

DOCUMENTS.

This installment finishes the series of fine old Hudson Bay Company documents, furnished by Mrs. Eva Emery Dye, from the collection of materials she made in the preparation of her book "McDonald of Oregon."

The Oregon Missionaries.

Archibald McDonald, in this long and interesting letter, informs his correspondent on many points, among which are the facts that three settlements of American missionaries had been made. He refers, of course, to the Lees in the Willamette Valley, Whitman at Waiilatpui and Spalding at Lapwai.

Colville, 25th Jan'y, 1837.

My dear Sir,

I have great pleasure in acknowledging receipt of your very kind letter of this very date last year, & was happy to learn that you and yours were then in the enjoyment of all the blessings this visionary world can afford: If I on my part take up the pen this early in the season, tis not to say that this is the latest date you will hear from us. No friend but as I am situated some preliminary steps are necessary to make the winding up of my correspondence more shure and convenient [obliterated] 20th. April, when the more important and pressing affairs of the concern must be attended to. I am not assisted with the scrape of a pen by clerks as heretofore was the case, indeed I may almost say there is not a man in the district that can sign his own name for Ermatinger with the exception of a couple of weeks middle of December I never see; his sojourn being constantly in the F. Head camp & the Kootenais business is in charge of Big Charles & Antoine Felix—old Rivet is the summer master & Deputy Gov'r of Colville—so you all cannot say that our bill of expense for clerks here is extravagant. I must own however that the bill of wages nevertheless is heavy—we have 28 Men and Boys and the most of them being old hands or otherwise useful their wages amount high. The Trade also is on a more liberal scale than in our early days in the Columbia, especially in the upper country both with Indians & Freeman in consequence of the number of new adventures now pouring in upon us from the American side of the mountains. Our profits however continued between 3 and 4 thousand. The farm

at present is on an extensive scale. What think you this winter upwards of 5000 Bushels of Grain?—namely—3000 of wheat, 1000 of corn and more than 1200 of other grain. Your 3 calves are up to 55 & your 3 Grunters would have swarmed the country if we did not make it a point to keep them down to 150. With all this and its concomitant comforts, I need not say that we live well—last season to complete our independence I had a handy man from the sea and in three months got us up a new mill & new stores the best between Cape Disappointment & Fort Coulonge. With your two friends of old Ogden & Black I made the trip to the sea last summer accompanied by Cowie who discontinued here the intended voyage out. There we found the usual bustle not at all diminished by the presence of a new transport ship from England and a very superb steam vessel intended for the coast. In this **Skokum** Ship as the Chinooks call her the *Isle a la Crosse Gents* & myself were treated with a delightful cruise round the mouth of the Willamette before her final departure for the coast with Finlayson, who superintended her first essay in those seas. By last account she reached her destination safe & proved well adapted for the project in view. She was to have returned by Johnsons Straits inside Vancouver's Island & winter in Puget's Sound—but of the happy performance off this trip I have not yet heard. Three other vessels are also employed in that trade and the occasional trips to California & the Islands. Work & Dr. Kennedy are at new Fort Simpson substituted for Nass. Manson & [illegible] Kipling (your Lac La Loche staff) at Fort McLoughlin—Yale at Langley and Kittson at Nusqually in Puget Sound—this is the coast distribution & you cannot say there supernumeraries. Birney again is at Ft. George Laframboise has the Umqua Dept. Payette the Lower Snake District & Tom the Upper—your friend John McLeod is a sort of a go between the three last places, who I dare say will be writing for himself. Black & Pambrun are at their old places; so that if you should be at a loss to know where the deuce the superabundance of gentl'n are, if there be any, look for them at Vancouver. Ogden, besides Squire Fisher, has seven clerks with him at the 7 Posts namely—McLane—Lane—McBrane—Fraser—Anderson—McKinley & McIntosh.—So far I am more particular with **you** in these matters than I will be with any of my other Indian country correspondents as I take it for granted you dont every day see a Columbia Herald. Your frequent visits now however to Montreal & Lachine might perhaps have saved me the task of going so minutely into our legal news.

