixed in the direction of the Island, and altho' I applied a Key it had not the effect of withdrawing it from that direction, but as we left the Island it gradually resumed its true direction. But on passing a Point of another Islnd a few hundred yards beyond it, the Compass again became similarly affected, from which circumstance I would infer that a vein possessing this quality extends for some distance in a NE & SW direction. At 3.25 PM we completed the Ascent of Knee Lake, which I estimate to be 47 Miles, averaging a WSW & ENE direction, except in the Knee, where it runs SE & NW nearly. We now commenced our ascent of the Trout River, which having done for 1½ Miles, we arrived at the Trout Falls,⁶⁴ one of the Most dangerous rapids or falls on the line of Communication. We Encamp at the Head of these falls, two of our Boats having fallen again in the rear. These falls with the surrounding scenery afforded a fine subject for the Pencil of poor Hood,⁶⁵ but the heightening of the Landscape by the Silver tints of the Moons rays shooting thro' a projecting point of Wood on the opposite shore & playing upon the agitated surface of these fierce falls made me regret that they were not similarly presented to him as they were to me this Evening, which added much to their natural grandeur.

⁶⁰Allan McDonnel and George Barnston. See biographical sketches, pp. 96 and 90.

⁶¹Knee Lake derives its name from a bend in its mid portion where the direction changes about one hundred degrees.

⁶²Chief Trader Hugh Faires. See biographical sketch, p. 93.

⁶³Franklin recorded: 'We watched our compasses carefully, and perceived that they were affected at the distance of three hundred yards [from the island], both on the approach to and departure from the rock . . . it was evident that the general magnetic influence was totally overpowered by the local attraction of the ore.' [Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 36].

⁶⁴Trout Falls is a translation of the Cree name *namegose powestik*. [Geographic Board of Canada, *Place Names*, p. 88.]

⁶⁵Simpson's remark about 'the pencil of poor Hood' refers to a picture painted by Robert Hood (see biographical sketch, p. 94) at Trout Falls in 1819, depicting a group of men hauling a York boat up the portage. It is the earliest known picture of a York Boat. [Hood, *To the Arctic*, plate 19; Glover, 'York Boats', p. 19.] His use of the word 'poor' refers to the fact that Hood was murdered during the disastrous overland retreat on Franklin's first overland expedition.

Monday 24th. Commenced fine clear Weather. We remained in our Encampment until 5.30 AM Waiting the arrival of our sternmost Boats, when we continued our ascent of the Trout River,⁶⁶ a very rapid stream, five miles of it being a constant chain of rapids and falls. At 9.35 we got above the Knife Portage and having hauled by line above a number of Rapids at a quarter past noon we arrived at comparatively still Water, enabling us to proceed with greater expedition. At 3 PM we arrived at Oxford House, a small Trading Post on Holey Lake.⁶⁷ The Trout River being by my estimation a distance of 14 Miles from its bottom to Oxford House — 9 Miles of that a succession of rapids, its direction for 12 miles being between NW & North, when it turns again from the SWbW. Our Crews received a supply of Pemmican at this Post, & we resumed our Journey at 4.30 PM & Having ascended Holey Lake 18 miles between WbS and SWbS we Encamp at 9 PM on an Island.

Tuesday 25th. Fine clear Weather a Breeze from the SW. We Embarked at 4.30 AM and continued our ascent of Holey Lake & at 10.45 Entered the Wipinapanis,⁶⁸ making the estimated distance of Holey Lake 33½ miles, WbS to SSW, leading among Clusters of Islands. Having ascended the Wipinapanis about 2 Miles we arrived at the lower Portage in this River.⁶⁹ We here met a Canoe and Boat from the New Caledonia District⁷⁰ with returns for York Factory. On Making this Portage we continued our ascent of this stream, making Two Portages and hauling four Rapids within a distance of two Miles. On arriving above these Rapids we passed thro' Windy Lake & entered the Rabbit Ground,⁷¹ where we Encamp, having travelled during the day a distance of 32 Miles. We Experienced great heat during the day.

Wednesday 26th. Fine Weather. At 2.30 AM Embarked & continued our ascent of the Rabbit Ground. We arrived at the Lower Portage of Hills Gates at ½ before 6 AM. In hauling these fierce rapids one of our Boats filled, having broke her sheer in the rapid & not having made a sufficient discharge of her Cargoe [*sic*], which should never be omitted [*sic*] in hauling dangerous rapids, which the Crews are apt to do to save themselves trouble in transporting the goods. The Scenery about this Portage presents one of those wild and singular pictures of the face of nature which seldom fails to impress the contemplative mind with feelings of reverence and wonder. To account for these Wonderful productions by the common operations of nature is I believe only speculative. Capⁿ Franklin in speaking of this place, supposes that the mere action of Water in time produced this extraordinary chasm, thro' which the River now holds its course. I should rather ascribe it to the force of one of those

⁶⁶Trout River connected the upstream end of Knee Lake with Holey (Oxford) Lake.

⁶⁷Holey Lake, now called Oxford Lake, derived its name from portions that were never sounded. The Natives called it *pathepaco nippee*, 'Bottomless Water.' Near the outlet, in the vicinity of Oxford House, it was referred to as 'The Deep Hole.' The first trading post was built there by Chief Factor William Sinclair in 1798. On 28 September 1819, the Franklin expedition arrived at Oxford House and Robert Hood wrote: 'It is built like the rest, of wood and inclosed by stockades. These lonely buildings are more widely scattered than the cities of Siberia. There is no difference in them; they were raised for the primitive object of shelter; and variety is only to be found in decoration and arrangement, here neither attempted nor desired.' [Morton, *Canadian West*, p. 303; Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express', p. 96n; Hood, *To the Arctic*, p. 31.]

⁶⁸About 6 miles long, the Wipinapanis River was the name of the section connecting the upper entrance of Holey (Oxford) Lake, with Windy Lake. It 'is composed of several branches which separate and unite again and again, intersecting the country in a great variety of directions.' [Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 38.]

⁶⁹At the lower portage, Wipinapanis Falls on modern maps, Franklin wrote: 'The river rushes with irresistible force through channels formed by two rocky islands; and we learnt, that last year a poor man, in hauling a boat up one of these channels, was, by the breaking of the line, precipitated into the stream and hurried down the cascade with such rapidity, that all efforts to save him were ineffectual. His body was afterwards found and interred near the spot.' [Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 38.]

⁷⁰Present-day north-central British Columbia, with headquarters at Fort St. James.

⁷¹A short river flowing into the upstream end of Windy Lake.

mysterious Convulsions to which our Earth has been subjected.⁷² Having made this Portage, we continued our ascent of the Hill River, hauling a succession of rapids & making the upper Portage of Hills Gates, which we completed at 3 PM.⁷³ We now arrived in comparatively still Water, tho' still opposed by strong Current, & at 6.15 PM arrived at the White Fall or Robertsons Portage,⁷⁴ having traveled a distance during the day of 25 Miles.

Thursday 27th. Commenced gloomy threatening rain. The Crews from Daylight were Employed transporting the Cargoes & Boats across this Portage, which is a most laborious operation, being across a Hill of Considerable Elevation and a distance of ½ Mile & is performed entirely by Main Strength, our Crews dispising [*sic*] the Aid of art. They are not even furnished with a Tackle, which would if judiciously applied render great assistance. A chain of falls on our right as we ascend forms this serious obstruction on this part of our route. It was viewing the rich scenery about these falls that so nearly cost Capⁿ Franklin his life by falling into the River on the Margin of the rapids.⁷⁵ He placed them in Latitude 54°24', Long^{de} 96°31'. At 11.35 AM the Boats &c. being transported we Embarked & continued our route by a small stream coming from a chain of Swampy Lakes which produce the White fish⁷⁶ in great Abundance & perfection I understand. The Country along our Track is cloathed [*sic*] with a stunt'd growth of Pines & Poplars, & occasionally shewing [*sic*] themselves above the Swamps are projecting Masses of Rock which form a Curious Contrast. At 5.45 PM Having made the Portage across the Painted Stone,⁷⁷ a narrow ledge of Rocks forming a barrier between one of the Sources of the Hays River and the Echiamamis, we continued our decent [*sic*] of the latter, a trifling stream taking its course thro' a Marsh. We fortunately found no obstruction from Want of Water & continued our route for 7 miles, when we Encampt upon a ledge of Rocks at 8.15 PM, Having come a distance of 23½ miles from the White Fall Portage. The Weather during the day was close and Gloomy. Thermometer at noon 78°.

Friday 28th. Commenced close Gloomy Weather. Thermometer 70°. At 3 AM Embarked & continued our route down the Echiamamis without meeting any obstruction from Want of Water, which is a rare occurrence at this season I understand. On arriving at the Dam erected

⁷²The scenery at Hill Gates also put Franklin into a contemplative mood. 'In passing through this chasm,' he marvelled, 'we were naturally led to contemplate the mighty but, probably, slow and gradual effects of the water in wearing down such vast masses of rock; but in the midst of our speculations, the attention was excited anew to a grand and picturesque rapid, which, surrounded by the most wild and majestic scenery, terminated the defile.' [Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 39.] Simpson attributed a cataclysmic origin to the land forms; Franklin thought that erosive forces accounted for their formation.

⁷³Hill Gates was the name of a short section of river between Windy Lake and Robinson Falls. Robert Hood described it as being 'confined to about ten yards between steep granite rocks, for a mile and a half. One mile is so straight that the whole perspective presents itself at once, the heights crowned with pine and larch, and the distant opening bounded by the sky; a magnificent defile which one would have thought too regular for nature, but too stupendous for art.' Contrary to Simpson's reference to ascending the 'Hill River,' it was not commonly known by that name. [Hood, *To the Arctic*, p. 32.]

⁷⁴Robinson Portage on modern maps.

⁷⁵On 2 October 1819, John Franklin 'slipped from the edge of a rock and rolled down a declivity 15 or 20 yards into the water.' Unable to climb out of the river, he was 'slowly approaching the fall.' He finally reached a 'low point' and was rescued, 'quite exhausted by his repeated attempts to land.' [Hood, *To the Arctic*, pp. 32–33.]

⁷⁶Lake whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*). Still one of the most important commercially exploited species in North America.

⁷⁷Painted Stone Portage is about 40 yards long, across the height-of-land and joins the Hayes River portion of the route to the Echiamish River. The portage takes its name from a stone that was formerly placed 'near the centre of this portage on which figures were annually traced, and offerings deposited by the Indians; but the stone has been removed many years, and the spot has ceased to be held in veneration.' [Franklin, *Narrative of a Voyage*, 41.] The Echiamish River (the-river-that-flows-both-ways) is about 40 miles long. It originates from two streams which meet at a beaver pond near its middle. One outlet of the pond flows eastwards to the Hayes River; the other flows west into the Nelson (Sea) River [Morse, *Canoe Routes*, p. 41].

by M^r Kemp⁷⁸ for the purpose of elevating this Stream, we found the sluice gate carried away and the Work otherwise considerably injured.⁷⁹ At Noon we entered the Hairy Lake⁸⁰ & were opposed by a Breeze from the SW. The Weather was extremely warm. Thermom^r 85° at 1.35. Having completed our decent of Hairy Lake which is a small sheet of Water of about 5 miles SW^{ly}, we commenced our decent of the stream called the Black Water, which is I suppose merely a continuance of the Echiamamis. On decending five miles we Entered the Sea River.⁸¹ The oppressive heat of the day was followed by a severe Thunder storm, accompanied by very heavy rain & Hail stones of an immense size, obliging us to take shelter for about an hour under cover of a small Island, when we again continued our ascent of the Sea River and Carpenters Lake, opposed by strong rapids, and at 8.30 Arrived at the Rapids formed by the falling of Play Green Lake into Carpenters Lake thro' a contracted Channel. We Encampt upon the ledge of Rock on the right for the night. Our Crews unloaded the Boats and hauled them above the Rapids.

Saturday 29th. Commenced close Weather with drizzling rain, with a breeze from the NE rendering us great assistance in our progress to Norway House. We Embarked from the Sea Carrying Place at 3 AM & pursued our route by the Lower Play Green Lake, Little Jack River & Upper Play Green Lake, in many parts thro' intricate channels & winding courses, but principally to the SW, a distance of 40 miles, which brought us to Norway House at 3 PM, Having taken sixteen days to perform the Journey from York Factory, which I estimate to be a travelling distance of 395½ miles.⁸² It is certainly a long time for so short a distance, altho' more expeditious than it is generally performed. But when it is observed that some days with our utmost exertions we did not travel a distance exceeding five Miles from the serious obstacles opposed to us by Rapids, Portages &c., the difficulty of this Track may be appreciated. It will be seen by a reference to Captain Franklins Journal that this Journey took his party twenty eight days.⁸³ Altho' there are many natural obstacles in the line of route, which art could not overcome, it is susceptible of improvement in many parts, but perhaps the expence [*sic*] attending it is too great a consideration to engage in such improvements. We found several of the Partners and other Gentlemen of the Company at this Post waiting the return of their Boats with the outfits from York Factory. There was also a considerable population who had collected here from various parts of the Teritory [*sic*] with the different Brigades & who remained here untill their return from York Factory for their respective destinations, and I was informed the number including woman and children was for a considerable time equil [*sic*] to about three hundred Souls, whose sole subsistence depended upon the fishing of this place, which fortunately proved very abundant this season. The supply having now failed provision has become a scarce article, which renders it disireable [*sic*] that people leave as early as possible. Our stay will therefore be very short.

⁷⁸William Kempt. See biographical sketch, p. 94.

⁷⁹After the extermination of the beaver from the Echiamamish River the HBC constructed a dam to maintain water levels to facilitate the passage of York boats and canoes. Vestiges of the dam were still visible in the summer of 2001. [Morse, *Canoe Routes*, p. 41.]

⁸⁰Hairy Lake derived its name from an extensive overgrowth of bullrushes. [Geographic Board, *Place Names*, p. 41.]

⁸¹The east channel of the Nelson River was known at the Sea River.

⁸²Norway House, named after the Norwegian labourers who were hired in 1817 to build a winter road from York Factory to Lake Winnipeg, was located at Warren Landing on Big Mossy Point at the northeast corner of the lake. The site was abandoned in 1826 following a fire which caused extensive damage. A new post was built about twenty-five miles northeast at the mouth of the Jack River, which was closer to the fishery and the main source of the food supply. It was the site where the York Boats were built, and beginning in the mid-1830s the annual meetings of the Council of the HBC were held there. [Morton, *Canadian West*, pp. 594, 603, 692.] At present it is a Cree community with a population of about 7000 people.

⁸³9 September to 6 October 1819.

Sunday 30th. During the night we had a very heavy fall of rain & Thunder storm against which our Tents proved but a very indifferent shelter, many coming down & exposing their inmates to a complete wetting [*sic*]. The scanty supply of Provisions has reduced our Crews to the alternative of eating Dogs, which, however is considered a choice article of food by some of the old Voyageurs. The Gentlemen participate in the general Scarcity and are reduced to a very scanty diet. M^r Ferris proceeded for Montreal with retired servants & familys [*sic*], having three Canoes, & M^r MacDonnell for Timmiscamaing⁸⁴ in a light Canoe. By observations obtained today I make the Latitude of Norway House 53°41'25"N and Longitude by my Chronometer 97°53'W which is 8½ miles to the East^d [eastward] of the Longitude assigned to it by Capⁿ Franklin, from which I must infer that the Journey to York Factory has altered the rate of my Chronometer.⁸⁵ Our Arrangements at this place being completed, we resumed our Journey at 5 PM and proceeded to an Encampment on Norway Point.

Norway House to Carlton House

Monday 31st. Commenced calm and Cloudy. At 4.45 AM we Embarked & pursued our route along the NW shores of the Lake Winnipeg,⁸⁶ which for the first thirty Miles is composed of steep cliffs of Clay. We were favoured with a fair breeze for a great part of our Days run, sometimes blowing strong accompanied by rain, which induced us to keep close in with the shore, thereby lengthening our distance considerably; at 3.15 we waited the arrival of our sternmost Boats under the lee of MacIntoshs Island, the one mentioned by Franklin as lying off the Tongue forming the seperation between Lime Stone Bay & the Main Lake.⁸⁷ At 4 we pursued our Journey again to the SW Keeping close along shore. At 8.30 we Entered a snug cove, about a mile to the north^d [northward] of the 2nd Rocky Point, where we Encamp^t for the night, having come during the day a distance of 60 Miles.

August 1826

Tuesday 1st. Commenced heavy showers. At 2 AM Embarked & pursued our Journey along the shore of Lake Winnipeg in a SSW direction. At 4.30 we got a fine breeze from the NW with clear Weather to which we made Sail, & having come about 20 miles from our Encampment we entered the Saskatchewan (*sic*) River at 7.30 AM and continuing our ascent of it for about 2 Miles, we arrived at the foot of the Grand Rapids.⁸⁸ After Breakfast I walked

⁸⁴Lake Timiskaming, about 300 miles northwest of Montreal.

⁸⁵Franklin placed Norway House at latitude 53°41'38"N and longitude 98°1'24"W. The method of determining longitude by chronometer required knowing the exact time at Greenwich, England and the local time. Inaccuracies of a few seconds introduced significant errors into the results; therefore, it was necessary for the observer to know the 'rate' at which the chronometer was gaining or losing time. Notwithstanding Simpson's conclusion that the rate of his chronometer had been altered, his determination of the longitude is more accurate than Franklin's. His statement 'that the journey to York Factory' altered the rate of his chronometer was a slip of the pen. He undoubtedly meant 'from York Factory.' [Franklin, *Narrative of a Voyage*, pp. 43–4; Cotter, *A History of Nautical*, p. 243.]

⁸⁶The next leg of the route was from Norway House to Grand Rapids, at the mouth of the Saskatchewan River on the northwest shore of Lake Winnipeg. The brigade followed the northeast shore, rounded the north end, and then turned southwards to Grand Rapids, a distance of about 80 miles.

⁸⁷McIntosh Reef lies one mile from shore in the northwest corner of Lake Winnipeg. On 7 October 1819, the Franklin expedition took shelter there from 'a strong westerly wind. . . . This Island is formed of a collection of small rolled pieces of limestone, and was remembered by some of our boatmen to have been formerly covered with water.' [Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 44.]

⁸⁸At its termination at Lake Winnipeg the Saskatchewan River flowed in a northerly direction. As one ascended the river it followed a gradual curve to the south and then west to Cross Lake, about 6 miles distant. The Grand Rapids, which varied in width from 3 to ½ mile, occupied the middle three miles. Robert Hood described the rapids as running 'with extraordinary noise and fury . . . round a long peninsula, fretted into a sheet of foam by the rocks which interrupted it.' John Franklin wrote: 'At the grand rapid, the Saskatchewan . . . works

to the Head of the Rapids, which from the Entrance of the River I estimate to be 6 Miles, forming a great bend between South & North, & bounded by steep Cliffs of Gravel and Lime stone, with an elevation of about 80 feet. I tried with the Mountain Barometer the number of feet which these rapids have from their foot, at the point where they commence Launching the Boats, to their head where the Boats are again Launched.⁸⁹ The result made it 43 feet. We found at the Head of the Rapids M^r Prudens with the advanced part of the Saskatchewan Brigade, and also three Boats under M^r Clouson for the Athabasca Department.⁹⁰ A great number of Indians were Encampt here actively engaged in the Sturgeon fishing, from whom we obtained a very seasonable supply of that article, which forms a very palatable food.⁹¹ We besides obtained an abundant supply of wild fruits, the strawberry, Poyer &c. which formed a very agreeable repast.⁹² A few nights previous to our arrival here a fatal event took place. Two Indians while setting in their Tent were killed by a flash of lightning; their relations craved rum [Simpson's underlining] to console them under this heavy dispensation. Our Crews have been Employed in Transporting the Cargoes & Boats across the Portage. We had throughout the day fine & pleasant Weather.

Wednesday 2nd. Very warm and clear Weather. Thermometer at noon 80°. The position of this place being accurately fixed by Capⁿ Franklin, I availed myself of the opportunity afforded to ascertain the rate of my Chronometer, which as I apprehended I found had altered her rate very materially, there being an accumulated daily loss of 3" seconds. A good Meridian altitude made the Latitude 53°8'26"N within a second of that ascertained by Franklin, which is a satisfactory coincidence.⁹³ The Magnetic Variation I made 17° East^{ly} [easterly].⁹⁴ Mess^{rs} Prudens and Coulson proceeded on their Journey at the usual Embarking hour. Our Crews from daylight were Employed transporting the Boats &c. across the Portage, which is a most laborious operation, having to drag them up a steep Bank of 20 feet & then to Launch them across the Portage a distance of 1800 yards & whose extreme height was determined by my Mountain Barometer to be 67 feet. At 3.30 PM this difficult service being completed we Embarked & continued our ascent of the Saskatchewan by tracking & poling against a very strong Current, & with our utmost efforts did not advance above a League⁹⁵ at 9.20 PM when we Encampt for the night just below the Red Rock. Several Indians having accompanied our Brigade, our Encampment this Evening presented a grotesque group.

Thursday 3rd. Commenced fine clear Weather. At 4 AM we Embarked and after severe labour for four hours at the Poles and hauling line, the Men being frequently up to their Breeches in

its way through a narrow channel, deeply worn in the limestone strata. The stream, rushing with impetuous force over a rocky and uneven bottom, presents a sheet of foam, and seems to bear with impatience the straitened confinement of the lofty banks.' [Hood, *To the Arctic*, p. 38; Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 45.]

A hydroelectric dam was built at Grand Rapids between 1960 and 1968. In June 1964 the gates of the dam were closed and the spectators 'watched the spray that had whitened along the rocky shores for aeons die down like partially whipped cream. And while they watched the river disappeared.' The water level of Cross Lake, above the dam, rose about 12 feet. [Campbell, *The Saskatchewan*, pp. 326–7.]

⁸⁹Mountain barometers were mercury barometers designed to determine elevation above a known base level. They had a scale ranging from fourteen to thirty-two inches, were stored and carried in leather cases, and supported on a tripods. [Turner, *Nineteenth-Century Scientific Instruments*, pp. 233–5.]

⁹⁰John Peter Pruden and Robert Clouston. See biographical sketches pp. 98 and 91.

⁹¹Lake sturgeon (*Acipinser fulvescens*.); still occurring throughout most of the Saskatchewan system, east to James Bay and the St. Lawrence and south to the Tennessee River, its flesh (and eggs for caviar) still command a high price, although total catches are much smaller than in the 19th century [Scott and Crossman, *Freshwater fishes*, pp. 82–9.]

⁹²'Poyer'. Simpson was mishearing 'poire', the voyageurs' name for the Saskatoon berry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), also known as Service berry and June berry.

⁹³The determination of latitude by meridian altitude involved measuring the sun's altitude at noon.

⁹⁴Magnetic variation is the angular distance between true north and magnetic north.

⁹⁵About 3 miles.

Water, we arrived at a small Island at the Entrance of Cross Lake, having come a distance of 3 Miles against a succession of rapids and strong Current.⁹⁶ Having breakfasted on this Island, we again pursued our route across the Southern extremity of Cross Lake in a Westly [westerly] direction for about 5 miles, which brought us to a narrow outlet or channel from Cedar Lake, which being very rapid occupied us untill 3.30 PM in ascending altho' only a distance of 6½ miles. We ascended Cedar Lake in a SWbW direction 12 miles, which brought us to the Long Point, when the Weather assuming a bad appearance & a considerable Traverse being before us we put on shore in a small Bay on the West side of this Point at 8 PM and Encampt for the night. We had hardly pitched when we had a heavy Thunder storm with much rain & Lightning. We therefore considered it fortunate that we had not taken the Traverse. Our days Distance was 25 miles from the Red Rock.

Friday 4th. Strong Breezes with rain during the night which detained us in our Encampment untill 5.20 AM, when the wind moderating we Embarked and proceeded on our ascent of the Cedar or Bourbon Lake,⁹⁷ Keeping under the shelter of its northern shores. At 11 AM the Wind shifted to the SE, which enabled us to make sail and steer a more direct course, which brought us to the Head of this Lake at 2 PM, which I estimate to be 11 Leagues in a WNW & ESE direction by Compass, and is indented by some very deep Bays & thickly stud'd with Islands and is a much larger sheet of water than the Maps shew it. We now reentered the Saskatchewan, ascending which by a swampy branch of the River for 3 leagues we Crossed the Great & Little Muddy Lakes & again reentered the Saskatchewan, which we ascended for 2 leagues, which brought us to the Pine Encampment, where we put up for the night, having come during the day an estimated distance of 59 miles. Altho' but an indifferent Encampment it is the only one that the face of the Country affords for a great distance, it being continued Swamps.

Saturday 5th. Commenced fine and clear Weather, a sharp North^{ly} [northerly] Wind. At 3.15 AM Embarked & made sail up the Saskatchewan by a branch of considerable extent, its Banks fringed by a Thick Crop of Willows & other low Shrubs at present flooded some feet above their roots beyond the Banks & extending between the intersections of the various branches of the River is swamps and sheets of Water, with occasionally in the distant view a few rounded elevations of Land bearing a growth of Pines which stand conspicuous above the adjoining Swamps. Noon fine clear Weather. Ther^r [thermometer] 66° at a quarter past noon. We succeeded in geting our Breakfast cooked upon a Raft, when we again pursued our route thro' a continuation of the same description of scenery. But as we ascend the Banks occasionally presents a fringe of Poplars and Elms, the Water being some feet above their roots. At 9 PM we secured our Boats for the night & cooked our Suppers on a raft & slept in our Boats. The Heavens presented one of the finest displays of the Aurora Borealis I ever beheld. The Whole heavens was a brilliant blaze caused by this phenomenon, assuming in quick succession the greatest Variety of forms, shewing the various tints of the Rainbow with many others possessing a richness and beauty quite indescribable. The great point from which they appeared to diverge was in our Zenith, from there shooting out its brilliant rays to the several points of the horizon & then again contracting themselves to the same point. And so strong was the play of these singular lights that I almost imagined I heard a noise caused by its coruscations. Our Days Distance was 39 miles by estimation.

⁹⁶The rapids in this part of the route were flooded with the construction of the dam at Grand Rapids.

⁹⁷The first trading post in the Saskatchewan River drainage basin was built in 1741 by La Vérendrye, the French fur trader and explorer. It was located on an island in a lake about 60 miles west of Grand Rapids. The post and lake were named Fort Bourbon and Lac Bourbon. After the waning of French influence in the area the name was changed to Cedar Lake, and David Thompson wrote: 'This Lake takes its name from the small Cedar Wood growing on its banks, and which is not found further north or eastward.' [Morton, *Canadian West*, p. 196; Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, p. 435.]

Sunday 6th. Commenced fine and clear Weather. At 3.30 AM we continued our ascent of the River by a narrow channel formed by an Island of about 12 Miles long, when the Main Stream resumed its breadth again which having ascended for about 5 Miles brought us to the confluence of the Basquiau River,⁹⁸ whose eastern point of entry forms a small plot of dry ground with a few Huts erected upon it, the property of a freeman & who has cultivated a small spot which produces Potatoes.⁹⁹ We found Indians Encamp't here from whom our Crews procured a supply of sturgeon &c. giving articles of wearing apparel in exchange of much greater value than the fish received. But a short supply of Provision and a ravenous appetite enhanced their Value in the estimation of our Men. One of our Boats having fallen in the rear, it was determined to wait her arrival at this spot. We therefore Encamp't at 11 AM, having come from the morning situation an estimated distance of 17 Miles. The great quantity of filth collected about the Indian Encampment did not make our situation desirable [*sic*].

Monday 7th. Fine clear Weather, a breeze North^{ly}. At 11 AM the sternmost Boat having come up we Embarked and continued our ascent of the Saskatchewan. About 2 miles above the Basquiau River is another Tributary stream falling in from the SW, named the Carrot, and extending to the West^d is a chain of lakes. The Basquiau Hills are seen extending from the West to SW forming a blue ridge in the distant horizon.¹⁰⁰ Having come about 8 Leagues along a swampy face of Country we put up for the night alongside a range of Poplars.

Tuesday 8th. A continuance of fine Weather, which may be considered fortunate in our present situation where the country affords no Encampments. At 3 AM we continued our ascent of the Saskatchewan. When having come about 8 leagues in a winding direction to the SW, we struck out of the Main Stream into a small channel which led us into a Lake,¹⁰¹ which we proceeded to cross in a West^{ly} direction for 5 Miles which brought us to a chain of swampy Channels leading us to the West^d by which Track we cut off a great part of the distance to Cumberland House. Our days Journey was much retarded by one of our Boats constantly falling in the rear, & the communication being now rather intricate we did not wish to part Company. We were therefore obliged to make frequent stops. She appears a heavy pulling Boat, & I suspect is not equilly [*sic*] Man'd. At 8.30 PM we put up for the night under a Clump of Willows, having come an estimated Distance of 36 miles during the day. The night presented a rich display of the Aurora Borealis.

Wednesday 9th. Fine but close and warm Weather bringing us an abundant supply of Mosketos. At 3 AM we continued our Journey & having come about 5 leagues we arrived at Cumberland House at 8.30.¹⁰² M^r Leith¹⁰³ the gentleman in charge of this Post, having fallen in

⁹⁸The Basquiau [Pasquia] River flows into the Saskatchewan from the south at the location of the present-day town of The Pas, Saskatchewan.

⁹⁹Most freemen were Métis or Natives from present-day eastern Canada who, after completing their term of contractual employment with the Hudson's Bay or North West companies, chose to remain in the country as independent trappers and hunters.

¹⁰⁰The Pasquia Hills, from where Simpson described them, lie 50 miles to the southwest. They rise to an elevation of 2,600 feet, 1700 feet above the surrounding country. The Carrot River flows northeasterly along their northwestern base.

¹⁰¹The Tearing River, a tributary of the Saskatchewan originating from Cumberland Lake.

¹⁰²Cumberland House was established by Samuel Hearne in 1774 'with eight whites and two Indians from York.' It was the first HBC post established further than one hundred miles from the shores of Hudson Bay and was named in honour of William, Duke of Cumberland. The post occupied an important location on the south shore of Pine Island Lake at the junction of the transportation routes leading westward to the prairies and Aspen Park Belt, and northward via the Sturgeon Weir River to the regions drained by the Churchill, Athabasca, Mackenzie, and Peace rivers. Cumberland House was the first permanent European settlement established in present-day Saskatchewan. In 2006 it had a population of 810, most of whom were Métis. [Glover, 'The Building of Cumberland House,' pp. 4–8.]

¹⁰³James Leith. See biographical sketch, p. 95.

the rear since leaving the Grand Rapids, the arrangement for the supply of Provisions for our Crews cannot be made until his arrival, which will detain us here for the day. My Observations place Cumberland House in Latitude 53°56'56"N, Longitude by Chronometer with rate ascertained at Grand Rapid 102°11'48"W, which is 5 miles to the East^d of that assigned to it by Capⁿ Franklin, which indicates a further alteration of her rate.¹⁰⁴ I must therefore adopt the rate shewn [*sic*] by my observations at this place. I am apprehensive the travelling has injured the Chron^r [chronometer] which will in a great Measure render her useless, as confidence cannot be placed in the result of observations Made by her. M^r Leith arrived in the Evening and also the Athabasca brigade that had left the Grand Rapids on the Morning of the same day that we left there. They had followed a new route but got entangled among swamps & were obliged to make a Portage over a considerable flat of Mud, so that they lost by the experiment. This Post is in very good order. A considerable extent of ground around it is in a high state of Cultivation, yielding abundant Crops of Wheat, Barley & Potatoes, & a garden affording an excellent supply of Vegetables for the Table. The soil appears of an excellent quality, being a black loam of considerable depth upon a subsoil of lime stone. The surrounding Country is swampy. Pine Island on which the Post is situated is low but bears a good growth of Pines. I saw few Indians at this Post. They were engaged at the different fishing situations processing a Winters supply.

[Marginal note: The estimated Distance from Norway H^o to Cumberland House is by me 302½ miles by the route we followed, & from York Factory 698 miles. In a direct line from Norway House it is only 152 miles & bears N85°W True.]

Thursday 10th. Commenced close Gloomy Weather with distant Thunder. Our Arrangements being Completed and having partook of an abundant Breakfast with M^r Leith, we resumed our Journey at 11 AM and pursued our route by the little River to the West of Pine Island,¹⁰⁵ in a Winding course to the SE for 2½ Leagues, when we reentered the Main Branch of the Saskatchewan and continued its ascent, the course being particularly Winding, some bends turning to the North & South & occasionally to the SE & NE, which is within eight points of going round the Compass.¹⁰⁶ At 3 we had a severe Thunder storm which continued for some hours. As we ascend the Banks of the River become more elevated but are still too Muddy to afford an Encampment. The Trees along the River are becoming larger. In some instances the Poplars have attained a considerable growth. Having come 25½ miles by estimation in a very winding direction we put up for the night at 8 PM & slept in our Boats.

Friday 11th. Showers occasionally with a strong Breeze from the SW which combined with the Current against us retards our progress very Much, not averaging a greater rate than about 2 Miles p^r Hour. As we ascend the Banks gradually increase their elevation & are becoming Drier. The Trees are more varied, numerous and of a better growth. Our Track generally has been less Winding than yesterday, averaging a SW^{ly} direction. We pass thro' channels formed by Islands lying in the bed of the River, which appear to owe their origin to drift Wood covered with Muddy Deposits. In the Evening the Wind abated & we had fine Clear Weather but Myriads of Mosketos infesting us. Having come a distance of 22 Miles we Encamp at 9 PM.

¹⁰⁴Franklin's observations placed Cumberland House at 53°56'40" latitude, 102°16'W longitude. [Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 58.]

¹⁰⁵Bigstone River.

¹⁰⁶Compass cards are divided into thirty-two points, each describing an arc of 11.25 degrees (32 x 11.25°=360°). To be 'within eight points of going round the compass,' means that the meandering and serpentine course of the river changed direction more than twenty-four points (32 - 8 = 24), i.e., more than 270 degrees (24 x 11.25°=270°).

Saturday 12th. Fine Weather, a breeze from the SW. At 3.30 AM Embarked & continued our ascent of the Saskatchewan in a SW^{ly} direction, but occasional [*sic*] bends from the North & then again from the SE. The country in some parts rising to Hills and generally becoming more interesting, being cloathed with Trees of a much larger growth, many of the Pines and Poplars having attained a great height. The Banks continue Muddy with a great quantity of Iron oxide oozing thro' them. The Waters of the River are quite turbid. As the Banks attain height the Current appears to gain additional force. The greatest part of our Journey today has been made by the Track line, which did not average a greater Distance than 2½ Miles p^r Hour. We met a few Indians in a Canoe in the afternoon who supplied us with Moose Deer Meat. Having come by estimation a distance of 26 Miles, we Encampt at 8.30 PM.

