

London Dec 20<sup>th</sup> 1782

Mr J. H. H. H. H.

Dear Sir

I have by Mr. Davis who has been to see  
Mr. Cook that the prospect of obtaining an annuity against the  
is not good - he thinks however from his conversation that he  
would be more likely to pay one claim than any of his others  
I have written to Mr. Little that I would write you to have a  
history of your settlement with Mr. Cook so that Mr. Cook might if necessary  
go to visit him if any prospect exists of obtaining any thing -  
Mr. Davis seems to think that there has been agreement on the part of  
of Mr. Cook and his partner - I will thank you to have a statement  
of Mr. H. H. H. H. in London and also send a copy to Mr. H. H. H. H.  
at Independence so that he may know what you have done when  
he goes up to you at Independence or Georgetown.

Every thing remains necessarily still here - we are selling  
the goods and collecting the money - the weather has been very  
warm since you left and navigation in a measure closed - we  
look for a change before winter sets in completely -

I hope you will visit all those who are indebted to us  
(see) or to myself and collect whatever you can as my little ac-  
count - the present season of the year is not favorable for  
collections as Christmas is falling very generally in the  
Country -

*Western Caledonia*

*Feb 27<sup>th</sup> 1837-*

**Peter Skene Ogden** writes to John Stuart, who was on furlough, at the Hudson Bay House, Ten Church Street, London, from Western Caledonia, now British Columbia. The following extracts are from this letter. "Feb 27th 1837...When you could find time to write me from London is to me a convincing proof you still recollect tho absent it is true the scenes of the wilds of America must be still fresh in your memory and will take a few years err you will forget all - I think however their are a few Individuals in it who entertain a sincere regard who will not ever be forgotten.....I am truly glad to hear you were enjoying health and surrounded by your friends what more can man desire on ....The rules and regulations you Marched to are no longer in existance my predecessors left me no old documents behind them perhaps they intended it as a compliment having my long experiance amongst so many wild Tribes.....my first winter ....was rather a severe. one the second has been the same and has fully repaid us for all our trouble our Outfit amounted to nine hundred Pounds and our profits are Two thousand [?] it would have been greater had not the [?] made considerable harm you will know the Natives of this quarter and it requires but little to prevent them from [?] however I am well pleased - all my improvements answer well and have so far succeeded in doing away with the whole winters transport not one voyage had to perform this season excepting one of pleasure I made to Connllys Lake.[This letter has been difficult to transcribe - so its rough]. I am confident you will agree with me in saying this in itself is a great doing of labor and expence economy is the role of the day in this quarter and by a thing is the safest plan to keep up the profits as the Country is not too well stocked with Beaver. In regard to Columbian affairs I can give you but little news the fact is since last August I have no accounts from that quarter. I however saw the Steam Boat this is at first starting an expensive concern but will eventually repay us all as I am convinced it will enable us to command the Country trade a most suferable one if we could but once obtain it. It is commonly unmached now days that the expences of the Columbia are enormous but few are aware of the numbers of our opponents that come not only by land but also by water and to keep these intruders at a respetable distance our frontiers require to be well guarded and again I assure you the Natives have on other intercourse with strangers that we are obliged to pay almost an extravagant price for Furs, Gov, Peely [Sir John Henry Pelly, Gov. of the Hudson's Bay Co.] & Lord Palmerstone had not yet by last accounts settled my affair with the Russian Govt. it will be a difficult affair to settle with the Russians as they will not relish paying damages, in their reply they state it was owing to my being over cautious which prevented my proceeding up the Stikine River this is the consequences of obeying orders and strictly adhering to the Convetion between Great Britain & Russia - my name as found and published to the World and here I am without being enabled to obtain redress.....I think the Govt. of Ten church Street will evenually clear up all to my satisfaction and obtain full damages for all our loss. May God preseve you many years is the sincere wish of yours sincerely

*Peter Skene Ogden*

**Peter Skeen Ogden** Was born in Quebec and was baptized on Feb. 12th, 1790. Ogden joined the American Fur Co., sometime before 1811, and then entered the service of the Northwest Co. that same year. In 1823, after the union of 1821, he was given the rank of a chief trader in the Hudson's Bay Co.. Between 1824 and 1830 he led several expeditions into the Snake Country in opposition to the Americans. See his SNAKE COUNTRY JOURNALS, pub. by the Hudson's Bay Record Society 1950. In 1835 he became a chief factor the man in charge of New Caledonia. The city of Ogden, Utah, is named after him. Peter Skeen Ogden died at Oregon City, Oregon on Sept. 27, 1854. He was one of the giants of the Canadian fur trade.