On politics I could also dilate a little too, but as I have just observed, the frequency of your visits to the great folk about Lachine must put you in possession of everything interesting on that head. Our betters seem to have a wonderful attachment to service—not one of them will budge—rather make the tour of Italy & Holy Land upon the advantageous terms of **full pay** than either retire or return to the country. I see the honest

man your father-in-law is a length promoted and I believe has already resigned, at least he himself wrote me so much last fall. I do not know when or how all our expectant clerks are to be provided for, but they seem exceedingly important at present. The last affair into which we were all lugged was to entail upon us advantages that I cannot for the soul of me foresee—the general profits are annually decreasing and will continue to decrease—happy those who have their fortunes already made—but enough on this gloomy subject. I hope you continue to hear pleasing accounts of the Boys. My wife is anxious to know what family you and Charlotte have now. Flora must now be an age to demand the untying of your purse strings. We have as yet but an only girl who with our boy is all the family we have here—the other chaps are at R R—three with Mr. Jones and one with the grandfather. By the by I have the pleasure to correct you in the information you had from Mr. McKay at Lachine. Earl Selkirk is not dead—at least end of last April he was at White Hall in America alive and active after returning from New Orleans—he is again about returning thro the Southern States, and this summer tis not at all improbable we shall see him from the head of the Missouri across upon a tour to the Columbia—what think you of that—I am aware of the passage in the papers that misled Mr. McKay. The traversing of the continent in that direction is now becoming more safe & familiar to our ear every day. I have now St. Louis cows & horses at Colville—two or three American clergymen with their families & houlshold goods came across last season & are now settled, the one in the Willamette and another in the Blue Mountains of Walla Walla and a third at the Clear water forks of the Nez Perces. We also have an Episcopalean Minister of our own at headquarters—so you must own “the march of intellect” is making great progress in our part of the wilderness. It is now almost an age since we saw one another—so much so indeed that you seem to forget the exact place. My memory is better—it was the Forks of Spokane & not Okanagan. this recollection brings on other melancholy reflections—poor Dease is no more and the fate of poor Douglas still more appalling in the Sandwich Islands—they were both our companions in the last parting glass. I have a very long and interesting letter from Edw’d Ermatinger at St. Thomas in U. Canada. He is well and in the way of succeeding well. His brother joined me here middle of last month—left us 9th. inst. with 14 men & 2 Boats for below; since that time I am informed of his detention by ice above Okanagan, & must await the grand breaking up of the River as the frost continues to increase in severity. They cannot suffer much, as their cargo is flour, corn & pease & the neighbourhood still affords Rocons if not Macons. The most of his men are York people whom I detained here in the fall until the flour was ground. This hank of provisions—apuhmus, cord & parplok is intended for Walla Walla and a large party that is to be fitted up from there in the spring under I

believe the direction of Mr. John McLeod. We must now absolutely make a bold stand on the frontiers. Though not a lucrative business its prosecution will have its advantages. We are satisfied from good information that the Americans attempting that trade make nothing out of it. Indeed the Equippers at St. Louis sent up an agent last summer to secure from the leaders of the Trappers all they could before their couriers *du Bois* were declared insolvents while the outfits continue from St. Louis—and a strong influential party has a direct interest in keeping the trade in that channel—we shall always be able to compete with them, but the moment an entrepot is formed by American subjects near the mouth of the Columbia good bye to our advantages.

April 3d Two days ago Ermatinger sent me a Budget from Spokan after his return from below—a vast deal of domestic news, and upon the whole nothing amiss all the way from Ft. Simpson to Umqua. Finlayson safely landed from the steamer in Puget Sound last fall. I expect him here in a few days on his way out also Douglas and Fisher, but Black it would appear wont budge from Kamloops. McLean got as far as Cape Disappointment on a Monterey voyage but being 45 days wind bound there was recalled & was succeeded by Birnie—he is now about Walla Walla arranging affairs for the Snake Expedition. We have had a very severe winter here—would you believe that the horses which left us with the F Head outfit the 21st of last month are not yet at Spokan. It will be some days yet before we can turn out our ploughs. Ermatinger took upwards of six weeks going down the Columbia even by leaving his lading at Okanagan. I am anxious to close my private correspondence as a very disagreeable task is just imposed on me by Order of Council to collect evidence & make out affidavits from our men here in the case of that unhappy man Heron.—Meantime

I am
My dear Sir,
Very sincerely & truly yours

(Signed) ARCH'D McDONALD.