Sunday 13th. Hot and sultry Weather (with Mosketos in great numbers) rendering the Tracking very severe labour to our Crews. We Embarked at 3.15 AM and pursued our route up the Saskatchewan in a very Winding direction, between North & south to the West. The face of the Country is becoming more diversified as we ascend, but the Banks continue Muddy. The Forest is becoming extensive. The River is also extending in breadth, but its course is occasionally obstructed by Islands. We travelled 29 miles, principally by Tracking, when we Encampt at 8.30 PM¹⁰⁷

Monday 14th. Hot and sultry Weather. At 4 AM we Embarked & commenced the labours of the day by Tracking along shore, averaging about 3 miles p^r Hour. Noon close Gloomy W^r [weather]. Thermometer 72°. The Banks now begin to rise in perpendicular Cliffs of a Muddy Sand to an Elevation of from two to three hundred feet — in other parts by gradual ascent forms Hills of as great a height, richly Cloathed with Pines and Poplars with a Variety of shrubs the Varied foliage affording a pleasing landscape, several of the Shrubs affording an abundant supply of refreshing fruits to our Crews, viz. the service berry, Wild Cherry, Poyer, &c.¹⁰⁸ The Ridges of Hills are composed generally of a fine Yellow Sand. Our Course has been very Winding between North & South to the West. We came an estimated Distance of 30 Miles and Encampt at 8 PM.

Tuesday 15th. The Weather Gloomy with a heavy dew, the Mosketos very troublesome. At 4 AM we proceeded on our Journey, the Muddy banks of the River affording a very bad path for our Crews on the Track line. Notwithstanding they proceed at a very good pace, making about 3½ to 4 Miles p^r Hour, and as they relieve each other hourly, the Crews being divided into two partys [*sic*], there is no intermission in our Mode of travelling, which prevents my taking observations as I could wish as the delay necessary for that purpose would throw me so much in the rear that I could not readily — (as experience taught me) get up with the Boats again. The path along the Banks is so Muddy that the traveller frequently sinks Knee deep & the Country not being yet sufficiently clear of Forest the passenger is obliged to keep in the Boats during the whole days March except during the breakfast hour. Noon hot sultry Weather. Ther [thermometer] 78° in the Shade, 96° exposed to the rays of the Sun, but the Evening was cool and pleasant. The face of the Country continues to alter its appearance as we ascend. Parallel to the course of the River a ridge of Sandy Hills extend with rounded & detached summits of considerable elevation, some richly adorned by Woods, others presenting a Meadow Surface, and the Forests are gradually disappearing. The immediate Banks are a strong Mud with occasional beaches of rolled stones. Through the Banks a great quantity of Iron oxide is seen oozing from which I would infer that that Metal exists in great

¹⁰⁷ This campsite was located approximately on the site of the present-day E. B. Campbell Dam (formerly the Squaw Rapids Dam) which was closed in 1963. Simpson's route up the Saskatchewan River for the next day or more is now submerged behind the resultant Tobin Lake.

¹⁰⁸ The wild cherry is probably choke cherry or pin cherry, or perhaps both. [Johnson, et al., *Plants of the Western Boreal Forest*, pp. 56–7].

abundance in this Neighborhood. Our Track today has been Winding but the average course tending to the SW. The River continues equilly rapid and retains its breadth. We traveled by estimation a distance of 40 Miles¹⁰⁹ and Encampt at 8 PM. We passed the Site of two abandoned Forts on our days route.¹¹⁰

Wednesday 16th. Fine Weather with great heat during the day. Thermometer 64°- 84° At 4 AM we Embarked and continued our ascent by Tracking along shore. There now occurs Tracks of clear country enabling those inclined to walk across the Points formed by the various bends of the River which being a more direct line than the Course of the River renders it easy to keep ahead of the Boats, but the great heat makes it more of a toil than a pleasure. It may therefore be judged if the Mere Walking is fatiguing how much more must the labour of Tracking the Boats be so to our Crews. On gaining the Summits of the ridge of Hills bounding the River, immense plains present themselves extending as far as the eye can see, which affords at certain periods pasture for numerous Herds of Buffaloe [*sic*]¹¹¹ & Deer. At 5 PM we arrived at the Forks of the North & South branches of the Saskatchewan.¹¹² The South branch appears equil to the North in point of size at their junction. My Observation for Latitude place the Forks in 53°12'N. [Marginal note: Forks of Saskatchewan Lat. 53°12'N]. We continued our Ascent of the North Branch. There is now a very evident diminution in the depth of the River, for since coming above the Forks we are constantly opposed by Rapids¹¹³ formed by Shallow ledges or Batturs [*sic*]¹¹⁴ of rolled stones extending across the bed of the River. In hauling above one of these rapids M^r Rowan[d]'s Boat struck a stone and got so much injured that it was necessary to discharge her for the purpose of repair, which made us Encampt at 8 PM for the night. Our Track during the day was Winding between NW & South, a distance of 33 miles.

Thursday 17th. Very warm and Clear Weather. The frequency of the Rapids and great strength of Current requires an additional force upon our Track line, so that the Crews cannot form an hourly relief of fresh hands, which obliges them to take frequent rests so that our progress is very much retarded. The face of the Country is extensive plains as far as the eye can see. Our Track today has continued very winding the bends turning from NW, South & even SE. The distance Made 24 miles by estimation.

Friday 18th. Commenced fine Weather. We Embarked at 4 AM & continued our ascent by Tracking untill 6 AM, when having got above the Rapids into a comparatively still part of the

¹⁰⁹ Much of this section of the river is now submerged beneath Codette Lake, impounded behind the François Finlay Dam, which was closed in 1986.

¹¹⁰The forts were probably the same establishments noted by two other travellers on the Saskatchewan River in the early 1800s: Alexander Henry (the Younger) and John Franklin. On 30 August 1808, two days before arriving at the confluence of the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan River, Henry noted: 'At 12 O'Clock we passed the Old Establishment at the Nepawee, which stands on the South Side.' And Franklin, travelling from Cumberland House to Carlton House on 26 January 1820, one day before arriving at the Forks, wrote: 'After a fatiguing march of seventeen miles, we put up at the upper Nippéween, a deserted establishment.'. The origin of that Fort is not known. The other fort mentioned by Aemilius Simpson was Fort à la Corne. Henry camped there on 31 August: 'At 6 O'clock we encamped at the spot where the French formerly had an Establishment called Fort St Louis, built by St. Luc de la Corne. It stands in a low bottom [on the] South Side; at this place some years ago were still to be seen agricultural instruments and remains of Carriage Wheels.' [Henry, *The Journal of Alexander Henry*, p. 349; Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 101.]

¹¹¹ American bison (*Bison bison*).

¹¹²The brigade was at the confluence of the North and South Saskatchewan rivers, located 38 miles downstream from the present-day city of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

¹¹³ The rapids negotiated on this and the following day are the site of the unfinished La Colle Falls Hydroelectric Dam. The City of Prince Albert, about 38 miles further upstream, began construction of the dam in 1909 but the project was abandoned in 1914 after an outlay of some \$3 million. The city was paying off the debt for decades thereafter.

¹¹⁴*Batture* is the French word for a sandbar or gravel bar or a gravel beach.

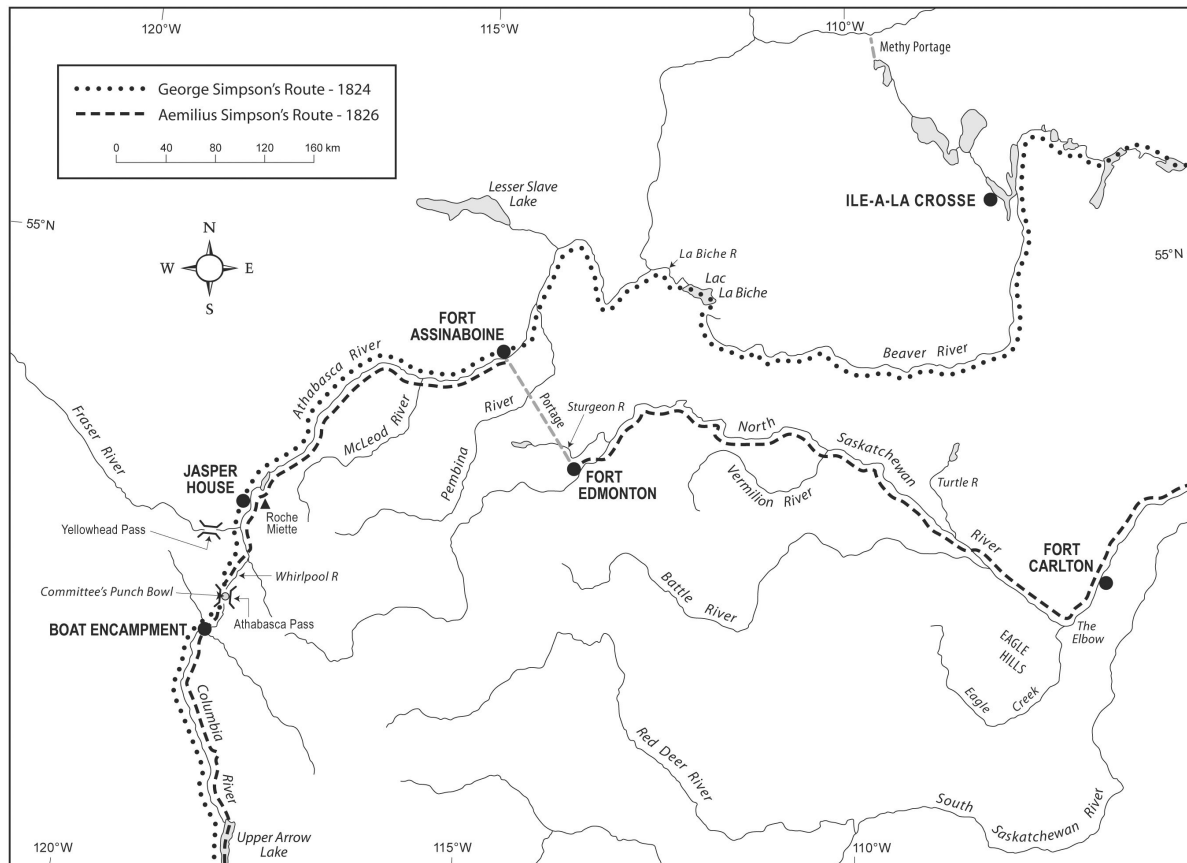
River resembling a Chain of Lakes we took advantage of a fair Wind & made sail, but a heavy fall of rain at 7 was followed by a Calm. Noon it cleared up & we had a good breeze from the East^d but at 2 PM we had a Thunder Storm with heavy rain, which continued for an hour when it again became fine clear Weather. A few Leagues brought us again into rapids, & the River along our Track has been richly stud'd by Islands, low and flat, bearing a rich growth of Poplars & Willows principally. The bounding Country continues extensive plains by crossing which in a direct line I am informed it is only two days Journey to Carlton House. The Banks of the River occassionally rises & forms perpendicular Clay Cliffs with flat summits. The intervening flats are Thickly Wooded. Our Course by todays Track has been between NW & south occassionally to the SE. Our Distance by estimation 31½ Miles.

Saturday 19th. Commenced heavy rain with the Wind NW. At 4.15 Embarked & continued our Journey. At 7 AM it cleared up & became fine. We discovered on an Eminence skirted with Woods on the right Bank of the River a few Indian Lodges and Horses. We put on shore to breakfast that we might communicate with these Indians, whom we found to be a party of Crees who had been attacked a few days before by a strong War Party of the Blackfeet & Blood Indians, who had succeeded in killing ten of their Nation & destroying their property. They however asserted that they had retaliated amply by killing more than an equal number of their Enemys [*sic*]. But no reliance can be placed on Indian authority in such cases, & it is evident they had the worst of it as they were flying out of the reach of [the] Blackfeet with the sacrifice of their propertys [*sic*]. They say they were taken by surprize [*sic*] & that the onset of their Enemys was desperate. Their apprehensions of another attack is so strong that they have requested that we will cross them & their familys to the opposite Bank, so as to ensure greater safety. This request was readily complied with. These Tribes have perpetual War. For a long time the Crees had the advantage I am informed, but the Blackfeet & Bloods being now as well supplied with Arms and Ammunition the scale is rather turned against them, & instead of gaining ground they are gradually retiring to the Woody Countrys [*sic*]. The general Character of the Country continues the same as that passed yesterday. There was perhaps a greater quantity of Wood along the Banks, which gave it a richer appearance. The Current runs strong, and Islands & flats frequently occur extending along the bed of the River. With the exception of one bend, our Course today has tended to the SW. Our Days Distance — notwithstanding our having had a fair breeze occassionally — is only 24 Miles. We had fine clear Weather throughout the day.

Sunday 20th. Very fine clear Weather. We Marched at 4 AM. The Country now presents a face of rich Meadow Land with occassional Groves of Wood interspersed over its surface, giving to the Scene a richness & beauty which even rivals the fine Lawns & rich pasture lands of a civilized Country, possessing the advantage in point of extent over most Countrys, the plains on the right or South Bank extending many hundred Miles to the South, affording pasture to the myriads of Wild Animals, viz. the Buffaloe, or Bison, a great variety of the Deer, & the number of Wild berries produced along the Banks of the River affords an ample supply of food to the black bear¹¹⁵ who abounds in these regions. The Wolf preys upon the numerous dead carcasses found over the plains in consequence of the attacks of Animals upon each other but much more from the hostility of the Hunter. Was this rich face of country made subservient to the use of civilized Man how much would it enhance its beauty & value. It is now the seat of savage society. The Indians of the plains looks solely to the chace [*sic*] for his subsistence and are consequently expert Hunters. And as they are well supplied with Horses they find no difficulty in runing down the Buffaloe, whose migrations they follow for that purpose which yields them an ample supply of food. The course of the River was less Winding along our days Track, but its channel was very much obstruct'd by Mud Banks &

¹¹⁵ *Ursus americanus*, still fairly common throughout the wooded areas of Western Canada.

flats. Having come a distance of 6 Leagues, we arrived at Carlton House at 3.15 PM (Map 2).¹¹⁶ This post is pleasantly situated and in a very good state of defence against Indian Attack, which is very necessary in this quarter, as the neighbouring Indians are Warlike and formidable. I make the Distance by estimation, by the Course of the River, from Cumberland House 304 Miles tho' in a direct line it is only 163 & bearing S66°W True. The Travelling Distance from York Factory is by my estimation 1002 Miles.



Map 2. Carlton House to Boat Encampment, Columbia River.

Carlton House to Fort Edmonton

Monday 21st. Fine & extremely Warm Weather. The transfer of M^r J^{no} Stewart from this Post to the Lesser Slave Lake detains the Brigade until he completes the necessary arrangements with his successor M^r Prudens.¹¹⁷ I Employed myself in taking a set of Observations, which makes the Latitude 52°51'N. The Chronometer, by the Grand Rapid rate makes the Longitude 106°13'42" & by the Cumberland House rate 106°26'37"W which is within 56" seconds of

¹¹⁶The Hudson's Bay Company's Carlton House was established in 1810 on the south bank of the North Saskatchewan River. Its location at the boundary of the prairies and the Aspen Park Belt enabled it to harvest the furs of the northern woodlands as well as pemmican and dried meat from the herds of buffalo on the southern plains. John Franklin stopped there in February 1820, during his overland journey from Cumberland House to Ile-à-la-Crosse. The fort later became an important way station and river crossing place on the Carlton Trail (portions of which are still visible), connecting Fort Garry and Edmonton House. Fort Carlton was temporarily abandoned in 1862; Treaty Number Six, signed by the Plains and Woods Cree and the Dominion Government was negotiated near the location of the fort in 1876. The Northwest Mounted Police occupied the fort just prior to the Riel Rebellion but abandoned it, as being indefensible, after the nearby Duck Lake Skirmish in 1885. The fort burned down shortly thereafter. Today, the restored fort is a provincial historic park. [Saskatchewan, Environment and Resource Management, *Fort Carlton*].

¹¹⁷John Stuart and John Peter Pruden. See biographical sketches, pp. 100 and 98.

the Long^{de} assigned to it by Capⁿ Franklin,¹¹⁸ from which I might infer that the Chronometer has reduced her daily loss since leaving Cumberland, tho' I am inclined to think the contrary, notwithstanding the near coincidence of the Long^{de} as given by the Grand Rapid rate. I am therefore disposed to give the preference to the Long^{de} 106°26'42", tho' perhaps it is best to adopt the Mean viz. 106°20'10"W. Carlton House is situated about ½ of a mile within the South Bank of the Saskatchewan, a flat surface of country extending for rather more than that distance to a Bank with rather a steep Ascent, but moderate elevation, forming a ridge of Hills runing parallel to the course of the River, on gaining the summit of which immense plains present themselves extending to the utmost range of human Vision. On the flat ground immediately in the neighbourhood of the Fort, a considerable Track of Land is now cultivated & produces very good returns of Wheat, Barley Potatoes, & vegetables in considerable perfection. The surrounding Country produces a great quantity of the Hazle [*sic*] Nut,¹¹⁹ the Poyer, a very rich berry, the Choke Cherry & other Varieties of Wild fruit. The Tillage of Land was entirely new to the Indians who looked upon it with great curiosity on its first introduction but have shewn no disposition to follow the Example, which would be a great step towards their civilization. We found a band of Horses at this Post that had been sent from Edmonton to wait the arrival of our Brigade¹²⁰ & who fortunately escaped the thieving depredations of the Indians who seldom fail in availing themselves of any opportunity that offers in that way. The Evening was hot & sultry with vast numbers of Mosketos.

Tuesday 22nd.

Courses and Distance: SW^{ly}

6 miles.

Iroquois Point is on the North Bank of the River.

Accompanying Remarks upon the Course of the River &c., &c.

On leaving Carlton House, we proceeded to Iroquois Point about 6 miles above that place. The course of the River is much obstructed by Sand Banks in this part of it.

The Variation of the Compass may be adopted as 20°Easterly.

Daily remarks &c. As the Track from this Point has been less frequented than that below here I have adopted a new form of Journal, so as to enable me to give a more copious detail of our Journey.¹²¹ I may here remark that my mode of computing Distances is by time. I observe the average rate of travelling in a given time according to the various circumstances & mode of travelling, which I noted at stated periods, by which means I think I make a close approximation to the truth. The Courses are taken by a Boat Compass & given as shewn by Compass;¹²² when they are corrected for variation I state it.

¹¹⁸In February 1820, Franklin's observations placed Carlton House in latitude 52°50'47"N and longitude 106°12'42"W. [Franklin, *Narrative of a journey*, p. 115.]

¹¹⁹The beaked hazelnut is a small edible nut commonly found throughout the Aspen Parkland and southern boreal forest. [Johnson, *Plants*, p. 42.]

¹²⁰The country between Carlton House and Fort Edmonton was less densely wooded than the region eastward and hence better suited for travel by horseback. Passengers, company officers, and clerks often rode alongside the brigade during that stretch of the journey. The experience was poignantly described by John McDonald of Garth, a partner in the NWC: 'It was usual now to send good Horses to the lower part of the river where commenced the Prairies — to await the canoes at a certain place, in order to follow the Brigade on their way up. The more to provide fresh provisions. The Partners and Clerks rode for this purpose with the Hunters. This I thought the most pleasant part of our lives. The riding of a swift horse in the fine valley of the Saskatchewan, abounding in Buffaloe and deers and all game. We rode all day following the progress of the brigade against a currant of 4 knots.' [McDonald, *Autobiographical Notes*, p. 58.]

¹²¹Simpson may have decided to maintain a more detailed account of the route westward from Fort Carlton because that was as far as John Franklin and George Back travelled on the Saskatchewan River in January 1820, before turning northwards to explore the Arctic Coast.

¹²²Magnetic bearings, uncorrected for variation.

The Weather commenced heavy Thunder storms with a very great fall of rain & strong gusts of Wind throwing down our Tents & making us spend a very uncomfortable night, but it became fine during the day. As this Post cannot furnish a supply of provision to our Brigade, it will be necessary to send our Hunters on before us to endeavour to kill Buffaloe which are said to be in great abundance upon the Banks of the River a short distance above here. Our business being brought to a close we Embarked at 6.45 PM & proceeded to an Encamp^t at Iroquois Pointe.

Wednesday 23rd. 4:45 AM Embarked

Courses and Distance:

Between South & SW	10 miles
South	19 --
Days Distance	29 Miles

Accompanying remarks: Along our Days Track Mud Banks frequently occur in the bed of the River, which makes the Channel very intricate. The immediate Banks are Muddy, but the country on gaining the Summit of a ridge or Bank of gentle ascent is a vast surface of Plains.

Daily remarks: Commenced fine clear Weather. We had a heavy dew during the night. At 4.45 AM we continued our ascent of the Saskatchewan alternately Tracking and Rowing. At 9 we landed to breakfast, our Horse party joining us, but after breakfast they proceeded to the Hunting grounds, Mess^{rs} Rowan[d] & MacMillan¹²³ accompanying the Hunters. As we ascend Deer are occas^{ly} [occasionally] seen grazing along the bounding Plains. M^r Barnstone¹²⁴ succeeded in killing one this afternoon, which afforded us a Venison Supper. These Deer are a small Kind resembling the fallow Deer and are called chevreuil by the Canadians.¹²⁵ We had a heavy fall of rain in the Evening, which obliged us to Encamp at 7.30 PM so as to secure the Cargoes.

Thursday 24th. 5:30 AM Embarked

Courses and Distance..

South	9 miles
We Entered the Elbow, ¹²⁶ turned	
WbN	3
SW	2
South	2½
Gradually turned to the NW & continued between that & West	<u>12</u>
Days Distance	28½ miles.

Accompanying remarks: Having run to the South about 3 Leagues we Entered the Elbow which forms a circular bend from S^o [south] to the North of West & back again to the South,¹²⁷ where the River holds its course from the NW from the Eagle Hill Creek, which falls in from the South^d at the Head of the Elbow. We have the Eagle Hills in the distant view

¹²³ John Rowand and James Macmillan. See biographical sketches, p. 98.

¹²⁴ George Barnston. See biographical sketch, p. 90.

¹²⁵ Either mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) or white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*).

¹²⁶ In the area of present-day Borden Bridge about 20 miles downstream from North Battleford, Saskatchewan where the flow of the river changes from a generally southeasterly to a north-northeasterly direction.

¹²⁷ Simpson is describing the sequence of his own course changes as he headed upstream: initially southwards (or more accurately south-southwestwards) to near the site of the present town of Langham, then for a short distance northwestwards, then south or southwestwards past Borden Bridge, then northwestwards past Eagle Creek towards North Battleford.

extending from SSE to West.¹²⁸ Immediately along the River is undulating Hills of little elevation, their sloping surfaces richly interspersed by Clumps of Trees and Shrubs. From their Summits the extensive plains commence.

Daily remarks: We had a continuation of heavy rain during the night, but cleared up at 5.30 AM, when we pursued our Journey favoured by a fair Breeze from the NW until entering the Elbow. Having made the round of the Elbow & nearly opposite the Eagle Hill Creek, we fell in with our Hunting Party with a very seasonable and abundant supply of Buffalo Meat consisting of six of these animals, which were equilly distributed to our Crews. Being anxious to Witness the Hunting of the Buffalo, I accompanied the Hunting Party, and Mounting our Horses we struck into the Plains in pursuit of that object. We had not advanced far when a Bull afforded the Hunter an opportunity of displaying his talents, but as he was not thought worthy of a chace upon Horse he was approached by the Hunter creeping along the ground, & when within distance he fired & mortally Wounded the Animal, but it did not prevent his retreating to a patch of Wood in the neighbourhood, where we followed him, & before he was finally dispatched he received six balls through his body. To a stranger the fierce Appearance of this animal is calculated to excite some apprehension from a too close approach, which is often attended with danger, as when only partially Wounded they frequently become furious & will attack the Hunter if not upon his guard. This Animals flesh not being deemed food, we left him & proceeded in search of bands of Cows, when we were soon gratified by a sight of immense herds extending along the plains as far as you saw, & besides these there were also large Herds of Deer, & here and there you saw flocks of Wolves prowling about for prey. You also see the Eagle soaring over the plains ready to pounce upon his prey. Our Hunter Mounted one of the fleetest Horses & went in pursuit of a band of Animals & was soon out of sight, except occassionally on his skimming [*sic*] along the rising ridges in the distant horizon we could discover him in close pursuit of a band of Cows, out of which he succeeded in Killing 2. Our other Hunters went in pursuit of a Herd of Animals also but adopted a different method. They approached them with great caution by creeping along the ground until in the Midst of them, when they commence their attack & frequently succeed in killing two or three before the Animals make their escape. This is by no Means so amusing a Mode of Hunting as by Horse, tho' I believe equilly destructive to the Animals. Our Hunters killed four Buffalo Cows during the Evening. We took up our abode for the night under the shelter of a few Willows, which to a stranger appears rather an uncomfortable nights residence.

Friday 25th. 4 AM Embarked

Courses and Distance:

between West & NW	9 miles
"	<u>14</u>
Days Distance	23 miles

Accompanying remarks: The Eagle Hills continue in view on our left & extend in a North and South direction, intersecting the Country between the North & South branches of the Saskatchewan.¹²⁹ In the afternoon we passed a small tributary stream on our left. The River has become very shallow in some places hardly affording a channel for our Boats & obliging us to follow a very devious course thro' these channels. The Banks have become very interesting, being finely ornamented by groves or plots of natural Wood, giving them the appearance of a gentleman's lawn, which is made more striking by the vast Herds of Cattle¹³⁰ seen grazing along them. Our Distance was made by Tracking and Rowing alternately.

¹²⁸The Eagle Hills Escarpment rises about 500 feet above the river and lies 35 miles northwest from where Simpson made this observation.

¹²⁹The North and South Saskatchewan rivers.

¹³⁰Buffalo.

Daily Remarks: Rain during the night. Our party renewed their Hunting at Day light, but owing to a high Wind which is not favourable for that purpose they only succeeded in killing one Cow, with which & the four killed the previous evening we proceeded to the Banks of the River to await the arrival of our Boats, who joined us at 8.30 AM. After Breakfast the Hunting Party returned to the plains, but I rejoined my Boat as being more favourable to my observations upon the course of the River. M^r Stewart and some other gentlemen went upon a Pedestrian excursion on the South Bank of the River and succeeded in killing a few animals, but not being furnished with Horses to transport the Meat they were obliged to leave it behind to be devoured by the ravenous Animals of the Plains. Our Hunters were very successful today, having killed nine Cows, & to afford them an opportunity of joining us with the Meat we Encamp at 6 PM in a very pleasant situation. The Weather throughout the day was cool and pleasant. The Thermometer at noon 60°.

Saturday 26th. 5 AM Embarked

Courses and Distances :

The course Winding between NW & WNW	<u>22 miles</u>
Days Distance	22 miles

Accompanying remarks: The bed of the River continues to have numerous shoals, and Islands occasionally occur of a low and flat character, being clothed with Willows & where these are situated the river expands most. The bends generally tend to the NW.

The Eagle Hills have approached nearer the Banks of the River. The immediate Banks are deep alluvial soil, the Substratum having frequently a saline Crust on its outer surface. In some places a bed of clay occurs which appears to be strongly impregnated with Iron ore. Its outer surface by the action of the Air forms itself into small Cubical Mass's & becomes hard. Our Crews were Tracking and Rowing alternately during our March.

Daily remarks: Commenced fine clear Weather. After breakfast I walked across a Point for a few Miles formed by a bend of the River. During my excursion I saw immense Herds of Buffalo & a great number of Wolves. I passed a considerable sheet of Water, which on tasting I found quite brackish. Its surface was covered by Myriads of Ducks, Bustards,¹³¹ & Swans & I also observed a few Muskrat. On passing between two Clumps of Wood I came in contact with a few Bulls & almost succeeded in killing one, my ball having pierced his body. On first receiving the shot he made a great leap & then seemed as if going to fall, but to my astonishment he again took to his heels. In fact it is far more difficult to kill one of these Animals than a person would suppose, for unless you pierce him in the heart or brain you seldom bring down the Animal. In the Evening our Hunters brought us an additional supply of five Buffalo.

It is pleasing & amusing to see our Encampment. On first View you might suppose from the immense quantity of Meat seen roasting at the different fires that some special feast called for these preparations [*sic*], as you would suppose it impossible that our Men could devour so much at a Meal, but on seeing a single Man very deliberately attacking six pounds of Meat for his supper you are soon convinced of the real cause.

Sunday 27th. 4.30 AM Embarked

Courses and Distance:

Between West & NW	5 miles
Passed the Junction of the Battle River ¹³²	

¹³¹Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*).

¹³²The Battle River flows into the North Saskatchewan River from the west at the site of the present town of Battleford, Saskatchewan.

in Latitude by my observations 52°42'N	
West to NW	3
West with occas ^l bends to the North ^d	<u>7</u>
Days Distance	15 miles

Accompanying remarks: At 7 AM we passed the Junction of the Battle River, which I make in Latitude 52°42'N. This River Washes the Northern termination of the Eagle Hills. On arriving above there the plains extend equilly on both sides of the River.

Our Encampment which is 10 Miles above the junction of the Battle River by estimation is by my observations in Latitude 52°46'55"N, Longitude by Chronometer 108°03'30" West.

Daily remarks: A heavy dew during the night, but fine clear Weather. The nights as well as the Mornings and Evenings are now become very cool & chilly which has had the happy effect of driving away the Mosketos, one of the greatest pests the traveller has to contend with. Altho' Sunday our Hunters proceeded to their occupations as usual & soon killed seven Buffaloe. The quantity of Meat already on hand with the addition of this supply suggested the necessity of preserving a quantity of it according to the Indian Mode, viz. smoking it over fires. We therefore Encampt at 2 PM for that purpose. Was salt and other necessarys [*sic*] on the spot the Animals are so abundant that any quantity of Meat might be cured and that of an excellent quality, for the beef of these animals appears to me as good as our English beef. At present we rely solely upon the Indians for our supplys [*sic*] of Provision and are consequently too much at their Mercy, as design or negligence on their parts might cut off our supplys, & these frequent Wars in which they are engaged makes them often loose [*sic*] their best opportunitys [*sic*] for Curing Meat. We had great heat during the day. Ther^r at noon 72°.

Monday 28th. 8.30 AM Embark'd.

Courses and Distances:

Between North & NW	6 miles
☉ [sun] Meridian Alt ^d [altitude] made the Lat ^d [latitude]	
52°50'56"N	
N th by NW	2
brought us to the junction of the Jack River falling in from the right	
WbN to NW	8
brought us to the Junction of the Turtle River on our right	<u>2</u>
Days Distance	18 miles

Accompanying remarks: The general appearance of the country continues the same, except that it is becoming rather more Wooded. Above the Turtle River a strip of Pines occur, which between here & Carlton have quite disappeared along the Banks of the River¹³³ & the face of the country generally — Poplar, Willows & Maple being the predominant Woods. There are numerous Islands in this part of the River. The Current appears to gain additional strength as we ascend. We passed two tributary streams the first the Jack or Pike River in Lat^d 52°53' the

¹³³ At present stands of spruce occur on the southwest side of the river downstream from North Battleford. Rather than a significant vegetation change over the past 190 years, it seems likely that these stands somehow escaped Simpson's notice.

second, the Turtle River in Lat. $52^{\circ}57'N$.¹³⁴ A little below Turtle River & on the opposite Bank there was formerly an establishment.¹³⁵

Daily remarks: We had rain during the night but the Morning fine and clear Weather. Having cured a considerable quantity of Meat, we Embarked at 8 AM, our Horse party striking off across the Country.

The face of the Country is becoming more Woody as we ascend, & the Pines have again appeared from Carlton where they had disappeared, the Woods being composed of Poplars, Maples, & Willow with a great variety of Shrubs, viz. Wild cherry, Pembina berry, Poyer, Dog Wood Berry &c., &c.¹³⁶ After passing the Junction of the Jack & Turtle Rivers, the bed of the River extends more & has numerous Islands placed along it, which are richly Wooded with Poplar & Willow & indicated the residence of Beaver. We saw a grizzle Bear¹³⁷ on the Banks of the River today, but he made his escape before M^r Herriot¹³⁸ could approach him. Our Hunters brought us a further supply of three more Buffaloe this evening. We had Warm Weather during the day.

Tuesday 29th. 5.15 AM Embark'd.

Courses and Distance:

NW to West	6 miles
Lat ^d by Alt ^d $53^{\circ}6'N$	
Long ^d by Ch ^r [chronometer] $108^{\circ}21'W$	
NW ^{ly}	<u>15</u>
Days Distance	21 miles

Accompanying remarks: The course of the River has been more direct today from the NW. The Current gains strength as we ascend. There are numerous Islands which form a number of channels & frequent flats or Mud Banks. A Mean of a set of Distances $\odot\text{---}\smile$ ¹³⁹ made the Long^{de} $108^{\circ}40'44''$ at the same time that the Long^{de} is entered in the course column. We observed a great appearance of Beaver along the banks on our days Track.¹⁴⁰ Our Crews were Tracking & Rowing alternately.

Daily remarks: We had a thick Fog in the Morning which detained us in our Encampment untill 5.15 AM. On the Fog clearing away we had great heat. Thermom^r at Noon 78° in the Shade, 94° exposed to the rays of the Sun, which was followed by a severe Thunder storm and heavy rain. The foliage being refreshed by the rain added much to the beauty of the surrounding Scenery. The Majestic & unruffled Surface of the River, rolling by its various channels formed by clusters of richly Wooded Islands, with the extensive background presenting here & there detached herds of Wild Animals, & the face of the Country

¹³⁴The Jack River and Turtle River are now called the Jackfish River and Turtlelake rivers. Both flow into the North Saskatchewan from the north about fifteen and twenty miles above North Battleford, Saskatchewan, respectively.

¹³⁵Turtle River House was established by the HBC in 1799. It was situated on the right bank about one mile below the mouth of the Turtlelake River. [Henry, *Journal*, vol. 2, pp. 363n; Henry, *Alexander Henry*, vol. 2, p. 501n.]

¹³⁶ The pembina berry and dog wood berry are the high bush cranberry and red osier dogwood, respectively. [Johnson, *Plants*, pp. 54, 65.]

¹³⁷Grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*). It has now been completely exterminated from the Prairies.

¹³⁸John Edward Harriott. See biographical sketch, p. 93.

¹³⁹ $\odot\text{---}\smile$ refers to a method of determining longitude by measuring the angle (lunar distance) between the moon and the sun. [Cotter, *Nautical Astronomy*, p. 196.]