2/8 sterling  
double rate  
collect 1/4  
ship letter  
rate, includ-  
ing 4d. ship  
captain's fee  
plus 1/4 inla-  
nd postage-  
Deal to London  
74 miles

sent to York  
Factory for  
the H. B. Co.  
ship to  
England

**HISTORICAL LETTER** regarding the 1825 British-Russian Convention on the fur trade. Ogden says it will be difficult to settle with the Russians, that they do not relish paying damages, while he is obeying orders and adhering to the Convention. See Peter W. Dease letter from Great Bear Lake, Dec. 18th 1838 for the Stikine River, The steambot mentioned was the H. B. Co. SS BEAVER. Lord Palmerston was the British Foreign Secretary. A great letter.

*From Western Caledonia Feb. 27, 1837*  
*DEAL SHIP LETTER*  
*rec'd. London 25 October 1837*



**NEW CALEDONIA** was the name applied by the fur traders to that portion of British Columbia lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Coast Range. This letter was written by Ogden at Ft. St. James on Stuart Lake which had been established in 1806. See MAP for Canoe Route, that letter was carried on, via the Peace River to Ft. Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska. From there the route follows the rivers and lakes, as per the RED line, to Lake Winnipeg. Thence across the lake to Norway House and then N. East on Hayes or Nelson rivers to York Factory on Hudson Bay, where it was taken by H. B. Company ship to London, on Oct. 25th after a long journey of seven months and twenty three days.



Great Bear Lake 18 Dec.1838"

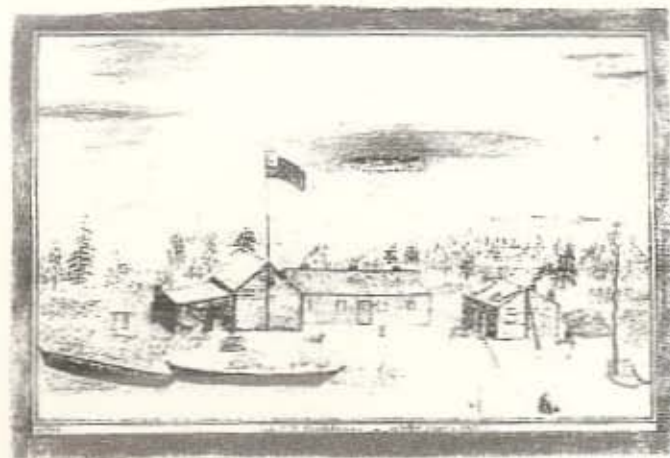
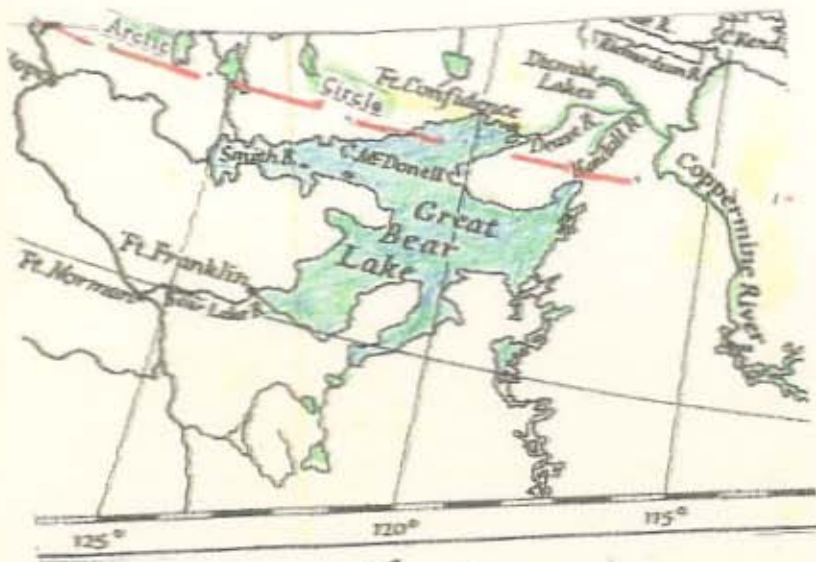
John Stuart Esq.

