

## THE CRUISE OF THE *FORESTER*

### *Some New Sidelights on the Astoria Enterprise*

The parts played by the various sailing vessels connected with that most famous of episodes in the early history of the Northwest Coast, the Astoria affair, are in most cases known in at least a general way. The history of the *Tonquin*, from the time that ill-fated ship sailed from New York till she was blown up after an Indian massacre, is known in almost bewildering details. The same is true of the *Beaver*, up to the time when this vessel arrived at Canton where she was blockaded for the duration of the war. We have also heard of the wreck of the *Lark*, and know something of the *Pedler's* movements from the time when Wilson Price Hunt purchased that brig at the Hawaiian Islands up to her release by the Spanish authorities on the Coast of California, after an accusation of having been engaged in illegal trade had failed of proof. Considerably less has been known of the *Enterprise*, Astor's first Northwest Coast vessel, and her commander John Ebbets, who went to prepare the way for the *Tonquin*, but at least it is a familiar fact that such a vessel and captain were concerned in the first act of the Astoria drama. But history has hitherto almost entirely overlooked another vessel concerned in this enterprise, the voyage of which is of scarcely less interest than that of the most important of the ships already named. This is not to say that nothing is known of the brig *Forester* and her commander Captain Pigot, but only recently has the slightest intimation of their connection with Astor and his colony on the Columbia River reached the attention of the public.<sup>1</sup>

Late in September, 1812, Captains William J. Pigot and Richard Ebbets,<sup>2</sup> sent by John Jacob Astor, the great New York fur trader and China merchant, to fit out a ship in England to be sent to look after his interests on the Pacific Coast, landed in Devonshire

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<sup>1</sup> I have dealt briefly with the *Forester's* relation to the Astoria enterprise in "John Jacob Astor and the Sandalwood Trade of the Hawaiian Islands, 1816-1828," *The Journal of Economic and Business History*, May, 1930, "The Cruise of Astor's Brig *Pedler*," *The Oregon Historical Quarterly*, September, 1930, and *John Jacob Astor: Business Man*, 2 vols. (Harvard University Press, 1931) Vol. II, pp. 640-642. In the present article it is my intention to develop this connection in considerably greater detail. The *Forester's* voyage is of interest both because of its relation to the Astoria enterprise and because of the light it throws upon the conditions under which the Pacific trade was carried on during and shortly after the War of 1812. The principal source for this article is the letters of Captain William J. Pigot, a part of the Astor Papers, deposited at Baker Library, Soldiers Field, Boston, under the care of the business history department of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, but I have also used contemporary journals, diaries, ships' logs, and travellers' accounts, both in printed form and in manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> Practically everything we know about William J. Pigot and Richard Ebbets will be developed during the course of the article. Pigot, we know, though hailing from New York, was "originally from England," (*Missionary Herald*, 1821, vol. XVII, p. 135) and was probably connected by marriage with John Ebbets, as will be indicated later.

and proceeded at once to London. They may have been accompanied by John Ebbets, Astor's first Northwest Coast captain, who was probably Richard Ebbet's brother. In London they consulted Thomas H. Wilson, one of Astor's London agents,<sup>3</sup> and learned that it would be impossible to get a license for either a neutral or an American flag. However, they discovered that it was probable that the government would allow a vessel to proceed under British colors to the Pacific Ocean and Canton. Moreover, a British vessel would have convoy as far as the coast of Brazil. In view of these circumstances they felt that to proceed thus under the British flag would be best for all concerned.<sup>4</sup>

On April 4, 1813, Astor wrote from Philadelphia to the Department of State, urging that a sloop-of-war be sent to protect his settlement on the Columbia, and informing the Department of "one steep which I have taking & which is known to none but myself in this country but which may now be known to you & I think it ought to the government if they mean to aid," the step being the fitting out of this vessel from England for the Columbia River. A letter from "Mr. P." (undoubtedly William J. Pigot), dated January 24, 1813 gave word that the vessel had been procured and loaded, but had not yet sailed.<sup>5</sup>

Early in February, 1813, Captain Pigot was still in London, engaged in fitting out the vessel, for which purpose the £12,000 stg. supplied by Astor turned out to be insufficient, and he found it necessary to draw on Wilson for three or four thousand additional pounds, as he informed Astor in requesting that arrangements be made for the repayment of that sum.<sup>6</sup> The vessel which had been purchased was a brig in which Pigot is said to have made many voyages from the Pacific Coast to Canton, though this seems highly improbable. She was built like a ship of war, capable of carrying eighteen guns, and was a very swift sailer. Originally she had been a French privateer rejoicing in the picturesque title *La Grande Guimbarde*, but on being captured by the English she had been purchased by certain London merchants who gave her the name of the *Forester*.<sup>7</sup>

Astor's fear that the vessel would arrive at Cape Horn in bad

<sup>3</sup> Astor Papers, Baker Library, Letter Book I, 1813-1815, letters to Thomas H. Wilson, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Astor Papers, Wm. J. Pigot and R. Ebbets, London, September 28, 1812, to John Jacob Astor, N. Y.

<sup>5</sup> Miscellaneous Letters, March-April, 1813, Department of State, Washington, D.C., letter from John Jacob Astor, Philadelphia, April 4, 1813.

<sup>6</sup> Astor Papers, Pigot, London, February 8, 1813, to Astor, N.Y.

<sup>7</sup> Kotzebue, Otto von, *A Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea and Beering's Straits...in...1815-1818*, 3 vols. (London, 1821) Vol. I, p. 324.

season, expressed in his letter from Philadelphia,<sup>8</sup> proved to be well-founded. The *Forester* sailed from London with a convoy sometime early in 1813 with John Jennings, an Englishman, as captain, "Biggot" (Pigot), supercargo, and Ebbets, clerk,<sup>9</sup> but on arriving at Cape Horn was unable to go around and so was obliged to bear up for the Cape of Good Hope and the northwest Cape of New Holland, going through the Straits of Timor.<sup>10</sup> The *Forester* finally arrived at the Hawaiian Islands early in November, 1813,<sup>11</sup> the only incident of the voyage worth mentioning having been the desertion of the chief mate and four of the crew in the gig, while passing through the Straits.<sup>12</sup>

It would seem that to Pigot was intrusted the direction of the voyage, Jennings having merely the care of the brig committed to his charge under the former's instructions.<sup>13</sup> It also appears that this desertion was merely the first symptom of a general restlessness on the part of the crew, for by the time the vessel was off Oahu, on November 6, the sailors, according to Peter Corney, who got all his information from Jennings, were "in a state of mutiny." The appearance off Honolulu Harbor of this "long low Brig mounting Ten Guns," which "from her appearance and manouveres" did not appear to be an American, caused great alarm to the American vessels which had sought refuge there, and their captains "got every thing in readiness for Action."<sup>14</sup> Among the vessels in the harbor was the American privateer schooner *Tamaahamaah*, and Captain Jennings intercepted a letter which his crew was sending on shore in a native canoe, stating "that if the vessels in the harbour would send their boats out they should find friends."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, "a Black man which was in Irons put a billet into the hands of one of" the natives, "which inform'd us that she was from London bound to the North West-Coast of America."<sup>16</sup>

The *Forester's* crew, it is evident, were ready to give their assistance in making a prize of the brig, which, though owned by an American citizen, Astor, was nevertheless under the British flag and a British commander. It is quite possible that some of the *Forester's* crew were Americans, caught in England by the out-

8 See note 5.

9 Corney, Peter, *Voyages in the Northern Pacific*, Prof. W. D. Alexander, ed. (Honolulu, 1896) pp. 38-41. Reprinted from *The London Literary Gazette*, 1821.

10 *Ibid.*; Astor Papers, Pigot, March 22, 1814, to Ebbets.