¹⁴⁰ *Castor Canadensis*. These traces of beavers would have been trees felled by the animals and lodges in quiet backwaters. These river beavers, known as bank beavers, do not build dams.

intersected by ornamental Clusters or Copses of trees, with extensive Meadow Lands extending from the gentle Sloping Banks of the River added to the soft tint of the Evening presented a Landscape that might certainly vie in richness with those of highly Cultivated Countrys. How valuable would such a Country be in the Civilized World. We Encampt at 7.30 PM.

Wednesday 30th. 4.15 AM Emb^{kd} [embarked].

Courses and Distance:

NW to WNW	8 miles
Passed a small River on our right ¹⁴¹	
_____	1
Winding between NWbW & WbS	10
NW	<u>3</u>
Days Distance	22 miles

Accompanying remarks: We followed some great bends on our Days Track, one from the NWbN gradually rounded to WbS. The Islands have become less numerous but the flats equilly so. The Woods are becoming More extensive.

At noon we passed a short range of Hills of Moderate elevation within the North Bank some distance, Called the Horse Mountains.

Daily Remarks: We had a heavy dew thro' the night, with a great chill in the Air, but fine Warm W^r during the day. Our Hunters having already supplied us with more Meat than is likely to Keep, they no longer destroy Animals, which is quite proper as it is cruelty to Kill Animals that you do not require. One of our Boats struck a stone in Tracking along shore, which was hid from the turbid colour of the Water. She was so much injured that she was immediately hauled on shore, but notwithstanding their exertions to unload her as quick as possible, her Cargo got wet & some powder destroyed in consequence of this Accident. We Encampt at 6.15 PM.

Thursday 31st. 4.15 Emb^{kd}.

Courses and Distance:

NW	2 miles
SW	10
Latitude by ☉ Merid ⁿ [meridian] Alt ^{de} 53°22'30"N	
Winding to the NW, then a bend to the SW,	
from that to North & then NW	<u>15</u>
Days Distance	27 miles

Accompanying remarks: The course of the River has been particularly Winding during the days Track, between North & SW. The Country along the North shore had been more rugged and Woody, in consequence of its being bounded by a range of Hills — the Stag or Red Deer Hills¹⁴² — but on coming above this range the country resumes its level appearance.

The Buffaloe are now seen but thinly scattered over the country — as if the Stag Hills formed their boundary. Their Southern termination is in Latitude 53°22'30"N. They extend a few Leagues up River only.

Daily remarks: Thick Fog in the Morning but cleared up on sun rize [sic]. At 9.15 landed to breakfast & continued on shore untill 2 PM drying the Cargoe of the Boat which got injured

¹⁴¹Probably Whitesand Creek.

¹⁴²Paradise Hill on modern maps.

last night. It being no longer necessary for the Horses to follow the circuitous route of the Boats, they were dispatched for Edmonton, their place of destination. Mess^{rs} Rowan[d], M^cMillan, M^cDougal & Birnie accompanying them, & by crossing the plains they expect to get to Edmonton in four days.¹⁴³ They follow the Track South of the Saskatchewan. We assisted in crossing the Horses and party — the former having swam the River, when we continued our ascent of the River until 8 PM. We then Encamp on the S^o Banks, being the first time we did so since leaving Carlton.

September 1826

Friday 1st. 4.20 AM Embarked

Courses and Distance:

NW to WNW	8 miles
SW to South	9
when we rounded a low projecting Point and turned gradually back to WNW	<u>7</u>
Days Distance	24 miles

Accompanying remarks: We followed some long bends from the S^o & SW and gradually back to WNW & NW. The River is contracting & the Water appears less Muddy, frequent Batturs or flats & a few Islands.

Daily remarks: Commenced a Thick [fog?] in the Morning which continued until 8, when it became very warm. The Thermometer at noon 76° in the Shade, 92° exposed to the sun's rays. The face of the Country displays no material change from that passed yesterday, except the absence of Hills since coming above the Stag Hills. We saw several black bears along the Banks of the River, & Mess^{rs} Stewart and Herriot Killed two Buffaloe & as Men were dispatched for the Meat, we Encamp at 6.30 PM.

Saturday 2nd. 3.50 AM, Embark^d

Courses and Distance:

Between WNW & NW	10 miles
A bend to the SW & South	2½
Observed Latitude 53°40'44"N	
SSW	2
SW	1
We passed the Junction of Vermillion or Painted Creek in Lat ^d 53°39'N	
West to NW	
Hauled two rapids	<u>12</u>
Days Distance	27½

Accompanying remarks: For about 2 Leagues below Vermillion Creek the River has a bend South & SW, when it gradually turns again from the West & NW. My Observations place the Latitude of the Junction of Vermillion Creek, 53°39'N.¹⁴⁴ Opposite its Mouth there were two Trading Posts situated on a low Point upon the North Bank (& the opposite one to the Vermillion Creek) before the Coalition.¹⁴⁵ The River is becoming narrower, not Averaging a

¹⁴³The overland distance (in a straight line) from this point to Fort Edmonton is about 160 miles; the distance by river is 235 miles.

¹⁴⁴Vermilion Creek joins the North Saskatchewan from the southwest.

¹⁴⁵The reference is to the coalition of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821. The two companies each built a trading post on the left bank opposite the mouth of the river in 1808. Both

greater breadth than 150 y^{ds}, which is not above the half it had some distance below here. Its course is occasionally obstructed by rapids formed by projecting Points of rounded stones, obliging our Crews to use the Track line principally today.

Daily remarks: The Morning sharp and cloudy with Showers but turned to great heat during the day. Thermometer at Noon 80° in the shade. At 1 PM we met a Small boat or Batteus [bateau] with two Men from Edmonton. The Boat was broke & the men Embarked with us. In the Evening we had a heavy Thunder storm with heavy rain. We had at Sun set the singular appearance at the same time of a beautiful setting Sun, rainbow & vivid lightning. We appear to have got out of the Buffaloe district. We saw none of these Animals along our days Track — tho' we saw two Bears. The face of the Country continues the same as that passed yesterday. We Encampt at 7.45 PM. For some days the Mosketos had disappeared, but the great heat & rain of today brought them back in great numbers — to our great annoyance.

Sunday 3rd. 4.15 AM Embarked

Courses and Distance:

Between NW & West	10 miles
Passed Moose Creek on our right	
SW to SSW	2
Passed the site of old Fort (Fort George), ¹⁴⁶	
having come WbN	2
Passed thro' a bend to the SW.	
Arrived at the bend of Dog Rump Creek Fort ¹⁴⁷	2
Then South & rounded	
the Point, a strong Rapid off it.SW	3
Passed Dog Rump Creek ¹⁴⁸ on the right	
West	<u>3</u>
Days Distance	22 miles

Accompanying remarks: The course of the river has been very Winding, with numerous rapids on rounding the projecting Points, rendering the Tracking a very difficult duty.

posts were abandoned in 1810. [Voorhis, *Historic Forts*, p. 174.]

¹⁴⁶There were originally two forts constructed at that site on the north bank of the river; both were established in 1792. Fort George was built by NWC partner Angus Shaw, and about 300 yards to the west William Tomison built Buckingham House for the HBC. John McDonald of Garth, who served there as a clerk during the 1790s, described 'the fort [George]' as being 'upon the margin of a fine hummock of Pine — upon a rising Hill or Bank with the noble Sascatchwan in front, with banks in that place of strong woods for perhaps a mile in Breadth and twenty in length along the river.' Both forts were abandoned in 1800. During the 1960s and 1970s they were excavated and in 1976 were declared a Provincial Historic Resource. An excellent interpretive centre now serves as an educational and tourist attraction. [Elk Point Historical Society, *Fort George and Buckingham House*; McDonald, *Autobiographical notes*, pp. 31–2].

¹⁴⁷The mouth of Dog Rump Creek is ten miles upstream from the Fort George site, but the history of a trading post at that location is obscure. Alexander Henry (the Younger) mentioned the creek several times in his journal for 1809–10, and it appears that horses were pastured there. On 21 September 1809 he noted '... the Horse keeper's tent at the Dog Rump Creek.' But it is obvious that there was not a trading establishment there at that time. In 1827, the year after Aemilius Simpson's journey, Edward Ermatinger passed the creek on May 28 and September 4; on neither occasion did he mention the presence of an old fort. However, in 1835 Sir James Douglas, travelling from York Factory to Fort Vancouver, recorded on September 11: '... encamped 2 miles below the old Fort of Dog Mump [sic] Creek.' [Henry, *Journal*, p. 401; Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express', pp. 86–102; Douglas, 'Journal of Journey', p. 32.]

¹⁴⁸The creek takes its name from a nearby ridge of hills in which 'a lively fancy sees . . . a resemblance to a dog's rump.' [Grant, *Ocean to Ocean*, p.158.]

Our Men are frequently obliged to Wade out to their Middle in the River, where the projecting Points of rounded stones or Batturs makes it necessary to Keep the Boats a distance off shore.

We passed Moose Creek, coming from a Lake of the same name in the NW. This affords a route for Canoes by making a few Portages to the Beaver River & hence to the English River.¹⁴⁹ We passed on our days Track the site of two old Establishments, viz. Fort George & Dog Rump Creek Fort.

Daily remarks: A Thick Fog in the Morning, followed by clear & Warm during the day. Ther^f at Noon 76°. At 9.15 we passed Moose Creek, a small stream falling in within the left or North Bank. I am told it communicates with a Lake of the same name, & then by making a few Portages to a chain of small Lakes we get to Beaver River, which communicates with the Athabacaw [Athabasca].¹⁵⁰ At 4 PM we passed the ruins of Fort George, an old Establishment situated on the right or Nth bank.¹⁵¹ The Country along the right or South Banks of the River is now covered with extensive Forests, consisting principally of the Poplars. On the left the Country is a mixture of Forest & plains, with swamps in some places. We passed Dog Rump Creek old Post in the evening. It is situated on a low Point of Meadow Land, on the left Bank of the River. About here the river is very rapid & Winding. We Encampt at 7.30 PM.

Monday 4th. 4.20 AM Embarked

Courses and Distance:

Winding between SSW & SSE	4 miles
Passed Stoney Creek ¹⁵²	
SSW to SSE	4
Winding between SSW & WSW	3
Lat ^d Obs ^d at Noon 53°45'34"N	
SW to WSW	10
Rounded a point & turned to West & WNW	2½
A bend to the West & SW	½
A bend to the West & NW	½
Rapids	
WNW	4
Days Distance	28½

Accompanying remarks: The course of the River is particularly Winding tho' it appears the Average is nearly West, as the Difference of Latitude from the 2nd at Noon is only 4' mtes. 50" seconds that we got to the North.

At 7 AM we passed the Stoney River a small stream. At Noon we passed an Island upon [which] there formerly was an establishment,¹⁵³ which my Observations place in Latitude 53°45'34"N. Long^{de} by Chronom^r 110'40"W.

¹⁴⁹Churchill River.

¹⁵⁰By way of a portage to Lac la Biche, and the La Biche River.

¹⁵¹The fort was on the *left* or 'Nth bank.'

¹⁵²Silver Creek on modern maps. It drains Stoney Lake located about 3 miles north of the North Saskatchewan River.

¹⁵³Fort Island, about twenty miles above the Fort George site. The island is about one and one-half miles long and two hundred yards wide. The first post was built there in 1799 by the XY Company, and the following year the Hudson's Bay and North West companies built trading establishments on the island. [Morton, *Canadian West*, p. 509; Green, 'An Analysis' pp. 99–100.]

Daily remarks: Thick Fog in the Morning, followed by very Warm Weather during the day. Thermometer at Noon 75°. We were favoured with a fair Wind for some hours, which gave our Crews considerable relief from the labour of Tracking. Along the North Banks I observed Boulders or Mass's of lime stone imbeded [*sic*] in Clay. During the heat of the day we passed great numbers of a small striped Black & green snake swimming [*sic*] from the South to the North bank of the River & strewed along the Sandy Beach on the North shore,¹⁵⁴ as if enjoying the powerfull [*sic*] influence of the Sun, & it appeared that those crossing were leaving the Cold of a Northern aspect to gain the more pleasing heat of a southern exposure. The Evening having become cool we were less troubled by Mosketos.

Tuesday 5th. 4.30 AM Embark'd

Courses and Distance:

West to SW	6 miles
West to NW	2½
NW to North	5
North to NW	½
NW to West	1
West to SW & gradually to South for a short bend	2½
Crooked Rapids	1
SW to NW	2
Days Distance	23 miles ¹⁵⁵

Accompanying remarks: The course of the River is if anything becoming more serpentine & the rapids more frequent, making the labour of Tracking very severe. In the Evening we passed a very strong chain of rapids, the Crooked Rapids, formed by a very sudden bend of the River.

Daily remarks: Thick Fog in the Morning. We were joined by our Hunters at 6.15 AM who it appears were Employed Hunting Deer, as they brought us a supply of one Red Deer,¹⁵⁶ besides the Meat of a Buffaloe Bull. We Crossed them & five Horses to the opposite or North Banks of the River. Noon the Weather became Gloomy threatening rain. Ther. 70°. We had showers in the afternoon. At 5.30 we hauled above the Crooked Rapids. From here the Journey has been made to Edmonton, I am informed, in one day by Dogs & sledge. Behind here on the right Banks of the River the plains are very extensive. We Encampt at 7 PM, having come 23 Miles in the course of the day.

Wednesday 6th. 5.30 AM Embarked.

Courses and distance:

Between NW & West	7 miles
NW	1½
NW to NNE	½
NW to West & then to NW in a bend where we passed the Junction of the Terre Blanche or White Mud River ¹⁵⁷	4

¹⁵⁴Garter snakes (*Thamnophis elegans*), which, given the date, were probably heading for a hibernaculum on the north bank for the winter. This is the first written record of reptiles in Alberta (Dr. Tony Russell, personal communication).

¹⁵⁵The sum of the distances is 20½ miles.

¹⁵⁶Elk, or wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*). Probably named 'red deer' by Scottish fur traders who saw the strong resemblance to the related but much smaller European red deer (*Cervus elaphus*).

¹⁵⁷White Earth Creek.

SW to South	2½
Came on	1
& passed a small stream Lac De [illegible]	
South to SW	1
SW to West	1
Days Distance	18½

Accompanying remarks: The Banks of the River now rise into steep Cliffs of Considerable Elevation. The interval between these being Hilly ridges, those on the South Bank densely [*sic*] Wooded. The face of the Cliffs present Coal strata with very fine quarries of free stone, having a yellow hue & apparently of an excellent quality.

Daily remarks: We had heavy rain during the Morning, which cleared up at 10 AM. At Noon Gloomy, with heavy rain again in the Afternoon. We passed a small stream coming from the NW called the White Mud River, on account of a fine White Mud found on its Banks, which the Indians use for Whitening their leather robes. The River is frequently bounded by steep Cliffs, presenting regular strata of Coals & fine free stone quarries. At 7.15 we Encamp on the face of a Clay Cliff forming a very indifferent Encampment.

Thursday 7th. 4.30 AM Embark'd

Courses and Distance:

Between SW & NW	7 miles
NW to West	2½
Having come about	4 miles

we passed the Junction of the Four Post River coming from the NE

WNW	1
A bend to the South with several rapids	
Passed the Carp River ¹⁵⁸	4
A short distance above here the River takes a bend to the SE, and an Island extends along the bed of the River.	
SEbS	4
South	1½
SW	½
Days Distance	24 miles
7.20 PM Encamp't	

Accompanying remarks: The course of the River has been very Winding some bends turning to the SE. We passed several tributary streams. Rapids occurred. I am informed the Interior Country from here is no longer plains but is very Woody & intersected by Swamps. Our Tracking path has been very bad today, being in many places a soft adhesive Clay, & the Men were frequently obliged to Wade nearly up to their necks in crossing the Mouths of the several small streams falling into the River.

Daily remarks: Fine clear Weather, but a sharp Morning. At 8 we fell in with a party of Cree Indians Encamp't upon the North Bank of the River, consisting of three Lodges. They traded a supply of Deers Meat, which was very acceptable as notwithstanding our late abundance our Provisions was falling short, the Most of the Meat that had been cured having spoilt, caused

¹⁵⁸Namepi Creek on modern maps. *Namepi* is the Cree word for Carp. [Beaudet, *Cree-English, English-Cree Dictionary*, p. 257.]

perhaps by the heat of the Weather, but I suspect it was not well Cured. Noon fine. Thermometer 63°. The Course of the River has been very serpentine during our Track of today, sometimes turning back even to the SE. We Encampt at 7.20 PM upon a Muddy Cliff. The general appearance of the Banks resembled that of yesterday.

Friday 8th. 4.40 AM Embarked

Courses and Distance:

Between South & SW	6½ miles
Passed Vermillion River ¹⁵⁹	
SW	2
SW to West	2
South ^{ly}	2
SW in this bend a high cliff on the right	½
South	2½
SW	1
Passed the Junction of Sturgeon River	
SSE	½
SSW	2
Passed an Island	
SSE	½
S° to SW	2
Arrived at a sudden turn & strong rapids	
Encampt on a Clay Cliff 8 PM	—
Days Distance	21½

Accompanying remarks: The Course of the River continues very serpentine, its Windings between West & SSE with a very strong Current, which forms rapids on rounding the Points. The Banks have been more flat today & Thickly Wooded.

Daily remarks: The Weather commenced fine in the Early part of the day. At 7.40 AM we passed the Junction of Vermillion River, a considerable Rivulet coming in from the Nth. From here to Fort Edmonton is only a short days Journey on foot, tho' owing to the serpentine course of the River & strength of Current, it occupies the Boats generally two. Noon fine. Thermometer 73°. PM Sultry which was followed by a Thunder storm in the Evening. We Encampt at 8 PM above a chain of rapids upon the base of an Elevated Clay Cliff.

Saturday 9th. 4.30 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Course very Winding between East, S° & NW	7 miles
Passed the Junction of the Old Mans River a small stream	1
SE to South	6
Between SE & West	5
which brought us to Edmonton House ¹⁶⁰ at 4 PM	—

¹⁵⁹The modern name is Redwater River. The mouth of today's Vermilion River, which the brigade passed on September 2, is about 145 miles downstream and on the south bank.

¹⁶⁰The first Edmonton House was built in 1795 by the HBC on the north bank of the Saskatchewan River, about one mile above its confluence with the Sturgeon River and twenty-five miles downstream from today's City of Edmonton. It was abandoned in 1802, and there were subsequently several establishments called Edmonton House. In 1826, when Simpson arrived, it was on the north bank of the Saskatchewan River and below the site of the present-day legislative buildings. The area was subject to flooding, and the final Edmonton House was built on higher ground. A beautiful park and a lawn bowling green now occupy the site. [Losey, *Let*

Days Distance

19 miles

Making the estimated Distance by the Course
of the River from Carlton House 419½ miles
and from York Factory 1421½ miles.

The Direct distance from Carlton by Observation
is 260 miles & bears S 81°W true

Accompanying remarks: From our mornings Encampment the course of the River is particularly Winding and bounded by very high cliffs, whose surfaces present a double Strata of Coals. Petrifications¹⁶¹ are very abundant on the Banks of the River. A little distance within the Summits of the High cliffs on the right Bank of the River the country opens out into plains. On the left, or within a bounding ridge or Bank — taking its rise some distance from the bed of the River — & running parallel with its course nearly & leaving a Margin of low Meadow Land between it & the River — from the Summit of this Bank the country presents a broken surface of Woods & Swamps intersecting it, tho' it is generally level — the distant ridges of Hill having little elevation. Above here the River divides into two branches, one coming from the West the other from the South upon the last of which we have a Trading Post.

My Observations place Edmonton House in Latitude 53°30'46"N, Longitude by Chronometer with the Cumberland House rate 112°55'21" & by the rate subsequently ascertained at Fort Assinaboine 113°29'.

A Mean of a Lunar ☉—☾ & the Cumberland House rate gives 113°34'. I did not place much confidence in the five Lunar distances I obtained. I think that shewn by Ch^r with the Assinaboine rate is very near the truth. The Variation 22° east^{ly}.

Daily remarks: Gloomy and cold raw Weather. At 4.30 we Embarked and pursued our Journey favoured with a fair breeze from the NW, but on turning up to the West it became a contrary wind, oblidging [*sic*] us to Track against a very strong current. Having come a distance of 19 Miles, we arrived at Fort Edmonton, or Augustus at 4 PM. The Gentlemen and Horse party that had left us on the 30th Ult. had made their Journey to here in five days, which took us nine and the time occupied in our Journey from Carlton was eighteen days. In the cliffs bounding the River on our days Track I observed great abundance of Coals running in Horizontal Strata with a short distance between each formed by a strata of a blue Clay or clayy [*sic*] slate. These coals are used by the blacksmith of the Establishment, but as what he makes use of is merely the outer surface they do not shew themselves of a very good quality, but were they regularly Worked I have no doubt of their proving good. Fort Edmonton is the most important Trading Post on the Saskatchewan. It is situated on the North Bank of the River & is in a good state of defence against Indian attack — a very necessary precaution, as the Indian Tribes visiting it are formidable — viz. the Blackfeet, Blood, & Crees.

There is a considerable extent of farm adjoining the Fort, which is now under an abundant Crop of Wheat, Barley, Oats and Potatoes, and a garden producing excellent vegetables. There is an extensive range of Pasture land also along the Banks of the River affording an abundant Provision for Horses &c. Deer are very numerous in this Track of country — of the Red Deer Tribe principally. Bears both of the Black & grizzle kind are also numerous.

Sunday 10th. We had a sharp frost during the night. Ther 40° in the Morning. They have had a great deal of Wet Weather Weather [*sic*] here of late, which they are apprehensive will render the road between here & Assinaboine [*sic*] very Wet and Swampy,¹⁶² so that it will be difficult

Them Be Remembered, pp. 222–34; Morton, *Canadian West*, pp. 463, 511.]

¹⁶¹ Fossils.

¹⁶²The Assiniboine Portage, about ninety miles long, ran northwesterly from Fort Edmonton to Fort Assiniboine on the north bank of the Athabasca River. On George Simpson's instructions the trail had been cut

for our Horses to travel it. Men were sent from here several days ago to that place to bring a supply of Horses to bring us across the Portage. They are hourly expected here. This being Sunday it is observed as a Holy day.

Fort Edmonton to Boat Encampment, Columbia River

Monday 11th. Fine but cold Weather. Thermometer 40°– 64°. They are Employed preparing the goods into Packs for transportation across the Portage. The Horses arrived this afternoon from Assinaboine, but they will require a rest before they are able to return again.

Tuesday 12th. A Continuance of Cold Weather but fine during the day. The day has been occupied in making preparations for our Journey across the Portage. M^r Rowan[d] favoured us with a Ball in the Evening, which appeared to diffuse a great deal of delight & pleasure among the Numerous partakers of the Amusement. All appeared anxious to decorate themselves in their best attire, and altho' among so many there were some grotesque figures, yet the general appearance of the group was very pleasing, and I was not a little amazed to see Scotch reels, and even country dances danced with a spirit & grace that would not disgrace a far more refined society. Among the half breeds and Canadians particularly I observed some excellent dancers, & the half breed girls, tho' evidently not so proficient in that Art, Made a very good appearance & seemed much pleased with the Entertainment. We have all reason to feel obliged to M^r Rowan[d] for his great Kindness & hospitality since our arrival at his Establishment.

Wednesday 13th. The commencement fine Weather. A distribution of the Horses & loads having been made among the Men, the Colombian Brigade commenced the Journey across the Portage at 2 PM. The Athabasca & Lesser Slave Lake took their departure in the Evening. The Whole Brigade consisting of about 50 Men and 83 Horses, 33 of the Men for the Colombia and New Caledonia. As the loaded Horses cannot travel very expeditiously, I with several of the gentlemen continued at the Fort for the night with the intention of following in the Morning.

Thursday 14th. Commenced Cold but fine Weather. After Beakfast Mess^{rs} J^{no} Stewart, M^cGillivray, Barnston & myself Mounted our Horses & commenced our Journey across the Portage. At Noon we arrived at the Sturgeon River, which we crossed in a small skin canoe. This stream is small but has a considerable depth. M^r J^{no} Stewart having come up with his party at this River he remained with them. We proceeded in search of the Colombian Brigade. On arriving at a small creek M^r Barnston followed a different Track to what I conceived our Brigade had followed. I pursued what I thought the right one, untill I arrived at a deep swamp & stream when I began to suspect I had followed the wrong road. I therefore began to retrace my steps but found M^r MacGillivray coming by the Same Track. I returned again with him & Crossing the Swamp and stream (which obliged the Horses to swim almost) we came up with the Brigade a short distance beyond it Encampment. While retracing my steps in the dusk I had rather an unwished for meeting with a Bear, but on taking a short survey of me he turned into the Woods. My Track during the day was in a Winding direction to the NW about 20 Miles, the first 15 rather an open Country & affording comparatively a good Track.

Friday 15th. A very coarse night, rain & sleet, with Thunder & Lightning, which prevented our Marching in the Morning untill after Breakfast, when we continued our Journey at 10 AM

by François Cardinal during the winter of 1824–5. It traversed marshy terrain, which made it a very difficult route during periods of rainy weather. Fort Assinaboine served as a provisioning post for brigades travelling westward, up the Athabasca River, to the Columbia and New Caledonia districts; and northward to the Athabasca and Mackenzie districts.

& pursued our route by a road almost impassible to Man or Beast.¹⁶³ The Horses & their loads frequently falling into swamps & ruts in which they almost disappeared, & it required extraordinary efforts at times to extricate the poor Animals from their very uncomfortable situation and calling down upon them the Most awful Imprecations from their Canadian guides. In the Tracks leading through the Woods the loads, which were slung over the sides of the Horses, projected so far that they were constantly coming in contact with Trees & Branches, to the great injury of the loads, & to add to the comforts of our Journey it rained throughout the day. We travelled untill 5 PM, when we Encampt for the night, having come 14 Miles by estimation in a Winding course to the NW, over a broken & almost inaccessible face of country intersected by Swamps and Woods which afforded hardly a Track sufficient for the Horses to get through.

Saturday 16th. Constant rain during the night, but cleared up at 6 AM. At 8 we proceeded on our Journey over a continuance of extremely bad roads, leading thro' Woods, quagmires & Marshes.¹⁶⁴ At 2 PM we crossed the Pembina River,¹⁶⁵ a considerable stream, which the Horses forded but not without having Wet'd some of their loads. We found a Canoe on the right or S^o Bank of the River, which was launched for the purpose of transporting a few of the Casets, particularly my Instrument and Book Caset. Mess^{rs} MacMillan, MacDougal, & Herriot came up with us here. They had remained behind at Edmonton after our departure. Having crossed the River we pursued our Journey untill 4 PM, after a severe days March for the Horses. Our Distance come today I estimate at about 18 miles tending to the NW over the Worst road I certainly ever saw travelled.

Sunday 17th. We had a very sharp frost during the night forming a thin coat of Ice on the sheets of Water. 6 AM we commenced our March, our road not generally so bad as formerly. We passed some pretty spots of Meadow bounded by Woods, all of the Pine Tribe. We found an Indian family Encampt on one of these spots, a Hunter attached to the Fort Assinaboine establishment. We stopt [*sic*] to Breakfast at 10 AM & resumed our Journey again at Noon, which we continued untill 3 PM, when we Encampt in the Midst of a Wood, which formed a very comfortable Encamp^t. We travelled 16 Miles between North & West.

Monday 18th. A hoar frost during the night, with clear Weather. At 5.30 AM we commenced our March & traveled through a Point of Woods untill 8.30, Many parts of the Track being very bad, the Horses sinking under their loads up to their necks nearly. We breakfast'd on the North side of the River Cruz,¹⁶⁶ a small but deep stream. At 11 we resumed our Journey, passing several Creeks, Swamps & Points of Wood, where the Track is frequently almost impassible from the immense quantity of fallen burnt Trees strewed over the path & which forms one of the worst obstacles on the line of route, as every gale blows down a new covering of these burnt stumps however often you clear the path, & to work your way thro' this confused Mass is irksome and tedious. We forded a branch of the Athabasca, which forms an Island of a few miles extent, & at 3 PM we arrived at the Main Branch opposite Assinaboine Post, to which we Crossed in a Canoe¹⁶⁷ — thus completing our Journey from Edmonton in a little less than six days altho' only a distance by estimation of about 90 Miles

¹⁶³ Since Cardinal had cut the trail in winter, when everything was frozen, he would not have been able to identify and avoid swampy areas.

¹⁶⁴ In May 1827, Edward Ermatinger echoed Simpson's comments about the portage. On the 16th he wrote: 'Our road the whole of this day has been thro' one continued mire.' And the next day: 'The road. . . lies along the border of small lakes, thro' swamps and woods — the track thro' the latter being in some cases extremely bad — much fallen wood and deep mires.' [Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express', p. 84].

¹⁶⁵ The Pembina River (one of several of that name) joins the Athabasca River about 35 miles below Fort Assinaboine.

¹⁶⁶ The 'River Cruz' is an incorrect spelling of Rivière de Cruche (Pitcher) Creek, about fifteen miles southeast of Fort Assinaboine. [Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express', p. 84.]

and in a direction by my observations only 62 miles N37°W true, which may serve to point out the difficulty of passing this Portage, which in any other part of the World I really believe would be considered impassible. Yet so familiar is the Voyageur with difficultys [*sic*] that he is better qualified to overcome them than any other people I have met with. Assinaboine is a small Post, situated on the North Bank of the Athabasca, enclosed by a Woody Country but has intervals of Meadow Land, which furnishes good pasture for Horses. It is much used for that purpose a number being always kept here belonging to the Edmonton Establishment & to supply the Brigades crossing the Mountains & as it is safe from the depredations of the Blackfeet & other Indians who do not cross this Woody country. A considerable quantity of dried meat is procured at this Post, which is made into Pemmican to supply the passing Brigades to & from the Colombia &c. It gives fair returns of skins, I am informed. PM gloomy W^r Threatening change I fear.

[Marginal note] The travelling distance by my estimation from York Factory to here is 1501½ Miles.

Tuesday 19th. Coarse Weather with rain & sleet, bearing all the appearance of Winter. I trust it is merely the equinoctial storms as a continuance of this Weather would make our Journey across the Mountain a very difficult & disagreeable one. I examined my Casets today — apprehensive that their contents got injured in crossing the Portage from the number of Thumps, Tumbles &c. received but was pleased to find that the instruments &c. had received no material injury. The Mountain Barometer was not so fortunate, for on examining it I found its Tube broken.¹⁶⁸ This was to me a great disappointment after having succeeded in carrying it so far safe & as I was now about entering upon the field of its utility. But it is evident that such instruments are too delicate for such roads, & had I been aware of their extreme badness I certainly would never have attempted the Carriage of it. The Wet Weather retards our arrangements. We are unable to Gum¹⁶⁹ and otherwise arrange our Canoes.

Wednesday 20th. A Continuance of coarse Weather, Snow & rain. Thermometer at Noon 43°. Our preparations are retarded by the Weather. Such Jobs as can be done under cover are however going on. During a few hours in the forenoon it continued fair when the Men were Employed arranging the Canoes. I regret the Weather preventing my taking observations of any kind.

Thursday 21st. A Thin covering of snow on the ground & hoar frost in the morning with constant rain during the day. This bad Weather has prevented M^r Stewarts getting Across the Portage with his party, and as he has the supplies for the Upper Posts, were we otherwise ready we could not proceed untill his Arrival here with these. An Indian Hunter brought us a very seasonable supply of Venison, as we found no great abundance of Provision at this Post, tho' with the Potatoes of its produce & dried meat our Table could not be called badly provided.

Friday 22nd. The Weather having improved enabled them to pitch the Canoes &c. We are now ready to proceed on our Journey but must wait the arrival of M^r Stewart, for which we are now becoming Anxious.

Saturday 23rd. Commenced with heavy rain, still retarding the Arrival of M^r Stewarts party. Mess^{rs} Birnie & Sinclair were sent of [*sic*] for Jaspers House this forenoon with a loaded Boat

¹⁶⁷The Athabasca River divides into two main branches immediately west of Fort Assiniboine and flows around an island measuring about ½ mile wide and 1½ long. They forded the south branch of the river and crossed the north branch in a canoe.

¹⁶⁸This barometer would have included a mercury-filled glass tube just over 30" in length, which would have been very susceptible to breakage.

¹⁶⁹This involved caulking the seams with a gum made from spruce or pine resin.

and strong Crew, so as to enable her to get in advance as much as possible before we start in our Birch Canoes. M^r Stewart with a few of his party arrived in the Evening Having had a most difficult task to transport his goods across the Portage, owing to the continual bad Weather rendering the roads Worse than we had them. He sent a few of his hands with a Cargoe by the Canoe on the Pembina River, which they decended [*sic*].¹⁷⁰

Sunday 24th. The Weather has taken a favourable change & appears set in for a continuance of fair Weather. The remainder of M^r Stewarts party arrived in the morning. This day they have been Employed examining & drying the goods which we have to bring up to Jaspers House. The clear Weather enabled me to get a set of observations, which places the Latitude of this Post in 54°19'46"N, Longitude by Chronometer with Cumberland House rate 113°45'24", & a Mean of three sets of Lunar Distances ☉—☽ 114°38'41" Shewing the Longitude 48 miles to the West^d of the Chron^r. The Mean of the Lunar & Chronom^r 114°09'24" West. By assuming the result of the Lunars as the True Longitude, the Chronometer was at noon slow of Mean Time at Greenwich 18'54.2" & loosing [*sic*] 10.5" which is an increase on her daily rate of 4.2" as found at Cumberland House. Altho' the few observations I obtained does not furnish such satisfactory data as I could wish, for assuming a new rate for the Chronom^r, yet it appears evident that her rate has undergone a serious change caused I have no doubt by our Mode of travelling, particularly across the Assinaboine Portage. Under the disadvantages which the instrument has laboured it would be unjust [*sic*] to attach blame to her Maker (Barraud)¹⁷¹ for her bad performance.

[Marginal notes] 1st set Lunar

☉—☽ 114°15'15"

2nd D^o 114°49'15"

3 D^o 114°51'34"

114°38'41"

Variation 20° East.

Long 114°33' is what I adopt for Chronometer new rate.

Monday 25th. 9 AM Embarked & commenced our Ascent of the Athabasca R

Courses and Distance:

Course Winding between S^o & West^d 10 miles

SW to West 11

Days distance 21 miles

Encampt 5 PM.

The above courses are corrected for Variation, as are all those given in the Track up the Athabasca.

Accompanying remarks: The course of the River is very Winding, for altho' we travelled about 20 Miles by estimation the difference of Long^{de} by Chronometer made today is only 9 Miles, & the Latitude at noon by ☉ Meridⁿ Alt^{de} was 54°18' & Longitude of our Evening's Encampt 114°42' by Ch^r, shewing that we had only come 2 miles to the South and 9 to the West^d since leaving the Post.

