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# *Trading Beyond the Mountains*

THE BRITISH-INDIAN TRADE ON THE PACIFIC

1793-1843



Richard Somerset Mackenzie

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THE BRITISH FUR TRADE ON THE PACIFIC

1793-1843



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UBC Press  
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## Beyond the Mere Traffic in Peltries

*Our Salmon, for all the Contempt entertained for any thing out of  
the routaine of Beaver at York Factory, is close upon 300 Barrels, &  
I have descended to Oil & Blubber too, tho not on your large Scale –  
So that altogether, whatever others may think of Fraser's River,  
I am much satisfied with its proceeds myself.*

– ARCHIBALD McDONALD (FORT LANGLEY)  
TO JOHN MCLEOD, JANUARY 1832<sup>1</sup>

North of the Columbia River was a mild and temperate coastal region extending from Puget Sound to the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Gulf of Georgia, and bearing a generally poor fur trade. Posts in the region were forts Langley (1827), Nisqually (1833), and Victoria (1843). While the Columbia River was the principal source of new exports, this northerly region also provided exports in the form of Fraser River salmon and Puget Sound wool before 1843. Its protected inland waters offered such an impressive potential for farming, livestock, fishing, lumbering, and mining that it later became the heartland of British and American settlement on the Pacific coast north of the Columbia. By the 1830s, the Hudson's Bay Company had engrossed this region's fur trade in its fight against American traders on the North West Coast, and in the process had found that it possessed a fine, secure – and unrealized – commercial potential. By 1843, Langley was known more for its salmon than its fur, and the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company's stock farms at Nisqually promised real profit. Moreover, coal deposits had been located on Vancouver Island in 1835, and James Douglas, five years later, had reported favourably on central coast salmon and coal prospects. George Simpson himself inspected these resources in October 1841, and his examination resulted in his decision the following spring to move head-

quarters from vulnerable Fort Vancouver to Vancouver Island, and to exploit the broad range of resources available in the northerly region.

Underpinning all this was a modest fur trade. Native people of the lower Fraser, for example, exploited the resources of the river and ocean to provide for their needs, but the mountainous land around them lacked a large population of fur-bearing mammals. In 1828, James McMillan complained that 'they are very lazy and independent [because] the Sea and river Supply their wants plentifully'; in the same year, George Simpson observed that 'the ample means their country and Coast afford, in regard to the necessities and comforts of life' had rendered the Native people 'perfectly independent of our supplies.'<sup>2</sup>

Fort Langley's construction in 1827 had brought with it hope of an extended and profitable fur trade. As many as three thousand Cowichan crossed the gulf every year to their summer fishing villages on the Fraser.<sup>3</sup> Company traders assumed that such people would yield a rich and sustainable fur trade. Simpson, for example, in 1829, urged the Indians of the lower mainland to hunt the beaver in their territory:

There are a good many Beaver in the immediate vicinity of Fort Langley, and we have reason to believe that except in the very mountainous parts, the interior country is rich. Its permanent inhabitants, however, being few in number, are intimidated by the large and powerful bands that come to the River from Vancouver Island [and] the Coast, for the purpose of fishing, and as yet venture only to steal a visit to us during the absence of their more warlike neighbours: they have begun, however, to supply themselves with our Traps, which they are surprised to find so much better adapted for taking Beaver than those of their own rude workmanship, and give us a few skins in exchange for Arms, Blankets, &c., so that as their wants increase, which they will soon do from an acquaintance with the use of our supplies, their Trade will become more valuable to us.<sup>4</sup>

Simpson surmised that the fur trade would improve over time, as did chief trader Archibald McDonald. McDonald wrote in 1830 that Fort Langley drew furs from a vast territory extending from the edges of the Chilcotin, Thompson's River, and New Caledonia districts; from the foot of Puget Sound to the end of the Gulf of Georgia, and from the inside coast of Vancouver Island to the lower Fraser. He wondered why, with such a large area, the fort's beaver and otter trade had increased by only 400 pelts over the two previous years: 'A superficial glance over this

immense space ... naturally led to very high expectations.' McDonald blamed poor returns on recent American competition at sea and on 'the unproductive nature of much of the Country itself.' Beaver did not thrive in a mountainous country with tumultuous creeks and rivers. 'To the Northward of Barrard's Canal the face of the Country is still more Mountainous than hereabouts and of consequence yields but few returns.'<sup>5</sup>

McDonald's analysis was accurate. 'Fraser's River does not come up to original expectations,' he repeated a year later. Again, he blamed the terrain: explorations had revealed mountains, lakes, and rapid rivers. In 1827, from Kamloops, Francis Ermatinger had explored the Lilliwit (Lillooet) River; in 1829, McDonald examined the lower lengths of the Pitt and Silliwhite (Lillooet, i.e., Harrison) rivers, and Annance explored the Oussaak. McDonald named the Harrison after Benjamin Harrison, a member of the London committee. In 1830, he sent James Yale and eight men to the Harrison, which turned out to be an extension of the Lillooet (Map 17). Yale concluded that there was 'no prospect of drawing Beaver from a country so perfectly inaccessible with the mountains' as was the terrain between the Harrison and Thompson rivers.<sup>6</sup>

The post was intended as a base for the trading war against the Americans, who in the late 1820s ventured through the Strait of Juan de Fuca into Fort Langley's territory. In 1831, Aemilius Simpson noted that 'In the years 1829 & 1830 two vessels from Boston visited the Columbia & Gulf of Georgia but have now left the Coast, it had not for many years previous been the practice of American Traders to go there & I do not think it likely they will soon visit it again & from the Competition that has been carried on by vessels in different interests & the scarcity of Sea Otters. The profits of their Trade is I learn so small that I think it probable they will soon relinquish it.' The American ships were the *Owhyhee* and the *Convoy*. Commanded by captains Dominis and Thompson, these vessels felt the HBC's competition and abandoned the coast.<sup>7</sup>

The fort's returns gradually increased as the Boston traders forsook the coast. In January 1832, McDonald reported that the American absence since 1830 had caused a considerable increase of trade; Fort Langley was up from 1,400 to 2,500 beaver. Douglas told McLeod in the same year that 'Your friend Archy has been doing wonders at Fort Langley, he has collected about 2000 Beaver, and is not a little vain of his feat.'<sup>8</sup>

By the mid-1830s, however, Langley's fur trade had not grown as expected, even with the Americans gone. In some places the beaver population had been wiped out through overhunting. For example, in September 1841 on Texada Island in the Gulf of Georgia, Simpson 'found one object of interest in an old beaver-dam of great extent.' This was probably the remains of an isolated beaver population obliterated by the company's demand. Similarly, Chief Kakalatza of Somenos told naturalist Robert Brown in 1864 that his father used to hunt beaver at a small lake near the Cowichan River. 'The lake is full of [beaver dams], & Kakalatza tells me that his father used to hunt them long ago when the King Georges wore beaver hat and skin was worth trading at Fort Langley to Mr Yale - a very old story indeed.'<sup>9</sup> The coastal fur trade simply was not amenable to indefinite extension. Gradually, the HBC realized the futility of attempting to obtain fur from Native peoples who were not primarily hunters and whose limited fur resources had already been exploited.