11 *Ibid.*

12 Corney, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-41.

13 "I intended to have gone to Woahoo." (Astor Papers, Pigot, March 22, 1814, to Ebbets); Ms. book, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Log of the Ship *Atahualpa*, October 1, 1811, December 28, 1814, November 7, 1813.

14 *Ibid.*, November 5, 1813.

15 Corney, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-41.

16 See note 14.

break of war and, probably being ignorant of the vessel's ownership, were patriotically ready both to strike a blow at British property and to win a share of prize money. On the other hand, they may have been merely renegade British who were interested only in the prospect of financial gain, making possible an idyllic existence in the Islands. Whatever the crew's motives, their disposition was unmistakable. Captain Jennings at once set sail on November 7 for Hawaii, where the vessel would be under the immediate protection of the king, who, when the brig anchored at Kailua, came aboard with his family and offered every assistance.<sup>17</sup> While there, news of the wreck of the *Lark* on Maui was received from John Young, Kamehameha's principal European adviser.<sup>18</sup> The brig then sailed to Kealakekua Bay where she remained until the middle of December, making repairs and taking on water.<sup>19</sup>

There and then a trivial incident sent the long-smouldering mutiny into flames. A ship's boy had deserted but was brought back with the loss of all his clothes. One afternoon the youth informed Captain Jennings that he wanted his clothes and would not go to sea without them. The latter replied that he would try to get them and, if that were impossible, would supply his needs from the slop-chest. The boy was not satisfied with this promise and employed language which won him a box on the ear from the enraged captain, who, being a small man, was immediately grappled and thrown to the deck by the mutinous runaway. A general melee of fisticuffs ensued. The mutineer was knocked down in his turn by the clerk, Richard Ebbets, who was himself felled by the boatswain who had come running aft to the aid of the overmatched sailor. In the meantime the captain had broken away and called for irons to be put on the boatswain, who was momentarily cowed by this order. However, his spirits revived when the irons turned out to be too small and, calling out derisively for "man's irons", he went forward, secured a long knife, and swore to stab the first man who laid hands on him. His vociferations were apparently arousing the crew, whereupon the captain seized a musket lying by the poop and presented it, with an order to be silent or he would shoot. The mutineer, apparently not taking this threat seriously, threw open his jacket in a dramatic fashion, baring his breast, and invited the captain to "shoot and be damned." The latter immediately complied with the first of the challenge and the man received "a

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17 Corney, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-41; Astor Papers, Pigot, March 22, 1814, to Ebbets.

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*; Corney, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-41.

bullet cut in four pieces" in his right shoulder. He fell instantly, crying out that he had been murdered, and his shipmates immediately prepared to avenge him. However, they did not pay proper heed to the old maxim, "First catch your hare," and while they were engaged in "rigging a whip to hang the captain forthwith to the yardarm," their intended victim, who had apparently fired away with that single shot any fighting spirit he may have possessed, jumped into one of the native canoes which hung about every ship among the Islands and was paddled to shore, where the king took him under protection. The wounded man was also taken on shore by several of the crew, who swore to be revenged, but the terrible nature of the projectile plus the absence of efficient medical attention made his wound hopeless; mortification set in, and, declining to have his arm amputated, after lingering a few days he died. The captain having thus deserted the ship, William J. Pigot, the supercargo, took command, "got one Adams to navigate and some islanders to work the ship," including some who were acquainted on the Northwest Coast and especially a "Black fellow by Name of *Joe*," and sailed for the coast of California, leaving Jennings and five of the crew on shore, the former declaring his intention of taking the mutineers to England for trial. Some time later H. M. S. *Cherub*, Captain Tucker, touched at Hawaii, flying American colors, which lured the *Forester's* people on board where they were detained, "while," says Peter Corney, "their late captain kept out of the way," whether from fear of the American flag, of the vengeance of some member of the crew, or of legal proceedings for the death of the boatswain, is not mentioned.<sup>20</sup> In July, 1814, Captain Jennings was still on Hawaii,<sup>21</sup> but later he went to Canton in the *Isaac Todd*, where on March 28, 1815, he was made captain of the schooner *Columbia*, owned by Inglis, Ellice & Co. and McTavish, Fraser & Co., in place of Captain Arthur Robison, resigned, Peter Corney being his second mate. The latter, in a tone which contains a hint of apology for some of his superior's exploits on the *Forester*, dismisses the subject with these words: "I sailed upwards of three years with him on board the *Columbia*, and found him to be every way a proper person to command a ship in those seas."<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, Captain Pigot, who had sailed for California even before the boatswain's death was known, "after a short passage,

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*; Astor Papers, Pigot, March 22, 1814, to Ebbets. According to the log of the *Atahualpa*, "Seven Mutiniers... were put on shore at Owyhee."

<sup>21</sup> McClellan, Edwin North, "John M. Gamble," *Report of Hawaiian Historical Society*, 1926, p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> Corney, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-41.

saw Bodega on the Coast of New albion." There he found a Russian settlement under the command of Governor Kuskov and "purchas'd 3400 skins at their usual rates \$1 for large and  $\frac{3}{4}$  p small." After leaving Bodega he traded at various places along the coast and had his cargo been properly assorted could have sold \$50-60,000 worth, "but unfortunately the very articles that was laid in for this Market does not suit at all." However, he believes that "his friends" would be satisfied with what he had so far done and comforted himself and them with the assurance that at any rate he had "shav'd th Padres well."

At the date of this letter, March 22, 1814, he was on his way northward and had intended to stop at Columbia River, but, as he said, "e're this, that place is in our possession,"<sup>23</sup> the N West company will of course monopolise all that part of the coast—H M ship Raccoon & Ship Isaac Todd, arrived at Monterey on their way to C.R.—When I was at St Louis." In consequence he intended to go on north to Sitka, possibly stopping on the way at the Islands, since, he remarks gloomily, "I must endeavor to *spin* this, small *Cargo* to the best advantage—I have no doubt but I shall make a great voyage for my friends—but a paltry pittance for myself—indeed it was hardly worth my coming for—"<sup>24</sup> However, Pigot soon gave up any intention he may have had of stopping at the Islands on his way northward, for on April 3, 1814, word reached the settlement at Fort George, formerly Astoria, by the Indian chief Coalpo, "arrived from a trip to Gray's Harbor" that two "ships" were trading at "Queenhithe," one the "Packee," the other the "Forester." Before Coalpo left, the *Forester* had already sailed for an unknown destination.<sup>25</sup>

When Pigot and the *Forester* arrived at Sitka, he found Hunt and the *Pedler* already there. The latter, with the clerks Halsey, Farnham, and Seton, had embarked on the *Pedler* in February, 1814, and finally left the Columbia River about April 1, "While there (at Sitka), a sail under British colors appeared, and Mr. Hunt sent Mr. Seton to ascertain who she was. She turned out to be the 'Forester,' Captain Pigott, a repeating signal ship (?) and letter-of-marque, sent from England in company of a fleet intended

23 "In our possession." This phrase in itself would indicate either that Pigot was an Englishman or that he wished to appear so to anyone who might read this letter. As a matter of fact, he was of English birth, though apparently long domiciled in America—as far as a sea-captain may be said to possess a home. The exigencies of wartime makes his phraseology frequently very cryptic. Never does he mention Astor by name during that period, though frequently he does so by indirection.

