

DOCUMENTS.

The Hudson Bay Company documents collected by Mrs. Eva Emery Dye in the preparation of her book on McDonald of Oregon are continued in this department.

Fear of Losing British America.

Archibald McDonald is evidently writing to his friend John McLeod in this letter. Readers will notice how he hints at the possibility of His Majesty's losing his possessions on this side of the Atlantic:

Fort Langley, 20th Feb'y, 1833.

My dear Friend,

Without going into a long preface about it, let me inform you that your kind letter of March last came duly to hand, and much gratified was I to learn that you and your were safely landed in one of His Britannic Majesty's Canadian Domains. That wing of the country however being rather new to us all in this part of the world you might have said a little more about it,—Chicoutimy—where is Chicoutimy? why, you tell me tis near the seat of Government, but more out of the way of news than even Kamloops—if this be the case tis what classical characters would call a great anomaly. But Master John if the truth were known you have the Quebec Mercury & Montreal Herald wet from the press the 2'd & 3'd morning after their publication and of course have become brimfull with Canadian polotics—by the by to all appearance a most fertile subject of discussion in these days, so much so, that, if he does not look sharp His Majesty will ere long be apt to loose his valuable domains on this side of the Atlantic.

As the Kings posts—the Seignories and all that is great and good along that side of the Gulf of St. Lawrence is now ours I hope we shall soon have a flaming account of your profits in order to make up the full extent of first expectations on our side. Do not however imagine that I insinuate by this that we ourselves are making a loosing business of it—on the contrary west side the mountains last year cleared 20,000£ and this, I expect it will do just as good. Still I would not be sorry that all the Factors who have heretofore in snug corners distinguished themselves for having made good and profitable returns, were sent to the N W Coast or Gulf of St. Lawrence, and then they would see the difference of making out a shining bill-sheet. Here, this year, in the face of 3 American vessels we collected 2,000 skins. Nass in opposition to no less than 7 got as much besides 1,000 picked up by each of our own vessels—but then they cost dear,

near 2 dollars for made Beaver. Will you trade be much cheaper? I presume not, for I understand your Micmacs from the opposite shore knew how to value their Beaver & to teach the natives of the district a good lesson also. Mr. Connolly does not write me, but I believe so far from his being in a dying state last Spring, he was about taking to himself a better half, and thereby contemplating, health—wealth and happiness at Tadousac. I suppose I shall next hear from you from Lake St. John as I understand you are to move up that way. The same source of information hints to me that Jerimy is the post intended for me when I return from my rotation. Of course, unless you meet him about Québec or Montreal you see nothing of our old English River Bourgeois. is he not down near Anticosti? He writes no one in the north now a days. With respect to my self I at the request of our great folk took passage in the Eagle last fall from here—spent a month with them in the Columbia and found my way back to the family a few days before Christmas after spending some time in Puget sound looking out for a place fit for an establishment more suited for our purpose than Fort Vancouver, which, you must understand, is in this case to be abandoned. The Doctor and Mr. Ogden I believe got out this spring—at all events I am directed to be at Vancouver early next month with bag and baggage and whatever becomes of the Baggage—goods and chattels, poor things, tis more than probable I myself shall be sent to fill up a hole on the coast. They say I cannot be off with less than 15 years of the Columbia. You would have understood from Mr. Herriott that he was not to come across last fall, neither did Kitson;—Mr. Heron as usual stuck at Colville with Frank and Annance his aids. Black is at our old place Pamburn at Walla Walla. Work continues to follow the Freeman in one direction and Michel la Frambois in another. Manson and Doctor Kennedy compose Ogdens staff. Exclusive of all these in Columbia proper there sat at table when I was at Vancouver last fall—Factor McL. and Finlayson—Trader Cowie,—Mr. David Douglas, just returned from California via Sandwich Islands—Messrs James Douglas of the Vancouver and Capt. McNeill of the brig Lama (Lately bought at Waohoo by Mr. Finlayson) & two or three mates besides these were a Captain Wyeith and a Mr. (obliterated) both from Boston with a party of settlers to form a colony on the Willamette. Of a great many that started in the expedition only 9 arrived at the place of destination. The plans intended for the establishing of this colony you will see at full length described in all the American papers. To complete the catalogue of our Gent'l'n in this quarter I should say that Capt. Kipling with the brig Dyrad & 2 mates, & Capt. Sinclair with the schooner Cadboro and 1 mate were then to the northward Yale is with me here and takes charge when I leave the place—he will have 12 men and 1 cooper as assistant—force in my opinion adequate to the security of the place as another Establishment is to be formed in the