Yankee Competition.

John Work writes to Edward Ermatinger at St. Thomas, Upper Canada, telling the news of Fort Simpson. Among other things he mentions the competition from Yankee fur traders and hopes it will cease.

Fort Simpson N. W. Coast.
15th Feby. 1837.

My dear Ned

On the 31st December last I had the pleasure of receiving your very kind and highly valued favour of the 11th Feby. last

and was much gratified by learning that you and Mrs. Erma-tinger and the little ones were well and getting on prosperously. It gives me joy to hear of your increased emoluments from the Bank and the confidence from which it results. May it still be further augmented and success and prosperity attend you in all your undertakings is the sincere wish of your old friend Work. Ned how often I envy you of the happiness you enjoy compared to anything within our reach in this cursed country. But since there is no remedy we must be content and make the best of a bad job till we have the means of doing better. I am happy to inform you that except occasional twitches of rheumatism I am in good health. The affairs here under my charge going on as favourably as can be expected, last summer we had a very keen competition with two ships from the States, I am in hopes your Yankee friends had so much of opposition and made so badly out that they will not feel much disposed to return again and I assure you I dont long to see them. I have formerly given you an account of this place and the coast altogether as well as the savage tribes of Indians we have to deal with. They are getting no better only a short time ago we had to fire upon them but no lives were lost on either side. The smallpox broke out among them away to the northward somewhere last spring and reached this place in September and is advancing on to the southward, great numbers of the Indians have died of it and I have no doubt will be the cause of very poor returns this season. Having so many little ones now to provide for, the dread of the expenses has induced me to defer my intended visit to the civilized world for a year or two longer, but I have not given up the idea, I have got the wife and two youngest girls brought on to join me here, the two eldest remain at Vancouver at school a parson and his lady came out there to reside last summer. I was in hopes this would be of great service to the young ones, but I regret much to learn that some misunderstanding exists between them & the girls at Vancouver, and I fear will not be easy made up. This is in many respects not a very desirable place. Yet as some notice may be attracted it is perhaps preferable to some others. I have therefore preferred it for a short time I have not heard from Frank for near a twelvemonth, he was then he hoped starting on his last trip to the plains, he tells me he had received some encouragement to hope for promotion, it ought to be realized, and I sincerely hope it will be so. Our mutual friend J. Tod from all I can learn from himself & others has made an unfortunate matrimonial speculation in his letter he tells me he had arranged to go to England and leave his wife & child with their friends and intended returning early to Canada in order to pay you a visit, poor man his wife is deranged, I am really sorry for him. He will give you all this country news. The report you heard is I really believe entirely unfounded and entirely arose from no other cause than his taking a glass of grog occasionally in an evening as was our custom in former days. As to myself I

have not been partaking in anything like a booze for a long time nor do I feel the least relish for it, even were I alongside of my good friend Ned I durst scarcely indulge for I could not bear it. I have not seen poor Dease these many years but I understand he has taken out his wife and several little ones to Canada, a step which I fear he will repent. Among civilized people neither himself nor her can be happy, to join in anything like civilized society with her is out of the question. What tribe she belongs to I cant say but think her a Flathead: I hope that he may be able to make himself comfortable. I could scrawl on much longer but don't like to have you taxed with double postage. May God bless you and success & prosperity attend you and yours is My Dear Ned the sincere wish of yours ever sincerely & affectionately

JOHN WORK.

Edwd. Ermatinger.