Dear Sir: I hope that the receipt of my addresses to you, would have convinced you ere this, that, I should be sorry, willingly to incur the reproach of neglect or forgetfulness from my friends, especially those among whom it has been my fortune to pass those days when free from the cares and anxieties which time and the vicissitudes of life are accompanied, it was my endeavour to share with others the various pleasures that only youth and buoyancy of spirits can derive from surrounding objects, and the mutual interchange of kind offices then lost when continued as in our case, leave the impression never to be eradicated and from the most pleasing retrospection of life, for although separated almost from Pole to Pole as we may be, past scenes can always be recalled to memory. Such are almost the only enjoyments to me now in this Country, where but few of the companions of those days remain and then widely separated, I am sincerely pleased to hear that you enjoy that state of health without which no society or amusement can be agreeable, may a long continuance be granted you - for my own part, I have no reason to complain of want of Bodily health, but whether during my Caledonia travels, or since, I perceive a vast difference in my sight, which is much impaired without however causing any painful sensations. Symptoms which afford me but faint hopes of a restoration to former state of vigour. With much pleasure I hear of the continued health and happiness of my respected friend M. J. Leith as also Messrs A. N. McLeod and one of the oldest acquaintances in the country Mr. J. Haldane, and should feel greatly gratified by an opportunity of personally paying my respects to them, if spared to return in safety from the Expedition I do not despair of having that satisfaction it being very probable I may again cross the Atlantic. We were informed by our letters & some public prints of the unfortunate result of Captain Backs Expedition in the Terror and the imminent danger they were in during most of the season. Our last summers campaign I am sorry to say was not attended with success we hoped for, but still not entirely fruitless. Although fine in some respects was not favourable for the disruption of the ice after a severe winter for cold, the general winds we had tended to keep it on the coast few very few South or S.E. breezes, and calm prevent with the utmost toil along shore pushing off & cutting through points of ice, carrying so that we reached Pt. Turnagain of Sir John Franklin on 9th Augt. when again we are blocked up by ice, seeing which a coasting Pedestrian Excursion was performed by M. Simpson with a party he proceeded upwards of 100 miles to 10 Lon, 104½ from whence a Deep Bay which would have taken much time to perform the circuit of made him resolve upon returning, tho the sea was there open & had been for some space before reaching that - he rejoined us on the 29th and only on the 31st could we extricate ourselves from our hopeless encampment. The Ice still a considerable distance to the Eastward, precluded all hope of advancing for some time. The lateness of the season without any prospect of seeing natives as we saw but one family at C mine River (Coppermine) who had fled from us, made us think a return season most advisable with intentions of another trial next summer God willing, when we trust that with the experience gained of one route & the coast should the season be favourable at least not adverse, I hope we may succeed the remaining distance but about 130 miles to Rap's Pillar. I\* trust it may be granted us to accomplish. On our return we ascended the Cop Mine (River) with our Boats to near Kendals River, by which from the Dismal Lakes (see map) we had descended to it with our Boats & Cargoes -

\* Pillar rapids



# ARCTIC CANADA



FORT CONFIDENCE -- WINTER VIEW 1850-51

BY JOHN RAE

*Great Bear Lake 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1838 --*



**FORT CONFIDENCE** was built in 1837 by Dease and Simpson as a base for their Arctic Explorations. It was located on the northern most point of Great Bear Lake, inside the Arctic Circle. SEE map above. John Rae was a surgeon & explorer for the H.B.Co. He made 4 Arctic Expeditions, 3 in search of Sir John Franklin, 1848-1854.