Sound. In one respect I regret leaving Ft. Langley—it is a snug comfortable place—but when I find it is high time for me to see and get my little Boys to school—God bless them I have now no less than five of them, all in a promising way. Jennie is glad to hear of Charlotte's welfare and begs to be most kindly remembered to her. I hear poor Mr. Prudent is not too well in health—he wrote me himself but did not say so. If I succeed with my six men in reaching the Columbia safely I shall endeavour to write you a few lines on the envelope to say how I am likely to be disposed of &c. &c. &c. Meantime believe me my Dear friend

Most sincerely yours

(Sgd) ARCH'D McDONALD.

Appalled by Fever.

John Work prefers all other savage dangers to that of leading a fever-stricken party through hostile lands:

Fort Vancouver, 24th Feby. 1834.

My Dear Edward

After an expedition of 16 months I arrived here on the 29th of October when I had the particular pleasure of receiving your, your very kind and highly valued letter of the 3rd Feby. last and was extremely happy to hear of your health and welfare and that you are getting on so well and the fair prospects before you. Accept my best thanks for the fund of interesting information which your letter contains. I can scarcely help envying you the contentment and happiness you enjoy. Let not the trouble you have buying selling and bartering discourage you but go on vigorously, your perseverance and prudence will insure success and in a short time your business will be on a more extensive scale and much more satisfactory to yourself. Keep in remembrance that many of the principal merchants in Canada who be persevering industry realized handsome fortunes, and though with no very extraordinary talents commenced business on a far lesser scale than you have done. God prosper you and may you succeed to the full extent of your wishes My dear Ned as I have frequently told you I have been long heartily tired of this Indian country and the wretched life which it has been often my lot to lead in it, and would be happy to leave it immediately, but as affairs stand at present I can perhaps save more here than in business, with the small sum I could begin upon, besides it is more certain, at least for some time, I therefore deem it best to endeavor with strict economy to save a little more so that I might be likely to have better success. I am also afraid of my own want of experience. My last expedition was the most unpleasant one I have yet had. I was to the Southward to California we had a good deal of trouble and some skirmishes with

hostile tribes of savages who are there very numerous, some parts of the country are very rugged and difficult to pass, but what was worst of all the fever broke out among my people, (near 100 in number) and spread so rapidly among them that in a short time more than three fourths of the party, myself, the three little ones & their mother among the number, were attacked by it. A number of us were soon reduced to a most helpless state, indeed wretched, without medicines, (for my stock had been all expended,) or any kind of necessaries for people in such a condition, having to pass through hostile tribes of treacherous savage Indians, and a month & a half's march to get here where alone I could expect to obtain assistance, we were in a most deplorable condition I am unable to describe it, at length by persevering and with much difficulty we got this length. Two men and Indian & two children belonging to the party died on the way, I was so much exhausted by this debilitating disease that I was reduced to a perfect skeleton and could scarcely walk, but by medical aid and enjoying the comforts of the establishment, comforts which I had been long a stranger to, I am now, thank God recovered and in pretty good health. Ah! Ned, the dangers among the Blackfeet are bad enough God knows, but them and all the other troubles in my most troublesome part of this savage country are not to be compared to the calamity of a whole party being thus attacked with sickness in a wilderness far from any aid or means of procuring remedies. God keep me from ever experiencing the like again. I had a letter from Frank not long since he is passing the winter at Colville with Mr. McDonald and was then well, he was in the plains last summer and is to return again, it is a dangerous situation I have cautioned him to be particularly on his guard. Here affairs go on much in the old way, The Doctor's perseverance has made a great change you would scarcely know the place every bit of cleared ground and a great deal more which has been cleared is under cultivation and the quantity of grain produced is immense. A thrashing mill which he has had built this winter has been some time at work and distilling whiskey has been going on all winter, a hundred head of swine have been killed to make pork for the Naval Department. There are four vessels constantly in the country. Our friend J. Tod now winters in the neighborhood of Ye and always passes the summer there, & I am happy to hear he has got quite well. I may be so situated that I cannot be punctual in writing but be assured I shall miss no opportunity, and I trust you will do the same and continue to give me the news and prospects in your quarter.