The Current is very rapid. We advanced against it solely by the Poles & travel about 3 Miles p^{er} Hour. The Scenery very much resembles that on the Saskatchewan as we approach Edmonton. Beyond a Margin of low land high Cliffs take their rise, the face of the Country richly Wooded consisting of Varietys [*sic*] of Pine the Birch, and Poplar. On first Embarking we pass'd an Island extending a considerable distance below & above the Post. The Channel

¹⁷⁰ On reaching the Athabasca River they would have headed up that river to Fort Assinaboine – a rather lengthy detour but evidently a preferable option to continuing via the overland trail.

¹⁷¹ Paul Philip Barraud. See biographical sketch, p. 91.

forming it is small & full of drift wood at its Entry & the same which we Cross'd on our Horses coming to Assinaboine but a dense Fog prevented my getting a good view of on Embarking. The Motion of the Canoe, in consequence of constant use of the Poles, renders my Compass almost useless. I am therefore often obliged to use the Suns bearing to judge my course. I therefore Enter the Courses on the Track up the Athabasca Corrected for Variation.

Daily remarks: A Sharp frost with clear Weather during the night, but a thick Fog came on in the Morning, which continued until 11 AM. Our Arrangements being completed we Embarked at 9 AM & pursued our route up the Athabasca River, our Brigade being distributed into three Canoes, very deeply laden. Each Canoe has seven men besides boys, but heavy laden as we are we make comparatively quick progress to what we did in the Boats ascending the Saskatchewan. And our Canadian Crews appear very well pleased with the change as they are much more used to and understand the Management of the Birch Canoes much better than the Boats. To the passengers however the change I think affords no advantage, the heavy lading reducing our room to very small bounds. Noon fine clear Weather. At 4 PM we came up with a small canoe, which we had dispatched the previous Saturday with Baptist, an old Iroquois & 3 other hands to make their way in company with the Boat sent on the same day, but she proved so leaky that they had not, they said, been able to make further progress. It being necessary to repair this Canoe, we Encamp't at 5 PM. The Evening clear & frosty.

Tuesday 26th. 5 AM Embarked. Our course Winding thru' channels formed by Islands.

Courses and Distance:

Between West & SE. 12

Lat^{de} here is 54°11'22"N.

Long^{de} by Lunar ☉—☽ 114°55'W.

By Chron^f 114°48'W

WSW to South & NWest^{ly} 18

Days Distance 30

Accompanying remarks: The course of the River by our Days Track has been very Winding, leading very much thro' Channels formed by Islands, the breadth of the River varying from 300 to 150 Yards — the Current very rapid. There is a beach along the Banks of Gravel and rounded stones forming in many places a regular Causey. Our Distance in a direct line is very little from the very serpentine course of the River. The bends generally tend to the South of West. By sights for Double altitude at our Breakfast Encamp^t I made the Latitude 54°11'22"¹⁷² & Longitude by a set of Lunars ☉—☽ 114°55'West.

Daily remarks: A sharp frost during the night, a Thick Fog in the Morning, which continued until 9 AM. We Embarked at 5 AM. The Thick Fog prevents my having a view of the country during its continuance, which I regret, as the general appearance of the Banks has been very interesting, in some places rising in perpendicular cliffs of from two to three hundred feet, their summits richly cloathed with Pines, Birches & poplars. The various tints of the foliage forming a very pretty contrast which, combined with the singular appearance assumed by many of the hanging cliffs forms a very agreeable Landscape. Many of these Cliffs present stratas [*sic*] of coal, free stone, and clays alternately placed in horizontal position. The coal has a rich vitreous lustre. On exposing it to the action of fire it does not melt or cake but continues a hard red hot Mass & produces a clear blaze & is very slowly

¹⁷²The double altitude method of determining latitude requires two altitudes of the sun or other star and the time interval between the observations. [Cotter, *Nautical Astronomy*, pp. 143–62.]

reduced in the process of combustion. I suppose these strata form a Geological connexion [*sic*] with those seen in the Saskatchewan, which traverse this district of Country. The Weather has been clear & pleasant during the day. Ther^r noon 70°.

Wednesday 27th. 5.15 AM Embarked.

Courses and distance.

Between SW & West to * NW	8 miles
NW	4
Winding to the West ^d	<u>15</u>
Days Distance	27 miles

5.40 PM Encamp^t.

*Latitude by Noon Meridian Alt^{de} 54°11'North.

Longitude by Chronometer 115°09'22" &

by Lunar ☉—☽ 115°15'W shewing

5'38" to the West of Ch^r.

Accompanying remarks: The Windings of the River have tended to the NW today. We have passed thro' stream channels formed by Islands. Many of these are evidently formed by drift Timber, intercepting Annually a fresh Accumulation of drift Wood until they have at length attained a considerable size, and are now with the Alluvial deposits and decayed vegetable Matter covered with a sufficient thickness of soil to bear Trees of considerable growth, principally of the Poplar or Aspen Tribe. The Interior country is covered with extensive Forests.

Daily remarks: A Frost during the night followed by a Thick Fog in the Morning which continued until 7 AM. We Embarked at 5 AM & continued our ascent of the Athabasca. The face of the Country continues the same as that described yesterday, the Coal rather more abundant, some of the Cliffs presenting three strata. These strata have no great depth, not exceeding two to two and a half feet. Many of the Cliffs shew free stone (of an excellent quality) solely. The Current is strong & the rapids frequent. In hauling above one of these two of our Canoes got broke obliging us to Encamp at an early hour for the purpose of repairing them — viz. 5.40 PM. The Weather throughout the day clear and pleasant. Thermometer 50° in the Morning, 66° at Noon.

Thursday 28th. 10 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

*SW	1
Passed the Forks of McLeods River ¹⁷³	
Winding between SW & NW	<u>20</u>
Days Distance	21 miles

*Our mornings Encampment by the ☽ M. [meridian] Alt

54°11'10"

Long^{de} by Chron^r 115°23'39"West

1 mile SE from MacLeods River

Accompanying remarks: Our Days Track has been Winding between SW & NW, short bends occassionally to the N^d and South of that. The Current and rapids very strong.

¹⁷³The McLeod River flows into the Athabasca from the southwest at the modern town of Whitecourt, Alberta.

The fall of the River over the Batturs forming the rapids is very perceptible, the difference of level at the foot & Head being several feet. Our Mornings Encamp^t I made in Latitude by ☽ [moon] Merid. Alt^{de} 54°11'10"N. Longitude by Chronom^t 115°23'39" West.

Daily remarks: A Slight frost and clear Weather, the Morning being free from Fog. One of our Canoes, M^cDouglass,¹⁷⁴ not having come up with us since the Accident of yesterday, we continued in our Encampment to wait her Arrival, which she did at 10 AM, when we pursued our Journey continuing our ascent against a strong Current & rapids, making the labour of Poling very severe. We came upon a Camp of the Strong Wood Assinaboine Indians in the afternoon, who supplied us with Moose Deer Meat. We had pleasant Weather during the day. At 6.15 PM Encamp^t for the night.

Friday 29th. 5 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Winding between West & NW	13
West to NW	13
SW to NW	<u>3</u>
Days Distance	29 Miles

Accompanying remarks: By our days Track the average course has been West X being between SW and NW. The Rapids were less frequent and the Current not quite so strong.

Daily remarks: A Frost thro' the night with a slight fog in the Morning, followed by fine pleasant Weather during the day. The Scenery along our Days Track similar to that of yesterday. Not having met with any accidents we made a good days distance, having come about 10 Leagues. We Encamp^t at 6 PM. We heard a Musket fired a short distance above us, which we concluded was a Signal from M^r Birnies Boat to acquaint us with their situation.

Saturday 30th. 5 AM Embarked.

Courses and distance:

SW to West	9 miles
West	6
Lat ^{de} 54°19'N	
SW ^{ly}	11
Passed a small River coming from the South.	
	<u>2</u>
Days Distance	28 Miles

Accompanying remarks: The general appearance of the Banks continues pretty much the same as that hitherto passed. In the Evening however we passed a ridge of Hills extending about 12 miles NE & SW, of a considerable Elevation, along the right bank, about 400 to 500 f^t densely Wooded. An indifferent Meridian Altitude of the Sun, as I suspect he had fallen on my first observing gave the Lt^{de} 54°19'N.

Daily remarks: Frost with fine clear Weather. Embarked at 5 AM. At 7 we came up with M^r Birnies Boat, altho' she had left Assinaboine two days before us & was well man'd, which shews the superiority [*sic*] of the Birch Canoe over any other species of craft for this kind of navigation. Noon fine. Thermometer 66°—75°. In hauling above a rapid Mr M^cDougals Canoe got broke. The frequent accidents to his canoe proceeds I suppose from the want of skill in his steersman and Bowman. We Encamp^t at 5.45 PM with the Boat in Company.

¹⁷⁴ James or George McDougall.

October 1826

Sunday 1st. 5 AM Embarked.

Courses and distance:

Between SSW & West	10 miles
Longitude by Chronom ^f 116°21'40"West	
SbW	2
⊙ Meridian Alt ^{de} made Lat ^{de} 54°10'N	
SbW	4
West	1
SW	6

Passed Baptists River¹⁷⁵ coming from the North^d

SSW	<u>1</u>
Days Distance	24 miles

Accompanying remarks: The Current has been very strong & frequent Rapids oblidge [sic] haul above them by line. The Right or S^o Bank of the River is now bounded by Hilly ridges, some rising to an elevation of from six to seven hundred feet, in some places falling abruptly & forming stupenous [sic] cliffs. I observed no Coals today. Among the Boulders of rolled stones I observed lime stone.

Daily remarks: Fine clear Weather, soft breeze from the South^d. Air free from frost. A party was dispatched by land for Jaspers House, consisting of Mess^{rs} Birnie, Linton & Sinclair,¹⁷⁶ with one man two boys & a guide. Noon fine. At 4.50 PM we passed the Junction of Baptist's River a considerable stream. On the opposite side of the River here a remarkable & steep cliff bounds it. The face of the country presents a dense forest consisting of Varieties of the Pine principally. We Encampt at 5.30 PM.

Monday 2nd. 5 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

SW to West	8 miles
West ^{ly}	6
Lat ^d obs ^d ⊙ Merid. Alt. 53°56'30"N	
SSW to SW	8
SW to West	<u>5</u>
Days Distance	27 Miles

Accompanying remarks: The Average course of the River has been from the SW. As the Banks increase in Elevation the Current appears to gain additional force. The face of the Country presents a continued Forest composed now exclusively of several varieties of Pine.

Daily remarks: Fine and soft Weather, a Fresh breeze SW. We met a grizzle bear this Morning on the Bank of the River. He very deliberately stood & looked at us in our Canoe as if intending to choose one of us for his prey, but M^f MacMillan Wounding him he scampered of [sic] to the Woods. He was followed for some distance but without success, as he made his escape good. Our Breakfast situation this Morning was a very romantic one, the opposite

¹⁷⁵Baptist's River, now known as the Berland, flows into the Athabasca from the west, about sixty-five miles above the town of Whitecourt, Alberta. It was named after Baptist Berland, a fur trader. [Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express,' p. 107.]

¹⁷⁶James Birnie, George Linton and Thomas Sinclair, see biographical sketch for Linton, p. 95.

shore being a very high cliff composed of a fine quality of free stone about 300 f^t high Washed at its base by a rapid stream of about 200 yards Width. In fact the Scenery generally is picturesque & interesting, the River bounded in many places by these fantastic cliffs & then by ridges of Hill six to eight hundred f^t and urging its course with irresistible force along its steep Banks with a rich cloathing of Wood. These combined forming a very romantic Landscape. We Encampt at 5.20 PM.

Tuesday 3rd. 5 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

SW & West	8 miles
Latitude by ☉ Meridian Alt. 53°49'49"N	
Variation 2 Points East ¹⁷⁷	
SW to SSW	2
Entered a bend runing from the SE and ESE full of strong rapids & bounded by high cliffs, free stone & coal strata	1½
Hauled above the Belanger — 2 fierce rapids extending	½
when we rounded a Point & the River turned again from the South	—————
Days Distance	11½ miles

Accompanying remarks: Our Track today has been principally to the SW, untill we arrived at a bend & chain of strong Rapids — ESE & SE — bounded by very High cliffs on the right Bank. It was decending these rapids that two Canadians, La Pense & Belanger were drown'd.¹⁷⁸ Two Crosses denotes the graves of these unfortunate Men. The Latitude at Noon by a good Meridian Alt^{de} of the Sun was 53°49'49"N.

Daily remarks: A Slight Fog in the Morning but fine & pleasant Weather throughout the day. Thermometer at Noon 62°. We Embarked at 5 AM & continued our ascent untill 9 when we arrived at the Camp of a party of Strong Wood Assinaboines. We put on shore to Breakfast and got a supply of Moose Deer Meat from these hospitable Indians. The Boat having fallen far in the rear we waited her arrival here untill 2 PM. The Indians appeared well pleased to have our society, and their appearance was certainly better calculated to prepossess a stranger in their favour than most or any I have yet seen in the country. They were neatly dressed, their robes of leather being clean and fantastically ornamented & their persons generally bespoke a cleanliness of habit which I had not previously witness'd among Indians. And I observed among both sexes a few faces that were agreeable. One young girl (who appeared to be the Wife of an Indian from his close attendance upon her Motions) had pretensions to a moderate share of beauty, which her lord & master seemed duly to appreciate. They appeared much amused by my operation of taking the Suns Altitude. Our land party joined us to breakfast & described their route thro' the Woods as most difficult of access. They continued their Journey after breakfast. We pursued our Journey at 2 PM and having got above a chain of

¹⁷⁷22.5°.

¹⁷⁸On 25 May 1814, two NWC voyageurs, members of the NWC brigade travelling from Fort George to Fort William on Lake Superior, drowned in these rapids. Gabriel Franchère was with the brigade and described the event. 'About two o'clock,' he wrote, 'as we were rounding a point we saw a considerable rapid ahead . . . we hit the rocks, our frail skiffs overturned and one of them broke up. . . . Two men were drowned in this unlucky accident — Olivier Roy Lapensée and André Belanger. . . . I went down the river to rescue the baggage and . . . I discovered the body of young Lapensée, which we buried as decently as we could, and erected [a cross with] an inscription carved with the point of my knife recording the unhappy end of these two young Canadians.' Edward Ermatinger called the site the 'Rapids des Morts' or 'Dead Man' rapid. [Franchère, *Journal of a Voyage*, p. 164; Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express', p. 107n.]

strong rapids — the Belanger & La Pense — the distance about 4 Miles we Encamp at 5.30 PM. The Scenery about these rapids is very grand.

Wednesday 4th. 6 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Ascending the Rapids de Croix	½ mile
South to SSE	1½
Got above the Rapids de Croix & passed the Old Mans River coming from the NW	
South ^{ly}	5
Between SW & SE	2
South	1½
SW & WSW	<u>7½</u>
Days Distance	18 Miles

Accompanying remarks: Having got above the Rapids de Croix or Cross Rapid (so named on account of the Cross's erected over the Graves of the two Men drowned runing these rapids, as mentioned above — who were runing these rapids in a Small Canoe) the River turns again from the S° & SW & becomes comparatively still. On the left bank is a cliff rising perpendicularly about 800 ft. The River here is about 250 y^{ds} broad. At the head of these rapids also the Old Mans River falls in on the left Bank or from the NW. At certain seasons it is a stream of importance.

Daily remarks: Commenced gloomy with rain. We Waited the arrival of the Boat untill 6 AM when we Embarked but only proceeded a short distance to the first Rapids de Croix when two of our Canoes came in contact, which damaged us so much that we were immediately oblidge to put on shore to repair. That being finished & having breakfasted we pursued our Journey and got above the Cross Rapids, when the River becomes comparatively still. Noon Showers. Thermometer 68° - 72°.

One of our Canoes having got broke by striking a stone we Encamp at 5 PM, which enabled the Boat to come up with us in the Evening.

Thursday 5th. 5 AM Embarked

Courses and Distance:

SW	9 miles
SSW	1
Got the first view of the Rocky Mountains to the SW	
SSW to SW	4
SW	5
SSW to SSE	2½
SW	<u>12</u>
Day's Distance	33½

Accompanying remarks: With the exception of one short bend, the Average course of the River during our days Track has been from the SW. The Banks were free from steep cliffs and the bounding ridge of Hills were comparatively low, not exceeding three to four hundred feet. We had fewer rapids & the force of the Current is greatly diminished. We consequently made the greatest days distance since leaving Assinaboine. At 11 AM we got sight of the Rocky Mountains to the SW. Between two detached Mountains there appeared an opening, the Northern extremity of the Southern one falling very abruptly & forming a grand precipice. The summits of the ridge in view are partially covered with snow.

Daily remarks: The Morning a Thick Fog, which cleared up at 9 AM. At 11 we came in sight of the Rocky Mountains in the SW, their lofty summits towering up to the Vaulted Heavens seemed to bid defiance to the efforts of man to gain their eminences. It was not therefore easy for the traveller to divest himself from feeling anticipated hardships on beholding this stupendous Mass of Mountain which he was about to Cross, & was it necessary to pursue our route across their Summits I doubt much the practicability of gaining access to the West side of this stupendous Barrier. But detached Mountains form Grand defiles — it is by these that the traveller is enabled to make his way across the Mountains. The Weather throughout the day has been pleasant a cool breeze blowing off the Mountains. Ther^r 62° - 65°, 6° below the temperature of yesterday. Our Crews have pushed hard today, taking only four rests during the days labour. And as we no longer waited for the Boat, we soon left her out of sight behind. We Encampt at 6.15 PM, it being dark.

Friday 6th. 5 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

WSW	3 miles
West to SW	3
A short turn [North?]	
SW	2
West to WSW	3
SWbW	2
WNW	½
Entered Jaspers Lake ¹⁷⁹ SW	<u>1½</u>
Days Distance	15 Miles

3 PM Arrived at Jaspers House, Making the estimated Distance from F. Assinaboine by the Course of the River 285½ miles ¹⁸⁰ & from York Factory 1787 Miles.

The direct Distance from Assinaboine S 61°W 124 miles.

Jaspers House in Latitude 53°18'40"N

Long^d 117°38'36"W

Accompanying remarks: The course of the River with the exception of a few short bends to the WNW has been from the West & SW, with a strong current particularly on rounding the numerous perpendicular cliffs bounding it in our days Track, many of these presenting a very singular exterior resembling old ruins. The Water of the River has become very turbid (caused by the Snow Water from the Mountains) rendering the rapids more dangerous, as it hides from view large blocks of stone lying in the bed of the River. Having followed a bend WNW ½ Mile we rounded a Point & entered Jaspers Lake, & crossing the Lake SW 1½ miles we arrived at the Post. The Scenery presented on entering this sheet of Water is very fine — its

¹⁷⁹The lake, now called Brûlé Lake, is formed by a widening of the Athabasca River. The first trading post was built near its northern termination by the NWC in 1813 and was named Rocky Mountain House. (Another post of the same name was located at the site of the present-day town of the same name on the upper North Saskatchewan River.) Gabriel Franchère described it as 'situated at the edge of a small wood and is surrounded by cliffs frequented only by ibexes [mountain goats] and sheep.' And Ross Cox, a NWC clerk who stopped there in 1817, noted that 'an old clerk, Mr. Jasper Hawes, was in charge.' He described the post as 'a miserable concern of rough logs' and a 'melancholy hermitage.' It was abandoned in 1829 and a new establishment was built about fifteen miles upstream on today's Jasper Lake. Although it served as a fur-trade post, its primary function was to raise and supply horses for the brigades crossing Athabasca Pass. [Morton, *Canadian West*, p. 698; Franchère, *Journal of a Voyage*, p. 163; Cox, *Columbia River*, pp. 289–90].

¹⁸⁰This is the first significant error in Simpson's estimates of distances. The distance by the Athabasca River Route from Fort Assiniboine to the first Jasper House site on Brûlé Lake is about 185 miles.

unruffled surface extending to the South for nine Miles is bounded by a stupendous Mass of Mountain taking a gradual ascent from its very edge and bearing a rich covering of Pine and Aspen, whose variegated [*sic*] foliage forms a pleasing contrast with the dark shade of the Pine. Then about half way from their summits they present their naked surfaces falling More abruptly and closing the Scene, forming as grand an amphitheatre as the imagination can well fancy. This small Post is situated on the West side & northern extremity nearly of Jaspers Lake which extends North and South about 10 Miles.

Daily remarks: A very fine Clear Morning. At the dawn the distant view of the Mountains had a very fine effect, their lofty & rug'd summits circumscribing the Western horizon, and their dark blue tint forming a fine contrast with the rich azure sky. We Embarked at 5 AM & continued our ascent of the Athabasca. At Noon our Canoe got broke by striking a hidden Rock, obliging us to put on shore immediately to repair, which occupied us untill 1 PM — When we again pursued our Journey and arrived at Jaspers House at 3 PM, Having taken twelve days to perform the Journey from Assinaboine House, a distance by Estimation of 285 Miles, the course of the River being particularly Winding with a very strong Current and frequent Rapids occuring [*sic*]. By my observations the distance is only 124 Miles & true course S 61°13'W.

We found our Land party here, who had arrived only this Morning. They report the Track by land to be most difficult and labourious, leading thro' extensive Forests. They frequently lost themselves & the great quantity of burnt Wood strewed over the face of the country in many places was a formidable obstruction. We found M^r Drummond¹⁸¹ here a gentleman connected with the Polar expedition,¹⁸² whose researches in this quarter are directed to the acquirement of Botanical specimens, which he considered a more likely situation to afford a supply of these than the steril [*sic*] Shores of the Polar sea. He proposes Crossing the Mountain with our Brigade, a trip that is likely to reward him well for his labour. There are forty Horses collected here for the purpose of transporting our Brigades across the Mountains. The Weather during the day was very warm. The Thermometer at Noon 76°.

Saturday 7th: 12.30 PM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Ascended Jaspers Lake south	9 miles
Reentered the Athabasca River between West & SW	6
Winding between South and West	3
A very Winding Channel & rapids along the Base of Millet's Rock. ¹⁸³	
SE	<u>1</u>
Days Distance	19 miles
Encampt under or at the Base of Millett's Rock, a very romantic situation.	

Accompanying remarks: My Observations place Jaspers House in Latitude 53°18'40"N, Longitude by Chronom^r by Assinaboine rate 117°1'8". Longitude by a set of Lunar

¹⁸¹Thomas Drummond; see biographical sketch, p. 92.

¹⁸² Captain John Franklin's second overland expedition whereby he and his colleagues explored the arctic coast from Return Reef (near Prudhoe Bay) in the west, to the mouth of the Coppermine River in the east in 1826. [Franklin, *Narrative of a second expedition...*]

¹⁸³Named Roche Miette on modern maps, it marks the northern termination of the Miette Mountain Range and is located just west of the eastern entrance to Jasper National Park. In the early 1800's, however, it was also called Millet's Rock. Gabriel Franchère described the view of Roche Miette, as seen from the lake, as resembling 'the side view of a church portal.' [Franchère, *Journal of a Voyage*, pp. 162n, 163.]

distances \odot — \gg $117^{\circ}55'45''$ giving the Longitude 34 miles to the West^d of the Chron^r, Which indicates a further increase in the daily rate of the Chronometer, but as I have reason to suspect from subsequent observation that the Lunar was too far to the West, I adopt a new rate from the Mean of the Lunar & Chronometers Longitude by the Assinaboine rate, placing Jaspers House in Longitude $117^{\circ}38'6''$, making the Chronometer slow of Mean Time at Greenwich at Noon on the 6th October $22'13''$ & loosing daily $16.6''$. This great addition to the daily rate I must ascribe to the Mode of travelling. Jaspers Lake is bounded by the Mountains, except from NE to SE where the Country is Comparatively low. It is at present a very shallow sheet of Water and we found some difficulty in obtaining a sufficient channel for our Canoes. On reentering the River its course is between SW & West, with a few short bends to the South & even SE skirting the Base of Millett's Rock. We passed a few rapids, in other places a smooth current. The Geological formation of the Mountains is different to what I expected for instead of their being composed of Granite they are primitive Lime stone traversed by veins of a few Inches Thickness of a pure White colour. On first entering the Mountains the stratas are very confused but on Entering further in among them they become more regular, having their Dip to the SW, with a declination varying from 45° to about 60° Degrees.

Daily remarks: A very sharp frost during the night followed by great heat throughout the day. Thermometer at Noon exposed to the rays of the Sun 80° , in the shade 57° F. I employed myself in the forenoon, with the assistance of M^r Barnston, in measuring the height of Millett's Rock, the remarkable Mountain whose Northern termination falls perpendicularly & forms the Southern boundary of the grand defile thro' which our route lays at its entry. This Mountain has its name from a Canadian who asserted that he had ascended to its summit, when he sat down on the edge of this enormous precipice nearly four thousand feet high & felt so little apprehension that he amused himself by raping [*sic*] his heels against the Rock. He must be very credulous that believes this story. The limited time & the nature of the ground not affording a very good or sufficient length of base did not admit of the Measurements being made with that degree of accuracy upon which an implicit reliance could be placed. I therefore offer the result only as an approximation viz. 3755 feet above the level of Jaspers Lake — but the level of it above the Sea must be very great when it is recollected that we have travelled from there a distance of 1787 Miles of a constant Ascent — except the Echiminis a short & petty stream¹⁸⁴ — and that ascent generally considerable. I therefore conceive at a very moderate computation it cannot be less than 13000 feet above the level of the sea,¹⁸⁵ & Millets Mountain is not much above half the height of some of those more to the interior of the Mass, as I found the more we penetrated into the Mountains the higher they became. Altho' I very much regret the loss of the Mountain Barometer, yet Circumstanced as I am it could not be applied to any general practical purpose, as it would be necessary to gain the Summits of these Mountains to ascertain their height by its means, which would require considerable time and great labour, and indeed many if not most of them are inaccessible. The outfits for this Post having been delivered and our arrangements completed we Embarked at half an hour past noon & pursued our Journey to the Rocky Mountain Portage. Mess^{rs} MacMillan, Birnie, & Drummond, with a few Men accompanied the Horse Brigade for the same place.

The view now in all directions presents a continued Mass of snow clad Hills towering their lofty summits in successive ranges their outlines assuming a great variety of forms, giving to the whole scene a grandeur and novelty beyond my powers to describe — but is truly sublime. We continued our ascent of the Athabasca occassionally opposed by rapids alternating with sheets of Comparatively still Water, until 6 PM when we Encamp^t for the

¹⁸⁴The Echimamish River that the brigade travelled down on July 27 and 28.

¹⁸⁵The elevations of the lake and the summit of Roche Miette are 3232 and 7596 feet, respectively. Simpson's error in calculating the difference in elevation is only about 600 feet. However, his estimation of the gain in altitude since leaving York Factory is considerably wide of the mark.

night at the Base of Millet's Rock upon a Gravel flat or Battur, which extends to the bases of the bounding Mountains that forms this grand defile & through which the River holds its course. I certainly think our Encampment might vie in point of romantic appearance with many of far greater celebrity. On our left is the perpendicular face of this stupendous Rock rising to an elevation of upwards of three thousand feet, its shadow casting a gloom over the deep defile, so opposite to the brilliant sky immediately over us, that the mind feels an impression as if this situation was somewhat supernatural.

Sunday 8th. 5.15 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Ascended the River Winding to the SW	4 miles
Entered a Lake very shallow ¹⁸⁶	
SW	6
_____	5
Reentered the narrows or River	
SSW	5
A Small Lake South ^{ly}	5
Then Winding between West & South	
Frequent Rapids	<u>10</u>
Days Distance	35 miles

Encamp upon the left or North bank of the River
opposite Henrys old Post ¹⁸⁷ & below
M^r La Roches¹⁸⁸ about 1 mile.

This is the commencement of the Mountain Portage
and is by estimation 54 Miles from Jaspers
House altho' in a direct line only 28 Miles
bearing S 22°W True.

[Marginal note] From York Factory the estimated Distance is 1841 miles.

Accompanying remarks: The River has its course thro' a low flat lying between two ranges of Mountains, branching into numerous Channels. In some places it becomes still & assumes the appearance [*sic*] of Lakes & then again contracts & running over shallows of gravel forms rapids, its course very Winding but averaging to the SW. The flats in some places forms a Margin of low Land bearing a stunt'd growth of Wood extending from the Bases of the Mountains to the Banks of the River — the intersecting branches forming several Islands. But I am informed that these flats after the Melting of the Snow in the Spring are no longer visible, it being almost a continued sheet of Water from base to base of the Mountains, some Miles Broad. The Scenery along our Days Track continued to display the same grandeur & the Mountains present the same quality of lime stone, Dark blue traversed by White Veins of

¹⁸⁶Jasper Lake on modern maps. Like Brûlé Lake (above), it is formed by an expansion of the Athabasca River.

¹⁸⁷The brigade encamped on the 'left or north bank' of the Miette River, which flows into the Athabasca from the west. Henry's House was built about 1812 by William Henry, David Thompson's clerk and a cousin of Alexander Henry (the Younger). It was located on the east or right bank of the Athabasca River directly opposite the mouth of the Miette River. The site appears as Old Fort Point on modern maps. [Henry, *Manuscript Journals*, p. 642n.]

¹⁸⁸The history of this post is obscure and the identity of 'M^r La Roche' is sketchy. However, on 27 April 1825, two days after crossing Athabasca Pass on his return from the Columbia District, George Simpson and his men 'got to the Mountain House at 6 O'Clock Chief Trader Laroque in charge...' Simpson wrote: 'When M^r Laroque left York last Fall it was determined that he should Winter at Cranberry Lake in the heart of the Mountains but his craft was set fast by Ice in the Athabasca River which rendered it impossible for him to get beyond this place.' This is probably the post to which Aemilius Simpson was referring. Frederick Merk, editor of George Simpson's journal of that journey, identifies the trader in charge as Joseph Larocque [Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, pp.146–7]. For Joseph Larocque see biographical sketch, p. 94.

Carbonate of lime. The Strata very confused in some instances almost perpendicular from that to a Declination of 45° Dipping to the SW.

Daily remarks: Fine and clear Weather. Embarked at 5 AM and continued our ascent of the Athabasca. On having done so for a few miles we Entered a small Lake which was so shallow that we had considerable difficulty in finding a passage through it & had to make a Portage over some sand Banks, which detained us considerably. The proper channel lys [lies] along the Mountains on our right. As we open new Valleys additional ranges of Mountains present themselves far exceeding in height those we have already passed or in our immediate neighbourhood, one particularly to the South covered with Snow down a great distance from its Summit. At 2 PM we met two Men who were proceeding for Jaspers House with an express from the West side of the Mountain Portage. As it was now unnecessary for them to proceed, their communication being directed to the gentleman in charge of our Brigade,¹⁸⁹ they Embarked with us. At 6.15 PM we arrived at the Encampment from which we were to commence our Land Journey across the Mountain, and the point of seperation from the Brigade for New Caledonia.¹⁹⁰ The Weather throughout the day was fine with cold & strong gusts of Wind issuing from the Deep Gullies or Valleys. I observed as we approached our Encampment the Pine became limited to one kind, the Scrub Pine or *Pinus Banksiana*¹⁹¹ — thinly scatered [*sic*] over a Meadow face of country, forming a narrow strip along the Base of the Mountains.

Monday 9th.

Accompanying remarks: Our Encampment nearly opposite Henrys old Post, that being on the South side of the River. Our Encamp^t on the North is by My Observations in Latitude 52°53'10"N. Longitude by Chronometer by rate last assumed 117°54'46" West. Variation 22° East^{ly}. A Meadow strip affording a tolerable Base I took Angles for Measuring the height of the Mountain to the South before mentioned. It bore South from the Encamp^t has rather a Peaked Summit. I do not presume to offer the result as more than an approximation — but the nearest I could make under existing Circumstances — the result above its apparent Base was 5890 feet.¹⁹²

Daily remarks: Fine and clear Weather. At Noon our Land party & Horses arrived bringing with them a supply of Moose Deer Meat & Mountain Sheep.¹⁹³ The latter is very good meat, much resembling in taste & flavour the highland Mutton. There is a singular peculiarity in the Wool of these Animals, in fact it does not seem entitled to that appellation [*sic*], as it resembles more the skin of a Deer than that of a sheep. But in all other respects it resembles the Sheep. It is equilly singular that the Goat of the Mountains¹⁹⁴ has a Wool resembling our sheep, tho' it does not resemble it in any other way. This day has been occupied in making arrangements for our Journey across the Portage & the separation of the Brigades for the Colombia & New Caledonia, the latter pursue a route that has hitherto been passed by few. Report says it is a good one which leads them to the Head Waters of Frasers River.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹James McMillan.

¹⁹⁰At this point the brigade was at the eastern entrance to the Yellowhead Pass, near the modern town of Jasper, Alberta. The New Caledonia District, named because of its resemblance to the Highlands of Scotland, encompassed the territory of north central British Columbia. [Gibson, *The Lifeline of the Oregon Country*, p. 3.]

¹⁹¹*Pinus banksiana* — jack pine.

¹⁹²Mount Edith Cavell, elevation 11,047 feet, rises 7,400 feet above the valley of the Athabasca River and lies 14 miles south of their encampment.

¹⁹³Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis canadensis*).

¹⁹⁴Mountain goat (*Oreamnus americanus*).

¹⁹⁵Over the Yellowhead Pass and down to Tête Jaune Cache on the Fraser River. This is the route followed by the CN Railway and the Yellowhead Highway.

Tuesday 10th.

Courses and Distance: South^{ly} about 12 Miles.

Our Encampment is called the Buffaloe Encampment.¹⁹⁶

Accompanying remarks: Considering the country, our road has been good along our Days Track, there being good footing for our Horses, no obstruction from fallen burnt Wood, and the ascents generally gentle. We Encamp^t in a Valley extending for several Miles & bounded by immense Mountains, having a flat & Meadow surface with a small stream Meandering thro' it.

Daily remarks: A Sharp frost during the night, with fine and clear Weather. Thermometer in the Morning at the freezing Point. The luggage and Horses having been sent across the River to Henry's Plain, we wished our friends Mess^{rs} MacGillivray & MacDougal, & the rest of the Brigade for New Caledonia a farewell & Commenced our Journey across the Portage at 10 AM. Our party consisting of Mess^{rs} MacMillan, Birnie, Barnston, Sinclair, Drummond & myself with twenty five Men and boys, having nineteen Horses to convey the Luggage and passengers. We continued our Journey untill 2 PM, when we Encamp^t in a small plain extending from base to base of the bounding Mountains, with a small stream Meandering thro' it. It is named the Buffaloe Encampment. Our route has been by a tolerably good Track the path thro' the Woods being clear with a good hard footing for our Horses, & no precipices of great importance. The Weather during the day was pleasant.