The company's experience at Fort Langley set the pattern for the trajectory of development in the Gulf of Georgia-Puget Sound region in the mid-nineteenth century. A poor or modest fur trade drove the fur traders to exploit the varied resources of trade and labour available in the Native economy. Salmon was the most important of these. In 1841, Simpson observed that the Langley region had been 'closely wrought for many years, the returns in furs are gradually falling off; but the increasing marketable produce of the fisheries makes up for that deficiency.' In 1845 Yale wrote that the fort's fur returns were 'trifling to an extreme.'<sup>10</sup>

The salmon trade grew while the fur trade stagnated. Scouler had likened salmon to a staple cereal, and the colonial naturalist John Keast Lord called salmon 'one of the most prominent wonders of this region.'<sup>11</sup> Fraser River sockeye was the company's first non-fur export from what is now British Columbia - save perhaps isinglass, a valuable substance derived from the float bladder of the sturgeon and an important provision obtained in the Indian trade at Langley.<sup>12</sup> After proving the Fraser unnavigable in 1828, Simpson had maintained Langley as a branch of the coasting trade, and specifically for its fur trade, fishery, and farming potential. Thereafter, salmon followed fur as the post's major export<sup>13</sup> (Table 6).

TABLE 6 Salmon production and export, Fort Langley, 1828-43

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total production</i>	<i>Exported to Oahu</i>	<i>Value at Oahu (\$)</i>
1828	16 tierces		
1829	85 tierces		
1830	220 barrels		
1831	300 barrels	100 barrels	10
1832	n/a		
1833	350 barrels		
1834	30 barrels		
	55 half barrels		
1835	605 barrels		6
	112 half barrels		
	25 tierces		
1836	200 barrels		
1837	450 barrels	350 barrels	8-9
1838	597 barrels		
1839	400 barrels	51 barrels	
1840	300 barrels		
1841	540 barrels		
1842	n/a		
1843	n/a		
Total	4,050 barrels (excluding tierces)		

*Source:* These figures are derived from the text and from Mary Cullen, *History of Fort Langley, 1827-96* (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites 1979), 96

Native traders came from a number of places on the Gulf of Georgia and lower Fraser. Aurelia Manson, Yale's daughter, recalled that the 'old natives' of Point Roberts, New Westminster, Vancouver, Katzie, and Saint Mary's Mission could tell of Langley's 'work and doings.' Vancouver Island people fished at the river and had extensive summer villages there; indeed, in 1825 McMillan had recorded that the Native name for the Fraser was Cowichan. 'With the coming of the Sockeye in July,' ethnographer Homer Barnett wrote, 'all the able-bodied Cowichans left for the Fraser River for two months, where they camped on Lulu Island on the south arm of the river.' They dried their salmon there before returning to the island for the winter. In 1829, McDonald characterized the Nanaimo as the 'most forward' Indians trading at Langley: 'They



also are a numerous tribe and live mostly on the Island – during the salmon season they occupy a large village they have about 3 miles below this on same side the river.<sup>14</sup>

The HBC traded fresh fish at the fort, ran a fishing station or saltery at the mouth of the Chilliwack River, and may have traded salmon at Point Roberts. For Fraser River transport, the company introduced *bateaux*, modelled on Columbia River boats, of about three-tons burden in the 1840s.<sup>15</sup>

Fort Langley's records are full of references to the salmon fishery. 'I understand Salmon is more abundant in Frasers River than here,' McLoughlin wrote in 1826. Within forty-eight hours of the fort's founding, in August 1827, fresh salmon were obtained. The Fraser fishery, like that on the lower Columbia, relied directly on the Native trade, and indirectly on three fishing methods: hooks, spears, and nets.<sup>16</sup> The Native fishery centred on the production of dried salmon for winter use, and for the first two years McMillan traded dried salmon from the Cowichan on their return from the fishery at the canyon. Salmon was so abundant, he wrote, that he could obtain enough to feed all the people of Rupert's Land.<sup>17</sup>

McLoughlin, who had started curing salmon a year or two before on the Columbia, asked McMillan in the spring of 1828 to do the same at Langley. 'Will you please to Salt all the Salmon your means will permit, although if not required by you it will serve for us & to inform me what quantity you think you can Salt & the price a Barrel would cost,' he wrote. At the end of September 1828, McMillan wrote that 'our whole Trade this season is only 5000 pieces dry.' His salmon shed contained 3,000 dried salmon and sixteen tierces of salted salmon, each equivalent to forty-two wine gallons.<sup>18</sup>

Simpson descended the river a few weeks later and noted with pleasure that 'In regard to the means of living this Establishment may be said to be already independent: Salmon are so abundant, that besides the consumption of the Post a considerable quantity might be cured for Exportation if a market could be found.' By the spring of 1829, the men of the post were consuming their own salted salmon and potatoes, and McLoughlin asked Archibald McDonald (McMillan's successor) how many barrels he could salt at Langley for export and what help he would need.<sup>19</sup>

In August 1829, McDonald recorded the results of his salmon speculation. 'In case the salmon fishery at Fraser's River may hereafter become an object of attention I here give a view of the season's trade.' In the previous ten days, he had traded a total of 7,544 fish averaging six pounds each for just under £14 (\$70). This, he wrote with genuine understatement, 'is in all conscience as cheap as provisions could anywhere be had.' Axes, daggers, chisels, and knives changed hands, as did combs, rings, mirrors, buttons, files, cod and 'Kirby' hooks, beads, vermilion, baize, wrist bands, and tobacco. Nearly half the value of the trade goods was made up of 640 country-made 'small chisels' or axes that, McDonald wrote, were 'shabby little things got made here by ourselves.' As on the lower Columbia, blankets were considered too good for the salmon trade: 'This Trade costs us very little, as vermilion, Rings, and other trifles are the only Articles we allow for dried Salmon.'<sup>20</sup>