**1838 (Dec. 18) Fort Confidence, Great Bear Lake, North West Territory to London, England, folded letter, manuscript "IN4", readdressed "Forres NB" in red manuscript, reverse with "H 15 OC 1839" datestamp and a stepped SHIP LETTER DEVONPORT.**

AN AMAZING LETTER FROM PETER DEASE ON HIS 1838 ARCTIC EXPEDITION.

*The letter was written by Peter Dease, arctic explorer, on his 1838 expedition and was carried via Hudson's Bay Company canoe express to York Factory and from there via H.B.C. supply ship to England, rated 1/4 Stg collect and redirected to Forres, Scotland. In the letter, which is to John Stuart at H.B.C headquarters in London, Dease remarks on his own "difference in my sight which is much impaired" which may have resulted from his "Caledonia Travels", refers to Captain Backs expedition in the Terror and the imminent danger they were in during most of the season. He speaks of his summer expedition which due to severe winter ice and high winds caused much blocking resulting in "pedestrian excursions" to find openings. They finally abandoned hope of proceeding and considered it advisable to return the following summer.*



## ARCTIC CANADA

a Rapidous little stream - four strong rapids also occur in the Cop Mine above the Bloody Fall where we still found a memento of the horrid massacre described by Hearne (Samuel) & to which he was an unwilling spectator. Our party are still in spirits for a renewal of our voyage the season has been extremely mild for this climate from which I entertain hopes, as we had a clear coast on the return westward. Mr. Robert Campbell last summer has succeeded in reaching the head of the Stikine [River] and a few miles below the Bridge where Mr. Jno. McLeod was, found a large camp of natives with a Party of Russians trading their furs, but his arrival was not looked upon with a favourable eye, although one of the officers treated him to a glass of Grog - there is a talk of exploring Peel River with best wishes believe me yours truly Peter W. Dease

*Peter W. Dease*

1839 Jan'y 20 Since writing the above we have the satisfaction of the arrival of the men from Ft Simpson bringing our letters by Ath-Boats [Lake Athabasca], at same time Ship letters, the ship reached Y/F [York Factory] 28th Augt. and our news this place 27th ulto and you may suppose we were much gratified by the satisfaction expressed by their honours at the result of our western voyage and the generous manner in which they have testified their approbation of it. I sincerely pray it may be granted us next season to be equally fortunate as we were to Westward. I see one report has been published and highly applauded, the merit is due to Mr. T.S. [Thomas Simpson] **NOT ME**, as you know Scientific pursuits are out of my reach, therefore do not aspire to undeserved distinction. Yours P.W. Dease

*P. W. Dease*

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**Peter Warren Dease**, born at Michilimackinac, Michigan in 1788. He first worked for the XY Co. and the Northwest Co., then with Hudson Bay Co. in 1821. He was a member of Franklins second Arctic Expedition 1825-7 and, at the time of this letter Dease and Simpson were on their 1838 Arctic Expedition. Dease was made a chief factor in 1828, retired in 1843 and died January 17th 1863.

**James Leith** born in Scotland in 1777, joined the XY Co. in 1798 and the Northwest Co. in 1804. On the amalgamation with the Hudson Bay Co. in 1821 he was made a Chief Factor. He retired in 1831 a rich man and upon his death June 19, 1838, he left half his estate to the Indians of Canada, for the propagation of the Protestant religion. Dease did not know this at the time of this letter.

**Archibald Norman McLeod** was a partner in the Northwest Co. from 1799. In 1808 he became a partner of McTavish, McGillivarys & Co. With the merger of the N.W. Co and the H.B.Co. in 1821, he retired and went back to Scotland.

**Sir George Back**, Captain/Admiral Royal Navy, born at Stockport, England 1796. Was with Franklin on his first two expeditions in the Arctic. He commanded an Arctic land expedition down the Great Fish River to the Polar sea 1833/35. The ship **TERROR** was the one Franklin lost on his last voyage of exploration.

**Thomas Simpson** born in Scotland in 1808, the cousin of Sir Geo. Simpson. He was with Dease at the time of this letter, was killed near Turtle Lake No. Dak. He had been made a Chief Trader shortly before his death June 14, 1840.