I am sure you will be glad to learn that I am in high spirits and in hopes of possessing the means in a few years of retiring in a few years to some civilized corner of the world with the pleasing anticipation of passing the few remaining years of my life free from the vexations, turmoils, privations, dangers and difficulties to which I have been so long subjected in this, to me long since unpleasing country.

Arrival of Steamer Beaver.

Peter Skein Ogden, writing from Western Caledonia, tells his friend, John McLeod, that he is very well pleased with his post, and then comments on what advantages were expected from the newly arrived "Steam Boat."

Western Caledonia, Feb'y 25th, 1837

John McLeod, Esq'r

My dear Sir,

Your last letter from St. Maurice River dated 16th March was very acceptable for after a silence of two years I began strongly to suspect you had forgotten me and consequently last year did not write you but this will again convince you I have no inclination to drop the correspondence & if it should happen you alone will be to blame myself the greatest loser. I am truly glad to learn you are so fortunate in your present quarters. I can form a very good idea what they must be so near Town and Settlements. It must indeed be even more than opposition of former days I can assure you I do not envy you your present birth although you do occasionally pay a visit to Christians after all I would not exchange my Dry Salmon with you but as you may think it is this year we have been far more fortunate in every respect than last as our profits will exceed ten thousand Pounds last year little more than seven and if I can only manage to keep it up to ten I shall be very well pleased & so ought

all interested for independent of the opposition on the Coast the Country is not so rich as it was a few years past however it still fully repays us for our trouble & I may also add there is not a District in the Country to equal it in a word I am well pleased with my present birth. Your old quarters T River under Blacks management still does well in fact the Columbia holds out well but the Furs are obtained at a far greater expense than formerly. When at Vancouver last summer I saw our Steam Boat and made a short trip in her. She cost fifteen thousand pounds but our commerce will soon repay us at all events will have a decided advantage over our opponents again last summer they the Americans had four ships there Work Manson Kennedy & Dunn are stationed there & Finlayson is also there during the summer. It is reported I know not how true the latter crosses the mountains in the spring, amongst the many good things their honours from Frenchurch Street sent us last summer was a Clergyman and with him his wife the Rev'd. Mr. Beaver a very appropriate name for the fur trade, also Mr. & Mrs. Coppindale to conduct the Farming Establishment & by the Snake country we had an assortment of Am. Missionarys the Rev. Mr. Spaulding & Lady two Mr. Lees & Mr. Shephard surely clergymen enough when the Indian population is now so reduced but this is not all there are also five more Gent. as follows 2 in quest of Flowers 2 killing all the Birds in the Columbia & 1 in quest of rocks and stones all these bucks came with letters from the President of the U. States and you know it would not be good policy not to treat them politely they are a perfect nuisance—long ere this you would have heard of David Douglas death he fell into a Bull Pit and was gored to death—I was I can assure you happy to hear of Mr. Prudents promotion but it is said must retire from the service. I presume he will go to Red River if I can form an opinion from what I hear that Colony is not in a very flourishing state and will I presume before many years die a natural death. What think you of rotations now a days Robertson five years and others ten each the former man may consider himself very fortunate but after all I expect in many years to hear of his being a very poor man as for John Clarke he will always make a show at little expense. Our friend Archy is at Colville living at his ease with little or nothing but his Farm to attend to, Frank E. with the Flat Heads Kittson Puget Sound, Yale F. Langley, T. McKay a young man by name of McLean, his father was killed in Red River you know him, are in the Snake country—Gingras at Okanagan that place still gives 15 Packs what think you of that—Mr. Rae Umqua and the Doctor, Cowie, Douglas, McLeod, Allen & B. McKenzie at Vancouver Pambrun I had almost forgot Walla Walla now you see how all are stationed & I verily believe all exert themselves for the general interest—with my kind regards to Charlotte

Believe me yrs truly

(Signed) PETER SKEIN OGDEN.

Fight With a Clergyman.

John Work, in this gossipy letter, gives the startling information that a quarrel between Doctor John McLoughlin and Reverend Beaver reached such a point that blows were exchanged and the Beavers left for home.