The Fraser fishery, like that on the Columbia, remained dependent on Native procurement, as McDonald reported in 1831:

I must inform that we made several attempts ourselves last Summer with the Seine & hand scoop net but our success by no means proved that we could do without Indian Trade, nor does even this appear to me a source of great disappointment as in years of scarcity the best regulated fishery of our own would miscarry, while in years of plenty such as the last the expense in trade would hardly exceed the very cost of Lines and Twine.<sup>21</sup>

In 1829, the post consumed 8,118 salted, 4,640 dried, 1,360 fresh, and 462 smoked salmon. McDonald asked for a helper from Fort Vancouver because his men were inexperienced with curing.<sup>22</sup> The following year was critical to the fishery. McDonald traded more than 15,000 fresh salmon between 25 August and 15 September, enough, he wrote, to make up more than 200 barrels. They cost £30 (\$150) in trade goods. Salmon preserved in Langley's own casks were, he feared, so poorly prepared that the first cargo would not 'stand the test of a foreign market,' and he repeated his request for a cooper who 'will know something of Fish curing.' At the end of September, he sent 120 barrels and forty-five tierces of salmon to Fort Vancouver, along with a small amount of kippered salmon; the *Vancouver* was so laden with goods that another forty barrels of salmon had to be left behind. McDonald's concern about the casks was well founded; they very soon lost their pickle, and McLoughlin sent only a sample to Oahu.<sup>23</sup>

McDonald redoubled his efforts in 1831, when he built 'Wharves and other conveniences for the Salmon business.' In February he reported his progress to McLeod:

Am now preparing from 2 to 300 Barrels to be at the Salmon immediately on the Commencement of the Season – they say a Cooper is come across [the Rocky Mountains] for me, but we saw nothing of him as yet. In consequence of my casks of last season losing the pickle, the Dr sent none of them to market but sent his own, & kept ours for home consumption. So the end is always assured, & perhaps this might at all times be the arrangement as the Columbia fish is acknowledged better than ours. Curious they are caught a week or two sooner at the Bridge than here – last season it was approaching the end of August before they appeared here.<sup>24</sup>

Oahu materialized as a foreign salmon market in 1831, when McLoughlin informed McDonald that 'Mr Charlton writes that at Woahoo your Salmon would sell at 10 dollars pr. Barrell you will therefore salt all the Salmon you can and on the return of the Dryad from the North she will call at your place for it.' McDonald threw himself into the work, and the fishery produced about 300 barrels to counteract the 'contempt' entertained for it by the company's accountants at York Factory. The result was the export on the *Eagle*, in 1832, of at least 100 barrels of Langley salmon, the first commercial salmon export from what is present-day British Columbia.<sup>25</sup>

The company's Oahu records give a view of the shipment's passage. Duncan Finlayson accompanied the *Eagle* to Oahu where, enthusiastically, he reported that the salmon trade was 'an object likely to become lucrative':

A Gentleman by the name of Reid, lately of a respectable house in Lima, but now set up in business at this place, has purchased 100 Barrels of the Langley Salmon ... at 10\$ each, for the Lima market, where, in his opinion it is highly esteemed, & will there command a remunerating price. He will hereafter enter into a contract to be furnished annually with a larger quantity at this place ...

Under these circumstances, I may venture to assure you that the Salmon will at all times meet with a ready market, & command a good price, I have therefore sent pr the *Eagle* to Fort Langley about 380 Bushels of Salt, so that Mr McDonald may increase his quantity to 300 Barrels. It may however be

proper to remark that the Columbia Salmon is much more esteemed, & meets with a much better market & price than that of Frazer's River; indeed, so confident am I that the Salmon, if attended to, will become a profitable Branch of our business, that I would not hesitate, if at liberty to do so, to embark all my earnings in speculating thereon.<sup>26</sup>

To McDonald, Finlayson wrote on the same day that

as 'tis probable the Fraser's River Salmon will command a remunerating Price, I have shipped on board the Eagle, 100 Barrels containing 380 Bushels Salt, which will enable you to cure about 300 Barrels of Salmon, & which I think can be disposed of to advantage ... The Kipperd Salmon is highly esteemed at this place; samples of which are now making up for Valparaiso & Callao, & we will be informed, ensuing spring, the price it may fetch at those places.<sup>27</sup>

But the Langley coopers, as McDonald knew, were still perfecting their art. When Reid discovered that most of the salmon was from the new Fraser fishery, and not the established Columbia fishery, he complained to Charlton, who reported to McLoughlin that all but two of the barrels were 'what the traders to the North West Coast call "Squagging,"' that is, a less desirable northern species.<sup>28</sup> Complaints disappeared as quality improved. The 1833 fishery was the best yet, yielding at least 350 barrels. On 12 September of that year Tolmie of Fort Nisqually noted that 'In the evg. the Cadboro hove in sight [with] 280 barrels of salt salmon on board,' much of which was supplied to forts Nisqually and Vancouver as a provision. The catch was so abundant that Fort Vancouver remained a principal market for Langley salmon for a decade.<sup>29</sup> In 1834 McLoughlin asked Yale for all the salt salmon he could spare, and to send thirty barrels to Nisqually. McLoughlin called it 'as well cured as any I ever saw.'<sup>30</sup> Yale grew to resent these provisioning demands because salmon, if exported, would have produced greater revenue for Langley. But Langley was a provision centre, subsidiary to the company's larger business, and answerable to orders from headquarters.