Wednesday 11th. 6 AM Marched.

Courses and Distance:

SE ^{ly}	5 miles
Winding to the West	4
& SW	<u>9</u>
Days Distance	18 miles

Encamp^t upon the Banks of the SW branch named the Moose Encamp^t situated between two immense Mountains whose summits are cloathed with snow.

A Meridian Altitude of the Moon made the Latitude 52°6'

Accompanying remarks: On our days Track we crossed two Rivers, the first a continuation of the branch of the Athabasca, which we ascended in our Canoes, its course here from the SE. The second is also a branch of the Athabasca but a Smaller one. It flows from the SW. It is a narrow but rapid stream. A short distance above where we crossed it, it has its course thro' a Deep ravine. The Scenery after crossing the last branch becomes very grand, Winding along the Bases of these tremendous Mountains, and from the eminences or steep cliffs overhanging the River, they peep down upon it forcing its way thro' these awful Chasms with irresistible force, and the deep Gloom cast over the Scene by the surrounding Forest forms one of those Wild pictures that is calculated to please the romantic Mind. Our Encamp^t is situated on a Battur thro' which the River has its course & which has now become a small and turbid stream. We are bounded by huge Mountains on every hand.

Daily remarks: Commenced with hail & rain showers in the Valley. Snow on the Mountains. At 6 AM we resumed our Journey. At 8 we arrived on the Banks of the Athabasca, where we

¹⁹⁶Prairie de la Vache on the right bank of the Athabasca River and opposite the mouths of the Astoria and Whirlpool rivers, about ten miles south of today's town of Jasper, Alberta. Its name was derived 'in consequence of buffalo having been formerly killed in it,' and 'it forms a landscape that for rural beauty cannot be excelled in any country.' [Cox, *Columbia River*, p. 287.]

waited the Arrival of a Canoe that had been dispatched from Henry's House for the purpose of crossing our Luggage &c. That being completed at 11 we pursued our Journey, our route leading thro' a flat and Woody face of Country with a great quantity of burnt Wood strewed over its surface for about five Miles when we arrived at another branch of the Athabasca, a narrow but deep and rapid stream, which we forded with some difficulty. From here we continued our Track leading along the Banks of this Stream principally.¹⁹⁷ We occasionally ascend pretty steep Eminences & pass thro' Thick Woods, intersected by swamps or Mosses into which the poor Horses sink with their loads and costs a great deal of labour to extricate the poor Animals from their disagreeable situation. Having come about 18 Miles we Encamp at the Moose Deer Encampment,¹⁹⁸ situated on a flat or Battur through which the River has its course, bounded by immense Mountains whose summits appear almost Vertical to us. The Evening was fine.

Thursday 12th. 6 AM marched.

Courses and Distances:

Our Track Winding to the SW.

20 miles

Thermometer 40°

Accompanying remarks: Our Track has been along the course of the River, Winding from the SW. At 8 AM we Crossed a small River — the Moose Deer — at its junction with the branch of the Athabasca. It flows from the West & NW & has a very turbid colour. Our Track has been bounded on both sides by a succession of stupendous Mountains with perpendicular faces & snow cap'd summits. They are quite inaccessible except to Animals of the feathered Tribe I should suppose, but I am told goats ascend them almost to their summits by the clefts & chasms that occur. I observe that trees do not grow at a greater elevation than about one third from their bases where the sterile face of Rock presents itself to their Summits. Along the Surfaces of the Woody parts you see Tracks that have been swept clear of Trees by the impetuous force of the Avalanches in the Spring. It is evident the Waters must be very high in these defiles on the Melting of the Mountain Snows, as you see drift Timber piled along the face of the Hills for a considerable height.

Daily remarks: Cold Weather with occasional Showers of hail and rain. We commenced our March at daylight and continued travelling untill 3 PM, having come a distance of 20 Miles in a Winding course to the SW, ascending & descending high cliffs alternately, over one of which a horse fell and the poor animal was so much injured that it was deemed necessary to kill him, an expedient that was not at all disagreeable to our Voyageurs, his flesh being deemed by them a good and seasonable supply of food. The River has now dwindled away to a petty stream, its course very much through flats or Batturs confined by stupendous Mountains. In some places again it forces its way thru' ravines and Clefts of Rock. The Geological formation of the Mountains continues the same quality of lime stone, the Strata generally dipping [*sic*] to the SW, with an angle of about 45 degrees. I observed Boulders of Quartz strewed over the Batturs. We passed immense glaciers of Ice that appear from the earliest time to have resisted the power of the Sun and are now as compact as the Mountains that enclose them. They impart a frigidity to the surrounding atmosphere and cast a cheerless aspect over the Scene that is by no means agreeable to the passing traveller, however much they may excite his Curiosity.

¹⁹⁷At this point the brigade left the Athabasca River Valley and began to ascend the valley of the Whirlpool River, which originates at the Athabasca Pass about thirty miles to the southwest.

¹⁹⁸Called Campement d'Original by Edward Ermatinger and Lower Moose Encampment by Sir James Douglas, it was two day's march from the summit of Athabasca Pass, and a popular stopping place for travellers crossing the Continental Divide. [Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express', pp. 81, 109; Douglas, 'Journal', pp. 11, 38.]

Friday 13th 6.30 AM Marched.

Courses and Distance:

SW^{ly} about 6 Miles which brought us to the Committees Punch Bowl,¹⁹⁹ then winding to the SW 4 when we commenced our decent of the Grand Coté²⁰⁰ a big Hill, which occupied us 2 hours & 10 minutes, sometimes decending by almost perpendicular paths & occassionally Winding along the ridges of precipices. The Whole Distance about 5 miles. On gaining the foot of the Hill, we enter a Battur extending to the base of a bounding ridge of Mountains & through which the Waters of the Columbia take their course flowing by numerous channels that intersect this flat & obliges the traveller to take several fords. We proceeded 3 miles when we Encamp^t at 3 PM opposite the Junction of a stream with the one we followed — called the Encamp^t of the Big Hill.

Days Distance

18 miles

Accompanying remarks: On Commencing our March, our Track led thro' a narrow defile with a gradual ascent for about 6 miles, when we arrived at the Committees Punch Bowl, which forms an interlockage of two of the sources of the Athabasca and Colombia Rivers. At present it forms but a trifling sheet of Water in the form of an oblong Circle & is shallow, its bottom being quite Visible over its whole extent & the Streams runing from it on either side are mere brooks meandering through a Swampy Channel. The Weather prevented my obtaining an observation on the Spot, but by account I make its Latitude about 52°20'N. The Country about here which is the extreme point of elevation on our line of route is swampy & may be termed level to the base of the bounding Mountains, which approach very closely here, leaving only a very narrow defile cloathed with a growth of Scrub Pines, and among the plants I observed the heather such as I have seen on the Hills of Scotland, altho' I had frequently heard that this Continent does not produce that plant.²⁰¹ About 3 to 4 Miles beyond the Punch Bowl we commenced our decent of the Grand Coté a big Hill which is certainly a most arduous undertaking more particularly for loaded Horses, its face being in many places a complete precipice and was it not that our path follows an oblique direction it would not be possible to make the decent. I estimate the decending distance to be about 5 Miles which occupied us two hours & ten Minutes. On arriving at the foot of the Hill you come upon an extensive flat or Battur, altho' of no great breadth being bounded by ridges of Mountain on each side. The River which has now become a rapid stream follows its course in a very Winding direction thro' this flat, receiving many tributary streams that intersect this flat and obliges the traveller to make his way across them by rapid Fords.

Daily remarks: The Weather commenced cold with Snow. Thermometer 32° On decending the Big Hill some distance it turned to rain & on arriving at its bottom the Weather became warm and fine, comparatively. We commenced our March at 6.30 AM, & having come thro' a defile over ground intersected by swamps and small Streams or Brooks & bearing a stunted

¹⁹⁹Two small tarns at the summit of Athabasca Pass are known collectively as The Committee's Punch Bowl. When Governor George Simpson crossed the pass on 17 October 1824 on his way to Fort George he named it in honour of the London Committee of the HBC. 'At the very top of the pass or height of Land,' he wrote, 'is a small circular Lake or Basin of Water which empties itself in opposite directions and may be said to be the source of the Columbia & Athabasca Rivers as it bestows its favours on both these prodigious streams. . . . That this basin should send its Waters to each side of the Continent and give birth to two of the principal Rivers in North America is no less strange than true . . . and the circumstance appearing remarkable I thought it should be honored by a distinguishing title and it was forthwith named the 'Committee's Punch Bowl.' [Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, p. 34.]

²⁰⁰The western slope of the Continental Divide.

²⁰¹White Heather (*Cassiope mertensiana*), which is common above the timber line. [Clark, *Wild Flowers*, pp. 369, 382.]

growth of Pines, we arrived at the Committees Punch Bowl, which forms the scourse [*sic*] of two Small Streams runing in opposite directions, one to the West being one of the Sources of the Colombia River, the other to the East forming one of the Sources of the Athabasca. At present this is only a small & nearly circular Sheet of Water, having no great depth, but at certain seasons it forms a considerable reservoir. About a League beyond here we commenced our decent of the Grand Coté a precipice of enormous Magnitude & which forms a very serious obstacle on the line of communication, and it is only necessity or an arduous spirit of Enterprize [*sic*] that could have first induced Man to make it a thorough fare. It has almost a perpendicular decent of about five Miles and occupied us two hours and ten Minutes. On arriving at its foot and looking back upon the immense Mountain that you have just decended you cannot avoid feeling some degree of amazement at the feat you have performed and the idea forms itself upon the Mind that this is by no means an agreeable barrier between seperated [*sic*] friends. How the poor Horses with their loads succeeded in geting down this immense Hill is most extraordinary. As you descend the Mountain the face of the country assumes quite a new character. The productions now become very different and you are struck with the enormous size of the Trees which cover the face of the Country. I measured one on the face of the Hill whose girth was sixteen feet, and it did not surpass in size many in its immediate neighbourhood, their height in proportion. This was a Pine which with Cedar constitutes the Forest. There is a great variety of Shrubs forming a Thick undergrowth, which yielded M^r Drummond a number of new & valuable acquisitions. The Geological character also changes, altho' the dense covering of Wood & Shrubs hides the face of the Country too much to afford a general view. Yet the few specimens I could collect consisted entirely of Quartz, Mica in great abundance, Felspar &c. From the foot of the Hill we pursued our route along a Battur for about 3 to 4 Miles, when we Encampt, having come a distance of about 18 Miles over the most difficult & extraordinary road I certainly ever travelled.

Saturday 14th : 6.30 AM Marched.

Courses and Distance

A continuation of the Battur.

SW ^{ly}	5 miles
Then through a point of Wood	6
Along a Battur Winding to the SW	<u>7</u>
Days Distance	18 miles
2 PM Encampt at the Beaver Encampt	

Accompanying remarks: Our Course has been Winding to the SW which is the direction of the Valley thro' which our route lay.²⁰² On passing thro' the Woods our course is necessarily [*sic*] devious. We are bounded on each side by ridges of Mountain whose elevations are now becoming comparatively low to those taking their rise from the height of land and are clothed with Forest to their very summits.

Daily remarks: Commenced gloomy with rain. Thermometer 34° in the Morning. We continued our Journey at 6.30 AM & proceeded along a Battur intersected by various branches of the River, which obliges us to Cross a number of them. On coming to the foot of this Battur we entered a Wood thro' which the Track is particularly bad from the great quantity of fallen Trees, some of an enormous size lying across the path. In other places there are Bogs into which the Horses frequently sink. The Ascent is trifling however. On geting thro' this Wood we arrived on another Battur extending about 6 Miles. The streams begin to increase considerably in size, rendering the Fords more difficult. At 2 PM we Encampt, our

²⁰²The brigade was descending the valley of the Wood River, a tributary of the Columbia.

foot Travellers and Horses having had a very fatiguing days March. In the Afternoon the Weather was fine with warm blinks occassionally.

Sunday 15th.

Courses and Distance:

Along a Battur for about	2 miles
Through a Point of Woods	6
Through Swamps & a Short Point of Wood	3
when we arrived at Boat Encampment ²⁰³	_____
Days Distance	11 miles
Making the Travelling distance across the	
Portage by Estimation 97 miles.	
The direct Distance 49 miles & bearing	
S 20° W.	
From York Factory the estimated	
Distance is 1938 miles.	

Accompanying remarks: Our route laying thro' Woods & Swamps has made our course necessarily very Winding, but tending to the SW. Having travelled about 11 Miles we arrived at the Boat Encampment, situated on the left Bank of the branch which we followed on our route and at the Junction of three Branches of the Columbia, one coming from the North: (the Canoe River), the one we followed from the NE & the other from the SE, leading to the Kootanei Country & Saskatchewan Portage which is the most considerable of the three. My Observations place the Boat Encampment in Latitude 52°07'09"N. Longitude by Chronometer 118°22'30"W. Our Encampment is surrounded by snow cap'd Hills, but the nearest & lowest ridges are Wooded to their summits. They are of primitive formation.

Daily remarks: Rain during the night. At daylight we continued our Journey & passing over a Battur, when we forded several considerable Branches of the River, a distance of about 2 Miles. We then entered a Wood, the point having a considerable elevation & affording a very indifferent Track from the quantity of fallen Timber Strewed over it. But the path affords good firm footing for the Horses. On geting out of the Wood, we arrived at a Marsh or Swamp of considerable extent covered with long grass & reeds, & having with difficulty passed through it, we came to a short Point of Wood & then to the Boat Encampment at 10 AM, terminating our Journey across the Rocky Mountain Portage. Here the Water communication commences again, which is certainly an agreeable Change in our Mode of travelling. We found M^r Dease²⁰⁴ & M^r Finnan MacDonald²⁰⁵ here, & a few return servants & familys [*sic*] on their way across the Mountain, who were waiting our Arrival so as to return with our Horses to the other side of the Mountains. The Weather during the day was fine.

²⁰³The junction of the Wood, Canoe, and Columbia rivers located at the northern bend of the Columbia. Boat Encampment is now submerged beneath the head pond of the Mica Dam.

²⁰⁴John Warren Dease. See biographical sketch, p. 92.

²⁰⁵Finan MacDonald. See biographical sketch, p. 96.

Boat Encampment to Fort Vancouver

Monday 16th. The Courses Entered in my decent of the Colombia are corrected for Variation.

Courses and Distance:

Winding between South & SW	28 miles
Run the Crooked Rapids very Winding between South & ESE	12
Days Distance	40 miles

Accompanying remarks: The River after the Junction of the Three Branches at the Boat Encampment becomes a fine stream.²⁰⁶ The body of Water is very considerable with a great Strength of Current with several rapids. The Crooked one which we ran in the afternoon the worst considering it is formed by a sudden bend of the River to the SE and large Masses of Rock, which renders them very dangerous. A number of tributary Streams fell in from the different ravines as we pass along. The Breadth of the River is about 100 to 150 Yards, its banks generally Rocky and bounded by immense Mountains on both Sides.

Daily remarks: Rain during the Night the Morning Foggy. Our Crews were Employed during the early part of the day arranging our Boats and preparing for our voyage down the Colombia River. Noon fine. Thermometer 63° F. Our Arrangements being completed, we wished M^r Finnan MacDonald & those bound across the Mountain farewell and Embarked at a quarter past noon and Commenced our Decent of the Colombia, our party being Embarked in three Boats (constructed in imitation of Canoes) including M^r Dease's and consisting of about 33 hands. We now proceed on our Journey with great rapidity, decending the Stream at about 7 to 8 miles p^r Hour. In some parts along the Banks a low margin of land extends to the Base of the bounding ridges of Mountain, but generally it is confined by Rocky Cliffs of primitive formation, some of them composed of a similar lime stone with that which constitutes the Main Mass of the Mountains. The face of the Country is richly Cloathed with Wood of a very great growth, principally the Pine & Cedar Tribes.

Tuesday 17th.

Courses and Distance:

Winding between ESE & SSE	9 miles
Run the Dalles de Mort, or Upper Dalles, ²⁰⁷ a very strong Rapid	
Winding to the SE	9
ESE & South	28
Run the Second Dalles Rapids a narrow & long shoot confined by High Rocky Cliffs	
SW	3½

²⁰⁶The Columbia River originates in a lake of the same name in southeastern British Columbia, flows northwesterly and makes a bend (popularly known as the Big Bend of the Columbia) of almost 180 degrees around the northern extremity of the Selkirk Mountain Range. It passes through the Upper and Lower Arrow lakes, crosses the forty-ninth parallel and then pursues a course to the west and south. It flows into the Pacific Ocean near today's town of Astoria, Oregon – the location of Fort Astoria, founded by the Pacific Fur Company in 1811. Today, the river is an important source of irrigation and hydroelectric power, but the numerous dams, both on the Columbia as well as its tributaries, have greatly altered the flow, and it now bears little resemblance to the current and rapids described by Simpson.

²⁰⁷Dalles des Morts, about 43 miles upstream from the present-day town of Revelstoke, B.C., were named after a party of eight employees of the NWC who lost their canoe and provisions there in late May or early June of 1817. As the weaker members succumbed to starvation and exhaustion the remainder survived by cannibalism. Only one man, La Pierre, lived to tell the tale; he was rescued by Natives at Upper Arrow Lake and taken to Fort Colville at Kettle Falls. A detailed account of the tragedy can be found in Ross Cox's account of his travels. [Cox, *Columbia River*, pp. 278–9.]

Very Winding to the SE	<u>29</u>
Days Distance	78½
Entered the Upper Lake & Encampt at its Head 6 PM.	

Accompanying remarks: By our days Track the course of the River has been to the SE principally. We ran several Rapids, the Most considerable the Dalles. There are a number of tributary Streams falling in, some of considerable size. The Scenery continues much the Same as that passed yesterday but that we pass occasional Cliffs of Gravel with a Mixture of Sand. The bounding ridges of Hill are rather more distant from the Banks. The Main Mass of Mountains are evidently less elevated as we descend.

Daily remarks: The Morning Hazy. At 7 AM we run the Upper Dalles Rapids, a very grand shoot, the runing of which is attended with considerable danger and requires great Skill on the part of the Steersmen & Bowsmen [*sic*]. The passengers & paper chest²⁰⁸ are landed at the head of the Rapids a very proper precaution. One of our Boats struck a stone in runing the rapids, but fortunately escaped without sustaining any considerable damage. The bounding cliffs present a great variety of curious specimens for the Mineralogist, but the great rapidity with which we passed afforded little time for their collection. Among those which I collected is laminated Kyanite,²⁰⁹ a coarse specimen of the crystal of Quartz of which there is a large Mass, Massive Quartz combined with Mica &c. It cleared up at 9 AM & continued fair with a cold & Sharp Wind during the day. Ther' 50° F at Noon. We saw a few Indians in two very curiously constructed Canoes. In the afternoon we run the 2nd Dalles Rapids our Boats shiping [*sic*] a good deal of Water. The Scenery about these rapids is very fine. At 6 PM we Entered the Upper Lake²¹⁰ & Encampt upon a low flat at its Entrance, Having come about 80 Miles during the day (Map 3).

Wednesday 18th. 2 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Decending the Upper Lake. South ^{ly}	22 miles
South	9
From here after rounding a remarkable Cliff we turn to SSE & the Lake contracts	
SSE	15
The Lake becomes quite narrow & bends to the SW.	4
Then reentered the River Winding South.	<u>3</u>
Days Distance	53 miles

Accompanying remarks: Our Days Track has been through a Lake which I estimate about 50 Miles nearly North & South, its average breadth about 3 Miles, about its Middle rather broader. It is generally bounded by Rocky Shores & its depth appears considerable. The bounding ridges of Hill or Mountains are barren & of primitive formation. The Trees have a Stunt'd growth comparatively to those above. The Mountains are diminishing in height, yet the highest are cap'd with Snow.

Daily remarks: Commenced with rain, which continued untill 8 AM, Accompanied with a Strong Breeze from the SW, retarding our progress greatly. One of our Boats having fallen out of sight astern we waited her arrival. We passed a few of the Lake Indians who were

²⁰⁸A cassette containing account books, correspondence, despatches.

²⁰⁹Cyanite, blue or green crystals of Aluminium silicate.

²¹⁰Upper Arrow Lake.

engaged in fishing salmon, the Most Miserable looking fish I ever beheld, being in the last Stage of existence. After having continued their ascent from the Sea this great distance they become so reduced that they hardly bear any resemblance to what they were & must prove but an indifferent article of food, but it is what these poor people principally depend upon for their Subsistence, and the consequence is they [are] as miserable like as their food. Their Mode of fishing is with a Spear. A Man stands erect in a small Canoe with his spear in readiness and on seeing a fish runing along the bottom in the Shallow Water he immediately darts it at the fish. And they are so expert that they seldom Miss. Noon fine, but Sharp & Cold. Ther^r 50°F. At 4.30 PM we completed our decent of the Lake when we reentered the River, but one Boat having again fallen in the rear, we Ecamp^t for the Night so as to allow her [to] come up before dark.

Thursday 19th. 4 AM Embarked.

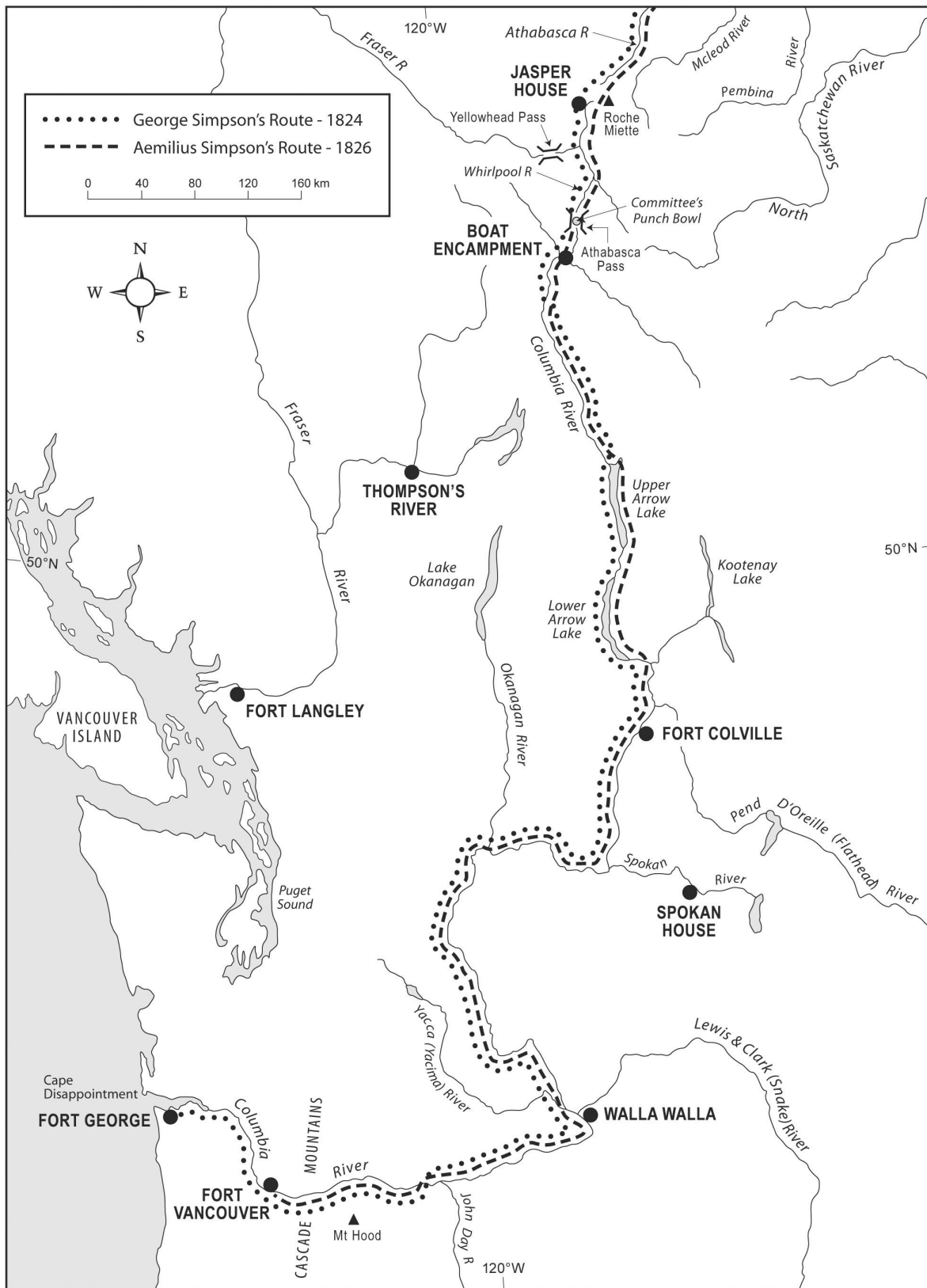
Courses and Distance:

Decending the River SSW	16 miles
Entered the Arrow Lake ²¹¹ SW ^{ly}	9
SbW	13
SbE	6
SSE	6
Passed the Arrow Rock, turned between SE & ESE	<u>12</u>
Days Distance	62 Miles

Accompanying remarks: The communication between the Lakes is a continuation of River for about 6 Leagues. On Entering the Arrow Lake, it runs to the SW and gradually turns to the SSE & on passing the Arrow Rock, a remarkable cliff on the left, it turns to the ESE & SE. The Arrow Rock, so named on Account of a round Hole in its face full of Arrows, said to have been fired at it by Indians when practicing the Bow and Arrow before a War excursion. This Lake is generally narrower than the Upper one, not exceeding two Miles in breadth, except at its Middle when it expands to about 4. Its Shores frequently presents a low Sandy beach but generally bounded by Cliffs and Hills. The High Mountains have now Disappeared, tho' the bounding Hills have a considerable elevation & are densely Wooded.

Daily remarks: The Morning Hazy. At 4 AM we Embarked when we decended the River for 5 Leagues and then Entered the Arrow Lake, Which we continued to decend for the remainder of the day. Noon fine but Cloudy. Thermometer 57°. In the Afternoon we had a favourable Breeze from the NE, to which we spread our Oil Cloath [*sic*] and assisted us a good deal. This Lake is generally very narrow for so extensive a Sheet of Water, seldom exceeding two Miles. The Water of this Lake has a Sea green colour, from which I would infer that it has a great depth. On Entering this lake your course is to the SW, from which it gradually turns to the ESE. At 6 PM we Encamp^t having travelled fourteen hours & coming a distance of about 20 Leagues.

²¹¹Lower Arrow Lake.



Map 3. Jasper to Fort Vancouver.

Friday 20th. 3.40 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Decending the Remainder of the Arrow Lake,
ESE to East 14 miles

Reentered the River which turns to the South,
run a rapid & passed the
Junction of MacGillivrays River.²¹²

Winding to the SSW 12

Very Winding to the SE 9

S° & SW 6

Passed the Junction of the Flat Head
River coming from the East^d

At its Mouth a considerable Rapid.²¹³

Winding to the SW 7

Passed the Junction of the Mutton Blanche
or White Sheep River ²¹⁴
coming from the NW.

SW^{ly} 9

Run the Dalles Rapids above the Kettle Falls

Very Winding to the SW 9

A bend between East & SE 4½

WbS 3½

A Small stream falling in from the North.

SSE 1½

Arrived at Fort Colville²¹⁵

Days Distance

75½ Miles

Making the estimated Distance from the
Boat Encampment 309 miles
and from York Factory 2245 miles.

The Direct Distance from the Boat Encamp^t
S 3°46'E 210 Miles.

Accompanying remarks: On Embarking we continued our decent of the Arrow Lake for about 14 Miles when we reentered the River, and continuing its decent in a Very Winding Course between East & West we arrived at the Kettle Falls. Along our Track it received the addition of three very large streams, viz. MacGillivrays, Flathead & Mutton Blanche, the last comparatively small, these extensive supplys rendering it a grand stream. But the principal change is in the depth & force there being little apparent change in the breadth. Its course is obstructed by numerous rapids. The face of the Country has undergone a great change, the bounding ridges of Hill present in many places Tracks of Meadow Land & even those parts

²¹²Kootenay River.

²¹³It is now called the Pend D'Oreille River. The 'considerable rapid' at its mouth was a waterfall of 10 or 15 feet, which is now the site of a hydroelectric plant. [Harris and Anderson, *Letters from the 49th Parallel*, p. 169.]

²¹⁴Probably Big Sheep Creek, about 7 miles south of the International Boundary.

²¹⁵The site for Fort Colville was chosen by George Simpson in 1825 as a replacement for Spokane House and because of its rich agricultural potential. It was built by John Work of the HBC in 1825–6 immediately above Kettle Falls and about twenty-two miles south of the present Canada - United States border. The site was flooded in 1941 on completion of the Grand Coulee Dam about 120 miles downstream. [Morton, *Canadian West*, pp. 719, 740; McDonald. *This Blessed Wilderness*, p. 16n.]

Sunday 22nd. 9.45 AM Embarked at the foot of the Kettle Falls.

Courses and Distance:

South ^{ly}	5 miles
Arrived at the Grand Rapids.	
Sw ^{ly}	4
Between SE and South	16½
South & SW	6
S ^o to SE	4½
WNW	2
SSE	6
West ^{ly}	6
SW	2
SE	<u>2</u>
Days Distance	<u>54 miles</u>

Accompanying remarks: Having made the Kettle Falls Portage, which is about ½ a Mile over a considerable Hill, we Embarked & continued our Decent of the Colombia. On doing so for about 5 Miles, we arrived at the Grand Rapids, where we make a Portage of the goods over a Cliff or Point of Rock on the left Bank of about 300 yards. The Boats run the rapids. On leaving this Portage we continued our decent at a very rapid rate occasionally runing strong Rapids, our Course very Winding between SE & WSW True. The Banks of the River are generally low with gravel beaches, but in some places Rocky Points & Cliffs project to the River. The Bounding Country is composed of undulating Hills partially Wooded with fine Meadow Surfaces affording fine pasture for domestic Animals were they introduced to this part of the World.

Daily remarks: Thick Fog in the Morning. The Boats and Cargoes having been transported across the Portage to the foot of the falls, we Embarked at 9.45 AM & continued our decent of the Colombia. The Kettle Falls are formed by Shelving Masses of Rock extending across the Bed of the River. The higher Shelf forms a fall of about fifteen feet, and the second shelf forms another of about eight feet. The Scenery about the falls is very grand, the rug'd & projecting Cliffs hanging in fantastic forms over this awful clash of the Water, which from the channels being contracted by these projecting Cliffs the Stream urges its way through with such accumulated force that its surface forms immense Whirlpools. On the left of the falls is an eminence on whose summit you see a great number of the burial places of the Natives curiously grouped, its face forming a precipice Washed by a troubled Stream or branch of the River. The formation of these cliffs I should call granular lime stone, having a Slaty [fracture?] in consequence of its containing parallel layers of Mica. It is very translucent on the edges and is susceptible of a high Polish. The Indians erect stages & have Baskets very ingeniously placed over the falls, by which Means they catch great numbers of Salmon when leaping the falls as they ascend the River. A few miles below these falls are the Grand Rapids, formed by projecting Masses of Rock obstructing the course of the River. As we decend we pass a dense population of Indians Encampt in Mat Huts along the Banks of the River Employed fishing a very bad quality of Salmon. However they smoke them & they with the assistance of roots forms their Sole Subsistence. The Bounding country is picturesque — being sufficiently Wooded for ornament. The Weather during the day was fine & pleasant.

Monday 23rd.

Courses and Distance: South a little

East	8 miles
Run the Spokane Forks Rapids at Junction of that River, when we entered a great bend runing from South by the West to North, terminated by Singular Cliffs of Rock on the right	12
Between West & NW	4
NW to NNE	1½
Run the Stony Island Rapids SW to West	7
Passed the Junction of the San Peul River ²²⁰ SW to West	1
SSE to WNW	3½
WSW to NNW	2
WSW	3
NbE	5
NbW	7
Run a rapid SW to WNW	14
Run two rapids in quick succession South to West	3
Entered the Dalles Rapids above Okanagan Run the Upper Chain	
West to NW	4½
When we Encampt below the first Chain of the Dalles Rapids	—
Days Distance	75½ Miles

Accompanying remarks: By our Days Track the course of the River has been very Winding, between SSE by West round to NNE. We run several rapids of great force & extent, particularly those at the Forks of the Spokane River & the Dalles Rapids. The face of the country now assumes a new character, a number of remarkable cliffs extend along the Banks of the River of quite a different appearance from any we have hitherto passed. They appear in deep Tabular Masses piled above one another forming alternate bases each receding in succession from the lower one to the Summit, and each having a perpendicular face composed of Vertical & columnar ranged Stones, giving their surfaces a fluted appearance that has a very singular effect.²²¹ The colour of these Rocks is generally a dark brown and I think fall under the Class of secondary Trap Rock.²²² The flater [*sic*] parts of the Country presents a steril surface, almost destitute of Trees & a very Miserable herbage. You see singular blocks of Rock strewed over its surface in detached Masses, resembling the Druidical pillars of Stonehenge. On close inspection they appear to be blocks that have resisted from some latent cause the general decomposition that has reduced the neighbouring ground to a sort of soil (which even displays a late origin) as it has little or no depth & produces no vegetable substance scarcely. We passed the Junction of two Rivers, the Spokane a considerable stream, flowing from the East, & San Peul a smaller stream flowing from the North.

²²⁰Sanpoil River.

²²¹Columnar basalt. This is a good description of the landscape of the Columbia River Flood Basalts which cover some 164,000 km² between the Cascade and Rocky Mountains in Southern Washington, Northern Oregon and Eastern Idaho.

²²²Trap rock is a fine-grained, dark-coloured extrusive rock, such as basalt, having a more or less columnar structure. [Jackson, *Glossary of Geology*, p. 676].

Daily remarks: We had a Fog in the Morning, which frequently occurs I observe. We descended about 3 Leagues below our Encampment when we arrived at the Spokane Forks Rapids — a chain of strong rapids. The passengers walk across a point on the right, covered with immense blocks of Rock that appear to have been washed here by the force of the Rapids. The view of the Boats running these rapids with the Wild character of the Scenery, which was much heightened by the Fog, is rather terrific. They dashed down the rapids as if to inevitable destruction and were soon beyond the View of the Spectator, and at the foot of the rapids without having received further injury than Shipping [*sic*] a good deal of Water. The running of rapids is an operation that requires great skill and coolness. Along our days Track the Country presented a very sterile appearance, hardly a Tree to be seen & only a parch'd like grass forming a thin covering over its surface with a confused heap of detached Rocks strewn over it. But the singular appearance is those ridges of Hill intersecting the country curiously arranged in Tabular Masses, one above the other, each base forming a horizontal line, which is distinctly defined as the base of each Tabular Mass recedes towards the Summit of the Hill, their separate faces having ranges of columnar Stones varying in thickness, but generally narrow and in a vertical position terminated by the different horizontal lines above mentioned & the Summits of the Hills being a flat or Table Land. This part of the country certainly indicates very strongly some great Natural Convulsion to have caused its singular formation. And what strengthens the supposition is that a deep channel once evidently the Bed of a River cuts across the country from a few Leagues below the Junction of the Spokane River to some Leagues above the Priests Rapids, which was certainly a more direct route for the River to hold its course than its present one.²²³ We passed a great Number of Indians encamped in the Mat Hovels along the Banks of the River. Clear and pleasant Weather. Thermometer at Noon 59°F.