24 Astor Papers, Pigot, March 22, 1814, to Ebbets.

25 Coues, Elliott, ed., *Henry-Thompson Journals*, 3 vols. (N.Y., 1897) Vol. II, p. 864.

for the South Seas. On further acquaintance with the captain, Mr. Seton (from whom I derive these particulars) learned a fact which has never before been published, and which will show the solicitude and perseverance of Mr. Astor. After dispatching the "Lark" from New York, fearing that she might be intercepted by the British, he sent orders to his correspondent in England to purchase and fit out a British bottom, and despatch her to the Columbia to relieve the establishment."<sup>26</sup>

Astor, in New York, anxiously awaited any news which might come as to the welfare of the vessel. Some bits seem to have filtered through. On July 11, 1814, he requested Gabriel Shaw, one of his London agents, to inform him if he got "any account of P.....," adding, "I see he has not been the most fortunate, but may yet do well."<sup>27</sup> On September 14, 1814, he wrote to another London agent, Thomas H. Wilson, in regard to the safety of the *Forester*, remarking, "I wrote the other day to our mutual friend Mr. Gabriel Shaw informing him that it was the wish of the friends of Pigot to have ten thousand pounds Sterling insured against sea risk this may be done on cargo or perhaps part of vessel & part cargo, I suppose writing to the above friend would be the same as writing to you, if it is so very well, if not then please confer with him. I am desired however to fix the premium or rather to limit it so that it shall not be more than 20 pC. say from the port you have last had accounts of her to the port from whence the vessel was fitted or if that cannot be done to C..... (Canton) at the premium mentioned."<sup>28</sup> Apparently fresh word must have arrived between the date of the above letter and the first of the next month, since two letters of October 1 and 4 to Wilson countermanded the request "to insure for our friend Ten thousand pounds," if not already done, until further directions, since "I have some reason to believe that Mr. P. has arrived safe from his voyage." The second letter requested that G. S. (Gabriel Shaw) should also be notified. However, if insurance could be obtained at 15%, Wilson was given

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26 Franchere, Gabriel, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America*, pp. 369-370. Neither Seton nor Franchere seems to have wondered how the captain of a British privateer could know so much of Astor's secret plans, still less to have suspected that this so well-informed captain was the man who had been selected to manage that "British bottom," despatch by Astor's "solicitude and perseverance." Bancroft, in mentioning this incident, comments on what he terms the *Pedler's* good fortune in encountering this British letter-of-marque in a neutral rather than on the high seas.

27 Astor Papers. Letter book i, John Jacob Astor, N. Y., July 11, 1814, to Gabriel Shaw, London.

28 *Ibid.*, John Jacob Astor, N.Y., September 14, 1814, to Thomas H. Wilson, London.

leave to proceed as previously requested.<sup>29</sup> Apparently Astor was late in countermanding his order for insurance, for a letter of December 24, 1814, acknowledged the receipt of a letter from Wilson of October 18, 1814, informing Astor of his "having effected insurance for one of my friends which is very well."<sup>30</sup> In the above letters, Astor preserves throughout the fiction that this insurance is being obtained for "a friend", or by "the friends" of Captain Pigot, his own interest being not so much concealed as agreeably ignored.

When Pigot arrived at Norfolk Sound to sell the remainder of his cargo to that "most Noble scoundrel," Governor Baranoff. "it was with the pleasing anticipation of making the fortune of myself and friends." However, upon consulting with Hunt, he discovered that, owing to a series of unfortunate mistakes and misunderstandings, his plans would have to be drastically revised. His intentions had previously been "to have clos'd the sales at shetka, to proceed immediately to Canton, taken a return Cargo, for California and shetka by which means "from a moderate calculation" the original investment, would have neated 400-00 dollars in Canton, which would have been the greatest voyage ever made to the Pacific—I also contemplated, either to purchase or charter a *Country* ship "I could have done it"<sup>31</sup> for the purpose of procuring a cargo of Sandal Wood; from Tamaahmaah for payment in dollars—" But the air of New Archangle soon dissipated these delicately-tinted if somewhat misty plans. From a tangle of maledictions against the "cursed Lark alias Magpye—... *Rapeljie* that Loggerhead *Marshall* & that puppy *Boash*"<sup>32</sup>—these last named persons evidently being members of the *Lark's* crew and probably her officers—we are able to glean something of the cause for his displeasure. Although out of respect for his employer's intended Canton agent, Nicholas Gouverneur Ogden, who had come out in the *Lark*, he abstained from applying to him any terms of an opprobrious personal nature, it is clear that he considered "Mr. O—" the author of most of his misfortunes. "What did Mr. O—come for—did he come to watch me, or did he come, to ruin me—was I not competent to the under-

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, John Jacob Astor, N. Y., October 1 and 4, 1814, to Thomas H. Wilson, London. This news of Pigot's safe arrival may have come either from the Hawaiian Islands, where he arrived early in November, 1813, or from Sitka, which he reached probably in April, 1814.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Astor, December 24, 1814, to Wilson.

<sup>31</sup> Pigot seems to have had an inordinate affection for what would appear to be the somewhat excessive use of superfluous punctuation marks. His quotation marks, for example, appear to have been employed principally for purposes of emphasis.

<sup>32</sup> Marshall was the *Lark's* second mate, by whose carelessness that vessel is said to have been lost. He is also said to have been one of Astor's nephews. "Boash" may have been William Bush, to whom Astor wrote a friendly and fatherly letter on the assumption that he was at Canton. I know nothing of "Rapeljie."



taking—if not why send me—I did not seek it—” The matter finally reduced itself to this. The success of the voyages depended in large measure upon keeping secret the fact that the *Forester*, though under the British flag, was an American-owned ship. Should her real ownership once become known, she would become a fair prey to the British cruisers and letters-of-marque then swarming in the Pacific and blockading Canton, even as her British colors made her a conspicuous mark for the less numerous but still active vessels of the United States, though a capture by one of the latter would doubtless have ended in the vessel being released upon the proper representations. Such a capture would, however, nonetheless wreck the purpose of the voyage. Despite this necessity for secrecy, Ogden gave a letter to John Young, the Hawaiian king’s adviser, to be handed to Captain Pigot, which was done “publicly in the Cabin; which I assure you created no small degree of surprise,” Young blandly remarking, to make his knowledge of the circumstances more obvious, that Pigot “had been expected sometime.” Young’s awareness of the situation forced Pigot to make him in some degree his confidant. In this capacity, Young was requested to deliver any future letters privately. Upon departing from Hawaii, Pigot “Wrote Mr. O—Thro Mr. E—”<sup>33</sup> who gave it to “Young—requesting him to forward it as from an old acquaintance—what do you think became of that letter. *It was expos’d at Woa-hoo.*<sup>34</sup> and to crown all Mr. H<sup>35</sup> proceeded to the Damn’d river and before he was aware of the transfer their—expos’d the whole to that rascal McD—<sup>36</sup> gracious Heaven, it was too bad—”,<sup>37</sup> concluded Pigot, rather mildly, having apparently exhausted himself in his preliminary maledictions. It is of course obvious that, with information which, to judge from Pigot’s alarm, must have been of a very pertinent character, strewn from the Hawaiian Islands to the Columbia River, the *Forester’s* British flag became of quite negligible value so far as protection from British vessels were concerned, and that any attempt to enter Canton harbor would be commercial suicide.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Ebbets, beyond much question.

<sup>34</sup> Oahu.

<sup>35</sup> Wilson Price Hunt, Astor’s partner and confidential agent at the Columbia River.

<sup>36</sup> Duncan McDougall, another of Astor’s partners, who was the principal in selling the post and property of the Pacific Fur Company at a nominal price to the North West Company. Pigot’s estimate of his character would seem to agree with that of Irving, but since it was probably derived from information given by Hunt, who seems to have systematically made McDougall the official Astorian scapegoat, too much weight should not be allowed this judgment.

<sup>37</sup> Astor Papers, Pigot, “St. Peter & St. Paul, (Kamschatka)”, January 7, 1816, to (John Ebbets?) Although no address is attached to this letter it was undoubtedly sent to John Ebbets. The tone is the same as that of the one specifically addressed to Ebbets, March 22, 1814. Moreover, in this letter reference is made to another sent to the same addressee “two years since” “Via Vera Cruz”, which answers the description of the letter of March 22, 1814.