**Bloody Fall** was a waterfall on the Coppermine River, where Hearne had witnessed the massacre of twenty Eskimos, by a much larger band of Chipewyan Indians, in 1772.

**SEE MAP** for the Coppermine and Kendall Rivers and the Dismal Lakes.

**JOHN M. McLEOD & ROBERT CAMPBELL** were both on the Stikine River. The "Bridge" was a flimsy one built by the Indians. The Stikine is southeast Dease Lake and runs into the Pacific near Ft. Wrangle, Alaska at the time it was Russian America. Campbell called it "Terror" bridge.



John Stuart Esquire Dear Sir

Fort Simpson McKinzie's River  
15th March 1837

I have no language adequate to express the pleasure your very kind and much esteemed favour of date London 4th March afforded me which I had the honor to receive 26th August last and by which I was glad to learn your welfare and that you had passed the time since you crossed the Atlantic much to your satisfaction, in visiting the different parts of Britain. You had then travelled through and still more that you felt yourself in a condition to undertake a Journey to the Continent where I much wish you joy and I have little doubt but you will derive much benefit and real satisfaction from your tour.

Before I proceed to inform you of our local news from this quarter allow me to return my most hearty thanks and acknowledgements for the very favourable opinion you seem to entertain of me, and the kind manner in which you have been pleased to show me such distinguished marks of your favours, which is far above what I could have the most distant idea of having deserved. In fact I thought all the gaieties and vivid scenery of the old country would have banished for ever my name out of your memory as indeed I had neither claim to have deserved such favours and I beg here to assure you that I esteem it the more on that account.

I am much obliged for the Publications and steel pens you mention of altho not yet come to hand, as well as your being prepossessed so much in favour of my brother and the desire you have to know his address which agreeable to your request I shall with pleasure give it thus Mr. Duncan Campbell Kintoch, By Pitlocrie. Should you pass through Perth (if he has yet continued his usual practices) any of the principal writers in that city will be able to give you some information regards him.

Since I had the pleasure of addressing you last, altho a few months time have revolved on few or no circumstances have transpired within this narrow Arctic sphere wherein I move worthy of notice. The summer passed by much in the usual way and a very fine and late fall succeeded which afforded us much facility in getting through the usual business that season. The Winter has been for the most part hitherto very mild and favourable in these parts, and the people at all the Establishments as well as the native population throughout the District are living in a usual abundance, and both at this place and Fort Liard provisions have not been for some some years past so plenty. As regards the Trade the prospects are also favourable. Mr. Bell [John] had by accounts 31st January Furs in store to the value of about £3000 [pounds] - Ft. Norman much the same as last, Fort de Liard is on the increase and this place [Ft. Simpson] as to value at this date is considerable above that of the two preceding winters. We have but very few Rats [Muskrats] this year but Martens Beaver and Lynx are better and more valuable substitutes in their stead of the former we have several hundreds more than of Rats. But the principal cause of the augmentations in our Returns is owing to the Marten Lake Indians who have within the two last years visited us pretty regular and since the beginning of winter they have brought us about 1500 Martens with other Furs from that apparently rich country. The amount total profits as per Balance sheet for outfits 36 were as follows viz Fort Simpson £ 2343'13'4, Fort de Liard £ 1978'3'3, Fort Norman £ 946'17'7, Fort Good Hope £ 1992'1'11, Fort Halkett £ 965'6'4, and District £ 7995'8'3, without taking Fort Halkett into at all. I think the returns of current outfits will considerably exceed the last [year].