Tuesday 24th.

<i>Courses and Distance:</i> Run a chain of Rapids, the Lower Dalles between SW and West.	9 miles
A Bend Winding from West to NE	8
Winding between NNW & SW	3
Arrived at Okinagan ²²⁴	—
Days Distance	20 miles

By Estimation the distance from the Kettle Falls is 150 Miles & in a Direct line bears S 63°W. Dist. 68 miles.
The estimated Distance from York Factory is 2396½ Miles.

Accompanying remarks: Our course from the Dalles has been very Winding, one bend running between SW & NE. The distance from the Dalles to Okinagan by Land is comparatively short to what it is by the course of the River. The country is generally similar to that described yesterday, being very sterile intersected by ridges of those curiously formed Hills. The

²²³The Grand Coulee. A dam and powerhouse were constructed at this site between 1933 and 1942.

²²⁴Situated 550 miles above the mouth of the Columbia River, Fort Okanagan was established in 1811 by David Stuart, a partner in the Pacific Fur Company at Fort Astoria. However, with the demise of that concern in 1813, the fort became the property of the NWC and, after 1821, the HBC. In 1814, Gabriel Franchère commented that: 'The site chosen by Mr. Stuart for his post seemed to me very pleasant, the surrounding country being verdant prairie lacking only trees to vary its monotony.' The fort was the southern terminus of the overland portion of the Okanagan trail, linking the Columbia River with the Fraser and Athabasca rivers. (Okanagan is spelled with an 'a' in Canada and an 'o,' i.e. 'Okanogan,' in the United States.) [Franchère, *Journal of a Voyage*, p. 154; Morton, *Canadian West*, pp. 499–501.]

intervening district is generally low or gently undulating. The Post is situated upon a flat extending to a ridge of more elevated ground & upon the left bank of the Okinagan River & right of the Colombia; a flat Margin of Land between the Post & the Colombia is liable to annual floods and is covered with a thick covering of Sand & reeds.

Daily remarks: Fine and clear Weather. Having to run a chain of rapids below our Encamp^t we did not Embark until daylight, when we commenced our run of the Rapids, which form a successive chain for about 8 Miles. Below these rapids the River follows its course in a very Winding direction for about 3½ Leagues, when you arrive at the Junction of the Okinagan River, where we arrived at 9 AM. We found Mess^{rs} Arch^d MacDonald²²⁵ & Artmitinga²²⁶ [*sic*] here, who presented a communication from D^r MacLoughlin²²⁷ directing the Brigade to carry a Supply of Salmon for Walla Walla. But as these fish have not yet arrived from Thomsons River,²²⁸ we will be detained here till then. I employed myself by taking observations for Latitude & Longitude etc. The Weather during the day has been warm, the local situation of this place being calculated to attract [*sic*] heat from the quantity of Sand and Rocky surface of the country. In the Shade the Thermometer was only 58°.

Wednesday 25th.

Accompanying remarks: By my Observations the Latitude of Okinagan is 48°06'08"N. Longitude by Chronometer 119°36'01"W & by a Mean of two sets of Lunar Distances ☉—☽ 119°36'20"W.

Daily remarks: A Frost thro' the night, followed by fine Weather during the day. Notwithstanding the Apparent Sterility of this spot, M^r Armatinga has succeeded in rising [*sic*] Potatoes of an excellent quality, on a more fertile spot some distance from the Fort. On an elevated situation where the soil possesses More Moisture than on the lower ground, he has formed a Garden. Also on the Bank of the Okinagan, immediately alongside his establishment which produces such Culinary roots as he has had it in his power to try in considerable perfection. The pease [*sic*] came on rapidly & the Cabbages & turnips attained a large growth. These efforts are praiseworthy and adds much to the comfort of the individuals, as the Potatoes tends to render the Salmon, which forms the chief article of food, a far more palatable and healthy diet. The Okinagan, the Indians that are about this post, appear pretty numerous, tho' a poor looking people, and apparently very inoffensive, as the Weakness of the Post indicates, there being only a Clerk and one man in charge. The Salmon having arrived this Evening, we will resume our Journey in the Morning.

Thursday 26th. 6 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Very Winding course between SSE & West	20 miles
Passed the Mouth of the Clear Water River coming from the North ^d . ²²⁹	
Rapids.	

²²⁵ Archibald MacDonald. See biographical sketch, p. 95.

²²⁶ 'Armitinga' was either Edward or his brother Francis Ermatinger, both of whom joined the HBC in 1818. The other person at the fort was Clerk Archibald McDonald. See biographical sketches for the Ermatingers, pp. 92-3.

²²⁷ Dr. John McLoughlin, in charge of the Columbia District. See biographical sketch, p. 97.

²²⁸ Thompson's River, also called Fort Kamloops, was founded in 1812 by the Pacific Fur Company at the confluence of the North and South Thompson rivers (the site of present-day Kamloops, B.C.). In 1826 it measured 110 feet square and was manned by about twelve men. Although it provided scant returns of furs, it was an important way station on the Okanagan Trail and a horse herd was maintained to supply the Fraser-Columbia brigades. [Gibson, *Lifeline*, pp. 88-92.]

²²⁹ Now Lake Chelan, the head pond above Chelan Dam.

SSW to West & a short turn to the NW	15
Passed the Junction of the River Point de Bois ²³⁰ falling in from the North ^d .	
SSE to SW	15
SW to South	6
Passed the Pischahoose River ²³¹ falling in from the NW	
Very Winding to the SE	13½
Arrived at the Rocky Island Portage ²³²	
Run the rapids the Portage on the left is	½ mile.
Run the Poquin Rapids.	
SE to South	<u>10</u>
Days Distance	79½

Accompanying remarks: By our Days Track the course of the River has been particularly Winding. We passed the junction of three tributary streams, all falling in from the right, viz. the Clear Water, Point de Bois & Pischahoose Rivers. The Character of the Country continues the same as that described in the remarks of the 23rd, these curiously formed Hills still intersecting the Country.²³³ On opening the extensive Valley thro' which the Pischahoose River has it [*sic*] course, beyond a very extensive flat face of country, the Western view is bounded by by [*sic*] a distant range of Mountains, extending to the North & Westward, I am informed to Pugets Sound & Frasers River.²³⁴ The course of the River has been obstructed by a number of rapids, some strong and dangerous particularly the Rocky Island Rapids, which is generally a Portage, the carrying path along the face of one of those columnar Mountains for about ½ mile, on the left Bank of the River.

Daily remarks: The Morning Showery with Strong Breezes from the South^d but the Weather became fair at 9 AM and continued so during the day. Ther^r at Noon 56°. The face of the Country continues to present the same singular formation. A range of Hill along the River at the Rocky Island Portage seems somewhat different. The face is columnar but a good deal fractured, giving it the appearance of an immense Pile of Cubical Masses. The stone resembles lava, being Vesicular but a close inspection of some of the specimens I picked up discloses a number of minute but brilliant crystals resembling the Cinnamon stone of Ceylon²³⁵ imbedded [*sic*] in a dark brown Mass whose weight would lead you to suppose that it possessed a Metal. On opening the Track of Country thro' which the Pischahoose River runs, an extensive range of Mountains appear to the West extending to the NW.

Friday 27th. 4.30 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Between East & SE	3½ miles
ESE & SSE	14
SSE	6½
SSE to SE	8
Between SE & SW	7

²³⁰Mad River.

²³¹Wenatchee River.

²³²Now the site of Rock Island Dam.

²³³ This is still within the Columbia River Flood Basalt Province, with its characteristic terraced appearance and extensive exposures of columnar basalt

²³⁴ This was Aemilius's first sight of the Cascade Mountains.

²³⁵A light brown variety of garnet composed of calcium, aluminium, silicon, and oxygen.

Entered the Priests Rapids, ²³⁶ a Chain of about 10 Miles. You enter them SW & gradually turn to the SE	10
SE to East	5
From here the country becomes flat	
ESE	3
EbS	3
SE	8
Rounded a point & arrived at a ridge of Sandy Cliffs on the left ²³⁷	
From East to S° rounding an Island	3
SE	3
Between SE & South	<u>24</u>
Days Distance	98 miles ²³⁸

Accompanying remarks: The Priests Rapids are a long Shoot of about 10 Miles, in many places particularly towards their foot they are confined into Narrow Channels formed by perpendicular faced rocks of about 15 feet Elevation, the River forcing its way with great violence thro' several channels of this description. On the right Banks a range of the Columnar [rocks] extends but terminate a short distance below these rapids, when the country on the right becomes flat & Sandy. On Arriving below the Priests Rapids, the River turns to the East & SE forming a curve, gradually turning back to South, flowing thro' a flat Sandy Country, except for a few Leagues where it is bounded by Sandy Cliffs and hills of considerable elevation, from two to three hundred feet. The River expands considerably in & below this great bend being from three to five hundred yards broad.

Daily remarks: Fine and clear Weather, a fresh breeze from the SW. We continue our decent of the River at 4.30 AM, frequently passing ridges of these Columnar faced Hills. At 11 we commenced our run of the Priests Rapids, so called by the Canadian Voyageurs from the circumstance of an old Indian who constantly visits the Boats when passing these rapids, who they think resembles one of that Holy order. Below the rapids the Banks of the River becomes densly lined with Indians of the Ska-moo-namicks, Yac.ca.ma & other Tribes. They constantly importune us for Tobacco, of which they frequently get a Small donation. Many of these Indians are perfectly naked, which is certainly a very disgusting sight to the civilized stranger. They appear to possess no sense of shame for this indelicate exposure, which is a breach of decency that I never Witnessed among savages or Indians of any other Country. Their habitations is merely a few grass Mats placed against a few stakes stuck in the ground, & as they frequently change their situation these dwellings are very portable. Fishing and curing salmon appear their sole occupation. They appear to be have a number of Horses. A number of these Animals are seen grazing in the neighbourhood of their Lodges. These are originally from the Spanish settlements. They do not appear to have any other of the domestic Animals. We continued to travel after dark to avoid the annoyance of being importuned for Tobacco by the Indians, and untill we arrived at a spot where Timber could be procured for our fires, the face of the Country being destitute of Woods. The only supply of that article is the drift Timber strewed along some parts of the Banks of the River. We Encampt at 8 PM.

²³⁶Priest's Rapids were 'named in 1811 by Mr. [David] Stuart and his party on meeting a number of Natives, one of whom mimicked religious ceremonies and the action of sprinkling holy water.' [Franchère, *Journal of a Voyage*, p. 154.]

²³⁷White Bluffs, about 35 miles above the pre present-day town of Richland, Washington.

²³⁸The brigade travelled about 100 miles on this day, the farthest of any day of the entire journey.

Saturday 28th. 4 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Winding to the SE	12
Passed the Junction of the Yaccama River ²³⁹ falling in from the right	
Winding SE ^{ly}	9
Arrived at the Junction of Lewis & Clarks Branch ²⁴⁰	
Winding ESE	6
Winding to SSE	<u>3</u>
Arrived at Walla Walla ²⁴¹	
Days Distance	30 miles
The Distance by estimation from Okinagan is 207½ Miles, & from York Factory 2604 Miles.	
The direct Distance from Okinagan is S 15° E 126 Miles	

Accompanying remarks: On our decent of the River this Morning we passed the confluence of the Yaccama & Lewis & Clarks rivers two large streams particularly the latter, which appears to have a body of Water equal almost to the Main Stream. Immediately below Walla Walla, a small River of the same name emptys [*sic*] itself into the Main Stream, flowing from the Eastward its source in the Blue Mountains seen about 10 Leagues in the Eastern quarter with their Snow Cap'd Summits.

By my Observations I make Latitude of Walla Walla 46°04'37"N. Longitude by Chronometer 18°50'07" West. It is situated on the S^o Bank of the River surrounded by a flat Sandy Country, except a ridge of the Trap Hills some distance below here.

Daily remarks: The Morning Showery. We Embarked at 4 AM. Having decended the River SE about 4 Leagues, we arrived at the confluence of the Yaccama River falling in from the West^d. It is to the confluence of this River they propose removing the Establishment.²⁴² On decending about 3 Leagues further in a SE^{ly} course we arrived at the Junction of Lewis & Clarks branch, the supposed boundary of the United States. At its junction & for a considerable way up it is almost equal in size to the Main Branch. It then Forks, one branch flowing from the South^d thro' the Snake Country, the other from the East^d having its source in the Rocky Mountains.²⁴³ SSE about 9 Miles below this Branch the Post of Walla Walla is situated on the left or S^o Bank of the Columbia, where we arrived at 8 AM. This Post is in

²³⁹Yakima River.

²⁴⁰Snake River.

²⁴¹Fort Walla Walla (also called Fort Nez Percés) was established in 1818 by Donald McKenzie and Alexander Ross of the NWC. It was on the left bank of the Columbia River, 200 miles from its mouth and about ten miles downstream from the confluence of the Columbia and Snake rivers. About one-half mile south of the fort a small river, the Walla Walla, flowed into the Columbia from the east. In 1821 it became the property of the HBC and served primarily as a depot for supplies and horses to outfit trapping parties in the Snake River country and south of the Columbia. The fort was situated in an area of many warlike tribes of Natives and was exceptionally well fortified. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 established the forty-ninth parallel of longitude as the international boundary between Canada and the United States, and Fort Walla Walla was then in American territory. In 1854 the U.S. Department of Indian Affairs prohibited the HBC from trading with the Indians in the United States, and the company abandoned the fort the following year. The site is now beneath the head waters of McNary Dam. [Losey, *Let Them Be Remembered*, pp. 466–73; Voorhis, *Historic Forts*, p. 176.]

²⁴²In 1826 Chief Factor John McLoughlin was considering moving Fort Nez Percés from the mouth of the Walla Walla River, on the left bank, to the opposite side of the Columbia River, where it bends around the Horse Heaven Hills and changes from a southerly to westerly flow. However, he acceded to the wishes of the local Natives and left it where it was. [Morrison, *Outpost*, p. 175.]

²⁴³The 'south^d' branch is the Snake River, which forms part of the boundary between the state of Idaho and Washington and Oregon. The 'east^d' branch, the Clearwater, flows into the Snake River at Lewiston, Idaho.

charge of M^r Black,²⁴⁴ & tho' small is in a good state of defence against Indian attack. It is strongly stockaded & has a bastion on its SW Angle, Mounting a few pieces of Artillery. We found a Number of Indians about this Fort of the Nez Perces, Yaccamas & other tribes. Our Crews carried on a brisk trade of Dogs with them for the purpose of Eating. They consider the flesh of this Animal choice food. Orders having been received to send a supply of Horses to Vancouver by a detachment of hands from our Brigade, the necessary arrangements will detain us here for the day.

Sunday 29th.

Daily remarks: Rainy Weather. Wind NW^{ly}. The forenoon was occupied in sending the Horses across the River, which was a very great exertion for these poor Animals. Some of the younger ones were nearly drowned. 53 Horses and 4 Colts succeeded in crossing, with which Mess^{rs} Birnie & Barnston, with five Men, proceeded for Fort Vancouver. We will resume our Journey in the Morning. The Weather continued rainy during the day.

Monday 30th. 7 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Between SSW & SW	5 Miles
WNW	6
West ^{ly}	6
Run the Grand Rapids	
West ^{ly}	4
Passed the Junction of the	
Uttalla River ²⁴⁵ coming	
from the SE	
West ^{ly}	2
West & WNW	29
Days Distance	52 Miles

Accompanying remarks: From about 2 Leagues below Walla Walla the course of the River turns to the West^d until you arrive at the Head of the Long Island, when by keeping along its South side the course is WSW. This is a low Sandy Island, with numerous Indians Encampment along its Beach. About 6 to 7 Leagues below the Fort are the Grand Rapids a long chain formed by sunken Rocks stretching out into the bed of the River & contracting the Channel. The breadth of the River is now about ½ Mile bounded by a low flat Sandy Country, except that for a few Leagues below Walla Walla there are ridges of the Singular Hills.

Daily remarks: Commenced fair, a Strong Breeze from the SW. At 7 AM we Embarked from Walla Walla and continued our descent of the Colombia. We fell in with the Horse Brigade at our Breakfast Encampment. Noon strong Breezes West^{ly}. Thermometer 57°. The River has expanded considerably being now little short of a Mile. We passed Numerous Indians along the Banks of the River, who importuned us very much for Tobacco. At our Nights Encampment they collected about us in great numbers but conducted themselves peaceably, having got Tobacco to Smoke, of which they are particularly fond.

Tuesday 31st. 5 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Winding to the West ^d , a little South	37 Miles
Passed the Mouth of J ^{no} Day's River ²⁴⁶	
Between WSW & NW	18

²⁴⁴Samuel Black. See biographical sketch, p. 91.

²⁴⁵Umatilla River.

Arrived at the Shoots a portage here of ½ Mile	
About 2 Miles below the Shoots, run the Little Dalles Rapid	2
	3
Entered the large Dalles	2
Winding to the west ^d	<u>10</u>
Days Distance	72 Miles

Accompanying remarks: Our Course today has been Winding to the West^d seldom beyond SW & NW, except in the intricate Channels of the rapids and those formed by Islands of which we passed several. We passed the Junction of John Days River, a considerable Stream falling in from the S^o & East^d. The Shoots Falls is formed by a number of fine cascades decending into a number of Deep Chasms in an extensive Bed of Rock stretching quite across the Bed of the River & in which the Whole body of the River becomes hid from view urging its way with awful force thru' these deep channels untill they again collect in one grand stream at the foot of these foaming Shoots. The Dalles Rapids force their way thru' a number of Crooked Channels bounded by high Masses of Rock in various grotesque forms giving the Scenery a Wild & Singular appearance. They are a succession of strong rapids extending about 2 Leagues and very dangerous in many places. Along our Days Track these columnar formed Hills similar to those about Priests Rapids again made their appearance after having given place to a low Sandy Country for a considerable extent.

Daily remarks: The Morning Gloomy. At 5 AM we Embarked & pursued our route down the Colombia. At 10 it commenced rain which continued during the remainder of the day. At 2 PM we arrived at the Shoots Falls, where we had to make a Portage of our Boats & Luggage for about ½ a Mile across a Rocky Point on the North Shore, which occupied us two hours. We found about 70 Indians Encampt upon this Portage, who conducted themselves very peaceably, tho' [we] were upon our guard so as to resist any aggression. We gave the chiefs some Tobacco to have a smoke, when they ranged their Tribes about and indulged in that luxury, Making a harangue [at?] their people. On leaving the Shore a quantity of Tobacco was thrown among the Crowd, and it was not a little amusing to see the scramble that ensued. About two Miles below the Shoots we came to the Dalles Rapids a long & intricate chain rushing with great force thro' a number of narrow and Crooked Channels, bounded by huge Masses of perpendicular Rock, their faces very much fractured, giving them a number of fantastic outlines. They appeared to me of Basaltic formation. In many places they presented columnar Masses. At 6.30 PM we Encampt about 3 Leagues below the Dalles, when we were visited by a number of Indians, who got the usual donation of Tobacco and behaved themselves peaceably.

²⁴⁶John Day (b.1771) was a Virginian who entered the Columbian fur trade about 1810 and was a member of Astor's overland party in 1811–12. He and a companion became separated from the main party and were robbed of all their possessions, including their clothes, by Natives near the mouth of this river. 'Six feet two inches high, straight as an Indian . . . it was his boast that in his younger days nothing could hurt or daunt him' but he had 'lived too fast' and injured his constitution by excesses.' Some reports claim that he became insane and died at Fort Astoria in 1814; others claim he died in the Snake River country in 1820. [McArthur, *Oregon Geographic Names*, pp. 397–8; Irving, *Works*, pp. 129, 315–7.]

November 1826

Wednesday 1st. 4 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

A short bend North	3 Miles
Winding between NNW & WNW	8
WNW to WSW	6
_____	20
West to SW	6
Arrived at the Cascades ²⁴⁷	_____
Days Distance	43 Miles
We make a Portage here along the base of a Hill on the North Shore the distance about ½ of a Mile	

Accompanying remarks: With the exception of one short bend our average course has been West^{ly}, as we approach the Cascades more to the SW. From below the Dalles the Current has diminished in strength. The Cascades are a chain of strong rapids or falls, presenting a broken & foaming surface from their commencement to their foot. The River forms a sudden bend while following its course forming this chain of Cascades, which adds to their violence. They are bounded on either hand by immense Hills rising with rather an abrupt ascent to an elevation little short of two Thousand feet, bearing a rich covering of Wood, principally of the Pine Tribe. At the Head of the cascades stand a few Small Islands richly Wooded & two Indian villages, these combined objects forming a very picturesque appearance. Along our Days Track the face of the country gradually underwent a change from a low country. As we descend the River becomes skirted by Hills which attain a greater elevation as we continue our decent, untill at the Cascades they are nearly two thousand feet, & from a country free from Wood we arrive in one richly cloathed with Forest.

It is a singular remark made upon the Climate of the Colombia that this spot the Cascades forms a sort of dividing point, that here & below here we have the rainy season in its greatest force while above the Climate is dry nearly the whole year round.

Daily remarks: Commenced with fair Weather a strong Breeze from the NW. We passed some very remarkable cliffs this Morning, their surfaces presenting stupendous Columns, with six regular sides resting upon a base of Blue Rock, the Pillars having rather a brown tinge. They generally only present three of their sides the other three being imbeded in the Inner Mass, but where that has worn down you see the six sided columns distinctly. Resting upon the Summits of these Pillars, which have an elevation of upwards of 100 feet from their base, is a surface of some depth of confused Rock. That is, the Pillars disappear. The Columns are vertically placed & the faces of the cliffs quite perpendicular. I should I think the formation is Basalt.²⁴⁸ The Indians who visit us now differ in their appearance somewhat from those above. Their noses are perforated and have a piece of quill [*sic*] run thro' the hole.²⁴⁹ Their dwellings are Wooden or plank Huts, which appear permanent and must afford a more comfortable residence than the Mat Erections of the Indians above. Their canoes are also supperior [*sic*] in point of construction. In their dress however there appeared no great change

²⁴⁷The Cascades were the last set of rapids on the route where the Columbia River passed through the Cascade Mountains. They marked the upper reach of tidal water, were four and one-half miles long, and dropped about forty feet. The portage, which was on the north bank, varied in length from two to four miles, depending on the level of the water. The Cascades were submerged beneath the waters of the Bonneville Dam. [Gibson, *Lifeline*, pp. 129–31.]

²⁴⁸This is an excellent description of columnar basalt.

²⁴⁹Nez Percés.

for the better, being so scantily cloathed that their nakedness was not hid from view. Noon we had strong Breezes with heavy rain. At 3 PM we Arrived at the Cascades, which is the last Obstruction in the Colombia River. We make a Portage here along the base of a Hill on the North Shore of about ½ Mile. We Encampt for the Night at the foot of the Falls or Cascades, our Crews being Employed during the Evening in transporting the Boats and Luggage. We found but few Indians here, they being down the River I understand at the Salmon fishing. Those we saw are more marked in their appearance, having their heads flattened in a greater degree, a singular habit existing only I believe among the Tribes of Indians along the Colombia. This compression takes place in infancy by the application of bandages and must cause the little sufferer great pain & frequently costs them their lives. To the Stranger these flat Heads have a very singular appearance. This among the Chinooks and other tribes who follow this practice is considered a Mark of distinction. Their Slaves alone, as a Mark of inferiority, are obliged to retain their Heads in their own natural proportion.



Fig. 4. Fort Vancouver ca.1854. Sketch by Lt. Trevenen Coode. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba (P133, neg. N5318).

Thursday 2nd. 6.15 AM Embarked.

Courses and Distance:

Between West & SW 7 Miles
 Passed a remarkable Rock on our right²⁵⁰

WSW 7
 Passed a point of Rocky Cliffs
 WbS 3½
 Rounded a flat Point on our right

²⁵⁰Probably Beacon Rock, the basaltic core of an ancient volcano. Located about 40 miles above Fort Vancouver and 850 feet high, it was named by Lewis and Clark in 1805. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the Corps of Engineers was involved in the construction of a massive jetty at the mouth of the Columbia River. Holes were drilled in Beacon Rock for the purpose of dynamiting it to get rocks for the project. Beacon Rock escaped that fate after Henry Biddle, a private investor, purchased it and donated it to Washington State for a park. [Holloway, et al., *Columbia River Gorge*, p. 31; Dietrich, *Northwest Passage*, p. 115.]

WbN	2½
Passed the Quick Sand River on our left	
Numerous Sands & Shoals in this part of the River	
A Bend	
NW	3
Off Johnsons Island	
[Off?] Broughton	
Several Islands in this part of the River	
The Country becomes low with Lakes within	
the Banks	
WbN	<u>13</u>
Dist	36 Miles
Arrived at Fort Vancouver ²⁵¹ (Fig. 4) at 1.40 PM	

The estimated Distance from
Walla Walla is 203 Miles
And from York Factory the estimated
Distance is 2817 miles
The Direct distance from Walla Walla
is 160 Miles & bearing S 80° West
The Direct Distance from York Factory
is 1323 miles & bearing S 59° W
By my estimation the Distance from
Cape Disappointment is 80 Miles. The
Direct distance is 66 miles, and Bearing S 54° E
From Fort Vancouver the River
becomes Navigable for vessels from
two to three hundred Tons burthen,
but the floods being weak and short a
fair breeze between SW & NW is necessary.
Westerly Winds prevail in the Summer Months
but SE principally during the Winter & rainy Months.
The Bar is a serious obstacle during the Winter Months.²⁵²

²⁵¹In 1813 the NWC purchased Fort Astoria from the Pacific Fur Company. Located on the south shore at the mouth of the Columbia River, it was renamed Fort George and became the central depot of the British fur trade on the Pacific Coast. It became the property of the HBC after the amalgamation in 1821, and the London Committee, anticipating that the territory south of the river would eventually be ceded to the Americans, instructed Chief Factor McLoughlin to find a suitable location for a new establishment on the north side. He and his predecessor, Alexander Kennedy, chose a site one hundred miles upstream. The new fort was named Fort Vancouver, and although Fort George continued to be used, the new fort became the principal HBC establishment in the Columbia District. The move to the new location was completed in 1825, but it was vacated in 1828 in favour of another site about one mile to the west, closer to the river, less subject to flooding, and with a more reliable source of potable water. In 1846, the United States and British governments established the forty-ninth parallel as the boundary dividing the Oregon Territory, and Fort Vancouver was then in American territory. The U.S. Army built Camp Vancouver on the hill north of the fort in 1850, but Fort Vancouver continued to be used by the HBC until 1860. After the company left the buildings quickly deteriorated, and in 1866 they were burned. In 1948, the site was designated a National Monument, and in 1961 it became a National Historic Site. Several buildings and the palisade were rebuilt and exhibits illustrating aspects of the fur trade, daily life at the fort, and early settlement were constructed. It is now a popular educational and tourist attraction in the City of Vancouver, Washington. [Morrison, *Outpost*, pp. 135–56, 475, 478.]

²⁵²A sand bar across the mouth of the river at Cape Disappointment was the site of many shipwrecks, but this danger has been considerably reduced by breakwaters built out from both north and south sides of the river-mouth.

Accompanying remarks: For the first League below the Cascades rapids occur, & the Main Stream is much contracted by a number of Islands which form several channels. The River is bounded by Ridges of Hills, with fine cascades decending from Eminences of some hundred feet. These Hills are richly Wooded with a great variety of the Pine Tribe. On Arriving at the Praire de Tea, or Tea Plains,²⁵³ about 6 Leagues below the Cascades, the bounding country becomes lower & the Banks fringed with Poplar & ash &c. Within the Banks there are several Lakes. The River becomes much broader, with a great number of Sand Banks along its Bed. The flood arrives up this distance²⁵⁴ and the Strength of the current is very much reduced. My Observations place Fort Vancouver in Latitude 45°37'15"N and Longitude by a Mean of a Number of sets of Lunar Distances 122°36'West. Variation 20°Easterly. A new rate obtained for the Chronometer since my arrival here shews a still further accumulation in her daily loss. My Mode of travelling being very much calculated to injure the instrument, but I hope now that she has become stationary she will perform better.

Fort Vancouver is situated upon an elevated Bank, with a low Margin of Meadow land extending about ½ of a Mile between it & the river, which is subject to be flooded during the rise of the River in the Month of June generally — otherwise it might be made very productive. The Country behind is a Thick Forest, but the face of the Bank is finely ornamented with Trees thinly scatered [*sic*] over its surface, which with the extensive Meadow gives it the rich appearance of a Gentlemans Lawn. Along the Banks of the River there is a fringe of Poplars & ash, & also Oak. A short distance below here in the distant view you see Mounts Hood & Jeffrey²⁵⁵ projecting their snow clad Summits & the Columbia flowing majestically, the whole forming a very rich Landscape. It is upon the North side of the River, in the Friendly Reach of Vancouver,²⁵⁶ just above the Menzies Island & about 5 miles above the Belleview Point of Vancouver. It is by my estimation 80 Miles from Cape Disappointment²⁵⁷ & from here is Navigable for vessels of considerable burthen.

Daily remarks: The morning Hazy, with a Fresh Breeze from the NE. We Embarked at 6.15 AM and continued our Decent of the Colombia. For about a League below the Cascades there is a very strong Current with rapids. The River branches of [*sic*] into several channels formed by Islands. For about 6 leagues below the Cascades the River is bounded by a range of High Hills densly Wooded, their faces in some places being perpendicular with pretty cascades decending some hundred feet. We Breakfasted at the Praire de Tea, a few Miles above Johnsons Island. From here the Banks of the River become low & continue so to the Fort. They are fringed with Trees of the poplar & ash principally, but the interior country is covered with Forest of Pine. Within the immediate Banks there are Lakes & Swamps. We passed several Indian Villages situated on the Banks. At 1.40 PM we arrived at Fort Vancouver our place of destination, Having made the Journey from York Factory in three Months and nineteen days, a distance, which I estimate by our route, of Two thousand and eight hundred and seventeen Miles, the Whole of which is by Water communication, except the Assinaboine & Rocky Mountain Portages, which does not exceed two hundred Miles, but still they form the Most Serious Obstacles on the line of route. Our Journey tho' not performed with great Expedition may be justly called good, as during the Whole of it not the smallest accident occured [*sic*] to any of our party, and every thing destined for the different Posts arrived in perfect safety.

²⁵³Prairie du Thé was about 28 miles (approximately 9 leagues) above Fort Vancouver. It derived its name from mint that grew in the area, which was used for tea. [Cox, *Columbia River*, p. 269.]

²⁵⁴In other words the river is tidal up to this point.

²⁵⁵Mount Hood (11,235 feet) is located 40 miles ESE of the Fort Vancouver site. Mount Jefferson (10,497 feet), lies approximately 70 miles SE.

²⁵⁶George Vancouver. See biographical sketch, p. 100.

²⁵⁷At the mouth of the Columbia.

AFTERWORD

Aemilius Simpson and the Northwest Coast, 1826–1831

On 2 November 1826 Aemilius Simpson stepped ashore at Fort Vancouver. For the next five years he was involved in the HBC's efforts to become the dominant trading concern on the Northwest Coast. As a ship's captain he took part in the construction of two new establishments (Fort Langley and Fort Simpson), provided maritime support for a punitive expedition against the Klallams, participated in the coasting trade, and met with the governor of the Russian American Company at New Archangel (Sitka) on behalf of George Simpson. He also performed the duties of a fur trader, transported trade goods and provisions to and from the Spanish territories (California) and the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), and gathered commercial intelligence regarding the functioning of the coastal trade in furs, provisions, and manufactured products.

The HBC had had more than one hundred and fifty years of experience in the fur trade east of the Rocky Mountains, but it was not until after 1821 that the company became actively involved in the trade to the west of the Cordillera.²⁵⁸ They knew very little about conducting a profitable trade on the Pacific littoral, the Sandwich Islands²⁵⁹, and China. Moreover, they wanted to investigate the possibilities of developing a commerce in lumber, salmon, and manufactured products. But before the Company could successfully compete with the American and Russian traders who dominated the trade in the region they needed knowledge about several aspects of doing business on the Northwest Coast: What were the logistics of the Northwest Coast - China trade? What goods were most in demand? What were the media of exchange? What were the prospects for marketing lumber, spars, and salted salmon in California and the Sandwich Islands? Aemilius Simpson played a major role in answering these questions, thereby facilitating the company's entry and eventual dominance of the commerce of the region.

When he was at Fort George in 1824–5 George Simpson had ordered the building of two vessels, one 'of between 50 & 60 tons,' the other 'of about 20 tons.'²⁶⁰ When Aemilius arrived the construction was 'in a considerable state of forwardness . . . but contrary to what [he] expected found [the larger vessel] built for a Schooner instead of a Sloop.' His first task was to supervise the completion of that vessel. As 'the outfits ordered from England were intended for a Sloop,' he 'deemed it necessary in this stage of her progress to give directions to convert her to a sloop.'²⁶¹ The smaller vessel had been completed and was in service on the Columbia River. Also, at some time during that winter he charted the Columbia River from Fort Vancouver to Cape Disappointment, a distance of about one hundred miles. The chart, which has never been found, was forwarded to the London Committee by Chief Factor John McLoughlin on 11 August 1827.²⁶² And as noted above (page 2), Aemilius probably wrote his journal from notes made during his journey across the continent of North America in 1826. It is quite possible he did that during the winter of 1826–7.

²⁵⁸ Although the North West Company had maintained an establishment at Fort George at the mouth of the Columbia River since 1813, they had little to contribute in the way of knowledge regarding the coast trade. Competition from the Bostonians, the East India Company's monopoly of trade at Canton, and the lack of an agreement with the Russians limited their activities in the coast trade. [Morton, *Canadian West*, p. 617.]

²⁵⁹²⁶⁰ Hawaii.

²⁶⁰ HBCA, D.4/11, Letter of George Simpson to J. H. Pelly, 10 November 1825, f. 25r.

²⁶¹ HBCA, B.223/c/1. Letter of Aemilius Simpson to John McLoughlin, 20 March 1827, ff. 5r–6r. The vessels were named the *Vancouver* and *Broughton* respectively. The smaller one was used on the Columbia River, but the *Vancouver* had numerous structural problems and was never used for her intended purpose in the coastal trade.