Consequently, consulting Hunt on every point, Captain Pigot devised a plan for his further procedure. The trade at Sitka was very unpromising. "Barenoff would give no more, then \$2 p gallon for the rum and for a box of fine Irish Linnens, 15\$ p peice—because the great *Capt Davis* ("one of the Lords of the Pacific" as they are styld," I mean the Boston "folks—*your very good friends*") sold him cotton shirting at 25\$—but it came *from Boston*—" This seems to imply that the Bostonian William Heath Davis had sold the governor shirting at a rather inordinate price and that the latter was striving to recoup his losses by reversing the process with Captain Pigot. The captain continued: "I therefore proceeded to California with the Rum and Linnens, and fully explor'd that coast, even to Loretta, in the Gulf, where foreign ships had never been before—they had a pretty good stock of Linen, but I made out to barter for Bullion & Pearl, at the rate of 10\$ to 100 dollars per peice—".

The vessel suffered the usual viscissitudes of wind and weather. In November, 1814, while in the Gulf of California, the brig ran ashore because of the inaccuracy of charts "but soon got off apparently without damage—the next day, beating to windward in quest of Loretta, & blowing very hard—in attempting to veer—we lost our rudder—at the upper gudgeon—with the assistance of sweeps, abaft, we got her before the wind & in about two hours, brought up with the two bowers in a small cove in a desolate Island, that was under our Lea—" After concluding his business in California, Pigot wintered among the desolate islands along the coast, "intending to proceed to shetka in the Spring."

In April, 1815, they left Point Conception.<sup>38</sup> But during the latter part of the previous month the *Forester's* company had a curious experience. In the journal of Alexander Adams, the brig's sailing master, we find this account: "Brig *Forester*, the 24th of March, 1815, in the sea near the coast of California, latitude 32° 45' north, longitude 233° 3' west. During a strong wind from W.N.W., and rainy weather, we descried this morning, at six o'clock, a ship at a small distance, the disorder of whose sails convinced us that it stood in need of assistance. We immediately directed our course to it, and recognized the vessel in distress to be a Japanese, which had lost her mast and rudder. I was sent by the captain on board and found in the ship only three dying (sic) Japanese, the captain and two sailors. I instantly had the unfortun-

38 Astor Papers, Pigot, January 7, 1816, to [Ebbets?]

ate men carried to our brig, where they were perfectly recovered, after four months' careful attendance. We learned from these people, that they came from the port of Osaco (in Japan), bound to another commercial town, but had been surprised immediately on their departure by a storm, and had lost their mast and rudder. They had been, up to this day, a sport of the waves for seventeen months; and of thier crew of five and thirty men only three had survived, who would have died of hunger."<sup>39</sup>

"In latd 36° n Longt 223° East," says Pigot, "we lost our rudder a second time, 900 miles (sic) distant from any land—We bore up for Bodega w (h)ere we arrived in six days- from the Russian settlement their we got materials for a new one, which our Carpenter soon completed, and on the 4th June, left Bodega for Norfolk sound; at which place, we arrived in fourteen days."<sup>40</sup>

Here it had been Pigot's intention to sell the vessel and the rum for bills on St. Petersburg, but this could not be done. It then occurred to him to go to Okhotsk and there either sell the skins, rum, and vessel, or sell only the cargo, and himself proceed to St. Petersburg with the bills in payment, while Ebbets would go in the brig to the Hawaiian Islands, dispose of the vessel to the king for sandalwood, and wait there for the arrival of a vessel belonging to Astor or one on which the wood could be sent as freight to a Canton market.

As "The Russian American Companys ship Couvaroff was at Shetka; commanded and officer'd from the Russian Navy, Clever fellows, perfect Gentlemen," Pigot determined to counsel with them on this plan. They had a bond of sympathy in their common dislike for Baranoff and the officers were consequently glad to assist Pigot to a market which the governor declined to furnish. They advised him that his prospects at Okhotsk would be good, and that, if all the skins could not be disposed of there, the residue might be taken to the interior, "even to the frontiers of China—"Kaitkta". This plan had already been at least tentatively adopted, so after securing a letter of introduction to the governor of Okhotsk from the *Souvaroff's* commander, the *Forester* left the sound, July 31, 1815,<sup>41</sup> the general impression being that her destination was

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>40</sup> Another account says: "Thursday 25th June...at 2 P.M. saw a Brig in the Sound, at 6 A. M. she came in, proved to be the English Brig Forrester, Capt. Pigot last from Bo Diego...." (Ms. book, Mass. Hist. Soc., Boston, Log of the *Atahualpa*, June 25, 1815.)

<sup>41</sup> According to the log of the *Atahualpa* the *Forester* left Norfolk Sound on the last of June instead of the last of July. Could Pigot have been writing from memory without reference to the ship's log—which indeed was probably not available, since it is likely that it had gone south in the *Forester*? It will be observed that there is also a slighter discrepancy between the two accounts of the date of the *Forester's* arrival.

Japan, since the shipwrecked Japanese were on board. "In thirty days we were up with Cape Copatka, (Kamschatka) after which, we were baffled with continual fogs, about the Kurile Islands, untill the season become (to—stricken out) so late, for entering the sea of Ochotsk; that I thought it imprudent to attempt it. I bore up for this place in order to spend the winter and (make: interlineated) a further attempt in the spring—on the 12th Sept. we anchor'd in this Harbor (St. Peter and St. Paul, Kamtchatka)".

Here Pigot met with the greatest personal hospitality imaginable, coupled, however, with an exceedingly unpromising commercial situation. He wished to sell the vessel and store the cargo, preparatory to transporting it to Okotsk in one of the vessels which would go there in June, but the governor not only declined to buy the vessel, saying he had no power, but even expressed the wish that she should not remain in the harbor.

Pigot, therefore, not wishing to expose such a valuable cargo to the risk of capture, purchased a small cargo from a Mr. Clark, agent for Peter Dobel, the latter being then in St Petersburg while the former was at Kamchatka with a large cargo belonging to his employer. This invoice, for which Pigot gave his note, "payable in Ochotsk, twelve months after date amounting to 21. 948 roubles (assignats)", was loaded on the brig, which was put under the command of Ebbets, his orders being to proceed to California, raise a sum sufficient to pay the men off at the Hawaiian Islands, and there, if possible, sell the vessel for sandalwood," in the expectation that something might arrive from your quarter—but should he not be able to accomplish the thing—he is requested to make a bold push for Canton." Ebbets accordingly sailed from Kamchatka, November 4, 1815, leaving Pigot to take care of the seal-skins.

In a few days, Pigot wrote, "Mr. Eudin, agent for the Russian American Company at this place made me an offer for the seal skins, payable in bills on the company at Petersburg—after making inquiry of the Governor to know whether he was sufficiently authorized, I concluded a bargain for the whole, "say 61140 Seal Skins for 900,000 roubles (assignats). payable as follows. 200,000 roubles, three months after sight. the remainder Eighteen months after date—I thought it would be better to do this; than to run the risk of a market. and the dangers of the sea— besides the many obstacles, that might be thrown in the way, should I attempt to carry them to Irkutsk or Kaitka— & the rates had become very troublesome.—" So, although Pigot might have wished the term

had been shorter, and although his rum account was unsatisfactory—"five puncheons I have sold here & a few to the different ships, that I have met with—the balance has been *stolen leak'd out & drank out*"—he still felt that "the voyage is concluded and should the bills be paid, which I presume there can be no doubt of something handsome may still be made." He found it a matter for regret, however, that the price of the rum had not "been invested in low priced Irish linen, it would have differ'd 30,000 dollars."