You are already, I have no doubt, aware of the disasters which drove Mr. Hutchinson [John] and party so precipitately back from the West Branch last summer as they had commenced their voyage for Dease's Lake. I will therefore only say on that subject that I have volunteered my services for the Expedition going to reestablish in that quarter and that I believe I am to start with my party latter end of this month to Fort de Liard and to proceed from there as early as the state of the navigation will permit. I had the pleasure to see your worthy friend Mr. McLeod [Alexander Roderick] who I went all the way to Slave Lake to visit upon my snow shoes in company with the Winter Express and I can assure you that I was not disappointed in opinion I had formed of him. He is the fine kind open headed gentleman. You will be sorry to hear that Mr. McPherson's son Johnny departed this life 2nd Dec. last after a severe illness. He was to his last the amiable child you saw him. If I had more room I would be more troublesome to you but I have only room to offer you the assurance of respect and gratitude which I have no words to express. I have the honor to be

Dear Sir Your mos obd Hble servant

Robert Campbell"

\*\*\*\*\**Robert Campbell*\*\*\*\*\*

**ROBERT CAMPBELL** was born February 21, 1808 in Perthshire, Scotland. On June 2, 1830 he sailed for Canada on the H.B.C. ship PRINCE RUPERT, along with James McMillan & Donald Ross, both Chief Factors of the H.B.Co., who had come home on furlough. McMillan was a cousin of Campbell and had fascinated him by the "fur trade, boundless prairies roamed by tribes of Indians and herds of Buffalo, the vast lakes and the giant streams, the sublime majesty of the Rocky Mountains and forests". Campbell served the Hudson's Bay Co. as an Explorer and Chief Factor forty one years - 1830/1871. He discovered the source of the YOUKON & STIKINE RIVERS. In 1880 he built a home and a cattle ranch near Riding Mountain, Manitoba, Canada. He called it Merchiston Ranch and died there May 9, 1894. **JOHN HUTCHINSON** born about 1798, joined the H.B.Co. 1816. In 1834 he was ordered to build a post at Dease Lake claimed that he was prevented by an Indian attack and turned back. J.M. McLeod and others doubted this as an excuse not to spend the winter in that wild country! The same year he returned to England on medical leave! He retired in 1837.

**ALEXANDER RODERICK McLEOD** was born about 1792, joined the Northwest Co. in 1802 and became a Chief Trader at the coalition with the H.B.C. in 1821. On Sept. 6, 1828 he led a relief expedition to the site of the Umpqua Massacre in Oregon. Jedediah Smith had been attacked by the Kelawatset Indians, killing 15 of his men, with only Smith and 3 men escaping to Ft. Vancouver. They were able to recover 30 or more horses and mules and about 600 beaver and other fur pelts, all of which were sold to the Hudson's Bay Co. SEE Arthur Black for more on this event in this collection. McLeod was also with George Back's Arctic Land Expedition 1833/35. He was made a Chief Factor in 1836 and died June 11, 1840.

**JOHN BELL** born 1799, joined the N.W.Co. in 1818, thence to the H.B.Co. 1821. Became a Chief Trader in 1841, retired in 1860 and died in 1868. It was Bell, John M. McLeod and Robert Campbell whose explorations defined most of the river systems of western Canada.

Value of Furs in this letter are in Sterling pounds - pounds/shillings/pence.



Norway House 27<sup>th</sup> August 1850

My Dear Sir,

Your esteemed favor of the 22<sup>nd</sup> March came to hand by the Spring Express Canoe about the usual time in the month of June last – the melancholy cause of your not hearing from me last year, compelled my silence to all my other correspondents also. Both in this country and at home – In truth I was in no condition either of mind or body to do more than my public duties required of me. I was truly glad to learn by your letter that tho not altogether free from the ailings and infirmities which generally accompany advancing years, you were still comparatively well and active, a blessing which you no doubt owe to the correctness and regularity of your past life. Your notice of our retired colleague and your own movements at home are very interesting to me tho I am myself perhaps never destined to enjoy the pleasures and comfort of my native land.

Of this country there is really not much to be said in the shape of news that can afford much interest to any one, the efforts of various men of late years, all moved by selfish purposes of one kind or another, and all alike regardless of truth, have brought the country and its rulers into spurious notoriety and importance before the public; the attacks on the Company were certainly well timed for mens minds were generally in that sort of unsettled state, which rendered people too ready to believe in the existence of such evil and mis government as were represented to prevail under the Company rule – that rule itself too, it must be confessed, has always had its weak points, nor can we wonder that a monopoly such as ours should be in bad order in these days of Revolution and free trade mania.