²⁶² McLoughlin, *Letters*, p. 49.

Not all of his activities were connected with travelling, ships, and the sea; he is credited with being the first person to introduce apples to the Northwest. Eloisa Harvey, the daughter of Chief Factor John McLoughlin, claimed:

There was a gentleman who came from England by Express, and his name was Captain Simpson. . . . He was invited to eat with his friends somewhere before he left home, and somebody gave him eating apples. Somebody said you had better take these seeds, you might go somewhere where you wanted to plant them. He wrapped them up in a paper and put them in his vest pocket; and when he came to Vancouver, and talking about apples he says, 'Here I have got apple seeds in my pocket.' They took them out and planted them. . . . My father used to watch the garden so that no one should touch the tree. At first there was only one apple on, and that everyone must taste. . . it was a great treat, for everybody had just a little slice, There were a good many it had to go round among.²⁶³

On 6 June 1827 Simpson's ship, the schooner *Cadboro*, Master John Swan, arrived at Fort Vancouver,²⁶⁴ and Aemilius assumed command on 13 June. She was not particularly well-suited for the job of working in the coastal fur trade, and Aemilius was not favourably impressed with her performance. On 30 June 1827, when he first sailed her on the open ocean, he wrote in the log: 'With a swell the vessel makes no way. Tho' a good sailing vessel with the better breeze we have had would go 3½ to 4 knots. The [selecting?] of such a vessel must prove the means of defeating any advantage from the coasting trade.'²⁶⁵ Also, while performing some routine repairs it was 'discovered that a few of the Timbers [were] in a state of decay.' A 'more minute examination' revealed that 'all those examined extending the length of her hold were found defective.'²⁶⁶

James McMillan, the first Chief Factor at the new Fort Langley, commented that she was 'very lame in the way of defence to be on such a Coast as this.'²⁶⁷ And George Simpson later noted: 'The *Cadboro* is quite unfit for the Trade, there are hundreds of War Canoes on the Coast longer & higher out of the Water than she is, carrying from 40 to 50 men each.'²⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the *Cadboro* remained Aemilius's ship for most of his career.

To enter the coast trade the Company planned to establish a chain of forts northward from the mouth of the Columbia River. The first was Fort Langley, on the south bank of the Fraser River about thirty miles upstream from its mouth. In November 1824 James McMillan and a party of about forty men explored the region to search for a suitable location. They entered the river on 16 December, the first Europeans on the river since Simon Fraser's epic journey sixteen years earlier, and returned with a favourable report. But it was not until June 1827 that the necessary men and ship were available to proceed with the construction of Fort Langley.

McMillan led an overland expedition from Fort Vancouver and, on 24 June Simpson and his crew left Fort Vancouver on board the *Cadboro*, loaded with the trade goods,

²⁶³ Harvey, 'Biography of Her Father,' pp. 7–9. Quoted in Morrison, *Outpost...*, p. 155. Mrs Harvey's story is corroborated by comments made by Narcissa Whitman, who arrived at Fort Vancouver in 1835, and Hiram Bingham, a missionary in Hawaii.

²⁶⁴The *Cadboro* had been built at Rye, on the southeast coast of England, in 1824 and purchased by the company for £800 in 1826. She was a seventy-one ton single-decked vessel measuring fifty-six feet in length and seventeen feet at mid-beam. The depth of her hold was eight feet and she carried six guns. The *Cadboro* continued to be used until October 1862, when she ran ashore in order to escape a gale, sank, 'and there rested from her labours.' [HBCA, Search File: 'Ships-Cadboro'; Bancroft, *The Works*, vol. 2, pp. 476–7.

²⁶⁵HBCA, Ship's logs, C.1/218, *Cadboro* log, 1826–7, 30 June 1827.

²⁶⁶HBCA D4/121, Letter of Aemilius Simpson to John McLoughlin, 14 November 1827, ff. 17r – 18v.

²⁶⁷Letter of James McMillan to McLoughlin, September 15, 1827, in McLoughlin, *Letters*, p. lxxiii.

²⁶⁸Letter of Governor Simpson to William Smith, 17 November 1828, in Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, p. 301.

equipment, horses, and tools necessary for building the new establishment. They met M^cMillan's party on 11 July waiting their 'arrival on the shores of Whidbys Island at the entrance of Admiralty Inlet.' The combined party then embarked on the *Cadboro* and after some difficulty in finding a safe entry to the river proceeded to the site McMillan had selected, where they arrived on 29 July.²⁶⁹ The *Cadboro* remained there 'until M^r M^cMillan deemed it safe to receive his goods, rendering such assistance and support as he required.' While waiting for the new fort to be built, Simpson carried 'on such repairs and alterations as circumstances would admit, among the most important was the taking in a new Main-mast.'²⁷⁰ On Tuesday, 18 September, 'the *Cadboro* left [in the] early morning under a Salute of three Guns which she returned.' That evening, news arrived back at Fort Langley that the *Cadboro* 'had got safely out of the River.'²⁷¹

After leaving the new fort Simpson took the *Cadboro* northwards on a trading and reconnoitering voyage. She proceeded only as far as Port Neville at the eastern entrance to Johnstone Strait, and while there was 'visited by a few tribes of Indians' who 'furnished very few skins and that at a very dear rate.' During the return voyage to Fort Vancouver a group of five men who had gone ashore to find potable water were attacked by Natives; 'they wounded Peter Calder boy severely,' and seaman Edward Driver 'was killed while making an attempt to retain his arms.' His body 'was recovered in an awfully mutilated state, these monsters having stripped him of every article of clothing, made wounds all over his body and carried away his scalp.' During the melee, the attackers made off with the ship's longboat. The *Cadboro* arrived back at Fort Vancouver on 6 November.²⁷² The skins collected during the voyage, including those from Fort Langley, amounted 'to about 700 in all.'²⁷³ McLoughlin, reporting on the voyage to George Simpson, wrote:

From the short time the *Cadboro* was on the Coast we acquired very little additional knowledge of the Trade, but we have a shocking proof of its hazardous nature and that a Vessel must be strongly manned to insure the safety of the Crew.²⁷⁴

The late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century fur trade was a hazardous and often violent business, but nowhere more so than on the Northwest Coast.

Aemilius Simpson and his crew were not idle for long. He was immediately ordered 'to prepare for sea again . . . and sailed again on the 16th Novb^r.' His destination was the California coast and, if time would permit, the Sandwich Islands. There was a threefold purpose for the voyage: to collect two debts owed to the HBC and to arrange payment of one owed by the Company to the Commandant of the Presidio of Monterey. As well, he was instructed to purchase 'about three hundred Bushels salt, three Hundred Bushels Indian Corn, about thirty Barrels salted provisions, twenty Barrels flour and twenty firkins Butter.'²⁷⁵ And, finally, he was to acquire information about the operation of the coastal fur trade and to determine what products the HBC might profitably sell on the Californian and Hawaiian markets.

²⁶⁹ Simpson is credited with making the first hydrographic chart of the lower Fraser River in 1827; the data for that survey were probably collected during the ascent to the Fort Langley site. See Maclachlan, ed., *The Fort Langley Journals*, pp. 8–9.

²⁷⁰HBCA, D.4/121, Letter of Aemilius Simpson to John McLoughlin, dated *Cadboro*, Fort Cameron, November 1827, ff. 18v–18r.

²⁷¹Maclachlan, *Fort Langley*, pp. 37–8.

²⁷²HBCA, D.4/121, Letter of Aemilius Simpson to John McLoughlin, Fort Cameron, November 1827, ff. 18r–20v.

²⁷³HBCA, D.4/121, Letter of Aemilius Simpson to Secretary William Smith, London, f. 21v.

²⁷⁴McLoughlin, *Letters*, p. lxxii.

²⁷⁵A firkin equaled about 8½ gallons. McLoughlin, *Letters*, p. 54.

The *Cadboro* arrived at Monterey on 7 December 1827, and Aemilius immediately tried to settle the debts. Of the two owed to the HBC one was ‘outstanding since 1816 by the government of [that] country of 853 dollars.’²⁷⁶ (It was ten years in arrears and was originally due to the North West Company.) The other, in the amount of 3756 dollars, was due from a private individual, Don Jose Maria Estudillo. Simpson reported to Smith that he ‘had very little hopes’ of receiving repayment from the ‘present government, as [he was] informed they are without cash.’ As for the debt owed by Estudillo, Simpson thought there was ‘no chance of [it] being recovered, as by general report here,’ he learned, ‘he is not able to pay even a dollar much less thousands and his character for integrity does not stand high, besides he is not now resident, being at Saint Diego.’ The Commandant of the Presidio, Don Marian Estrada,²⁷⁷ however, was successful in collecting the money owed to him. Simpson later reported to John McLoughlin that when he made ‘the claim against the government for eight hundred and fifty six dollars’ he [Estrada] immediately made his claim for three hundred and fifty five.’ Estrada then ‘used threats,’ Simpson explained, ‘to throw obstacles in my way of procuring supplies in Saint Francisco, the port which I now determined to proceed for for [*sic*] supplies.’ Aemilius paid the debt by ‘giving him goods for the amount.’

None of the provisions he wanted to obtain were available at Monterey, and ‘in consequence [he] sailed from Monterrey for San Francisco on the 21st December and arrived there the following day.’ There he was able to obtain twenty-two casks of salt beef, ‘tho’ of an inferior quality,’ each weighing about three hundred pounds and costing ‘ten or eleven dollars each, which may be considered cheap.’ He was also able to procure ‘ninety three fanegas²⁷⁸ of salt . . . equal to about one hundred and sixty pounds each, for two to two and one-half dollars per fanega.’ The other provisions — flour and corn — he hoped to purchase from ‘the priest of the Mission of S^t Joseph and Santa Clara . . . but to [his] great disappointment the padre would not furnish any, as he said he had hardly enough for the consumption of his mission, where he had some thousand Indians to feed.’

His efforts to gather information were considerably more successful than his attempts to recoup debts or obtain provisions. Salmon, he found, would be ‘a profitable branch of trade that could be carried on from our establishment in the Columbia and Frazers River’ and was ‘an article that would sell well in the California and Lima markets.’ And ‘planks,’ he reported, ‘would pay from 45 to 50 dollars p thousand feet’ in California and from forty to sixty dollars in the Sandwich Islands. Simpson was less optimistic about the HBC’s trading in other commodities. He found that there was a market for cotton, silk, gold lace, spirits, cutlery, hats, hoes, and axes (cotton, silk, and gold lace)’ and other manufactured articles, but was not very optimistic about the Company’s likelihood of success. ‘This business,’ he reported, ‘requires a knowledge of the language and an acquaintance with the people, so that a stranger entering into competition with the numerous experienced traders now on the coast must labor under great disadvantages and might get involved in disputes that would expose him to great expence rather than profit.’ Moreover, the practice of ‘distributing presents and bribes to the official men’ and smuggling were integral parts of doing business in California. He summarized his opinions on the matter by claiming: Whether the Hon^{bl} Company would therefore like to expose themselves to such risk for profits of this new branch of trade is to me doubtful. The information I have been able to obtain on the northwest coasting trade by no means holds out flattering prospects.

²⁷⁶Simpson wrote three reports during this voyage: two to Secretary William Smith of the London Committee and one to Chief Factor John McLoughlin. HBCA, D.4/121, ff. 20v–23r and ff. 24r–25r, Aemilius Simpson to Secretary Smith, 18 December 1827 and 17 February 1828; D.4/121, ff. 25r–30v, Aemilius Simpson to John McLoughlin, 9 March 1828. (Hereafter, all quotations pertaining to Simpson’s voyage to the California Coast are from those documents.)

²⁷⁷Don Mariano Estrada.

²⁷⁸A fanega is an obsolete unit of dry measure used in Spain and its territories. It was not a uniform quantity, and the capacity of a fanega varied considerably between regions.

In Monterey he had met ‘a M^r Smith who [had] been engaged in the North West Coast trade for upwards of thirty years.’ Smith told Simpson that the coast trade in the region between the mouth of the Columbia River and the Russian territories to the north was a ‘loosing business.’ There were too many vessels engaged in the trade for the amount of furs available; the Natives were ‘so abundantly stocked with goods that they [did] not engage in hunting,’ and the ‘too great use of firearms [had] tended to frighten away the sea otter from the coast.’ Also, the Native peoples were ‘engaged in wars and consequently furnished no skins.’ Smith recommended ‘that to make that coast again valuable vessels should not visit it for some years.’

In addition to reporting on his attempts to collect the HBC’s debts, obtain provisions, and gather information about the Company’s prospects for entering into the commerce, Simpson’s three reports contain a wealth of information about the logistics of the trade, costs, profits, business practices, and countries of origin of the ships in the ports of Monterey and San Francisco.

Simpson had been instructed to proceed to the Sandwich Islands after his business in California was finished and if he ‘thought time would admit of it.’ But, as he explained to Secretary Smith, he foresaw a busy season ahead: two trips had to be made to Fort Langley, provisions needed to be delivered to Fort Vancouver, and a coastal trading expedition was planned. And ‘as the principal object of [his] going to these islands was to get information about the mode of carrying on the coasting trade,’ he thought that the several persons he had met had given him ‘as much perhaps as [he] could gain there.’

On 24 February 1828 the *Cadboro* left the port of San Francisco and ‘was opposed by a strong gale from the NW soon after leaving harbour.’ The wind shifted to the south and westward on 2 March and she was enabled ‘to proceed to the northward’ and arrived at the mouth of the Columbia River on 9 March.

Meanwhile, in January 1828, while Simpson was in California, a clerk, Alexander Mackenzie, and five *engagés* were returning to Fort Vancouver from Fort Langley when they were murdered by the Klallams near the entrance to Puget Sound. And a Chinook woman who was with them, Mackenzie’s wife, was taken as a slave. The news reached Fort Vancouver two months later, and McLoughlin decided to retaliate. As he explained to the Governor and Committee: ‘To pass over such an outrage would lower us in the opinion of the Indians, induce them to act in the same way, and when an opportunity offered kill any of our people...’²⁷⁹

A punitive expedition led by Chief Trader Alexander McLeod, three clerks, and fifty-nine men left Fort Vancouver on 16 June 1828. They travelled overland to Puget Sound, where they obtained canoes and then proceeded to Admiralty Inlet, the northern entrance to the sound. En route they met a party of Klallams and killed eight. Simpson and his crew departed Fort Vancouver on the *Cadboro* and met the overland party on 1 July. The Natives had gathered at New Dungeness a few miles west of the present city of Port Townsend, at the northeastern tip of the Olympic Peninsula. Negotiations failed to convince the Natives to give up the murderers and the woman who was held as a slave. McLeod then ‘requested Lieut. Simpson to fire a few Cannon Shot on the Village & Mr. McLeod & Party landed under cover of the Cannon, burnt the Village with all their property & forty six Canoes, the third day after this the Natives gave up the Woman. . . . On their return [the HBC men] burnt the Village at Port Townsend.’ McLoughlin considered the mission a success. He reported that McLeod told him:

He received the most zealous & effectual assistance from Lieut. Simpson & the Gentlemen & men of his Party and in my opinion the whole Expedition was most judiciously conducted, the woman recovered, the murderers punished & not a man of ours received the slightest injury.

²⁷⁹ Letter of John McLoughlin to Governor and Committee, in McLoughlin, *Letters*, p. 57.

The expedition had cost about thirty Klallam lives: eight were killed by the overland party on their way up Puget Sound, ‘twenty one of their people were killed by us & two of the murderers by the relations of those killed.’²⁸⁰

Simpson’s second trading and reconnaissance voyage along the northern coast was undertaken immediately after the punitive expedition. Unlike the first voyage on this coast the previous year, the *Cadboro* sailed as far as Cape Chacon, the southern point of Prince of Wales Island. His report on this voyage contains a wealth of commercial intelligence, most of which paints a bleak picture of the HBC’s prospects for competing in the trade in that region.²⁸¹ The costs of doing business, the diminished population of sea otters, and the exceptionally hostile and dangerous populations of Natives all contributed to a situation which led him to declare: ‘If the Hon^{ble} Company determine upon putting down opposition and possessing themselves of the trade of this coast, I have no hesitation in saying it must be at a very heavy sacrifice of money.’²⁸²

Early the following year, 1829, Simpson and the crew of the *Cadboro* delivered a cargo of timber and other goods to the HBC’s agent in the Sandwich Islands before proceeding on another northward voyage. They stopped first at Fort Langley and remained there from 14 to 18 July.²⁸³ Chief Trader Archibald McDonald was in charge of the post, and there is an intriguing comment about Simpson in a letter he later wrote to his friend Edward Ermatinger. He remarked that, ‘the Lieutenant [Aemilius Simpson] . . . returned in a few days with . . . his Princess. . . .’²⁸⁴ That is the only known reference linking him to a woman during his time in the Northwest; but most European traders at that time formed relationships with native-born women, and Aemilius was probably not an exception. The identity of the ‘Princess’ remains a mystery, but it is quite possible she was the daughter of a Native chief.

After leaving Fort Langley the *Cadboro* sailed to New Archangel.²⁸⁵ Aemilius was delegated by George Simpson to deliver a letter to Captain Pavel Chistiakov, the Russian governor at New Archangel. He was also empowered to act as the company’s agent, and Chistiakov was informed that ‘any arrangement entered into with Dr. McLoughlin or Lieutenant Simpson will be confirmed and fulfilled.’ Governor Simpson informed the Russians of the HBC’s intention to extend its operation ‘to the Trade of the Coast, and to connect therewith the discovery and Settlement of the interior Country up to our most Northern limits.’ In effect, he forewarned Chistiakov that the company planned to start doing business in the regions immediately adjacent to the Russian territories, and the Governor hoped that their ‘proximity should not give rise to any feelings of Rivalship or Competition in Trade. . . .’ He also suggested that, because of ‘the daring and formidable character of its numerous savage population,’ that the two companies (the HBC and Russian American Company) adhere ‘to the terms of the convention of 28th Feb^y 1825’ and refrain from selling ‘Arms, Ammunition & Spiritous Liquors’ to the Natives as a means of rendering their respective ‘dealings with the Natives less hazardous.’ George Simpson also offered to sell the Russians British manufactured goods and provisions ‘at moderate prices.’²⁸⁶

During the return to Fort Vancouver Aemilius prepared two reports: one addressed to the Governor and Committee and the other to John McLoughlin.²⁸⁷ In the former he remarked that Chistiakov ‘rigidly complys with the terms of the Treaty . . . in not furnishing the Indians

²⁸⁰ McLoughlin, *Letters*, pp. 57–8, 63–5.

²⁸¹ HBCA, B.223/c/1. Report from Aemilius Simpson to John McLoughlin, ff. 11r–20v. The report also contains his account of the Klallam expedition. (Hereafter, all quotations pertaining to that period are from that document.)

²⁸² *Ibid.*, f. 16v.

²⁸³ Maclachlan, *Fort Langley Journals*, p. 120.

²⁸⁴ McDonald. *This Blessed Wilderness*, p. 75.

²⁸⁵ Now Sitka, Alaska.

²⁸⁶ Letter of Governor Simpson to the Governor of the Russian American Company Archangel, 21 March 1829, in Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, pp. 311–12.

with Arms, Ammunition or Spirits.’ It was, however ‘at a great sacrifice to his concern.’ The Bostonians readily exchanged those items for furs, and ‘to oppose the American Traders without the sale of those articles’ was deemed ‘to be a fruitless contest.’ Simpson also reported ‘that the [American] Coasters have done little or nothing in the way of trade this Year.’ And he found the Russian establishment to be ‘upon a very respectable footing more resembling a military Post, than that of a civil body. This they find necessary,’ he added, ‘the tribes of Indians in this Vicinity being formidable and well stored with arms which they procure from the American traders.’

In the report to McLoughlin, Aemilius informed the Chief Factor that Chistiakov did not have the authority to enter into a trade agreement with the HBC, but he would forward Governor Simpson’s proposal to his superiors in the Russian-American Company. The prospects did not look promising: a supply ship was anchored in the harbour and ‘they were amply stored for at least three years.’ They might, however, be interested in purchasing ‘Wheat, other Grain and Provisions’ from the HBC. Aemilius also commented that the Russian trading establishment appeared to be under excellent management, and from the number of ships in the harbour he surmised that ‘they must carry on a considerable business, and must have a number of establishments, as these Vessels are principally occupied in bringing supplies to, and the Furs from their several Trading posts, and in protecting their hunting parties. . . .’ In closing the report Aemilius noted that there was an American ship in the harbour undergoing repairs by ‘Russian Ship Carpenters . . . the greatest part of them appeared to be Natives, the offspring of Indian Women & Russian Servants of the Comp^y and bear the Character of being good workmen.’

By 1830 the sea otter on the Northwest Pacific Coast was nearing extinction, but there was still a vigorous trade for land furs that were brought down the rivers leading from the interior. And the mouth of the Nass River, immediately south of the Russian territories, was the site of the most abundant supply. On 7 July John McLoughlin instructed Aemilius Simpson, now the Superintendent of Shipping for the Columbia District, to examine the Nass harbour and search for a suitable location to build a permanent trading post. Commanding the *Cadboro*, he was accompanied by the *Eagle*, a brig of 193 tons and the 60-ton schooner *Vancouver*. En route the *Eagle* was to stop at Fort Langley to deliver supplies and trade goods. Then the three ships were to sail northward, stopping at intermediate ports en route to trade with the local people.

The expedition got off to a faltering start. They left Fort Vancouver on the evening of 8 July and arrived at the mouth of the Columbia on the 12th. ‘Contrary winds and squally unsettled weather detained’ them there until the 16th, when they cleared the bar and turned northwards. The captains had agreed to rendezvous at Cape Flattery, but fog, ‘unfavourable winds . . . the *Vancouver*s dull rate of sailing,’ and failure to make the rendezvous caused considerable delay. When they finally arrived at the mouth of the Fraser River, Simpson ‘plainly foresaw if the *Eagle* were to ascend the river to deliver her cargo at Fort Langley it would be the middle of August before she would be able to clear Frazers River’, which would render it quite impossible to proceed to the northward with her and again return to the Columbia in any thing like the time specified.²⁸⁸ Simpson ordered the transfer of the cargo of the *Eagle* to the *Vancouver*, which proceeded to Fort Langley; unfavourable winds delayed the *Eagle* and *Vancouver* another week. They then returned to Cape Flattery where they traded for ‘Hyequas²⁸⁹ & a supply of fresh fish.’ On the afternoon of 12 August the two ships

²⁸⁷ Letter of Captain Simpson to Governor and Committee, *Cadboro*, New Archangel, 16 Sept. 1829, and Captain Simpson to John McLoughlin, *Cadboro*, 1 Oct. 1829, in Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, pp. 313–17.

²⁸⁸ Simpson’s report of his 1830 voyage to Nass Harbour is in HBCA B.223/c/1, ff. 19v–24v; reprinted in McLoughlin, *Letters*, pp. 305–13. (Hereafter, all quotations pertaining to Simpson’s 1830 voyage to Nass Harbour are from this source.)

²⁸⁹ Haiqua are the shells of *Dentalium pretiosum* or *D. indianorum* and were used for ornamentation and as a medium of exchange among the Native peoples in Northwest Pacific. They are tubular, slightly curved,

‘proceeded on [their] voyage Northward.’ Because of the delays, Simpson decided to bypass the intermediate stops and sail directly to Nass Harbour, where they arrived on the 28th. In early September — probably the 1st or 2nd — Simpson found a suitable location:

This position, which appears to me best calculated for building on, extends back from the banks of the river about three quarters of a mile where a range of rocky hills take their rise, its extent along the banks may be about one and a half mile with a good southern exposure and appears a strong deep soil well calculated to produce vegetables. It certainly appears a good country abounding in beavers (and those of good quality), tho the trade owing to the frequent visits of the American coasters will be a high rate. The site also offered the advantage of allowing vessels to ‘lay at anchor within a pistol shot of shore, the Indians can be easily kept at check.’

Simpson also acquired much valuable commercial intelligence. He noted the movements of several American ships and concluded his report to McLoughlin with an assessment of the coastal trade. ‘I must state,’ he wrote:

The Americans appear to have goods more in demand on this part of the coast than us. Arms and ammunition they sell without limits and ardent spirits in great abundance and these articles with the exception of blankets I found in greatest demand at Nass. Of the first of these articles I sold none, as for the last, half stock’d green I had on board, they offered only one beaver skin. I regretted being under the necessity of selling a quantity of the latter as I found it impossible to trade without it nor do I see how it can well be avoided till opposition is done off the coast.

In short, the Americans had a better supply of trade goods demanded by the Natives, and if the HBC were to best the Americans in the coastal trade they must set aside their policy of not trading liquor to the Natives until they had total command of the trade. The *Eagle* and *Cadboro* arrived back at Fort Vancouver on the 20 and 23 of September, respectively.

In the fall of 1830, Simpson took command of the *Dryad*, a 200-ton brig, and in late November he sailed her to Monterey with a cargo of salmon and lumber. While he was there, McLoughlin instructed him, that he was to determine ‘if there would be any objections to our sending a party of Trappers to that part of the country or to the Bay of San Francisco.’ McLoughlin was also interested in the possibility of obtaining livestock (cattle, horses, and mules) from California. The following spring the HBC proceeded with their plans to build a trading establishment at the mouth of the Nass River, and in April McLoughlin sent Peter Skene Ogden and two vessels under Simpson’s command to the Nass River to build a trading post at the site Aemilius had selected the previous year. They carried a cargo of lumber to build the fort, and after some of the buildings and the bastion were completed Simpson took the *Dryad* north on a trading expedition.

Sometime during that voyage he became sick. The nature of his illness is unclear, and his journal and correspondence do not contain any references to pre-existing health problems; but subsequent letters written by some of his colleagues mention ‘a Liver Complaint,’²⁹⁰ ‘an

tapered, open at both ends and attain a length of about one to four inches. They are usually white, or occasionally greyish, and have the texture of ivory. [Morris, *A Field Guide*, pp.116–17, plate 41; Gibson, *Otter Skins*, pp. 9, 228–30.]

²⁹⁰Letter of Duncan Finlayson to John McLeod, 12 March 1832, in ‘Documents: Trying to Best the Americans’, *Washington Historical Quarterly* 2, no. 1, 1907, p. 42; and Letter of Archibald McDonald to John McLeod, 15 January 1832, in ‘Documents: Beginning of Fort Simpson,’ *Washington Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 4, 1907, p. 65.

Inflammation of the Liver,²⁹¹ and ‘an inflammation of the lungs.’²⁹² These vague diagnoses could cover a myriad of ills, and the exact nature of his sickness is unknown. He returned to the new fort on 19 August, and the final entry in the log of the *Dryad* was that he ‘was pleased to learn that all was well at this establishment.’²⁹³ At the age of thirty-nine years, he died aboard his ship on 2 September and was buried outside the palisades.

When the news of Aemilius Simpson’s death reached John McLoughlin he wrote to the Governor and Committee:

I have received the Melancholly [*sic*] account of the death of Capt. Simpson who died after an Illness of thirteen days of an Inflammation of the Liver. By his death the concern loses the services of a man anxious to promote Its Interests to the utmost of his abilities and I suffer the loss of an acquaintance whose Gentlemanlike conduct and zealous discharge of his duty entitled him to my Respect and Esteem, and though his death at all times would be a loss Still in the present situation of our affairs It is particularly so.²⁹⁴

And his kinsman, George Simpson, commented in his ‘Character Book’ — before he knew of his death — that he was:

About 40 Years of Age. A namesake and Relation of my own, whom I should not have introduced to the Fur Trade, had I not known him to be a man of high character and respectable abilities. He has occupied the most dangerous post in the Service since he came to the country, and his whole public and private Conduct and Character have been unexceptional. [Accounts of his death have reached me since writing this.]²⁹⁵

In a letter written in early 1832 to Chief Factor John George McTavish, McLoughlin wrote that:

He was as good a little fellow as ever breathed, honourable, above board and to the point. He may be a disciplinarian but it was very necessary among the Vagabonds he had to deal with. The Drunken wretch Sinclair²⁹⁶ could afford him no support, he was therefore under the necessity of doing all the dirty work of cuffing & thumping himself. . . . From what I know of the Lieut. & have heard of him when we were School Fellows I have (laying all other claims & feelings aside) a very great respect for his character & high opinion of his worth.²⁹⁷

He obviously had the esteem and respect of his superiors, but not everyone seems to have lamented his passing as much as John McLoughlin and George Simpson. There are suggestions that Aemilius Simpson was not popular with everyone. In a letter to his colleague, John McLeod, dated 15 January 1832, Chief Trader Archibald McDonald commented on the numerous deaths – both accidental and natural – among the Company’s personnel. He wrote:

²⁹¹‘Letter of John McLoughlin to Governor, Deputy Governor, and Committee, 20 October 1831’, in McLoughlin, *Letters*, p. 1.

²⁹²Letter of James Douglas to John McLeod in ‘Documents: Luck of the Fur Trade’, *Washington Historical Society* 2, no. 1, 1907, p. 43.

²⁹³HBCA, C.1/218, Ship’s logs, Log of the *Dryad*, f. 80.

²⁹⁴‘Letter of McLoughlin to Governor and Committee,’ in McLoughlin, *Letters*, p. 231.

²⁹⁵ Williams, ‘Character Book,’ in *Hudson’s Bay Miscellany*, p. 231.

²⁹⁶Thomas Sinclair was the first mate on the *Cadboro* and *Dryad*.

²⁹⁷HBCA, B.135/C/2. Letter of John McLoughlin to John George McTavish, ff. 79v–80, quoted in McLoughlin, *Letters*, p. 199, footnote 2.

Among the latter we have to lament the loss of poor Lieutenant Simpson who died on board his own vessel ... of a Liver Complaint after a few days illness ... Independent of his loss to the concern I regret him very much as a private friend. *I am sorry to say with you in confidence however that he was not over popular with us – the cause you know as well as I do* (italics added).²⁹⁸

And Duncan Finlayson, also writing to McLeod, said, ‘He departed this life ... much lamented and regretted and *whatever feelings might be entertained toward him during his career in the part of the country* (italics added) there is now but one of general sympathy for his untimely end.’²⁹⁹

Both McDonald and Finlayson are vague regarding the cause of Aemilius’s unpopularity, but it seems he carried the rigid sense of protocol and discipline of the Royal Navy to the fur country of British North America. Hubert Bancroft, an early chronicler of the history of the North West Coast said about him:

For a British tar and a brave man on duty, dealing rum, molasses, beads and blankets to savages in the dark, dismal shores for wild beasts’ skins, Simpson was excessively the gentleman. Though an efficient officer he was somewhat eccentric. For example, his hands must be incased in kid before he could give an order on his own deck in the daylight, and if the occasion was perilous or peculiar, his gloves must be white kid. Form was nine-tenths of the law with him and the other tenth conformity.³⁰⁰

Eventually, Fort Simpson, the post Simpson had established at the mouth of the Nass, was found to be too far from the ocean and did not offer easy access to sea going vessels. A new location was chosen in McLoughlin’s Bay, on the northern end of the Tsimpsan Peninsula, and a new trading establishment was built there in 1834. Aemilius Simpson’s remains were reinterred in a nearby cemetery.

APPENDIX I

Biographical Sketches

Barnston, George (1800–83) was born in Scotland and educated as an army engineer and surveyor. He joined the NWC as an apprentice clerk in 1820 and was taken into the HBC after the coalition. Barnston was initially appointed to the York Factory and Red River districts, and in 1826 was posted to the Columbia District. He worked with Aemilius Simpson in charting the lower Fraser River in 1827 and remained to assist in establishing Fort Langley. During the 1830–31 season he was in charge of Fort Nez Percés (Walla Walla, Washington). He resigned from the fur trade in 1831 following a dispute with George Simpson, but was rehired the following year. He never returned to the Columbia District. Barnston subsequently served in the Albany District, Tadoussac, Norway House, and Michipicoten. He was appointed Chief Trader in 1840 and Chief Factor in 1847. George Simpson considered him to be ‘so touchy & sensitive that it was difficult to keep on good terms or do business with him.’ Barnston had a keen interest in botany and entomology, developed a friendship with the botanist David Douglas, and supplied specimens to the Royal Geographical Society, the Smithsonian Institution, and McGill College. Following his retirement from the fur trade he continued his studies in natural history and authored several papers that were published in scholarly journals. He died in 1883, one year after becoming a fellow of the Royal Society of

²⁹⁸ Letter from McDonald to McLeod, 15 January 1832, p. 265.

²⁹⁹ Letter from Finlayson to McLeod, 12 March 1832, p. 42.

³⁰⁰ Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, p. 477.

Canada. [Brown and Van Kirk, 'Barnston, George,' pp. 52–3; Fleming and Rich, eds., *Minutes of Council*, p. 427; Williams., ed. 'Character book', pp. 230–31; Maclachlan, ed., *Fort Langley Journals*, pp. 20–21.]

Barraud, Paul Philip was an English chronometer manufacturer who made about one thousand instruments between 1796 and 1820. [Davies, 'The Life and Death', p. 511.]

Birnie, James (ca.1799–1864) was born in Scotland and joined the NWC as an apprentice clerk in 1818. He was retained by the HBC at the time of the amalgamation in 1821 and spent the remainder of his long career at various posts in the Columbia and New Caledonia districts. From 1834 to 1837 he was at Fort Simpson, and Birnie Island, located about two and one-half miles northwest of the fort, was named in his honour. George Simpson considered him 'useful in the Columbia as he can make himself understood among several of the Tribes and knows the Country well; but not particularly active . . . [and] a loose talking fellow.' He retired in 1846 and remained in the Washington Territory. [Fleming and Rich, eds., *Minutes of Council*, pp. 428–9; Williams, ed, 'Character Book,' p. 202.]

Black , Samuel (1780–1841), a nephew of James Leith, was born in Scotland and emigrated to North America in 1802, when he began his fur-trade career as a clerk with the XY Company and after 1804 with the NWC. From 1803–5 he was in the Peace River country before being assigned to the Athabasca and Île-à-la-Crosse regions, where he remained for 15 years. He was a major participant in the violence and intimidation of the Hudson's Bay Company's employees in those areas. According to George Simpson he was 'a cold blooded fellow who could be guilty of any Cruelty . . . and equal to the cutting of a throat with perfect deliberation.' Black was, in fact, so hated by the HBC that it was doubtful if he would be accepted into that concern after the coalition of the two firms in 1821. However, in 1823, he was appointed as a clerk at Fort St. John, and the following year he led an expedition to explore the Finlay River. On his return, he wintered at Fort Dunvegan on the Peace River and in 1825 was assigned to the Columbia District. In 1837 he was promoted to Chief Factor and given command of all the inland posts in the Columbia District. He served at Forts Colville, Nez Percés, and Thompson River Post (Kamloops), where he was murdered by the nephew of an Indian chief with whom he had argued. His corpse was exhumed the following year and was being transported to Fort Vancouver for reburial when an accident occurred causing it to fall into Monte Creek, a few miles east of Kamloops. It was thought impossible to transport the soaked remains any further, and he was buried beneath a ponderosa pine.[Rich, ed., *Journal of a Voyage*, pp. xxvii-c; Rich, *History of the Hudson's Bay Company*, pp. 569–70, 645; Woodcock, 'Black, Samuel,' pp. 78–9; Williams, ed., 'Character Book,' pp. 192–3.]