The right variety and quality of wood was required for the hundreds of barrels needed every year. In September 1829, McDonald sent four men into the woods for barrel staves; he visited them twelve days later and recorded that 'we now have about 1000 excellent staves.'<sup>31</sup> Stave Lake and Stave River were named after one of the company's wood sources,

and by the 1840s four coopers worked at Langley. Historian Jamie Morton describes the process:

Raw materials were required in advance. A crew split straight-grained, knot-free trees and split the logs to the right length. The flitches (slabs of timber from the tree trunk) were used for either staves or end. This wood was then seasoned at the fort ... Next the staves were worked into their final shape – smooth, curved and dressed by specialized knives and a stationary jointer's plane. Here the cooper's skill or 'eye' became paramount if all the staves were to join neatly with no leaky gaps and if the barrel were to have the proper 'bilge' or belly.<sup>32</sup>

The coopers produced salmon barrels in two sizes: full barrels, containing twenty-four gallons and with a capacity for 180 or 200 pounds, and half barrels, containing twelve gallons and holding 90 pounds. At first, they were bound with wooden hoops. By 1841, if not earlier, iron hoops were in use.<sup>33</sup>

In 1830, barrels were made of '*pin blanc*' (western white pine, *Pinus monticola*) from the vicinity of Langley. That year, McDonald sent men 'off to the pines, about 3 miles up river, where the one half will employ themselves rising staves.' Rising staves meant felling trees, bucking them into stave bolt length, and splitting the bolts into the required material. In 1835, McLoughlin asked Kittson of Nisqually to cut 8,000 barrel hoops for immediate shipment to Langley, and four years later, McLoughlin visited Langley and wrote that wood for salmon barrels was a pressing need. 'If possible we ought to get the wood for 1000 Barrels,' he told Yale. Yale, however, complained of the difficulty of finding the right stave wood. 'I observe what you state about the difficulty of getting white Pine Staves,' McLoughlin replied, 'but I think red Pine would answer the purpose, and even if we get a sufficiency of white pine we must try a few red Pine Barrels to see how it answers.' Red pine was Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* ssp. *menziesii*), eventually the preferred species. It was named Red pine on account of its orange tinge.<sup>34</sup>

Shipments grew steadily in the 1830s. In 1836, 800 bushels of salt were needed at Langley and on the North West Coast, and the 1837 fishery yielded 350 barrels of salmon for exportation besides the quantity required for fort use. In June 1839, a joint summer shipment of Columbia and Fraser River salmon took place, when the *Vancouver* left

Fort Vancouver for Oahu with '59 Barrels Columbia Salmon' and '51 Barrels Frazers River Salmon'; the thrifty Douglas probably rounded up salmon intended for winter use, but not consumed. Toward the end of the decade, he told Yale that 'The Salmon fishery is an object of much importance and merits the utmost attention; if you think its produce could be greatly increased, the means will be furnished of doing it ample justice.'<sup>35</sup>

McLoughlin, Douglas, and Yale conducted an experiment in the late 1830s. 'You will salt thirty Barrels or Casks salmon with the heads and back bones in the fish by way of experiment,' McLoughlin told Yale in 1836. Two years later Douglas told Pelly that 'Forty Barrels of the Salmon now forwarded, are cured with their heads and bones; if in that state they are found to keep well, and to suit the market better, we will introduce that mode of curing at all our fisheries.' The next spring, however, Douglas reported that 'Fish cured with the head and backbone are not found to answer the Sandwich Islands Market, you will therefore continue to cure in our old way.'<sup>36</sup>

All this activity came to a sudden end on 11 April 1840, when Fort Langley burned to the ground with the loss of 300 barrels of salmon worth £300. 'It broke out in the Forge,' Douglas wrote, 'consumed building after building with rapid and relentless fury, unquelled by the efforts made to arrest the course until the Fort lay a waste, reduced to a heap of smoking ruins.' Everything was lost in the fire except trade goods, a bundle of furs, and seven barrels of salmon. 'Staves and hoops ready prepared for seven hundred Barrels, Tubs for pickling salmon in and all went with the rest,' Yale wrote. The fire made it difficult for Pelly to meet his obligations in Oahu, and thirty barrels of Columbia salmon were used to provision the new post at Taku. Reconstruction began immediately. Empty barrels were supplied to Langley from Fort Vancouver, and McLoughlin urged Yale to make a 'large box or two,' like the salmon storage bin recently made at Fort George. These open vats were 'say 18 feet long 8 broad and 6 high the planks ought to be three inches thick the seams well caulked from the inside and well pitched but not tarred as ours are here which Capt. Scarborough can describe, I am sure they would hold a great deal of salmon.' The fire allowed Yale to rebuild on a new and larger scale. In October 1840, McLoughlin promised to send two extra men to help him extend his farming and