God bless you Yours ever affectionately

Edwd. Ermatinger Esq.

JOHN WORK:

More About Fever.

Dr. McLoughlin encourages McLeod and shows how they all planned for future independent lives.

Fort Vancouver, 1st March, 1834.

John McLeod, Esq.
Dear Sir.

I have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of yours of 20th March, 1833, by which I am sorry to learn that your poor wife is again unwell, but I hope she is recovered and is in the enjoyment of sound Health as without Health Life is I would almost say a Burden—I cannot give an opinion at least any way correct in regard to the Kings Posts as I have no document to go By—But as a matter of opinion I must say I think I will never pay the money given for them—though they may perhaps pay by the Economy it will enable the Company to carry on Business in the neighbouring places as to us here we are going on in the usual way we have an additional post at Mill Bank Sound—and Expect to be able to Establish another at the River in Latitude 59 and which will enable us to extend our trade in the country north of New Caledonia. But this year we have no party in the Snake country as Work arrived so late last fall it was impossible for him to get Back this season—he was so late in coming in in consequence of him and his party being afflicted with the Intermittent in the plains of which five of his people died and the mortality among the natives has been Immense. At this place we were also afflicted with it but not so violently as usual. I remark what you say about the River St. Maurice, it certainly is a most disagreeable place where you are constantly annoyed by opposition—and never will shew on the credit side of the account but to you it has the Advantage of being nigh the Civilized World which enables you to place your money out to more advantage than $2\frac{1}{4}$ p Cent and more than this you are nigh to where your children are educated.

I am,

Yours truly,

(Sgd) JOHN McLOUGHLIN.

Arrival of the Missionaries.

In this gossipy letter Dr. McLoughlin tells about the arrival of Jason Lee's party, and also of Doctor Parker, who looked out the way for the Whitman mission.

Fort Vancouver, 1st Febry, 1836.

My dear Sir,

I have not the pleasure to receive any letter from you but I am aware that your epistle must be detained on the way.

I will still do myself the pleasure to address you. As to us here thanks be to the Almighty for His mercies—the fever has not been so Bad as usual—and in every other respect our Business goes on as well as usual—and our farm supplies us with plenty to eat. I think I wrote you that last year two missionaries Methodist preachers were settled in Willamette—they have begun a farm on a large scale and have collected a few Indians around them whom they are instructing in religion this year another Missionary is come across land from Boston—he is come to select stations for missionaries. He goes back this Spring by the Route he come and Missionaries will be sent here this Spring—their plan is to reside among the Indians in the way the preceding have. By this you must see that Before long this will be a settled country and if it was not very difficult to get here as it is I am certain settlers would flock here instead of remaining in Upper and Lower Canada. The Willamette Free-men have begun farms and have amongst them about 3,000 Bushels of wheat, Thomas McKay has begun a farm Nigh Casineaus old village and has about 800 Bushels—Wheat—Margaret and Eloisa request to be remembered to you and Believe

me to be

Yours truly

(Sgd) JOHN McLOUGHLIN.

Mixed Bloods.

Those "forelopers," as Kipling calls them, had sincere affection for their mixed blood progeny, which fact is shown by this letter from Finlayson to McLeod:

John McLeod, Esquire.

Fort Vancouver, 25th Feb'y, 1833.

Private.

My dear Sir,

Your very kind favour of the 29th. February came duly to hand per Mr. Cowie on the 4th November last, and was glad to learn that you & your family got in safety to your destination, but was on the other hand sorry to hear that Flora suffered so much from that kind of sickness, which invariably the introduction of the natives of this country into the civilized world, and from which, of once recovered, there can be little danger apprehended for the future. Your little Girl and the rest of your family, having therefore passed this ordeal, may be considered, if the expression is allowable as acclimated in the civilized world—and you have the advantage over your neighbours that your family are getting accustomed to and becoming acquainted with the usages of civilized society; while you are looking out at leisure, for a spot where to sit down for the remainder of your days. Matters in this quarter are going on in the usual way.