Charles, John (b. ca.1784) was born in England and entered the service of the HBC in 1799. Until the time of the merger of the HBC and NWC in 1821, he was located in the Churchill - Reindeer Lake regions. He was promoted to the ranks of Chief Trader in 1811 and Chief Factor in 1821. During his subsequent career he served in the Nelson River, Churchill River and Athabasca districts. Charles was fluent in both Cree and Chipewyan. Governor Simpson wrote that he was 'a man of veracity and integrity, but not bright.' He was the Chief Factor in charge of York Factory from 1836 to 1838. He went to the Red River Settlement on leave of absence in 1841 and retired there in 1843. [Bumsted, 'John Charles', p. 48; Williams, ed., 'Character Book,' pp. 173–4.]

Clouston, Robert (ca.1793–1850) was an Orcadian who joined the HBC as a blacksmith in 1812. He spent the following year at York Factory and was in the Winnipeg District from 1813–15. He then served at Brandon House, Swan River, and Fort Hibernia. From 1818 to 1821 he was in the Athabasca District. Clouston was promoted to the rank of Clerk in 1821,

and in 1822 he was at Pierre au Calumêt, a trading post on the Athabasca River located a short distance above the Athabasca oil sands. On 9 June 1822, when the survivors of Franklin's First Arctic Land Expedition were returning to York Factory, they stopped at the post and George Back, an expedition member, noted that 'A M^r Clouston was in charge.' Three years later, when the Second Arctic Land Expedition was descending the river, they stopped at the post on 13 July and John Franklin recorded that: 'M^r Clouston having a stock of dried meat I ordered 370 pounds of it. . . .' In 1828 he retired to the Red River Settlement. [Rich and Fleming, eds., *Minutes of Council*, p. 142; Back, *Arctic Artist*, p. 205; John Franklin, *Journals and Correspondence: The Second*, p. 72.]

Dease, John Warren (1783–1830), the brother of Arctic explorer Peter Warren Dease, was in charge of the NWC post at Rainy Lake from 1814–21. He became a Chief Trader at the time of the coalition and spent the following season (1821–2) at Fort Alexander at the mouth of the Winnipeg River. He was then posted to the Columbia District, where he was in charge of Fort Nez Percés (Walla Walla), Spokane House, and Fort Colville. Dease's health failed, and in December 1829 he became seriously ill at the Dalles on the Columbia River and died there the following month. [Richard Fleming, eds., *Minutes of Council*, p. 434.]

Drummond, Thomas (ca.1790–1835) was a Scottish naturalist who served as John Richardson's assistant on Franklin's second polar expedition in 1825–27. Although trained as a botanist, he also was also a collector of birds and animals. The expedition arrived at Cumberland House on 15 June 1825, and while Franklin, Richardson, and Back proceeded northward to undertake explorations in the Arctic, Drummond was assigned to conduct botanical and zoological studies in western Canada. He travelled extensively on the North Saskatchewan and Athabasca rivers and in the Rocky Mountains in the vicinity of Jasper House. In October 1826 he travelled with the York Factory - Fort Vancouver brigade as far as Boat Encampment on the Columbia River; he then returned to Fort Edmonton, where he wintered. From 5 April to 14 July 1827 he was at Carlton House and, in company with John Richardson, explored the surrounding area, including the South Saskatchewan River as far as today's city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. They rejoined the other expedition members at Cumberland House and arrived back in England in October 1827. On his return to Britain, he was appointed Curator of the Belfast Botanical Gardens, and from 1831 to 1834 he collected plant specimens in the southern United States. He died in Havana, Cuba in March 1835. [Geiser, 'Thomas Drummond,' pp. 478–512.]

Ermatinger, Edward (1797–1876) was born on the island of Elba, the son of an Italian mother and Canadian father. Edward and his younger brother Francis were apprenticed as clerks to the HBC in 1818. After serving at various posts in what is now the province of Manitoba he was transferred to Thompson's River (Kamloops) for the 1825–6 season, and in 1826–7 he was employed as a clerk in the coastal trade on the Lower Columbia River. In order to travel from Thompson's River to take up his new duties on the Lower Columbia he would have travelled southwards on the Okanagan Trail, which terminated at Fort Okanagan on the Columbia River. It is possible that he was there when the York Factory - Fort Vancouver brigade passed that post, and it was Edward that Aemilius Simpson met. (Similar circumstances, however, apply to his brother Francis.) During 1827–8 Edward Ermatinger was at Fort Langley, on the Fraser River. He had little interest in the fur trade, writing that 'nothing could induce me to spend the remainder of my life in a country, where so much hardship and privation had to be endured, beyond the bounds of civilization.' Ermatinger's informative journal describing his travels with the Fort Vancouver - York Factory express in 1827 has been published. He retired to St. Thomas in Upper Canada in 1828, and subsequently became a merchant, postmaster, banker, author, and politician. From 1844–7 he represented the Middlesex seat in the Legislative Assembly of Canada. [Thomas, 'Ermatinger,

Edward,' pp. 273–4; Ermatinger, 'AYork Factory Express Journal,' pp. 67–132; Anne Morton, HBCA, personal communication.]

Ermatinger, Francis (1798–1858) was born in Lisbon, Portugal and joined the HBC as a clerk. With his brother Edward, he arrived at York Factory on the *Prince of Wales* on 14 August 1818. His first posting (1818–25) was to the Fort Severn District. He was then transferred to the Columbia District and remained there until 1842, serving in a number of locations including Thompson's River Post, Fort Colville, and the Flat Head post. During his years in the Columbia he 'got into disgrace . . . in consequence of having employed one of the Company's Servants in cutting off the Ears of an Indian who had had an intrigue with his woman.' During the summer of 1826, Francis travelled with James Douglas and Pierre-Chrysologue Pambrum from the New Caledonia District to Fort Vancouver. Like his brother Edward (above), he would have passed through Fort Okanagan and coincidentally might have been there at the same time as the York Factory - Fort Vancouver brigade. In 1842 Francis was promoted to Chief Trader. He left the Columbia District in 1846, and after a year at York Factory he was in placed in charge of Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca until 1850. He was on furlough and leave of absence from 1850–52, returned to spend one year at Fort William, and then retired to St. Thomas, Ontario, where his older brother Edward lived. [Wallace, ed. *Documents*, p. 439; Williams, ed., 'Character Book,' pp. 206–7; Anne Morton, HBCA, personal communication; Allaire, 'Pambrum, Pierre-Chrysologue,' pp. 671–2]

Faires (or Ferris), Hugh (1779–1852) was a native of Montreal who joined the NWC as a clerk in 1804. Following an appointment to Rainy Lake (1804–06), he was one of the first NWC officers to cross the Rocky Mountains, and in 1807 he was in charge of Fort George in New Caledonia (now Prince George, British Columbia). Ferris was at Cumberland House from 1812 until 1817), at the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies in 1821, he was appointed a Chief Trader and served in the Peace River District from 1821 to 1826. George Simpson thought he was 'a well conducted steady man, who is liked by the Indians is respected by his people ... but his temper is exceedingly irritable.' 'Having expressed a wish ... of being allowed leave of absence during the current year [1826–7] for the benefit of medical advice, his request was complied with.' He was stationed in the Kenogamissie District from 1827–37, promoted to Chief Factor in 1838 and retired in 1840. [Rich and Fleming, eds., *Minutes of Council*, p. 141; Wallace, ed., *Documents*, p. 439; Williams, ed., 'Character Book,' p. 189.]

Franklin, John (1786–1847) began his naval career on a merchant vessel when he was thirteen or fourteen years old and joined the Royal Navy in 1800. He saw service in the Napoleonic War and the War of 1812, was a member of voyages of exploration to New Holland (Australia) in 1802–03, and to the Arctic, north of Spitzbergen, in 1818. Franklin commanded three expeditions to what is now the Canadian Arctic: the first and second were in 1819–22 and 1825–7. His final voyage began in 1845 and ended with the death of Franklin, and the loss of his two ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, with their entire crews in 1846–8. [Franklin, *Narrative of a Voyage*; Franklin, *Journals and Correspondence: The First*; Holland, 'Franklin, Sir John,' pp. 323–8.]

Harriott, John Edward (1797–1866) was a nephew of John Peter Pruden, the Chief Trader in charge of Carlton House. Harriot entered the service of the HBC as an apprentice in 1809, aged twelve years. After one or two years at York Factory he was located in the Saskatchewan District, and was a member of the Bow River expedition in 1822–3 that tried to reestablish Chesterfield House at the junction of the Red Deer and South Saskatchewan rivers. He probably joined the York Factory-Fort Vancouver brigade at Fort Carlton in 1826 for the purpose of travelling with it as far as Fort Assiniboine, where he was assigned from 1826–8.

Harriott, who was noted for his ability to gain the confidence and trust of the Natives, served in the Columbia District from 1828–32 and at Piegan Post from 1832–34. Most of his subsequent career was divided between Rocky Mountain House and Fort Edmonton. He is one of the few persons mentioned in Simpson's 'Character Book' whom the Governor deemed worthy of almost unqualified praise: He was 'a finished trader . . . generally esteemed' and although he was 'deficient in regard to Education, but in every other respect a very effective Man.' Promoted to Chief Trader in 1826 and Chief Factor in 1846, he retired to the Red River Settlement in 1855. [Thomas, 'Harriott, John Edward,' pp. 366–7; Williams, ed., 'Character Book,' p. 197.]

Hood, Robert (1797–1821) joined the Royal Navy as a midshipman in 1811 and served until 1816. He was chosen for Franklin's first Arctic expedition because of his expertise as an artist surveyor, and cartographer. During the return of the Franklin expedition to Fort Enterprise in the summer and autumn of 1821, Hood suffered miserably from effects of starvation and his inability to tolerate the diet of rock tripe that they had been reduced to eating. He died from a bullet to the back of the head following an argument with Michel Terohaute, an Iroquois voyageur. [Hood, *To the Arctic*, pp. xxiii–xxxv, 157–164; Franklin, *Journals and Correspondence, First*, pp. xx–xxi.]

Kempt, William (b. 1793) was employed by the HBC as a surveyor. He sailed from England and arrived at York Factory in August 1822. His first task was to make a plan of the establishment. He then departed for the Red River Settlement where he combined his duties as a surveyor with those of sheriff of the District of Assiniboia. For a short period in 1823 – during the interregnum between the appointments of Governors Andrew Bulger and Robert Pelly – he was in charge of the settlement. Governor Bulger said of him: 'He is surpassed by no man that I have ever known in zeal and industry in the performance of his professional duties.' In 1824 Kempt was 'employed to improve the navigation between Norway House and York' and was 'furnished with a Boat and the necessary implements for that purpose.' He sailed for England that autumn and subsequently returned to his native Scotland. [HBCA, Search File, 'Kempt, William.']

Larocque, Joseph (ca.1787–1866) was a clerk in the XY Company in 1801 and, in 1804, was employed by the NWC after the two firms merged. He was at La Ronge in the English (Churchill) River department in 1804 and at Fort des Prairies in 1806. His activities for the following six years are unknown. In the autumn of 1812 he participated in the building of Fort Kamloops on the Thompson River, and the following year he was a member of a party that descended the Columbia River to take control of Fort Astoria from the Pacific Fur Company. In 1815 Larocque was at Fraser's Lake in New Caledonia where Daniel Harmon, a staunch Christian, met him and wrote: 'I have past the evening much to my satisfaction and am happy in finding that he [Larocque] from being a thoughtless licentious person, appears now quite the reverse. Its evident that of late he has reflected and meditated much on his former behaviour and loose manner of talking, and therefore is determined with the aid of Gods Holy Spirit on a thorough reformation. May he have the fortitude to persevere in so laudable and necessary resolution.' Larocque remained attached to the Columbia and New Caledonia departments until 1817, when he was transferred to Fort Chipewyan to participate in the opposition to the HBC for control of the fur trade in that region. His apparent reformation seems to have lapsed, because he was one of the bullies who perpetrated the outrages against the HBC employees in the Athabasca department during the phase of the 'fur trade wars.' He was arrested by Colin Robertson in 1820 and was being transported to Montreal to stand trial when he was freed by a group of NWC men at Grand Rapids at the mouth of the Saskatchewan River. He returned to the Athabasca department and in September of that year he was one of the men in charge of the NWC post at Île-à-la-Crosse. At the coalition in 1821

he became a Chief Trader in the HBC and served in the English River and Fort des Prairies departments and at Lesser Slave Lake. In 1825 Larocque was transferred to the Mingan seigneurie on the St. Lawrence River. He retired a wealthy man in 1830 and moved to France in 1837, where he remained until 1851. In 1857 he and his wife retired to a convent of the Grey Nuns in Ottawa. At his death Larocque left a fortune to that religious order. [Rich, 'Larocque, Joseph,' pp. 456–7; Harmon, *Sixteen Years*, pp. 163, 172]

Leith, James (1777–1838) was born in Scotland and emigrated to Lower Canada about 1794. He was a partner in the XY Company in 1799 and a wintering partner in the NWC after the merger of the two concerns in 1804. Most of his subsequent career, until 1815, was spent in the regions north of Lake Superior. Leith was assigned to the Athabasca District from 1820–21. Appointed a Chief Factor when the NWC and HBC amalgamated, he returned to the Athabasca for one year and was then stationed at Cumberland House from 1822–9. After a period of furlough he retired from the HBC in 1831. In 1836–7 he toured the continent with John Stuart. Leith died in England in 1838; he left about twelve thousand pounds for the establishment of Anglican missions among the Indians in Rupert's Land. [Goldring, 'Leith James' pp. 498–9; Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express,' p. 95n.]

Linton, George (1800–35) was a Englishman who joined the NWC as an apprentice in 1819 and was assigned to the Athabasca District. After the coalition in 1821, he was employed as a clerk by the HBC and remained in the Athabasca until 1823. He subsequently served at Fort Pelly, in 1824–5, and Fort Edmonton from 1826–8. He was in charge of Fort Assiniboine and Lesser Slave Lake in 1829 and 1830, respectively. From 1831 to 1833 he was a clerk in the New Caledonia District and was placed in charge of Fort George (British Columbia) in 1834–35. He, his family, and others drowned in rapids on the Fraser River on 8 November 1835. George Simpson described him as 'a stout strong built square fellow who would have made a very good figure in the Prize Ring being an excellent bruiser . . . and I suspect is out of a bad nest. A low Knowing Kind of fellow who is neither a good Clerk nor Trader. . . . Has no prospect of advancement.' [Rich, ed. *Journal of Occurrences*, p. 447; Williams, ed., 'Character Book,' p. 216.]

McDonald, Archibald (1790–1853) was born at Glencoe, Scotland and was recruited by Lord Selkirk in 1812 as second-in-command of the third group of Selkirk Settlers. He and the settlers arrived at Churchill in 1813, wintered at nearby Churchill Creek, and proceeded to the Red River Colony in the spring of 1814. McDonald held a number of administrative posts in the colony before joining the HBC in 1820. The following winter, 1820-21, he served as a clerk in the Athabasca District. Among his colleagues in the Athabasca that winter was George Simpson, who was soon to become the overseas governor of the company. After the amalgamation of the HBC and North West companies in 1821, Simpson assigned McDonald to the Columbia District as an accountant. McDonald arrived at Fort George, near the mouth of the Columbia River, on 8 November 1821 and remained there until 1826. During that period he married Princess Sunday, daughter of Concomly, a prominent Chinook Chief. She died in 1824 shortly after the birth of their son Ranald. McDonald remarried shortly afterwards, and his second wife, Jane Klyne, was the daughter of Michel Klyne, a French Canadian who served as postmaster at Jasper House, and a Métis woman, Suzanne LaFrance. From 1826 to 1828 Archibald McDonald was in charge of the Thompson River District (Kamloops), and while there he explored and mapped the Thompson River from the fort to its confluence with the Fraser River. Natural history was one of McDonald's interests, and throughout his career he collected and sent numerous plant and animal specimens to Kew Gardens and the British Museum. David Douglas, the famed naturalist, was among his friends. In 1828 he was promoted to Chief Trader and was in charge of Fort Langley until 1833. After establishing Fort Nisqually in 1833–4, he was granted a year's leave, which

he spent in Great Britain. McDonald returned to the Columbia District and was appointed to Fort Colville. Promoted to Chief Factor in 1841, he retired due to ill health in 1844 but not before discovering a significant silver deposit on Kootenay Lake, which was later developed as the Bluebell mine. After wintering at Fort Edmonton (1845–6), where three of his sons, twin boys aged five and a two-year-old, died of scarlet fever, he and his wife proceeded to Montreal. They remained there for three years before purchasing an estate on the shores of Lake of Two Mountains. During his last years Archibald McDonald was active in local politics, served as a justice of the peace and surveyor, and led a delegation to Montreal to protest the Rebellion Losses Bill. He died of pneumonia at his estate on 15 January 1853. [Cole, 'McDonald, Archibald,' pp. 526–8; Archibald McDonald, Cole, ed., *This Blessed Wilderness*].

McDonald, Finan (1782–1851), a Scot who stood 'six feet four inches, with broad shoulders, large bushy whiskers and red hair,' crossed the Rocky Mountains with David Thompson in 1807 and spent his entire career assigned to the Columbia District, first in the service of the NWC and after 1821 as a clerk with the HBC. When Aemilius Simpson met him on the west side of Athabasca Pass he was leaving the Columbia District to winter on the east side of the mountains before retiring. McDonald joined the Fort Vancouver - York Factory express in 1827, and while in the vicinity of Carlton House he was badly injured by a wounded bison bull, which he had just shot. He was carried to Fort Carlton, and 'his wounds were dressed as well as the means of the party permitted.' McDonald survived to live another twenty-four years. He retired to Glengarry County with his wife Margaret, the daughter of a Kalispel chief. She predeceased him by ten years and he died in 1851. Both are buried in St. Raphaels's Cemetery, Glengarry County, Ontario. [White, *David Thompson's Journals*, pp. 234–6; Ermatinger, 'York Factory Express', pp. 87–8.]

McDonnell, Allan (1776–1859) was born in Scotland and began his career as an apprentice in 1799 with the fur trade firm of Forsyth, Richardson and Company, one of the partners in the XY Company. After the union of that concern with the NWC, in 1804, McDonnell served at Fort Dauphin and later accompanied Alexander Henry (the younger) to the Mandan villages on the Missouri River, in present-day North Dakota. He became a partner in the NWC in 1816 and participated in the conflicts with the HBC during the tumultuous years of the fur trade wars. McDonnell was present at the attack by NWC men on Brandon House and the murders of Governor Robert Semple and twenty-one HBC men at Seven Oaks in 1816. He was indicted by a grand jury for his role in those events but was never brought to trial. After the amalgamation of the HBC and NWC he was appointed Chief Trader and served in the Swan River District. In 1826 he was appointed to the Timiskaming District. George Simpson, displeased with his treatment of subordinates, independent traders, and Indians relieved him of that position in 1834. He was then posted to the Rainy Lake District until 1841, granted two years' leave, and retired in 1843. He died at Montreal, aged eighty-three years. [Mitchell, 'McDonnell, Allan', pp. 537–8.]

McDougall, James and George. Two brothers named 'McDougall' served as clerks in the early 1800s. The references to them in the published primary and secondary sources are scant and often confusing. It is not possible to be certain which one was with the York Factory - Fort Vancouver brigade in 1826. In 1800 Daniel Harmon, a NWC clerk and later partner, noted that he met James McDougall accompanying the Athabasca brigade to Rainy Lake and that he had 'been in this Country two years'. A clerk of the same name later served under John Stuart at various posts in New Caledonia. He founded a post at the eastern end of the Rocky Mountain Portage on the Peace River in 1804 and was in New Caledonia until at least the mid-1820s. In 1825 the names James and George McDougall appeared in a list of clerks 'whose engagements expire and whose services will not be required next year be brought out

to the Depot ensuing spring for the purpose of being permitted to retire.’ However, the following year a James McDougall was included in a group of clerks whose engagements had expired, and he was offered 100 pounds ‘for the current Outfit.’ And a James McDougall was assigned to the post at ‘Frasers Lake in New Caledonia’ for the 1828–9 season. A clerk called James McDougall retired to Montreal in 1832 and died there in 1851.

George McDougall was in the HBC service in the Peace River District in 1815. He joined the NWC in 1816 and after the amalgamation of the two companies he was accepted into the new concern. He was in New Caledonia District until 1830 – at Frazer’s Lake in 1819, Fort Alexandria, on the Fraser River, in the fall of 1826, the Chilcotin country from 1826–8, and Fort George (Fraser River) in 1829–30. The remainder of his career, 1830–49 was spent in the Athabasca and Peace River districts. Although he was in charge of trading posts for most of that time he never rose above the rank of clerk. [Harmon, *Sixteen years*, pp. xxi–xxii, 186, 194–95; Gibson, *The Lifeline of the Oregon Country*, pp. 17, 21–2, 75; Rich and Fleming, eds, *Minutes of Council*, pp. 105, 121, 173, 213, 245, 275; Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences*, p. 450.]

MacGillivray, Joseph served as Chief Trader in the Athabasca District, Norway House, and York Factory between 1821 and 1824. He was granted leave ‘for benefits of his health’ in 1824 and served at Severn on his return (1825–6 season). In 1826 he was travelling with the brigade to assume his duties at ‘Frazers Lake’ in the New Caledonia District, and he remained in that position until the end of the 1827–28 season. He was on ‘Rotation of Furlough’ for one year, and on his return served in the ‘McKenzies River, Nelson River, and Moose Lake districts’. He retired in 1831. [Rich and Fleming, eds, *Minutes of Council*, p. 254.]

McLoughlin, Dr. John (1784–1857) was born at Rivière-du-Loup and apprenticed as a physician at Quebec City from 1798–1803. An offence to a British Army officer prompted him to hastily depart Canada for the Northwest, and in 1803, at the age of 18, he joined the NWC as an apprentice clerk and physician. His first posting was to Kaministiquia (renamed Fort William in 1807), and most of his assignments until the time of the coalition were there or at the Rainy Lake post. He became a partner in the NWC in 1814, and in 1815 was arrested by Lord Selkirk for his alleged involvement in the Seven Oaks massacre at the Red River Settlement. McLoughlin was tried, and found not guilty in 1818. He played a minor role in the negotiations leading to the amalgamation of the North West and Hudson’s Bay companies in 1821. After a year of sick leave (1821–2), which he spent in Paris, France under the care of his brother David, also a physician, he returned to North America and the employ of the HBC. He was promoted to Chief Factor in 1822, and, after two seasons at the Rainy Lake Post, George Simpson assigned him to Fort George at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1824. In 1825, after the departure of Alexander Kennedy, McLoughlin assumed responsibility for the entire Columbia District. The following year Fort Vancouver was established about 90 miles upstream, and it became the administrative centre of the District and McLoughlin’s home for twenty years. Under his management the trade was extended northward to the Russian territories, to South America, and Hawaii. Agriculture, lumbering, and fishing were added to the company’s endeavours. In 1841, Charles Wilkes, an American military officer, was a guest of McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver. He described his host as ‘a fine looking person of robust frame, with a frank open countenance about 50 years of florid complexion his hair white . . . enthusiastic disposition and I should think of great energy of character and well suited for the situation he occupies which requires no small talent and industry to fill.’ McLoughlin’s final years with the HBC were marred by a bitter dispute with George Simpson, and he was forced to retire in 1845. He moved to Oregon City, about 20 miles south of Fort Vancouver, and remained there until his death. McLoughlin’s judicious and compassionate assistance of American settlers who arrived in the Oregon Country during his

tenure earned him the title of ‘Father of the Oregon.’ [Lamb, ‘McLoughlin, John,’ pp. 575–80; Morrison, *Outpost*]

McMillan, James (ca.1783–1858) began as a clerk for the NWC around 1804, and his first assignment was to the Fort des Prairies department. He was associated with David Thompson on his first crossing of the Rocky Mountains in 1807, and most of his subsequent career was spent in the Columbia District. He became a Chief Trader in 1821 and accompanied Governor George Simpson on his first trip to the Pacific Coast in 1824. That autumn McMillan explored the mouth of the Fraser River. In 1825 he was placed in charge of Fort Assiniboine on the Athabasca River and instructed to search for a route from Jasper House to the headwaters of the Fraser River (Yellowhead Pass). ‘Mr. Macmillan . . . left Fort Assiniboine on Horse Back,’ the Minutes of Council record . . . ‘& there is not the least doubt but he will succeed; yes it is Men of his Stamp the Country wants, meaning no offence to any one. . . .’ In 1827, the year he was appointed a Chief Factor, McMillan led a party to establish Fort Langley. He left the Columbia District in 1829, and after a period of furlough, established an experimental farm at Red River in 1830. The endeavour did not succeed under his leadership, and he subsequently served in the Montreal District. He retired from the fur trade in 1839. [G. Thomas, ‘McMillan, James,’ pp. 583–4; Rich and Fleming, eds., *Minutes of Council*, p. 450.]

Pruden, John Peter (1778–1868) was thirteen years old when he began an apprenticeship with the HBC at York Factory. He was transferred inland in 1795, and, with the exception of two years when he was on sick leave and in charge of Norway House, was assigned to various posts in the Saskatchewan District. In 1821 Pruden was made Chief Trader and from 1826 until his retirement in 1837 was in charge of Carlton House. He was twice-married: first to Nancy, a mixed blood woman who bore him eleven children, and in 1839 to Ann Armstong, the governess of Red River Academy. In the same year he was appointed a councillor of Assiniboia and in 1844 became a member, and later chairman, of the Board of Public Works. He died at Winnipeg at the age of ninety. [Brooks, ‘Pruden, John Peter,’ pp. 648–9.]

Rowand, John (ca.1787–1854). The son of a surgeon, John Rowand was born in Montreal and entered the fur trade as a clerk for McTavish, Frobisher and Company in 1803. His first assignment was to Fort Augustus (later Fort Edmonton) in the Saskatchewan department, and except for a brief interval of service at the Red River colony and on the South Saskatchewan River, most of his career was spent at that location. He became a partner in the NWC in 1820, and after the amalgamation of the HBC and NWC in 1821, he was accepted into the latter concern as a Chief Trader. In 1823 he was placed in command of the Saskatchewan division and promoted to Chief Factor in 1826. Around 1810, while buffalo hunting, he suffered a broken leg as a result of a fall from a horse and was rescued by a country-born woman, Lisette Humphrville, who later became his wife ‘according to the custom of the country.’ Their union produced seven children. The injury left him with a permanent limp, and his men called him (albeit behind his back) ‘One-Pound-One’ because of the sound of his footsteps on the wooden floors and walkways at Fort Edmonton. In 1841 he accompanied George Simpson for part of his trip around the world, and in 1847–8 he went on furlough — his first since 1803. Rowand died of an apparent stroke at Fort Pitt in 1854, while travelling to Montreal to retire. His remains were buried at the fort, but it was Rowand’s wish that they should rest in Montreal. During the winter of 1855–6 they were disinterred and ‘they got an Indian to . . . boil the flesh of. it was sayed that the wemmen of the Fort made soap with the fat of the pot.’ George Simpson then arranged for the bones to be transported to the Red River Settlement, from where they were to be transported to Montreal. But some of the voyageurs learned the nature of the contents of the package, and Simpson feared that they might throw it overboard. The bones were then shipped via Norway House, York Factory, and London, England to

Montreal, where they were buried on 10 November 1858. [Van Kirk, 'Rowand, John,' pp. 779–80; Foster, 'The Métis', p. 65; MacGregor, *John Rowand*, p. 173.]

Simpson, George (ca. 1787–1860) was born in the Highlands of Scotland, and about 1808 began employment in a London sugar brokerage, which merged with Wedderburn and Company, in 1812. Andrew Wedderburn, a shareholder in the HBC, arranged for Simpson to proceed to North America in 1820 to assume leadership of the firm should the governor-in-chief, William Williams, be arrested by the NWC. His first season was spent at Lake Athabasca, and the following year, following the coalition of the two concerns, he was given command of the Northern Department. Simpson soon demonstrated his ability for leadership, and in 1826 he was appointed as governor of all the company's territories in North America, a position he held until 1858, two years before his death. He put the affairs of the company on a sound business footing and was noted for loyalty to his friends and heavy-handed treatment of his enemies. He travelled extensively throughout his domain, and in 1841–2 he made a journey around the world. In 1841 he received a knighthood for his contributions to Arctic exploration. His remains rest in Mount Royal Cemetery, Montreal, beside those of his wife, Frances and close to the graves of John Rowand and Peter Dease. [Galbraith, 'Simpson, Sir George,' pp. 812–18.]

Sinclair, Thomas was an Orcadian seaman who started working as a sloop master for the HBC at York Factory in 1824. He travelled with the brigade to Fort Vancouver in 1826, and served as first mate on the *Cadboro* under Aemilius Simpson, during the founding of Fort Langley. He later became captain of the *Cadboro* and returned to England in 1834. [Rich and Fleming, eds., *Minutes of Council*, p. 456.]

Stewart, Alexander was a Chief Factor assigned to the Athabasca District in 1826. He had spent the previous three seasons at Island Lake, about 125 miles east of the north end of Lake Winnipeg, where he had been sent 'after mismanaging Fort William.' [Rich and Fleming, eds., *Minutes of Council*, pp. xli, 41–141.]

Stuart, John (1780–1847) began an apprenticeship with the NWC in 1796 and was assigned to the Athabasca District until 1805. In that year he became an assistant to the explorer Simon Fraser and participated in the establishment of Rocky Mountain House on the Peace River and Fort St. James on Stuart Lake in 1805 and 1806, respectively. Stuart was Fraser's second-in-command during the exploration of the Fraser River in 1808, and he gained a reputation as a dauntless and invaluable leader, explorer, and canoe man. The following year he was placed in charge of New Caledonia, where he remained until 1814. During that period he explored the route from Stuart Lake to the mouth of the Columbia River, was made a partner in the NWC in 1813, and on 16 October 1813 he was a signatory to the bill of sale transferring ownership of the Pacific Fur Company to the NWC. After a three-year period in the Athabasca District, he was made a Chief Factor at the coalition of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies in 1821 and returned to take command of the New Caledonia department. He was placed in charge of the Saskatchewan-Lesser Slave Lake and Winnipeg districts in 1824–6 and 1826–32, respectively; and from 1832–5 he was in the Mackenzie District. Stuart's active career ended in 1835, when he was granted furlough for health reasons, and he retired to Forres, in northern Scotland, in 1839. He died there in 1847. Stuart Lake and River, in northern British Columbia, are named in his honour. [Rich and Fleming, eds., *Minutes of Council*, pp. 15–141; Elliott, 'Sale of Astoria, 1813,' pp. 43–50; Smith, 'Stuart, John,' pp. 837–9.]

Vancouver, George (1757–98) was a naval officer who joined the Royal Navy in 1771. He sailed with Captain James Cook on his last two voyages of exploration (1772–5 and 1776–80) and during this period became an accomplished seaman and hydrographic surveyor. Vancouver was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 1780 and, with the exception of a period of fifteen months, spent the subsequent nine years serving on fighting ships in the Caribbean. In 1791 George Vancouver was appointed to command the *Discovery*, a ship of 340 tons. Accompanied by a smaller vessel, the *Chatham*, they sailed from England on 1 April bound for the Northwest Pacific. There was a twofold purpose for the voyage: they were to receive restitution from the Spanish for property seized from British subjects at Nootka Sound in 1789, and they were to survey the coast northward from latitude 30°N to 60°N to determine if there was a navigable waterway that would serve as a northwest passage to Hudson Bay and beyond. They did not return to England until September 1795. During that period Vancouver and his men carried out a meticulous survey of the coast from the northern Baja Peninsula to Baranof Island, and made three voyages to the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands. In addition, Vancouver conducted negotiations with the Spanish at Nootka Sound and formed a warm friendship with the Spanish commander, Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra. The voyage remains the longest exploratory expedition in history and is notable not only for the quality and quantity of work accomplished but also for Vancouver's ability to maintain the health and safety of his crews at a time when disease, accidents, and death at the hands of hostile natives usually claimed a significant number of lives. Vancouver retired on half-pay two months after his return to England and began work on his journal but died, aged forty, before its completion. His brother finished the work, and it was published in 1798. [Lamb, 'Vancouver, George,' pp. 743–8.]

APPENDIX II

Table of distances in statute miles from York Factory

Place	Simpson's estimates	Map measurements
Mouth of Shamattawa		
(God's) River	56	54
Norway House	395½	411
Cumberland House	698	731
Fort Carlton	1002	1006
Edmonton House	1421½	1437
Fort Assiniboine	1501½	1527 ³⁰¹
Jasper's House	1787	1712
Henry's House	1841	1749
Boat Encampment	1938	1809
Fort Colville	2245	2109
Fort Okanagan	2396½	2269
Walla Walla	2604	2487
Fort Vancouver	2817	2695

On 22 August Simpson described his method of estimating distances: 'I may here remark,' he wrote, 'that my mode of computing distances is by time. I observe the average rate of travelling in a given time according to the various circumstances and mode of travelling, which I noted at stated periods, by which means I think I make a close approximation to the truth.'

³⁰¹Based on Simpson's estimate of 90 miles for the Assiniboine Portage.

The distances in the right hand column have been measured on modern topographic maps. For the portions of the journey from York Factory to the northern boundary of what is now Jasper National Park and from Athabasca Pass to the forty-ninth parallel of latitude 1:250,000 maps of the National Topographic System were used. For those portions of the route within Jasper National Park and from the Canada–United States Boundary to Fort Vancouver the scales of the maps were 1:100,000 and 1:500,000³⁰², respectively.

Using dividers, the distances were measured by transferring short increments of the route to the scale of miles printed in the margin of the map. It is a method that underestimates the actual distance. The map measurements, like Simpson's estimates, are offered as 'a close approximation to the truth.'

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³⁰²Jasper and Maligne Lake,' Gem Trek Publishing, 1998, 1:100,000 topographic map; United States, Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, 'State of Washington,' 1982, 1:500,000 topographic map; United States, Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, 'State of Oregon,' 1982, 1:500,000 topographic map.

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