This letter Pigot sent by Russell Farnham, one of the clerks belonging to the deceased Pacific Fur Company, who had come out in the *Tonquin* and whom Pigot had taken on board from the *Pedlar* at Sitka. Pigot had taken him on because he was a good traveller and expert in the care of peltry, but as his services in the latter connection were no longer required, it was determined to make use of his first mentioned ability. With Farnham was sent "the first sett of exchange— Andrew Eudin's draft on the Russian American Company dated December 11th 1815. (old style) three months after sight payable to my order, for 200,000 roubles (assignats). Also his draft on the said company, payable Eighteen months after date for 667,000 roubles (assignats) which I have enclosed to Messrs Meyers, Bruxner & Co, of Petersburg knowing them to be the correspondents of our friend in London requesting them to hold the amount to his order—the balance, say 31,000 roubles (having deducted 2,000 roubles for damage by rats &c &c I hold in reserve for the payment of my note to Clark, & for other purposes, not knowing what may happen to (h—stricken through) me, between this & Petersburg—" Pigot also retained 103 assorted land otters, 120 otter tails, 75 land otters (apparently distinguished in some way from the 103), 61 beavers, 42¼ ounces of pearl, 16½ ounces of gold and 61 pounds of silver, all of which he expects to take with him to Okhotsk, to sell either there or in the interior of Russia.

Pigot also took occasion to warn his correspondent (that is, of course, in reality Astor) not to make any more shipments to Sitka: "the company have taken *new ground*—no more skins are to be sold to foreigners. California supplies them with provisions. If your *Magpye* had arrived safe, (should-stricken through) she would have made a singing voyage; a new Governor is appointed. "Hargenmaister I believe." *contracts*—Branoff will make no more, and if he did, he does not care on jot about them."

Pigot concluded with some personal matters, including an ac-

count of his life at Kamchatka, his "*bachelor's* hall, at the government house, the Governor having politely offer'd it to me, & remov'd to his own private dwelling—sometimes we give *dinners* sometimes *dance* and play Boston for copeeks—for (the: interlineated) benefit of the invalid soldiers—the other night we had a play—the "Miser"— which I assure you would pass off very well in many country towns— in short the good people do everything in their power to give pleasure— the Governor (Roodakoff)— is my particular friend, with him and his amiable lady, I spend the most of my time— you have seen him, he was formerly, third lieutenant of the *Diana*— In about twenty days I (take—stricken through) make the tour of Kamschatka—who knows but *Pigot travels* may become conspicuous."

Turning his thought toward home, he enquired concerning the education of his "darling boys," gave his respects to "your amiable wife & son— *perhaps children*," and expressed the hope that "yours, and our good old mother in law" may "live to enjoy many happy new years," which would seem to suggest that Pigot and his correspondent "John" (John Ebbets) had married sisters. A Mr. August Nicoll and a Mr. Corp also received his regards, but he was especially solicitous concerning "our friend in the large house in *broadway*, tell him the confidence he has plac'd in me, will not be misapplied, at least it will not be my fault I have done all that man could do, placed, in my situation— had I been *trusted* with a voyage before I might have come out to more advantage." The gentleman to whom he referred in this cryptic fashion, not altogether unmixed with some slight vexation, was, of course, none other than his employer, John Jacob Astor.

Apparently overcome by thoughts of home and far-away friends, or possibly having a foreboding of future tribulation, Pigot broke down in the last dozen or so lines, lamenting his unhappy fate, cursing the war, complaining of his health, and declaring that his sole hope was to spend his few remaining days with his family. Had he known what the near future had in store for him his outcries would have been altogether excusable.<sup>42</sup>

It is now proper to turn our attention to Captain Richard Ebbets who had sailed for California and the Hawaiian Islands on November 4, 1815, as mentioned above, in the brig *Forester*. On December 20 of that year, according to the journal of the sailing-master, Alexander Adams, the brig was anchored in San Luis Bay

<sup>42</sup> Astor Papers, Pigot, January 7, 1816, to Ebbets (?)

near Point Conception, California. On this day a boat-load of men from the brig were lured on shore by several Spaniards' driving up cattle as if to trade. When the vessel's men had landed, twelve soldiers, who had been lying in ambush, rode up in an attempt to take them prisoner and it was only by great activity that they escaped capture<sup>43</sup> and probably consequent imprisonment in a Spanish jail for the common offense of illegal trading.

On January 16, 1816, according to Alexander Adams' journal, the *Forester* came in sight of the island of Hawaii. One of the reasons for going to the Hawaiian Islands was to attempt to sell the vessel for sandalwood. On April 6, 1816, "The king of these islands having a strong passion to purchase the brig, Captain Ebbets and myself was accordingly deputed to treat with him, but he would not purchase her unless I would enter his service as her commander. I resultingly acquiesced, (the vessel) having been given up to him at Karahakua and called by him *Kaahumanu* in honor of his queen."<sup>44</sup> Thus ended the career of the *Forester*, under that name and as one of Astor's vessels. The price given by the king seems to be nowhere stated. An item in a New York paper contributed by a Captain Edes, just from Canton, states that he "Left at Woahoo, 29th March, British brig *Forrester*, Ebberts (sic), taking in provisions for King Tammaamaah, to whom the captain expected to sell the brig for \$9,000 and 8,000 sticks of sandalwood." Even were this account correct it would mean little, for sandalwood was always measured by the picul or 133 $\frac{1}{3}$  pounds and not by the meaningless "stick."<sup>45</sup> Whatever the price, it would seem to have been large, in view of the king's anxiety to possess her, described above.

It had been expected, in sending the *Forester* to the Islands to be sold for sandalwood, that some vessel would arrive from New York to take that commodity to Canton. These expectations were not to be disappointed. On December 27, 1815 the *Enterprise*, Captain Ebbets (evidently John Ebbets, not Richard Ebbets of the *Forester*) which had sailed from New York late in June of that year,<sup>46</sup> arrived at Oahu, bound to the Northwest Coast, at the same time that the *Pedler*, the vessel Wilson P. Hunt had purchased in

43 Alexander, W. D., "The Relations between the Hawaiian Islands and Spanish America in Early Times," *Papers of the Hawaiian Historical Society*, No. 1 (January 28, 1892) p. 8.

44 Adams, Captain Alexander, "Occurrences on board the brig *Forester* of London, from Conception toward the Sandwich Islands," *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual*, 1909, pp. 66-71. Selections from Adams' log book, January 16, 1816-December 26, 1818.

45 *New York Gazette and General Advertiser*, November 15, 1816, p. 2, col. 2.

46 *Ibid.*, June 29, 1815, p. 2, col. 4.

order to bring home the Astorians, also arrived from Hawaii.<sup>47</sup> She had just previously been at Norfolk Sound.<sup>48</sup> Thus Adams and Richard Ebbets—or rather the latter, since the former had entered the king's service—had two opportunities by which the sandalwood could be sent to Canton. The latter opportunity, however, was probably not utilized, since the *Pedler* went on to Canton early in January and there was probably not sufficient time to load the sandalwood even had Ebbets wished to send it by that vessel. The *Pedler*, by the way, arrived in New York on October 17, 1816, thus closing that chapter of the Astoria enterprise. But another chapter—a long one—the one with which we have for some time been engaged, was still in progress. At the time that the *Pedler* sailed for Canton, the *Enterprise* was shortly to depart for the Northwest coast.<sup>49</sup> In January, 1816, she had sailed to Atooi (Kauai)<sup>50</sup> and was still there in February, where only the assistance of King "Tamoree" (Kaumalii) prevented her from being lost in a violent gale. Presumably soon after this she sailed to the Northwest Coast. Early in September she was back at the Islands and on the 8th sailed to Oahu in company with the *Forester* (now the *Kaahumanu*). On the 11th she arrived, and up to the 24th the crews of both vessels were engaged "landing guns from the *Enterprise*." On October 27 the *Enterprise* sailed for Canton, doubtless taking the *Forester's* price in sandalwood,<sup>51</sup> and arriving December 1, 1816.<sup>52</sup> Early in December Richard Ebbets arrived in Canton as a passenger on the ship "O' Kane", Captain McNeal of Boston, from the Northwest Coast by way of the Islands.<sup>53</sup> We hear nothing more of him. Now that we have seen the *Forester* sold for sandalwood and the sandalwood conveyed to market, her sailing master in the service of the king of the Hawaiian Islands, and her clerk and captain Richard Ebbets disappear from the picture, it is proper to return to her supercargo and captain William J. Pigot, whom we left at Kamchatka, January 7, 1816. We first received word from him in a letter of August 1, 1817,<sup>54</sup> but from this and from other

47 Barnard, Charles H., *A Voyage round the World during the Years 1812...1816* (N. Y., 1829) p. 221. John Meek, later an Astor captain, may have come out with John Ebbets in some capacity, for he is mentioned as having introduced turkeys into Hawaii in 1815, coming from Coquimbo, Chile, in the *Enterprise*.