The trade of last outfit has been very poor in the north, and will, I fear continue so till Rabbit, and Partridge again make their appearance. With these have disappeared, Lynx Martin Fishers and Foxes to a very great extent – such fur bearing animals as derive their food from fish or vegetables, have not diminished in the same proportion – for instance Norway House District alone has this year turned upwards of 5000 prime Beaver and more that 50 otters, the Beaver unfortunately is of small value in the present day, but the Castorum itself will at last quoted price fetch a pretty round sum. The Fur trade on the west side of the mountain seems to be falling away rapidly. I believe the former important District of New Caledonia has hardly produced £1500 apparent profit for this last outfit – we must now look to Gold and Coals instead of Beaver and Marlins, for profits. The Gold indeed seemed to be coming in at a tolerable good rate – but I strongly suspect that the Coals will never yield us anything else than smoke. I look upon our tenure in the Columbia as a very uncertain one, we are in fact after all the fuss that was made by John Bull and his “Oregon Treaty” neither more or less than “Tenants At Will” to our Keen and unscrupulous neighbors who seem determined to make all they can out of us till they find it safe or convenient to turn us out altogether. During the past year they made us pay down upwards of £4000 Stg hard cash in Custom house duties alone. I hardly expect that the pending negotiation about our possessory right in that quarter will come to anything.



## Norway House, 1850 Letter to Scotland



Map of route



27 August 1850 Norway House to Aberdeen, Scotland, Liverpool Ship Letter hamdstamp

*Letter of Alexander (Donald) Ross mentions:* I believe the former important District of New Caledonia has hardly produced £1500 apparent profit for this last outfit – we must now look to Gold and Coals instead of Beaver and Marlins, for profits. The Gold indeed seemed to be coming in at a tolerable good rate – but I strongly suspect that the Coals will never yield us anything else than smoke.

*Don Ross*



## THE WESTERN MAILS



### STEAMER OMEGA

The STEAMER OMEGA was a sidewheeler of 144 tons; built at Pittsburgh, Pa. in 1840; operated in the upper Missouri trade for the AMERICAN FUR COMPANY; abandoned in 1849.

Historical letter on opposite page was written by a William Wilson to his mother in Scotland. The following quote is from that letter: "I have engaged as carpenter for 15 months to a coarse but healthy life - I am going up to the Rocky Mountains with the American Fur Company - I will have \$10 pr month but I am taking up a lott of Jewelry Beads & Ribands to traid with the indians on my own account by which I expect to make a little - the Company will start on the OMEGA STEAMER tomorrow - we will call on all the differnt towns and Ports on the Missouri River - sail up as farr as it is Navigable that is 5 miles up the Yellow-Stone River, about 2000 miles then on mules I expect above (about) one thousand miles through the Diffrent Indian Nations. Feed on nothing but Buffalo meet 3 times a day ----- you need not write to me till next June 1844 ----- I will write when I gett up to the Yellow-Stone by the Steam Boat which I hope you will receive." End quote.

The STEAMER OMEGA left St. Louis on April 25th, 1843 two days after this letter was written, and the same day it was post-marked.

This voyage of 1843 is known in more complete detail than any other in the early history of the Missouri River. Its master was Captain Joseph Sire and its pilot the famous Captain Joseph La Barge.

Audubon and his party of scientists were its most noteworthy passengers and the voyage was not without incident. Indians fired on the boat at Handys Point and a Scotchman who was asleep in his berth was awakened and terribly frightened by one of the bullets which entered his berth. Could this have been William Wilson?