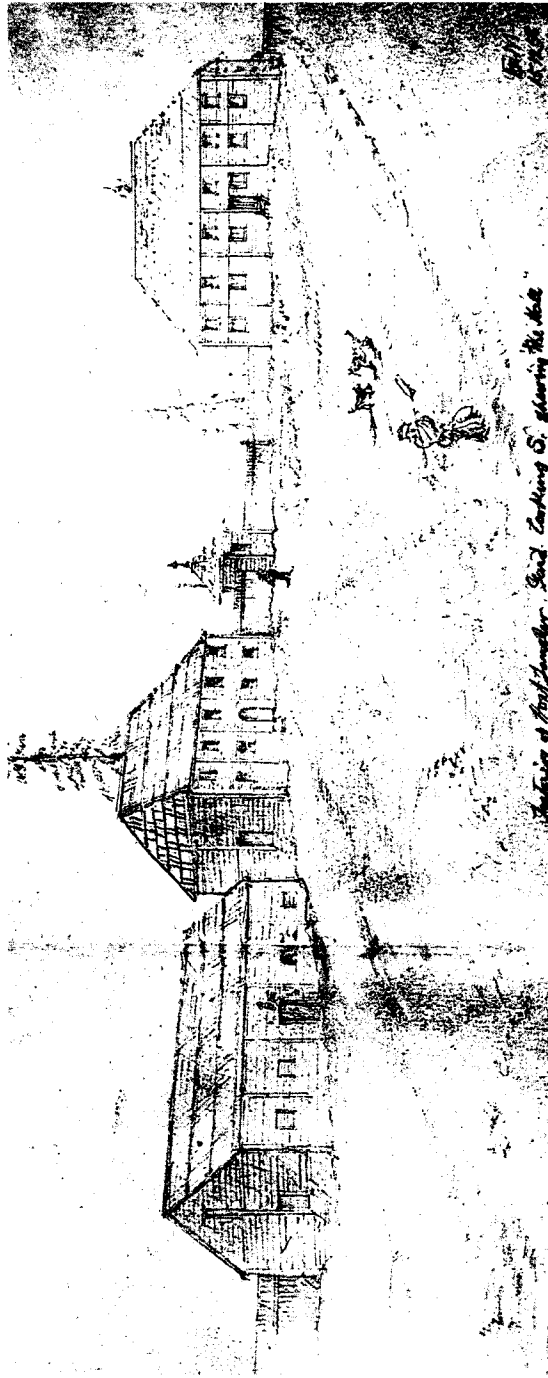


FIGURE 18 This 1858 sketch of the interior of Fort Langley shows the post at the beginning of its decline, at the onset of the Fraser River gold rush. Clearly visible is the HBC's post-and-sill or *pièce sur pièce* form of timber-frame house construction that flourished along the lower St. Lawrence River in the seventeenth century and reached the shores of the Pacific two centuries later. [Edward Mallandaine, *Interior of Fort Langley Yard Looking South Showing 'The Hall,'* 15 December 1858, British Columbia Archives, PDP 3395]

fishing operations. 'Make as many barrels for salmon as we can I wish you would make a thousand and fill them.'<sup>37</sup>

By November 1841, Langley's salmon trade was worth about a third as much as the post's fur trade, according to Simpson's analysis:

The returns in furs amounting to about £2,500 and in salted salmon for market say about 400 barrels to about £800, the profit on the post being about £1600 per annum ... as the country has been closely wrought for many years, the returns in furs are gradually falling off; but the increasing marketable produce of the fisheries makes up for that deficiency.<sup>38</sup>

'The exuberant fertility of the low delta lands of the Fraser is locally proverbial,' A.C. Anderson wrote. John Work, in 1824, noted the 'rich, black mould' at what became Langley Prairie, and ten years later Yale started a large farm there. In the spring of 1834, McLoughlin wrote that the Langley farm would protect Fort Vancouver in case 'we will be obliged to neglect perhaps our farm - and by having farm produce from you we will be able to do so without injury to our business.' Douglas, however, urged Yale not to cultivate the farm at the expense of the salmon fishery. 'Remember that the Salmon trade must not be sacrificed,' he wrote in 1838, 'as it will always yield, a more valuable return at less trouble risk & expense than the farm.' The farm possessed cattle, horses, pigs, poultry, and produced large crops of grains, peas, and potatoes from its two separate operations. It supplied the fort, the North West Coast posts, and coasting vessels, but did not provide foodstuffs for export until the 1840s, when it supplied provisions to the Russian American Company.<sup>39</sup>

Nor did Langley develop a lumber trade, despite the early enthusiasm of Archibald McDonald, who proposed to build a sawmill on the Fraser. He did, however, produce boards and shingles for a short time for export to Oahu. 'Lieut. Simpson ascertained in his voyage to the Sandwich Islands that Boards of one inch thick and one foot broad sold in Retail for one hundred dollars per thousand feet,' McLoughlin told McDonald in June 1829; 'if you have no other employment for your men they would pay their wages by sawing boards.' McDonald promptly sent 300 hand-sawn, two-inch-thick planks to Fort Vancouver, but the export of lumber could not, he wrote, 'by mere manual strength ... be made a



- inducted and continued successfully must become profitable in a less or more degree to the parties interested therein': McLoughlin to Pelly, 17 June 1836, HBCA B.223/b/12, fos. 42-42d;
- 81 Pelly to Smith, 1 January 1837, HBCA A.11/61, fo. 20; HBCA C.7/177, fos. 20, 54d; Fort Vancouver, [Country Produce], HBCA B.223/d/94; 'Columbia District Country Produce Inventories Outfit 1837,' HBCA B.223/d/106, fo. 8; *Sandwich Islands Gazette*, 5 August 1837, quoted in St. Clair, 'Beaver in Hawaii,' 40.
  - 82 McLoughlin to Pelly, 17 June 1836, HBCA B.223/b/12, fos. 42-42d; McLoughlin to G&C, 9 April 1836, HBRS 4, 148; McLoughlin to R.F. Budge, 8 April 1836, HBCA B.223/b/15, fos. 8-9; McLoughlin to Simpson, 4 April 1836, HBCA B.223/b/12, fo. 28, 30.
  - 83 McLoughlin to Eales, 8 April 1836, HBCA B.223/b/15, fos. 9-11; McLoughlin to Simpson, Chief Factors, Chief Traders, 30 August 1837, HBCA B.223/b/17, fo. 32; Pelly to Smith, 2 October 1836, HBCA A.11/61, fos. 14-15; G&C to Simpson, 15 February 1837, HBCA D.5/4, fo. 238d.
  - 84 Pelly to Douglas, 30 April 1830, cited in Douglas to G&C, 18 October 1838, HBRS 4, 267; Pelly to G&C, 24 April 1838, HBCA A.11/61, fo. 38.
  - 85 Pelly to Smith, 26 July 1838, HBCA A.11/61, fo. 43.
  - 86 Pelly to Smith, 22 December 1838, HBCA A.11/61, fo. 48; Pelly to Smith, 30 April 1839, HBCA A.11/61, fos. 51-2; McLoughlin to Pelly, 11 November 1839, HBCA B.223/b/24, fo. 53d.
  - 87 Douglas to G&C, 18 October 1838, HBRS 4, 259-60; 'Inventory of Goods Fort Vancouver Depot Spring 1844,' HBCA B.223/d/127, fo. 158; Douglas to Simpson, 18 March 1838, HBRS 4, 285.
  - 88 Wilbur, *Duflot de Mofras' Travels*, Vol. 2, 99; Farnham, *Travels in the Great Western Prairies*, Vol. 2, 266; Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841 and 1842*, 5 Vols. (London: Wiley and Putnam 1845); Dunn, *History of Oregon territory*, 153; Farnham to Poinsett, 4 January 1840, in Farnham, *Correspondence Outward*. See also Elliott, ed., 'Extracts from the Emmons Journal,' 268, and Roberts, 'Letters to Mrs. F.F. Victor,' 206.
  - 89 Douglas to G&C, 18 October 1838, HBRS 4, 259-60; Douglas to Simpson, 18 March 1838, HBRS 4, 285; Douglas to Pelly, 24 June 1839, HBCA B.223/b/24, fos. 21d, 22d-23; Pelly to Smith, 21 March 1840, HBCA A.11/61, fos. 53-6; Farnham to Poinsett, 4 January 1840, in Farnham, *Correspondence Outward*.
  - 90 Pelly to Smith, 21 March 1840, HBCA A.11/61, fos. 53-4; McLoughlin to Pelly, 19 May 1840, HBCA B.223/b/27, fo. 19; McLoughlin to Pelly, 15 June 1840, HBCA B.223/b/27, fo. 33; HBCA C.7/177, fos. 77d, 82d; McLoughlin to Pelly and Alexander Simpson, 21 November 1840, HBCA B.223/b/27, fo. 105.
  - 91 Simpson to G&C, 25 November 1841, HBRS 29, 87; Simpson to McLoughlin, 18 May 1842, HBRS 6, 290; G&C to McLoughlin, 27 September 1843, HBRS 6, 305.
  - 92 Pelly and Allan to McLoughlin, 22 March 1843, HBCA B.223/b/30, fo. 21d; Clark, 'Sawmill on the Columbia,' 44.
  - 93 Pelly and Allan to G&C, 28 October 1843, HBCA A.11/62, fo. 6.
  - 94 See Mackie, 'Colonial Land, Indian Labour, and Company Capital.'
  - 95 Simpson to G&C, 25 November 1841, HBRS 29, 78-9; Clark, 'Sawmill on the Columbia,' 43; Dugald Mactavish to Hargrave, 2 April 1842, Hargrave Papers, NAC.
  - 96 Wilkes and Holmes are cited in Gibson, *Farming the Frontier*, 199, 200. Indian Trade profits declined from £3,295 in 1836, to £1,985 in 1837, to £1,187 in 1842, and to £2,274 in 1843; sale shop profits increased from £1,665 in 1836, to £1,1613 in 1837, to £3,838 in 1842, and to £3,140 in 1843; the depot went from a £1,291 profit in 1836, to a loss in 1837 of £1,217, to a loss of £1,213 in 1842, to a loss in 1843 of £1,006. Fort Vancouver, Accounts Current, Outfit 1833, HBCA B.223/d/56; HBRS 4, 286; HBCA B.223/b/31, fos. 149a-149b; McLoughlin to Simpson, 20 March 1845, HBCA B.223/b/32, fo. 93.

