

## VANCOUVER'S CENTENNIAL

Preparations are under way for an appropriate celebration of Vancouver's centennial birth-year. The whole State of Washington should be interested as Vancouver is the oldest continuous home of white men in the State. The Spaniards at Neah Bay and the Astorians at Okanogan and Spokane began earlier settlements. Those were later abandoned while the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vancouver persisted and was later merged with the American village by its side, continuing from March, 1825, to the present time as an important home of white men.

One of the choicest records of Vancouver's first year has been saved for us by David Douglas, a young Scotch botanist. As a protegee of Sir W. J. Hooker, he was sent on an exploring trip to the Pacific Northwest by the Royal Horticultural Society of London. His success was remarkable. Many still call our greatest lumber tree the "Douglas fir." He was an enthusiastic collector of flowers and plants. The Indians called him "Grass Man." For a long time we had access to only a fragment of his journal published by T. Somerville in *Overland Monthly* for August, 1871. In 1914, the Royal Horticultural Society published the volume called *Journal Kept by David Douglas During His Travels in North America 1823-1827*. In that volume may be found references to his kind treatment by Dr. John McLoughlin and on page 107 is the following entry:

"My residence is on the north bank of the river twelve miles below Point Vancouver (90 from the ocean), the spot where the officers of his squadron discontinued their survey of the river. The place is called Fort Vancouver. In the river opposite my hut lies Menzies Island, so named by Mr. Broughton in honour of Archibald Menzies, Esq., then his companion on the famous expedition. On my arrival a tent was kindly offered, having no houses yet built, which I occupied for some weeks; a lodge of deerskin was then made for me which soon became too small by the augmenting of my collection and being ill adapted for drying my plants and seeds. I am now (August 16) [1825] in a hut made of bark of *Thuja occidentalis* [cedar] which most likely will be my winter lodging. I have been only three nights in a house since my arrival, the three first on shore. On my journeys I have a tent where it can be carried, which rarely can be done;

sometimes I sleep in one, sometimes under a canoe, turned upside down, but most commonly under the shade of a pine tree without anything. In England people shudder at the idea of sleeping with a window open; here, each individual takes his blanket and with all the complacency of mind that can be imagined throws himself on the sand or under a bush just as if he was going to bed. I confess, at first, although I always stood it well and never felt any bad effects from it, it was looked on by me with a sort of dread. Now I am well accustomed to it, so much so that comfort seems superfluity."

As preparations for the centennial celebration proceed, many early records will be searched such as the diaries of missionaries from 1834 to 1844, the journals of pioneers in manuscript or published form and such reports as that of the Wilkes Expedition of 1841.

While Vancouver is a city of Washington much help toward making a success of the proposed celebration will come from Oregon. The Columbia River boundary does not hinder a large and growing interchange of social and business activities. One of the greatest sources of help will be the Portland *Oregonian*, one of America's greatest newspapers from the standpoint of constant and effective attention to matters of historical value. On March 15, that paper cordially announced Vancouver's proposed ceremonies of ground-breaking for the coming celebration. The announcement with illustrations covered a full page. In the same issue, the leading editorial, a column in length, gave the reasons for, and the purpose of the celebration. The opening paragraph of that editorial is as follows:

"The formal dedication of old Fort Vancouver, on the north bank of the Columbia River, near Portland, which occurred just one hundred years ago this week, was an event of primary significance in Oregon history. As is not uncommon with incidents which subsequently prove to be of moment, it appears that the founders of Vancouver were hardly aware of the importance of what they were doing. So little effort was made to clothe the affair with the trappings of historical consequence that until recently there has been doubt concerning the precise date of the formal beginning. The agents of the Hudson's Bay Company in that time were fur-traders, not annalists. Choosing of the site which for nearly two decades was actually if not technically the capital of the Oregon Country and the building of a half military,

half mercantile establishment was all in the day's work. It was destined nevertheless to influence the destiny of a region six times as large as England, half again as large as post-war Germany."

In addition to the willing and effective help from the *Oregonian*, Vancouver will undoubtedly receive assistance from distinguished individuals in Oregon who hold in high esteem the history of the whole original Oregon Country. These include such students and writers as the venerable and loved George H. Himes, Curator of the Oregon Historical Society; Professor F. G. Young, of the University of Oregon; Frederick V. Holman, author of *Dr. John McLoughlin, the Father of Oregon*; Mrs. Eva Emery Dye, author of *McLoughlin and Old Oregon*, *McDonald of Oregon*, *The Conquest* and other works; Judge Charles H. Carey, author of the recent and valuable *History of Oregon*; and others with full information and willing spirit. Vancouver has in her own midst a number of men who have given much study to the history of the region. Prominent among these is Mr. Glenn Ranck, author of several works on the subject.

From the outset, the enterprise has an international flavor on account of the interest retained by Canada and England in the work of the old Hudson's Bay Company men. At the groundbreaking ceremony on March 19, one of the most prominent participants was Mr. Charles H. French, Supervisor of the Fur Trade of the Hudson's Bay Company in British Columbia, a position similar to that held by Dr. John McLoughlin from 1824 to 1846. Mr. French turned the first shovelful of earth at the ceremony. He was followed in turn by Mayor Allen of Vancouver, Washington; Mayor Pendray, of Victoria, B.C.; Mayor Taylor, of Vancouver, B.C.; Mayor Setters, of Astoria; and Mayor Gibbs of Longview.

Another evidence of this wide interest was a telegram received by Clement Scott, Chairman of the Centennial Banquet Committee, from Robert N. Kindersley, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, London, England, as follows:

"I profoundly regret that ill health prevents the fulfillment of my promise of 1920 and precludes acceptance of the invitation to me as Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company to be present at the banquet tonight, but I wish to assure you that all connected with the Hudson's Bay Company feel an intimate interest in the centennial celebration of Fort Vancouver, which a

century ago was established as headquarters of the company's western fur trade department."

The ground-breaking ceremony was the preliminary step in the plan to reconstruct Fort Vancouver as it was in the time of its supremacy in the Oregon Country. The stockade, 700 by 300 feet will be reconstructed on its original site with logs set on end. Twenty-three buildings, like the original ones, will be constructed within the stockade. Here will be assembled relics and exhibits of all sorts. The *Oregonian's* announcement says:

"The old Oregon trail will extend from the Fifth Street entrance of the military reservation to the Columbia River, winding between lines of stately shade trees. One side of the trail will be devoted to displays of diversified products of national repute, the other will be given over to amusements. At one end will be the Hudson's Bay fort and at the other end, an Indian village. In addition to the fort stockade, the entire tract, about 20 acres, will be enclosed by a stockade built of logs set on end. An impressive pageant has been outlined. Its personnel includes 200 persons, who will be garbed in frontier costumes."

The celebration will be held from July 4 to August 4, 1925. The Committee having it in charge consists of the following: State Senator J. W. Shaw, President; W. Foster Hidden, capitalist, Vice President; Leonard Clarke, local Manager of the Puget Sound Power & Light Company, Secretary; J. S. G. Langsdorf, cashier of the United States Bank, Treasurer; William Paul, Chairman of the Executive Board; Dr. A. C. Wagner, Secretary of the Executive Board; Glenn Ranck; W. S. Cohen, Deputy County Assessor; N. Blythe, newspaper men; John Wilkinson, attorney; Lewis Shattuck, automobile dealer; O. Jorgen Olson, President of the American Security Bank; Judge George B. Simpson, Dr. A. B. Eastman, Postmaster; and E. M. Blurock, President of the United States National Bank.

During the progress of the celebration there should be discovered a number of valuable records bearing on the early history of the Pacific Northwest.

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