

NEWS DEPARTMENT

A Relic of Vancouver

There has been displayed in the Bank of Petersburg, Alaska, about 120 miles north of Ketchikan, a battered old sign, on which was painted in faded letters: "Capt. George Vancouver R. N. H. M. Ship's Discovery and Chatham."

It had been picked up by Richard Hofstad of the *Tango*, after it had apparently been floating for an indefinite time in Chatham Straits. He found it at Fort Conclusion on June 5, 1931. He had the sign photographed and studied by his colleagues in the fishing and shipping industries. They arrived at conclusions, some of which are palpable errors. For example, it was claimed that the sign was placed during a winter spent in that region by the ships. The official journals show that the ships went south for each of the winters of 1792, 1793 and 1794 the *Discovery* arriving home in September, 1795.

But the ships did explore Chatham Strait and other Alaskan waters and shores in the summers of 1793 and 1794. Captain Vancouver named Chatham Strait after Lord Chatham for whom his smaller ship was also named. They left those northern shores from what they called Port Conclusion on the evening of Friday August 22, 1794.

It is thus seen that there were plenty of opportunities as well as good sailor reasons for placing such a sign. It is quite another thing to conjecture how it could endure the ravages of weather for so long a time. The photograph has been examined with a magnifying glass to ascertain if the letters had been burned into the wood. No such evidence appears. The boards were fastened with wooden pegs. It may be a perfectly genuine relic of a most important historic event. Mr. Hofstad has appealed to authorities in England. A photograph of the relic and the facts as known were sent to the Associated Press in Seattle and Mr. W. C. Hunter of that service supplied the information used here.

Portions of the New Vancouver Journal

The Oregon Historical Quarterly for March and June, 1932, has published portions of the Vancouver "Journal" rescued by Mr. A. H. Turnbull of Wellington, New Zealand. He purchased the