Fort Simpson, 10th Sept. 1838

My Dear Edward

The Steamer is shortly to start for Nesqualley and as this is the only opportunity I shall have from this out of the way place I gladly avail myself of it to write you and to express my most sincere wishes for the health welfare and prosperity of yourself Mrs. Ermatinger and the little ones. Little in the shape of news has occurred to me since I had last the pleasure of writing you. The occurrences of the place trade etc with which we are accustomed to regale each other in this country can be of little interest to you I shall therefore not trouble you with it further than that affairs go on here as prosperously as can be well expected, and that after a good deal of more trouble from the time I wrote you I got the mutiny on board the steamer quelled and reinstated the Captain in the command which I assure you I resigned with the greatest pleasure imaginable. But I will tell you what I am sure will be more pleasing, that except being occasionally annoyed by my old complaint, I have enjoyed good health, and that the good wife and little ones are also well. I am also in good spirits, tho' some little occurrences have taken place in the way of appointments which have caused me a good deal of chagrin but not depression. But Dear Ned notwithstanding I am in good health old age the unwelcome rogue forces his company on me a great deal more than I wish. The old villain wont be put off I must therefore keep fellowship with him in spite of me. My hair is not yet become grey but it is leaving me at such a rate that I shall soon have little to change colour. My eyesight has declined so much that I can scarcely see to mend a pen with candle light, but thanks to the inventor of steel pens this is a trifling inconvenienv. I continue as thin and wizened as ever. When we used to meet I did not smoke and but rarely even join you in a pinch of snuff. Now I am a most inveterate smoker. I much regret taking to this abominable habit and have often resolved to quit it, but resolves are easier made than executed. I have not heard from Frank since I last wrote you, but I hear that he is got rid of the Flat Heads and sent to Fort Hall which if anything at all is only a degree better. Manson is promoted, which strengthens my opinion that Franks turn must soon come, but my friend we must not forget that the former is a Scotchman which in these days is no small recommendation. I have seen the Captain with whom our friend Todd went home last year, from him I was happy to learn that notwithstanding all his misfortunes, the poor fellow was still in good spirits, and had

got his unfortunate partner and child disposed of to his satisfaction, I understand he intended to pass part of the winter with you, so you know all this already.

All my hopes of getting my children educated by the parson and his better half at Vancouver, have vanished the misunderstanding between them and the doctor ran so high as to terminate in blows before they parted in consequence of which, I hear their Reverences go home. Would to God my means admitted of my quitting this wretched country of which I have so long tired, at once and that I was snugly berthed somewhere close by you to reap the invaluable benefit of your experience and good advice, but as it is I must linger on reluctantly some time yet. While I am able to add to my means I am reluctant to leave till I have enough to enable me to live out the few years I have to pass in this world and make some provision for my little ones without entirely depending entirely on what might be made by any business I might be necessitated to enter into, and for which perhaps I might be ill qualified. But be my means what it may on account of getting my children educated I must not defer clearing out long the unanswerable arguments in your last letter have made a great impression upon me. I have a brother in Richimbucto New Brunswick who lately commenced a shop, last year I advanced him some money to assist him to get on, he was but a child when I left home, but from his letters I judge him to be a sensible shrewd man and am in hopes he will do well, he is not married,—perhaps should he be successful perhaps I might get him nearer to your neighborhood to assist me in some business.

Perhaps I may go to Vancouver with the steamer but be assured not as Captain.

Please offer my best respects to Mrs. E. With most sincere good wishes I am My dear Ned

Yours ever sincerely & truly

JOHN WORK.

Edwd. Ermatinger.

American Interference in Canada.

John Work, again writing to his friend, Edward Ermatinger, described his own rugged ideas of religion, and also takes occasion to refer to the Yankees trying to interfere with Canadian affairs.

Steamer Beaver 24th October 1839

My dear Edwd.