#### CHAPTER 9: Beyond the Mere Traffic in Peltries

- 1 McDonald to McLeod, 15 January 1832, McLeod Papers, NAC.
- 2 McMillan to John McLeod, 21 January 1828, McLeod Papers, NAC; Simpson to G&C, 10 July 1828, HBCA D.4/92, fos. 66-7.

- 3 Simpson, *Narrative*, Vol. 1, 183, 244.
- 4 Simpson to G&C, 1 March 1829, HBRS 10, 42.
- 5 McDonald to Governor and Council, Northern Department, 25 February 1830, HBCA D.4/123, fos. 66d-72. The fort commanded, in trade, a 'vast extent of sea line.' Malcolm McLeod, *Peace River. A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to Pacific, by the late Sir George Simpson; (Governor, Hon. Hudson's Bay Company) in 1828 Journal of the Late Chief Factor, Archibald McDonald (Hon. Hudson's Bay Company), who accompanied him* (Ottawa: J. Davie & Son, 1872), 108. Named by Vancouver in 1792, the Gulf was renamed the Strait of Georgia by Captain Richards in 1865. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names*, 204-5.
- 6 McDonald, '1831,' quoted in Gibson, *Farming the Frontier*, 50; McDonald to Governor and Council of Northern Department, 25 February 1830, HBCA D.4/123, fo. 67; same to same, 10 February 1831, HBCA D.4/125, fo. 114.
- 7 A. Simpson to C. O'Gorman, 7 January 1831, HBCA D.4/125, fos. 103-4; on the vessels, see Robert M. Galois, 'The Native Population of the Fort Langley Region, 1780-1857: A Demographic Overview,' report submitted to Parks Canada, 1994, 7.
- 8 McDonald to McLeod, 15 January 1832, and Douglas to McLeod, 12 March 1832, McLeod Papers, NAC.
- 9 Simpson, *Narrative*, Vol. 1, 184; Hayman, *Robert Brown*, 47, 64.
- 10 Simpson to G&C, 25 November 1841, HBRS 29, 73-4; Yale to Simpson, 17 December 1845, quoted in Robie L. Reid, 'Early Days at Old Fort Langley,' *BCHQ* 1, 2 (April 1937): 79.
- 11 John Keast Lord, *The Naturalist in Vancouver Island and British Columbia* (London: Richard Bentley 1866), Vol. 1, 257. See McLeod, *Peace River*, 107-8; 'Extract from a Memorandum by the late James M. Yale, Esquire, formerly of the HBC, relating to the Fraser River Salmon,' Anderson, *The Dominion of the West*, Appendix, i; Dee, 'Journal of John Work,' 136; Roy I. Jackson, 'Sockeye from the Fraser,' *The Beaver* 283 (March 1953): 18-25.
- 12 Fur Trade Returns, Columbia District and New Caledonia, 1825-1857, BCARS.
- 13 On the fort's fishery, see F.L. Howay, 'Fort Langley, Historic HBC Post in British Columbia,' *The Beaver* 2, 2 (November 1921): 2-6, 4; Ormsby, *British Columbia*, 73; Reid, 'Early Days at Old Fort Langley,' 79-81; Robie Reid, ed., 'Fort Langley Correspondence: 1831-1858,' *BCHQ* 3 (July 1937): 187-95; Robie Reid, 'Economic Beginnings in British Columbia,' *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 30 (May 1936); Cullen, *Fort Langley*; Mackie, 'Colonial Land,' 24-46; Jamie Morton, *Fort Langley: An Overview of the Operations of a Diversified Fur Trade Post 1848 to 1858 and the Physical Context in 1858* (Ottawa: Canadian Parks Service Microfiche Report Series No. 340, 1987); M.P. Shepard and A.W. Argue, *The Commercial Harvest of Salmon in British Columbia, 1820-1877* (Vancouver: Department of Fisheries and Oceans, 1989).
- 14 Aurelia Manson, 'Recollections of School Days,' BCARS; McMillan is cited in Simpson to G&C, 10 March 1825, HBCA A.12/1; Homer G. Barnett, *The Coast Salish of British Columbia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 1975), 22; Fort Langley Journal, 1829-30, HBCA B.113/a/3, 30 July 1829.
- 15 For the company's saltery at the mouth of the Chilliwack, see Cullen, *Fort Langley*, 50, and Richard Mayne, *Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island...* (London: John Murray, 1862), 93; for Point Roberts, see Richard Rathbun, *A Review of the Fisheries in Contiguous Waters of the State of Washington and British Columbia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Bureau 1899); for bateaux, see Anderson, *Handbook and Map*, 5, and Jamie Morton, 'Fort Langley Cooper's Shop Furnishing Plan,' unpublished manuscript, Calgary, Canadian Parks Service, Curatorial Services, 1988, 14-21.
- 16 McLoughlin to G&C, 1 September 1826, HBRS 4, 37; James McMillan, Fort Langley Journal 1827-8, HBCA B.112/a/1 [27 July-2 August 1827]. 'The savages at one time used a wooden hook with a bone barb, but now they get supplied with steel fish-hooks by the Hudson's Bay Company.' Lord, *The Naturalist*, 259, 261. '125 Large Cod Hooks' were traded in 1829; McDonald to Governor and Council, Northern Department, 25 February 1830, HBCA D.4/123, fos. 66d-72.
- 17 Fort Langley Journal 1827-8 (26 September and 3 October 1827), HBCA B.113/a/1; McMillan to McLeod, 21 January 1828, McLeod Papers, NAC.