48 Corney, *op.cit.*, p. 41; Mass. Hist. Soc., Boston, Log of the *Atahualpa*, Norfolk Sound, July 29, August 3, October 2, 1815.

49 *N. Y. Gaz. and Gen. Adv.*, October 17, 1816, p. 2, col. 1.

50 Barnard, *op.cit.*, p. 240.

51 Adams, *loc. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

52 *N. Y. Gaz. and Gen. Adv.*, March 29, 1817, p. 2, cols 1 and 2.

53 *Ibid.*, March 29, 1817, p. 2, col 1 and 2. Ebbets was still at Oahn, September 21, 1816 (Porter, Kenneth W., *John Jacob Astor: Business Man*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1931) vol. II, p. 1149).

54 Astor Papers, (copy) Pigot, "Ochotzk," August 1, 1817, to Meyer & Bruxner (St. Petersburg).



later letters we can piece together something of his unhappy experiences during the interim of over eighteen months.

It seems that upon the first bill on the Russian American Company, given by their agent Andrew Eudin, becoming due and being presented ("dated December 11th 1815. (old style) three months after sight"), which was done by Meyer & Bruxner to whom it had been delivered by Russell Farnham (who sailed from Copenhagen for Baltimore about October 16, 1816, the date of his passport,) <sup>55</sup> the Company declined to pay, alleging that the quantity of skins was too great and the price too high for them to sanction their agent's bargain. When Pigot learned of this he at once hastened to St. Petersburg, where he found that it would be impossible to persuade the Company either to accept their agent's bargain or "to enter into negotiations with him for a sale on equitable reasonable terms." In this they were assisted by a ukase of "August, 1802, which interdicted the importation of Seal Skins at Kamtschatka," though it had not been published there. He knew that should he petition the Czar upon the matter, his plea would be referred as a commercial matter to the Minister of Finance, where the ukase above-mentioned plus the Company's influence would probably cause it to be thrown out, thus putting the property into greater danger than before. If not, he would merely receive the answer "that he might take his redress on the Comp'y by the Law," which could result in nothing but a long suit with an ultimately unfavorable decision.

Knowing or being made aware of these facts, Pigot, anxious to extricate himself and the skins with as little loss as possible, engaged the British Ambassador "by an official note to the Secretary of State Count Nesselrode to convey his Petition to the Sovereign, setting forth; that he might with his Seal Skins be put on exactly the same footing as he stood on his arrival at Peter Paulovsky, vizt, that without any expence to him the Fur should be sent back from Ochotsk to that place & delivered to him there." From the above it appears that Andrew Eudin had conveyed the seal skins from St. Peter and St. Paul to Okhotsk and that the Company was using Pigot's innocent violation of the ukase of August, 1802, not only to extricate itself from a bad bargain but also to lay upon Pigot the extra transportation charges involved by their agent's bargain and the Company's refusal to abide thereby.

To this petition the British Ambassador received no official reply. Instead, the Department of Finance on May 7, 1817, ad-

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<sup>55</sup> Holt, Orrin S., "Russell Farnham," *Journal of the Illinois Historical Society*, 1916-1917, vol. IX, pp. 284-291.

dressed to Meyer & Bruxner at St. Petersburg, correspondents of one of Astor's agents, to whom Eudin's bills had been entrusted, an answer, refusing to grant Pigot's request. This house had the previous month refused to deliver the bills when the Department of Finance had insinuated that His Imperial Majesty would allow the "reexportation of the Fur, on Pigot paying the Transport Charges *to & from Ochotska Sea.*" The italics are mine. Meyer & Bruxner had once remonstrated against this decision but were able to obtain only the remission "that on our giving bond on your account for the demand of the Ochotsky Government *vz R 35,420*—if Pigot should ultimately be condemned to pay the money, Eudin's Bills were to remain in our Hands, with a Pledge on our part not to give them over to any other person, until we should be informed by Pigot, of his being put into the full repossession of his Seal Skins."

For further information the enquirer was referred to Sir Daniel Bayley, then in England, who was well acquainted with the circumstances. Meyer & Bruxner went on to assure their correspondent that all had been done, both by their house and by the British Ambassador, that possibly could be done, and pointed out that the Company's "abominable conduct" had precedents in the actions even of officers in the royal navy, such as Admiral Suravin, who had once captured a ship belonging to Israel Thorndike "with clear & distinct neutral Papers," all subsequent protests having been vain. In behalf of the Company it was stated that had the sales price "been more moderate, & the quantity within the compass of enabling the Company, beside the same Fur of their own, to dispose of it at Kiachta in a couple of years, it is highly probable they would have accepted Eudin's Bills." Pigot had left for Okhotsk some time previously, though word of his arrival had not yet been received.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Astor Papers, (copy) extracts of a letter from Meyer & Bruxner, St. Petersburg, October 23 and 26, 1817, (to one of Astor's London agents.)

The Russian American Company's refusal to abide by the bargain of their agent may have had a side other than that which appears in the correspondence of Astor's captain and the correspondents of his London agent. A historian of the Russian American Company endeavors to put the matter in a different light. He writes: "By some means Pigot succeeded in selling his furs to the Kamtchatka Commissioner of the Company at the rate of 15 roubles per skin (having purchased them at Novo-Archangelsk at 2r. 50k.), amounting to 61,000 roubles. The General Administration justly objected to paying 35,000 roubles for carrying the furs to Kamtchatka and then be compelled to ship them to Okhotsk in one of their own vessels. (*Istoricheskoe Obosranie Obrazovanie Rossiysko-Amerikanskoi Kompaniy, i deistvia eya do nastoyashchavo vremeny, sostavil P. Tikhmeneff*: Chast I, Historical Review of the Origin of the Russian American Company and its doings up to the present time, compiled by P. Tikhmeneff, part i, St. Petersburg, 1861, translation in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.) There are various inconsistencies, explicit or implicit, between Tikhmeneff's account and that found in Pigot's letters. Pigot never states specifically the source from which his seal-skins were obtained. According to Tikhmeneff they were purchased from the Russian American Company at New Archangle. The price at which Pigot sold his skins to Eudin

However, Pigot had reached Okhotsk nearly three months before the dates of the above letters, on July 27, to be exact. Writing to Meyer & Bruxner, he stated that he had received from Captain Minitzky, the Governor, "an Ukass, wherein permission is granted to take the skins away, by paying all expences or giving Security for the same, & by giving up the Bills of Exchange." This decision, he stated, was "nothing more than what the Senate decreed last year, & plainly shows that Interest will prevail over justice, altho' it is left to a Committee of Ministers to determine." However, since nothing better seemed in prospect, he had notified the governor that he would remove the skins as soon as an opportunity offered—which, in view of the lateness of the season, no vessel having yet arrived, might not be until the next year—until which he hoped there would be no objection to leaving the skins in the government storehouse and would decline to give up the bill until the decision was known. This letter was sent by a "Mr. Shredney, a naval officer," well acquainted with the affair, who, as such, we are to infer was as hostile to the Russian American Company as most men of his class.<sup>57</sup>