Returns are still good, but the strong opposition on the N W Coast for the last outfit, rendered it absolutely necessary to take some steps for the protection of the trade at that place, or abandon it altogether; I therefore, sailed in July last, for the Sandwich Islands, where I purchased a fine new copper brig of 150 tons for the sum of £1250 paid from the proceeds of the salmon & timber sent to that market. I also engaged her Captain (McNeill) to continue in the command of her who from his long experience on the N W Coast, will I think give affairs in that quarter a favourable turn. This step, together with the report of Mr. Ogden's liberality toward the natives, have been productive of some good results—insomuch, as it has acted as a damper upon our opponents; consequently the Coast at least for this winter, is clear of opposition and in this state will be turned to great advantage. It cleared for the last outfit £1613—the first gains ever realized from it, and I shall answer for its gains, ensuing one to treble that sum. I have written to Dr. Harkness, who is very old friend and acquaintance of mine, and who I will be most happy to see. I was not aware of his being at Quebec. In the Postscript to your letter of 12th March you speak of retiring. If your means are sufficient for that purpose, I would certainly do so, but I would recommend to you, not to take a step rashly, of which you might hereafter have cause to repent. You have two melancholy instances in your neighbourhood of the folly of such measures. I mean Messrs. McVicar & Spencer, both of whom if my information is correct, would gladly now grasp at what they have so foolishly spurned from them. I am just about starting on a cruise to the North West Coast and will perhaps peep in at the Russian Settlement at Sitka, you will therefore forgive the brevity of this, and with best wishes for the health and happiness and prosperity of yourself and family,

I am, My dear Sir

Most sincerely yours,

(Sgd) D'N FINLAYSON.

McLoughlin Mentions Wyeth.

In this interesting letter of friendly gossip the "Father of Oregon" reveals his heart about a number of things, and without mentioning the name tells of the arrival there of Nathaniel J. Wyeth.

Fort Vancouver, 1st March, 1833.

My dear Sir,

I have now before me your kind letter of 10 March 1832, and am happy to see that you and yours are enjoying that greatest of Terrestrial Blessings Good Health—and My Sister writes me that there are two Miss McLeods from the upper country at the Convent—did you know that the Mere Superior is my Sister—

if so why did you not tell her that you knew me & I am certain she would have been pleased to see an acquaintance of her Brothers. I am sorry to see you seem to consider your present situation will lead to Incur Expense. It is true it may do a little but you have the advantage by being close to the Civilized World, that you can place your money where you can get better interest than we get in England and the far greater advantage of being at hand to superintend the Education of your children—but of course every man is Best able to judge for himself and although I differ with your view of your situation still on your account I am sorry since all happiness only lays in the mind that you are not placed in a place more constant to your wishes. I have no data to enable me to give an opinion of the Kings Posts but if they are no Better than when the North West Company had them I think they will never pay the price paid for them, but still it may have been good Polocy to buy them as I am informed the Company was getting as notorious as the N. W. and H. B. were formerly in Canada.

But it is galling to think that a Bankrupt Yankee unacquainted with the Business should have been able to oblige us to pay so dear—in this quarter we go on in the usual way. Last year we had five opponents on the coast but still we procured furs to the amount of four thousand five hundred pounds. But this year we expect to have the Trade to ourselves and to do Better—we are also going to Establish another Post on the coast at Mill Bank Sound—and in 1834 another Post on a river in Latitude 56 North. Snake County is Ruined and there are at present 400 Americans in it and I see nothing that they can do to live but go in a body to the Pie-gan Lands which will be a Death blow to the Saskatchewan. A party of Americans made their way to this place they intended to Establish a Salmon fishery, but their plan has failed for the present in consequence of the vessel being wrecked, with their supplies being wrecked on their way there—and though he is off to Boston his people are here and he says he will be Back. Gervais (two names illegible) and a few others have begun farms in the Willamette and though I have been here since 1824 still I never could find time to visit it till last year and certainly it is deserving all the praises Bestowed on it as it is the finest country I have seen & certainly a far finer country than Red River for Indian traders to retire to—and before long you may depend it will be settled as there is now a plan on foot to colonize it from Boston. Margaret and Maria desire to (be) remembered to you and Charlotte and believe me to be

Yours truly

(sgd) JOHN McLOUGHLIN.

N. B. Our crop is 3,500 Bushels Wheat, 3,000 Do. of Pease 3,000 Do Barley, 2,000 Do. Oats and 15,000 do Potatoes. I believe we would bear to be compared with any farm—our stock of cattle between 400 and 450 exclusive of what we supplied other places and you know in 1824 we had only 17 cows.