- 18 McLoughlin to McMillan, 31 March 1828, HBCA B.223/b/4, fo. 2; Fort Langley Journal 1827-8 (27 September 1828), HBCA B.112/a/1; McMillan, 11 October 1828, quoted in McLeod, *Peace River*, 39.
- 19 Simpson to G&C, 1 March 1829, HBRs 10, 42; Fort Langley Journal 1829-30 (25 May 1829), HBCA B.112/a/3; McLoughlin to McDonald, 17 June 1829, HBCA B.223/b/5, fos. 4-5.
- 20 McDonald to McLoughlin, 23 October 1829, HBCA B.113/a/3; Fort Langley Journal 1829-30, 17-21 August 1829, HBCA B.112/a/3. See also 'Statement of Salmon Trade Fort Langley from 10th to 20th Augt 1829,' in McDonald to Governor and Council, Northern Department, 25 February 1830, HBCA D.4/123, fos. 66d-72; Fort Langley Journal 1827-8 (26 September and 3 October 1827), HBCA B.113/a/1. These axes may have been analogous to nephrite celts used in wood-working. See Quentin Mackie, *The Taxonomy of Ground Stone Wood-working Tools* [British Archaeological Reports, International Series 613] (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum 1995), 4.
- 21 McDonald to Governor & Council, Northern Department, 25 February 1830, HBCA D.4/123, fos. 66-72; McDonald to Governor & Council, Northern Department, 10 February 1831, HBCA D.4/125, fos. 62-3.
- 22 McDonald to Governor & Council, Northern Department, 25 February 1830, HBCA D.4/123, fos. 66-72; Cullen, *Fort Langley*, 86; Cole, *Exile in the Wilderness*, 148, 250; McLoughlin to McDonald, 7 July 1830, HBCA B.223/b/6, fos. 5-6; McDonald to McLoughlin, 14 November 1829, HBCA B.113/a/3.
- 23 McDonald to Edward Ermatinger, 20 February 1831, quoted in Ormsby, *British Columbia*, 504 n. 36; [McLoughlin], 'Mema. for Mr Finlayson,' [n.d., June 1832], HBCA B.223/b/8, fo. 5; McDonald to Governor & Council, Northern Department, 10 February 1831, HBCA D.4/125, fos. 62-3; J.E. Harriott to McLeod, 25 February 1831, and McDonald to McLeod, 20 February 1831, McLeod Papers, NAC; McLoughlin to Simpson, 16 March 1831, HBRs 4, 226.
- 24 McDonald to Governor & Council, Northern Department, 10 February 1831, HBCA D.4/125, fos. 62-3; McDonald to McLeod, 20 February 1831, McLeod Papers, NAC.
- 25 McLoughlin to McDonald, 4 June 1831, HBCA B.223/b/7, fos. 1-2; McDonald to McLeod, 15 January 1832, McLeod Papers, NAC; HBCA C.7/177, fo. 20 and McLoughlin to A. Simpson, 13 August 1831, HBCA B.223/b/7, fo. 4d.
- 26 Finlayson to McLoughlin, 2 August 1832, HBCA B.223/b/8, fos. 41-41d. On the Lima market see Finlayson to W.G. Reid, 25 July 1832, HBCA B.223/b/8, fos. 36d-37; on Reid's voyage to Valparaiso & Calloa, see Reid to Finlayson, 26 July 1832, HBCA B.223/b/8, fo. 37 and Finlayson to Reid, 27 July 1832, HBCA B.223/b/8, fo. 37d.
- 27 Finlayson to McDonald, 2 August 1832, HBCA B.223/b/8, fo. 39; see also Finlayson to Captain Grave, 2 August 1832, HBCA B.223/b/8, fo. 38.
- 28 Charlton to McLoughlin, 21 March 1835, HBCA B.223/b/11, fo. 111. 'The minor streams [on the whole coast] swarm during the season with a small variety, known locally to the northward as the Squag-gan; inferior in richness to the larger fish, and therefore not so well adapted for salting, but nevertheless of excellent quality.' Anderson, *The Dominion of the West*, 31-2. Gibson confusingly identifies squaggan both as sockeye and as a 'bastard kind of salmon.' Gibson, *Otter Skins*, 210-11.
- 29 McLoughlin to McDonald, 5 July 1832, HBCA B.223/b/8; Tolmie, 10 September 1833, *Journals*, 234-5; York Factory, Country Produce, Account Book, 1828-36, HBCA 239/d/491, fo. 56; McLoughlin to Yale, 5 February 1834, HBCA B.223/b/10, fo. 91. On Fort Vancouver as a market see McLoughlin to Yale, 16 May 1834, HBCA B.223/b/10, fo. 14 and Cullen, *Fort Langley*, 96.
- 30 McLoughlin to G&C, 18 November 1834, HBRs 4, 130; McLoughlin to Yale, 14 September 1834, HBCA B.223/b/10, fo. 45; McLoughlin to Yale, 4 June 1835, HBCA B.223/b/11, fo. 18.
- 31 Fort Langley Journal, 1829-30, HBCA B.113/a/3.
- 32 Jamie Morton, 'Over a Barrel. Coopering at Fort Langley,' *Canadian Collector* 20, 6 (November 1985): 32-33.
- 33 Eight-gallon kegs were also made for cranberries and butter. Morton, 'Over a Barrel,' 32-3; Morton, 'Fort Langley Cooper's Shop,' 11, 13.