I have had the infinite pleasure of receiving your highly valued and friendly favour dated 1st April 38 and more of seeing our friend Tod who speaks in raptures of the country where you are situated, and of the success which has attended you and above all of the high rank you have attained in the estima-

tion and respect of all the most respectable with whom you come in contact, all this is nothing more than I would have expected, for I was always sure that your honourable upright principles would not fail to command the highest respect with all to whom you should become known. Go on and prosper my friend. May the Almighty crown your endeavours with success. I deeply deplore the misfortune which befel you in the loss of your dear children, I am a father and can easily conceive how keenly you and Mrs. Ermatinger must have felt the blow, but at the same time I am gratified to find, that through Christian resignation you bore it with fortitude. Whatever my friend may be said by scoffers about Religion my friend it is our only resource in the day of misfortune, and will support us when all other resources fail. I am not speaking of mere professional religion, but of the genuine Religion of the heart which is practiced not from show, I am led to these observations from a conviction that there is too much show and parade in the Religion now practiced in the Columbia, not only at Vancouver but elsewhere. It is too puritanical, and as far as I can learn little good has hitherto resulted from it, at least there is little or no perceptible improvement in the morals of the people whether whites or blacks. On enquiring when last at Vancouver I was informed that cases of Venery in the hospital were as frequent as ever. I trust that you will not suppose that I am insensible to the blessings of Religion, on the contrary be assured that the reverse is the case, but I certainly detest hypocrisy which I consider to be the greatest enemy that can be to the Maxims of our Blessed Redeemer, but enough of this. From some recent American papers I learn that your Yankee neighbours are still endeavouring to disturb the peace of the Canadas and determined to force liberty (or what they consider such) on you whether you will or not. But it is to be hoped that their designs will be frustrated, at least they are not likely to find John Bull such a slack customer as the poor Mexicans were. Ere now I hope everything is quiet and that business is again become active and everything going on well with you. I am happy to find that Mr Dease is getting on well. Remember me to him.

I left Mrs. W. and the three youngest girls at Fort Simpson well, the two oldest ones are in the Willamet with a Mr and Mrs Lesslie, American missionaries, and I am told are improving fast particularly in English. During the last year I have been at times in but indifferent health, but at present thank God, I am well. My eyesight is much impaired and other symptoms of old age coming on more rapidly than could be wished, but these things are unavoidable and without remedy, we must be content, I have long been heartily tired of this country, and would be glad to be out of it, but still hang on in hopes of having a trifle to enable me to not be entirely dependent on other means of ending my days and some little provision for my little ones when I shall be gone. Ah! how I would have enjoyed the pleasure of being with you and our friend Tod. I am just wait-

ing for a chance of fixing my family during my absence in order to pay a visit to the civilized world, and if possible I shall give you a call and endeavour to make an arrangement to settle for good and all. My opinion regarding the Columbia colonies you already know it is not changed. I have a brother in Richimbucto who has commenced a little business a few years ago, I sent him a little assistance, he is still a bachelor, I wish he saw you, perhaps he would be induced to go up your way. Judging from his letters he is clever I have the utmost affection for him.

The result of this years proceedings, on the coast is less favourable than last year, but still pretty fair, indeed ever since I have been in this quarter affairs have gone on as prosperously as could well be expected taking everything into consideration, indeed better than there was reason to anticipate. Yet I dont expect any personal advantage from it. As usual with us it is not he who labours most who is best rewarded. I had a letter from Frank, by which it appears as usual he has an abundance of promsies but nothing else as yet has been forthcoming. I regretted at one time that he did not cross the Mountains with the Doctor, it is better that he did not, as the Governor did not come out and nothing could have been done. I am now on my way to Vancouver but write this at present, as my stay may be very short, and so much on my hands, that there will not be a moment to spare. I omit no opportunity of writing you. I cant conceive how you missed getting my letter that you did not receive. Our friend Tod is superintending a newly established farm on an extensive scale at the Cowlitz and will no doubt give you all the Columbia news,—perhaps I may be able to add a little to this when I get there, In the meantime may God bless you with every happiness & prosperity is the sincere wish of

My dear Ned

Yours ever sincerely

JOHN WORK.

Edwd. Ermatinger Esq.