From Pigot at Okotsk we may now double back to the Hawaiian Islands and to Alexander Adams, whom we left at Oahu late in October, 1816. Early in 1817 Adams, with a crew of about ten natives and ten white men, had taken a cargo of sandalwood to Canton for Kamehameha in the *Kaahumanu, ci-devant Forester*.<sup>58</sup> The brig returned October 16<sup>59</sup> after a voyage which inefficient

(61,140 for 900,000 roubles) was approximately 15r. per skin, which agrees with Tikhmeneff's account. But 61,140 skins could not be sold at 15r., or even be bought at 2r.50k., and bring in only 60,000 r. Of course in Pigot's account the roubles are described as assignats whereas no such specification is made in Tikhmeneff's version. But if Tikhmeneff's roubles were not assignats, this would introduce a variation in their price as sold to Eudin, as compared with Pigot's account. The implication in Tikhmeneff's account is that the variation between the purchase price of the skins at New Archangel and their sales price at Kamchatka was 35,000r., but more than 60,000 skins, purchased at 2r.50k. and sold at 15r., would account for a much greater "cost of transportation" between New Archangel and Kamchatka. Possibly this 35,000r., the alleged cost of transportation from New Archangel, is an error for the 35,420r. demanded by the government of Alshotshs from Pigot to pay for conveying the seal skins from Kamchatka to Okhotsk and back again, as mentioned on p 21 of the article. But what Tikhmeneff is trying to bring out is clear, namely, that skins purchased from the Russian American Company at New Archangel were sold to that same Company at Kamchatka at a tremendous and unjustifiable advance on the purchase price. If this is true, the Company can hardly be blamed for taking advantage of a ukase to extricate itself from its bargain. And if the facts were in general as stated by Tikhmeneff, it becomes necessary to account for Eudin's willingness to make a bargain so unfavorable to his Company. Did Pigot, perchance, bribe Eudin to enter into this agreement? Or did Eudin enter into it on his own volition, hoping to obtain the skins for the Company for little or nothing, knowing of the Czar's ukase and convinced that the Company would make use of it to extricate itself from the bargain? In either case Pigot must have overreached himself by entering into a bargain which he must have suspected was too favorable to him to make likely that the other party would carry out its terms without protest.

<sup>57</sup> Astor Papers, (copy) Pigot, August 1, 1817, to Meyer & Bruxner.

<sup>58</sup> Corney, *op. cit.*, p. 71. This says that Adams sailed February 22, 1817, but according to a member of his crew, William Sumner, Sr., chief mate on this voyage, the sailing date was March 12. ("Land Customs of Early Settlers in Hawaii," *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1907*, Thomas G. Thrums, ed., Honolulu 1906, p. 70)

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

management or some more culpable cause had rendered exceedingly unprofitable. From his return up to May 13, 1818, Adams busied himself variously in the king's service, but on that date he left for Kamchatka on the brig *St. Martin*, because, "according to contract with Mr. Pigot" he was "bound---to navigate here the brig *Sylph*." He arrived at Kamchatka on June 16, and from June 28 to October 15 he was engaged in fitting out the brig *Sylph* and taking on cargo for the Hawaiian Islands, where he arrived probably on November 17, though his printed journal makes it October, obviously an impossibility. With him as passenger went the brig's owner, "Col. Dobell, lady and child."<sup>60</sup> It will be remembered that Dobel was the merchant from whose agent Pigot had bought a cargo for the *Forester* on her last voyage to California.

As for Pigot, we next hear of him at Kamchatka, whither he had finally conveyed the furs which the shifty Eudin had taken to Okhotsk. The following letter shows his situation:

"St. Peter & St. Paul Kamchatsk<sup>61</sup>

October 14-26 1818

"John Jacob Astor Esqr

New York

Dear Sir

"I herewith enclose you Bill of Lading for sixty thousand six hundred & forty nine Seal Skins shipp'd by me on board the Schooner General San Martin Eliab Grimes Master bound for the Sandwich Islands, and shall embark on board that Vessel for the purpose of Joining Captain John Ebbets.— I was in hopes of giving you further information concerning what I mention'd formerly as to conducting a trade towards this Country no post having arrived as yet from Russia— However I am in hopes yet when I see Captain Ebbets, that we shall be enabled to do something yet in this quarter. In the mean time I remain

Dear Sir

yours Very respectfully

Wm. J. Pigot."

Certain comments will assist in making clearer a few points in this practically self-explanatory letter. Now that the war was some years over there was no need to write Astor in a roundabout and cryptic fashion. The seal skins—60,649 in number—were those 61,140 which he had sold to Eudin, minus the natural losses. The

<sup>60</sup> Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>61</sup> Astor Papers, Pigot, "St. Peter and St. Paul Kamchatsk," October 14-26, 1818, to John Jacob Astor, N. Y.

"Schooner General San Martin" was undoubtedly the brig. *St. Martin* in which Adams had sailed to Kamchatka. Eliab Grimes was a well-known captain in the Pacific trade of this period, connected with the Boston firm of Marshall & Wildes.

Pigot undoubtedly arrived safely at the Hawaiian Islands some time late in 1818, for on January 20, 1819, the French explorer Roquefeuil mentioned the kindness he received from various American captains, among them "Mr. Pigot, come some years before on the *Forester*, and arrived some months ago from Kamtchatka, after having crossed the continent twice."<sup>62</sup> Whether Pigot succeeded at once in carrying out his intention to join Captain John Ebbets seems open to question. According to James Hunnewell, on September 20, 1818, in Honolulu harbor, there was "Left in port--- Enterprise, Ebetts, for Canton in two months."<sup>63</sup> If the *Enterprise* actually did not sail for two months, or until about November 20, it is possible that Pigot, sailing from Kamchatka in the *General San Martin* on October 26 (new style) or thereabouts might have arrived before his departure. On the other hand, according to another account by the same gentleman, Mr. Dorr, one of his associates, "embarked---in the ship *Enterprise* to China, with our sandalwood" in September, 1818.<sup>64</sup> This, however, probably means only that the sandalwood was loaded on the vessel during that month. But, in any event, securing transportation for these skins to China in some Astor vessel would be only a detail.

Captain Pigot did not leave the Hawaiian Islands for some time. On December 15, 1819, he bought the *St. Martin*, the vessel in which he had come from Kamchatka, from William H. Davis and Thomas Meek for \$10,000. The schooner *St. Martin* arrived at Manila on March 21, 1820, in company with the *Sylph*, and sailed for the Hawaiian Islands on June 11.<sup>65</sup> However, Pigot sent the vessel under the command of another captain, and on April 19, 1820, was on hand to greet at Honolulu the first American Missionaries to those islands, and to furnish them with a cup of tea and supper, kindness which made a great impression on the recipients.<sup>66</sup> He was still at Honolulu on May 20, when it is recorded

<sup>62</sup> Roquefeuil, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 350.

<sup>63</sup> Hunnewell, James F., "Voyage in the Brig Bordeaux Packet, Boston to Honolulu, 1817, and Residence in Honolulu, 1817- 1818," *Papers of the Hawaiian Historical Society*, No. 8 (Honolulu, 1909) p. 18.

<sup>64</sup> Hunnewell, James, "Reminiscences," *The Friend* (Honolulu, January, 1867). Quoted in Thomas G. Thrums, "The Sandalwood Trade of Early Hawaii," *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual*, 1905, p. 55.

<sup>65</sup> Ms., State Department, Washington, D. C., Consular Records, Manila, Vol. I.

