

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

manuscript in London and added it to his fine library at his New Zealand home. Mr. J Neilson Barry secured a copy of the portion relating to the Columbia River and edited it for publication. Mr. Turnbull after studying the journal concluded that it had been written by Edward Bell, clerk of the *Chatham*, consort of the *Discovery* commanded by Captain George Vancouver, 1791-1794.

Mr. Barry has here rendered a valuable service for those interested in the history of the Columbia River. It should be recorded that the editor of the *Washington Historical Quarterly* published other portions of the same manuscript in 1914-1915, covering the dates from March 23 to October 13, or the trip from Hawaii to and around Puget Sound. This former portion, after appearing in the magazine, was published in a separate pamphlet in 1915 under the heading "A New Vancouver Journal on the Discovery of Puget Sound by a Member of the Chatham's Crew."

Mr. Barry now carries forward the same journal from October 13 to November 21, 1792, covering the work in the Columbia River and on to San Francisco Bay.

Robert Gray Memorial Association

Recognizing the importance of the 1792 discoveries by the American and "believing that more adequate and fitting recognition should be accorded to Captain Gray and his discoveries," a number of interested people have organized an association. Its headquarters are in Montesano and Rev. John M. Canse of that city is President, F. A. Hazeltine of South Bend is Vice President and A. Wendell Brackett of Montesano is Secretary. They wish to increase the membership and have placed the dues at the nominal figure of one dollar a year. They have issued Bulletin No. 1 stating the objects of the organization, a brief essay on "Discovery of the Pacific Northwest" by Mr. Canse and a list of "Source Materials for Addresses on Discovery of Northwest Coast." The Bulletin was printed by the *Montesano Vidette*.

Geographic Names Decisions

Since the last issue of this *Quarterly*, the United States Geographic Board has held two sessions— March 2 and April 6, 1932, covered by reports numbered 15 and 16. The large number of decisions included 106 related to California and the Pacific Northwest. The largest number in this group pertains to Montana, 46, and the next to Wyoming, 32.