

DOCUMENTS

Original Vancouver Letters

Two more original letters by the great English explorer, Captain George Vancouver, have come to light since the one dated at Petersham, January 11, 1798, was published in the *Washington Historical Quarterly* for April, 1926, pages 125-128. That one was addressed to "Dear Sykes" and it was promptly assigned to the artist or draughtsman with the expedition. That conjecture now seems to have been an error. The "Dear Sykes" was probably the father of the artist, since one of these new letters refers to "your Son."

The original of this letter was sent to the British Foreign Office by Robert Cole of London on January 1, 1846. It was found in F. O. America, Volume 459, Public Records Office, London, by Professor R. C. Clark, of the University of Oregon, and by him accurately copied.

Discovery Nootka Sound October ye 2nd. 1794.

Dear Sir: By the Jenny of Bristol which sails this night or tomorrow morning I take the opportunity of transmitting to you a set of 2 Bills of Exchange amounting in all to £160 9s, 9d the first of the same tenor and date having been dispatched in February last by the Doedalous from Karakooa bay which I trust ere this reaches Old England you must have received, I also beg leave to inform you that I have drawn on you three sets of bills of exchange, the first for £16 16s sterling dated 19 May payable to the order of Mr. Archibald Menzies the next for £42, 15s sterling dated ye 28 of May payable to the order of Mr. Wm. Brown and the other for £150 sterling dated 30 Sept. payable to Mr. Hugh More all which you will be good enough to accept and place to my account.

We arrived here this day month all in high health and spirits having *prety determined* the nonexistence of any water communication between this and the opposite side of America within the limits of our investigation beyond all doubt or disputation hence I expected no farther detention in this hemisphere not doubting but the business respecting these territories must have been settled a sufficient length of time for a vessel to have arrived by whome

we might be relieved and proceed on our route towards Old England in hopes to partake of some shair in the glorious and honorable cause her Fleets and Armies are at present engaged in, but in these expectations we are disappointed no vessel having arrive from England to that effect nor have I received any information in answer to my dispatches sent home by Mudge and Broughton as I expected by way of New Spain but are still in expectations of some news from that quarter as a pacquet was waiting in readiness at St. Blass to forward the dispatches respecting the Restitution of this Country etc but has not yet arrived.

Thus you see my good friend I am once more entrapped in this infernal ocean, and am totally at a loss to say when I shall be able to quit it, and not having it in my power to communicate any particular information respecting our voyage I shall only further add that your Son and all your friends in these vessels are in perfect health though greatly mortified at our present detention from a more active station which would be more congenial to our wishes than remaining here in a state of unpleasant inactivity.

A few days after our arrival here I had an opportunity of writing to my brother by way of New Spain but in case that Letter might miscarry be good enough on the receipt of this to inform him of my welfare etc.

And believe I am with sincere wishes for the happiness of yourself Mr. Sykes & Family

Yours with great truth & Friendship

Geo Vancouver.

After all the glory achieved by Vancouver in the Pacific Ocean, it is rather disconcerting to have him say "I am once more entrapped in this infernal ocean." Of course it was an emphatic way of saying that he was homesick. Moreover, he was writing to his financial agent who was also his friend. There was little probability that the letter would ever be published in the region he discovered and praised so blithely. We are delighted to find anything new about Vancouver and the above letter has the merit of showing that he was quite human.

The second letter is an official order. The original reposes, a prized possession, in the archives of the Provincial Library at Victoria, British Columbia, and was recently copied for Professor

Charles W. Smith, School of Library Science, University of Washington:

By George Vancouver, Esqr.
Commander of His Majesty's Sloop
Discovery, &etc.—

Mr. Alexr. Purvis Cranstoun late Master Surgeon of His Majesty's Sloop Discovery, having been regularly surveyed and in consequence thereof invalidated. You are therefor hereby required and directed to repair forthwith on board the said Sloop and take upon you the charge and employment of Master Surgeon in her accordingly (in the room of the said Mr. Alex. Purvis Cranstoun) until further order. For which this shall be your order.

Given on board His Majesty's Sloop
Discovery in Nootka Sound, the 9th of September,
1792.

Geo. Vancouver.

To

Mr. Archibald Menzies, hereby appointed to Act as
Master Surgeon of His Majesty's Sloop Discovery,
until further order.

Archibald Menzies was not only the surgeon but also the botanist of the famous expedition. Probably his finest monument is *Arbutus menziesii*, our beautiful madrona tree, botanically named in his honor. His journal of this great voyage, edited by Dr. C. F. Newcombe, with a biographical sketch by J. Forsyth, was published in 1923 as Memoir Number V., of the Archives of British Columbia.

Puget Sound Agricultural Company

Another fruit of Professor Clark's researches in Great Britain was the following document pertaining to the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, important subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company. It was located in the Public Record Office, London, Foreign Office America Volume 460. Professor Clark copied it with care and kindly submitted a transcript for publication in this *Quarterly*. He says it was enclosed in a communication dated March 23, 1846, from Sir H. Pelly. This was, of course, Sir John Henry Pelly, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1822 to 1852. There was enclosed in the same communication a chart of Cowlitz Farm as cultivated in 1844 and the spring of