<sup>66</sup> Gulick, The Rev. and Mrs. Orramel Hinckley, *The Pilgrims of Hawaii* (N. Y. etc., 1918). p. 82, quoting from a journal supposed to have been kept by the missionary Elisha Loomis; Bingham, Hiram, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich*

that he attended a witchcraft trial.<sup>67</sup> When Astor's brig *Pedler* arrived at Oahu from New York on May 23, 1820, under the command of John Meek, Pigot was engaged as the vessel's agent. On June 23, 1820, "Tamoore" or Kamualii, vassal king of Kauai, with his son George, signed a note to Pigot and Meek for 191 piculs of sandalwood,<sup>68</sup> due them for goods purchased from the *Pedler's* cargo. The *Pedler* probably left for the Northwest Coast in the summer of 1820. We know that Pigot was at Kamchatka in September, 1820, where he delivered a letter to the governor from the recently arrived missionaries and received in response a most gracious answer to be conveyed to them. This voyage was made in the *Pedler*, which reached Oahu on her return, December 5, 1820.<sup>69</sup> However, Pigot could not have been in charge of the *Pedler* when she reached Canton on February 9, 1821,<sup>70</sup> for on February 5, at Maui, the presence was recorded of the "Brig St. Martin, Picket (sic) bound for Fanni (n)gs Islands."<sup>71</sup> We last hear of Pigot in this same connection, in the summer of 1821, when we are told: "Capt. Pigot in the St. Martin with several Americans have gone to settle Fannings Islands. There is plenty of lamar (trepang or beche de mer) and Tortoise shell at those Islands."<sup>72</sup> After this Pigot drops out of sight, though from many references in records of the early days in Hawaii we know that Alexander Adams became a permanent resident of the Islands, while John Ebbets, to whom Pigot wrote most of those letters on which this narrative is largely based, was trading in the Islands at least as late as 1829.

But with the transfer by Pigot to some China-bound Astor vessel of those seal-skins which had caused so much trouble and expense, whenever that occurred—sometime in 1819 without much doubt—ended the last scene, and that not the least interesting though hitherto the most obscure, of what it is not too much to term the Astoria tragedy.

*Islands* (Hartford, 1849) p. 95. The Schooner "St. Martins" did not arrive until August 19, 1820, under command of Captain Dean, "in distress. The crew sickly." (*Missionary Herald* Vol. XVII, p. 243).

<sup>67</sup> Gulick, *op. cit.*, p. 82. From the middle of April, 1820, when the missionaries arrived, till June 21, when the *Pedler* with Pigot on board, sailed from Oahu there is constant mention of innumerable kindnesses on Pigot's part (*Missionary Herald*, 1821 Vol. XVII, pp. 131, 132, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141).

<sup>68</sup> Lydecker, Robert C., "The Archives of Hawaii," *Papers of the Hawaiian Historical Society*, No. 13 (Honolulu, 1906) p. 21.

<sup>69</sup> Bingham, *op. cit.*, p. 118. *Missionary Herald*, 1822, Vol. XVIII, p. 202.

<sup>70</sup> Manuscript notes of Mr. Edwin B. Hewes on the trade between the North West Coast and China.

<sup>71</sup> Ms. book, Essex Institute, Salem, Log of the Schooner *Eagle*, 1820-1822, February 5, 1821.

<sup>72</sup> Ms. book, Widener Library, Harvard University, Josiah Marshall, Letters Received from Sandwich Islands and Canton, 1820-1832, John Coffin Jones, Jr., "Woahoo, Village of Hannarorah, July 6th, 1821," to Marshall & Wildes, Boston.

## Appendix

Almost or quite as many versions of the rescue of three Japanese from a drifting junk by the *Forester's* company are in circulation as there are of the *Tonquin* massacre. It seems worthwhile at this time to examine certain of these varying accounts, to trace them to their sources, and to account, if possible, for their differences.

The version quoted in the body of the narrative is taken from Otto Von Kotzebue, *A Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea and Beering's Straits...in 1815-1818*, 3 vols. (London, 1821) Vol. I., pp. 353-354, note. It is supposed to have been quoted directly from the journal of Alexander Adams, the brig's sailing master. Another account is also supposed to be based on information furnished by Adams. This is found in Charles Wolcott Brooks, *Japanese Wrecks Stranded and Picked Up Adrift in the North Pacific Ocean* (San Francisco, 1876) p. 10. It differs little from the version in Kotzebue. The longitude of the rescue is given as  $126^{\circ} 57'$  W, while cruising off Santa Barbara, which agrees with its location as stated by Kotzebue, since Brook's  $126^{\circ} 57'W$  is the same as  $233^{\circ} 3' W$  (subtracted either longitude from  $360^{\circ}$  and the result will be the other). Brooks's account states that it was blowing a gale at the time. Fourteen dead bodies were found in the hold, the survivors being the captain, carpenter and one seaman, who "by careful nursing---were well in a few days. They were on a voyage from Osako to Yedo." This account adds some details to those found in Kotzebue, which, for example, do not mention the dead bodies found in the hold, the ranks of the seamen saved, nor the junk's original destination. Doubtless the "four months" required for the survivors' recovery, as compared with the "few days" mentioned by Brooks, may be accounted for by the consideration that the shorter period sufficed only to make them "well" while the longer was required for "perfect" recovery—the elimination of all traces of their privations.

Another version appears in Pigot's letter of January 7, 1816, from Kamchatka, to John Ebbets. He mentions that the event took place "on my return last March from Cape St. Lucas, California,---about 300 miles W.S.W. from Point Conception" which is the time and location given in the two accounts derived from Adams. The period of the junk's drifting is given as "about eighteen months," which agrees quite well with the seventeen months mentioned in Kotzebue, but the original crew is described as num-

bering only fourteen, as contrasted with the "five and thirty men" mentioned in the Kotzebue account. Doubtless the bodies of those men dying earliest were thrown overboard till the survivors become too weak. Pigot may have been thinking of the fourteen bodies found on board and may also have been hampered by not having the ship's logbook at hand. On June 1, 1818, Pigot gave an account of this occurrence to the French explorer Camille de Roquefeuil who included it in *Voyage Autour du Monde*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1843?) Vol. II, p. 33. Roquefeuil mentions only Pigot as the rescuer—Adams naturally was inclined to give himself the lion's share of the credit, gives the location as 300 leagues west of California, the period of drifting as thirteen months, and the original number of the crew as seventeen. He also stresses the extreme gratitude of the rescued captain. Pigot may have recalled in his conversation with Roquefeuil that fourteen dead bodies and three living men were found on the junk and added them together to obtain the original number of the crew. The difference in the period of drifting may be the result merely of a lapse of memory and the substitution of leagues for miles a translator's error.

Still another version differs materially from all those given above. It is found in Horace Davis, *Record of Japanese Vessels Driven upon the North-West Coast of America and its Outlying Islands* (Worcester, Mass., 1872) and is based on information drawn from Alexander Forbes, *History of California* (London, 1839), pt. ii, Upper California, chap. vii, p. 299-301. This account makes the rescue take place in 1813 and mentions John Jennings as the captain, as of course he was in that year. The Japanese vessel is described as "of about 700 tons burden, one hundred and fifty miles off the northwest coast of America and abreast of Queen Charlotte's Island, about 49° of N. latitude----, they had been twice in sight of the land of America, and were driven off, Some beans still remained on which they had been sustaining themselves, and they had caught rain water for their drink." The port of departure, too, was given as on the northern coast of Japan. This account varies so widely from those based on information given by Adams and Pigot that Davis, in his book, regards the version found in Forbes as based on an incident quite distinct from that on which he obtained information from Adams. Davis adds that the longitude of the rescue was 128° W. A latitude of 49° N. and longitude of 128° W. would place the rescue not far from Queen Charlotte's Islands, which, however, are in southeastern Alaska and thus a long



distance from Point Conception in southern California. The conclusion is irresistible that Forbes must have derived his information long after the event from some sailor of untrustworthy memory. Osaka, moreover, is in southern rather than in northern Japan. The other fresh details may well be reasonably correct.

It should of course be remembered that the alien tongue of the survivors offered great opportunities for misunderstanding.

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