- 34 Morton, 'Fort Langley Cooper's Shop,' 8 n. 26, 9 n. 28, 36, quoting Fort Langley Journal, 5 April 1830; McLoughlin to Kittson, 6 November 1835, HBCA B.223/b/11, fo. 77; McLoughlin to Yale, 6 November 1835, HBCA B.223/b/11, fo. 77; McLoughlin, 'Memorandum for Mr Yale,' HBCA B.223/b/24, fos. 59-60; McLoughlin to Yale, 22 February 1840, HBCA B.223/b/24, fos. 66d-67.
- 35 The main source is HBCA C.7/177, fos. 44, 51, 54d, 60d, 70d. On the 1835 shipment, see also 'Account Sales at Woahoo pr. George Pelly of the Cargoes of the Ganymede & Dryad Consigned to him October 1835,' HBRS 4, 152 n. 1; 'The Honorable Hudson's Bay Company in Account Current with George Pelly,' 21 July 1836, HBCA B.223/b/12, fos. 48d-49; 'In Acct with George Pelly' 'By Salmon pr. Dryad,' June 30 [1836], HBCA A.11/61, fo. 18. For the 1836-7 shipments, see also Douglas to Simpson, 18 March 1838, HBRS 4, 281; Douglas to G&C, 18 October 1838, HBRS 4, 267; 'Columbia District Country Produce Inventories Outfit 1837,' HBCA B.223/d/106, fo. 8. Douglas to Yale, 21 November 1838, HBCA B.223/b/22, fo. 38.
- 36 McLoughlin to Yale, 6 March 1836, HBCA B.223/b/18, fo. 22; Douglas to Pelly, 4 December 1838, HBCA B.223/b/22, fo. 41d; Douglas to Yale, 10 May 1839, HBCA B.223/b/24, fo. 14.
- 37 'Acct of Property Burnt with Fort Langley' enclosed in Yale to Simpson, 15 April 1840, HBCA B.223/b/28, fos. 53-5; Douglas, 'Diary of a Trip to the Northwest Coast,' 1; Yale to Simpson, 10 February 1841, James Murray Yale, Correspondence Outward, BCARS; McLoughlin to Pelly, 22 September 1840, HBCA B.223/b/27, fo. 76; McLoughlin to Douglas, 8 May 1840, HBCA B.223/b/27, fos. 13-14; McLoughlin to Yale, 30 May 1840, HBCA B.223/b/27, fo. 32; McLoughlin to Yale, 17 October 1840, HBCA B.223/b/27, fo. 92.
- 38 Simpson to G&C, 25 November 1841, HBRS 29, 73-4.
- 39 Reid, 'Early Days at Old Fort Langley,' 73, 81-2; Anderson, 'A Compendium of the Province of British Columbia,' 7; McLoughlin to G&C, 28 May 1834, HBRS 4, 118-19; McLoughlin to Yale, 2 October 1834, HBCA B.223/b/10, fo. 51; Douglas to Yale, 21 November 1838, HBCA B.223/b/22, fo. 38; Gibson, *Farming the Frontier*, 48-52; Simpson to G&C, 25 November 1841, HBRS 29, 74; Morton, 'Conspicuous Production,' 10-11, 19-23.
- 40 McLoughlin to McDonald, 17 June 1829, HBCA B.223/b/5, fo. 4; McDonald to McLoughlin, 14 September 1829, in Cole, *Exile*, 155, 251. See also McDonald to McLoughlin, 14 November 1829, HBCA B.113/a/3.
- 41 McDonald to Governor & Council, Northern Department, 25 February 1830, HBCA D.4/123, fo. 71.
- 42 McLoughlin to McDonald, 7 July 1830, HBCA B.223/b/6, fo. 6; McDonald to Governor and Council, Northern Department, HBCA D.4/125, fo. 62d; Charlton to McLoughlin, 27 January 1831, HBCA D.4/125, fos. 17d-1; HBCA C.7/177, fo. 33. In March 1835, Pelly asked McLoughlin for '100,000 Shingles about 18 Inches long and well made they would meet a Sale at \$8 a thousand,' and he offered to send 'a specimen of those in demand here the Russians seem very desirous of engrossing the whole Lumber supplies to this place.' Pelly to McLoughlin, 21 March 1835, HBCA B.223/b/11, fos. 118, 119.
- 43 Victor, 'Flotsam and Jetsam of the Pacific,' 38; John Dominis to Josiah Marshall, 14 June 1829, quoted in Morison, 'New England and the Opening of the Columbia River Salmon Trade,' 123; Howay, 'The Brig Owhyhee in the Columbia, 1829-30,' 27; Green, *Journal of a Tour*, 100.
- 44 McLoughlin to G&C, 5 August 1829, HBRS 4, 78-9; McDonald to Governor and Council, Northern Department, 25 February 1830, HBCA D.4/123, fos. 66d-72. On the Clallum Expedition, see 'Old Memo Book and Journal of Edward Ermatinger,' Ermatinger Papers, NAC; MacLachlan, 'The Founding of Fort Langley,' 24-5; Francis Ermatinger, 'Earliest Expedition Against Puget Sound Indians,' *Washington Historical Quarterly* 1, 2 (January 1907).
- 45 Dominis to Marshall, 14 June 1829, quoted in Morison, 'New England and the Opening of the Columbia River Salmon Trade,' 123-4; McLoughlin to Heron, 20 July 1833, HBCA B.223/b/9, fo. 16; Dunn, *History of Oregon territory*, 231-2; Simpson to G&C, 1 March 1829, HBRS 10, 80.
- 46 McDonald to McLeod, 15 January 1832, McLeod Papers, NAC; York Factory, Country Produce, Account Book, 1828-36, HBCA 239/d/491, fo. 67; Fort Vancouver, Accounts Current, 1839-40, HBCA B.223/d/127, fo. 4.