My Dear Mother

St. Louis April 23<sup>d</sup> 1843

Send you these few lines ~~hoping~~ hoping they will find you as well as I wish you, I am in good health at present which with the blessing of God I hope will continue. I received your letter of the 28<sup>th</sup> Feb<sup>y</sup> on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April. I am sorrow to think that I shall never see my Grandfather in this World again, but I hope it is the will of our Heavenly Father that we shall meet in a Farr better. I am very anxious about my Dear Sister send her to the Cruck of Devon where by the aid of Kind Friends she may gather Health and strength she says she would like to see me I am sorrow to say we cannot see one another before 18 months. I am glad to think you Dear Mother are keeping up your Heart so well. John is in good Health which I am glad to here off. I hope George will gett about again I wish he was with me. I have engaged as Carpenter for 15 Months to a Coarse but healthy life I am going up to the Rocky Mountains with the American Fur Company. I will only have \$10 p<sup>er</sup> Month but I am taking up a Cott of Jewelry beads & Ribands to train with the Indians on my own account by which I expect to make a little the Company will start on the Omega steamer tomorrow we will call on all the Dufferent towns and Forts on the Missouri River will up as farr as

as

11  
12

PAID  
BY THE  
POSTAGE



Scotland

Edinburgh

Mr. James Clerk Maxwell

10, Colinton Road

Post

1870  
APR 25  
11

James Clerk Maxwell  
Edinburgh

AMERICA  
1



Dear Brother

Dickland Township, Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 1848

I have delayed writing to you nearly 3 weeks from receipt of yours, not knowing what to say to you & yet that I have disappointed you but not so much as I am disappointed myself. I fear our hopes are blasted of seeing you and sister at the time & place. I know it is our duty to try and help you out here, but the father has decreed it otherwise at this time. He wrote to Charles & sister with the full assurance of finding the means but before the letter reached Baltimore he was on his way coming to see us, he stayed with us about 3 weeks and had only enough of money about \$800. to furnish his旅 of visiting all his relations in the States, after which he intends saving 4 or 500 dollars to come and settle himself beside us, as he is very much taken up with the looks of the country. It for ourselves we have been thinking of buying to borrow some money from some of the speculators as they are all speculating about here when they have a few 100 dollars put them, but how can I when I know not how to pay them, my wheat crop the only article of produce, in this part of the country, has been a complete failure this year, some few laborers found that had very early sowing has good crops, 5 acres of spring wheat looked very well, and 11 acres of fall wheat - altho it was a good deal water killed, still it looked promising till the heads were about half filled when it came on a very wet spell, followed by heavy ~~some~~ dews at night, which caused it to be (what we call) struck with the rust, so that the head did not fill any more, and it was not north cutting, I cut about 5 acres of it - which gave me about 40 bushels, I think putting in 16 lbs on 11 acres yesterday, I am the first that has sown down about this country, so I hope with the blessing of God that

23

Paid 3/4<sup>05</sup>

Mr. William Pitt

215 Number Street  
off the King gate of  
London

Scotland

Belleme Lane 3  
Apt 30-1828

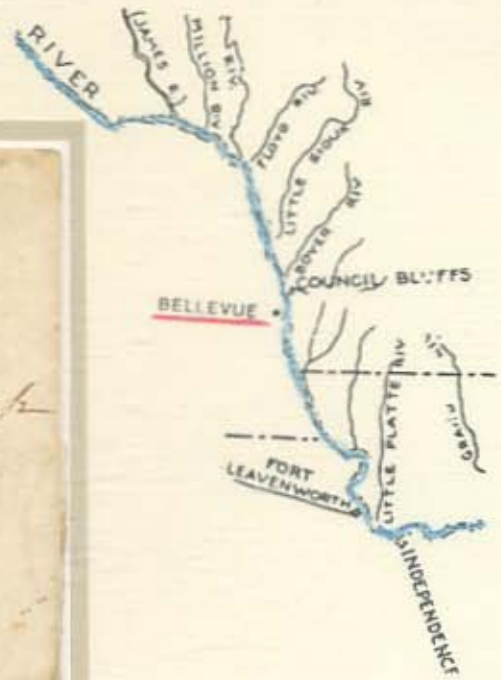
CHARROW  
LONDON E.C.4  
9.40 P.M.

LIVERPOOL  
0023  
1848



THE WESTERN MAILS

*(By S. Boat Yellowstone)*



*Steam boat Yellowstone  
8 August 1832.*

**YELLOWSTONE** Steamboat built for the American Fur Company at Louisville, Kentucky in 1831. She was 130 by 19 feet with a 6 foot hold and a register of 144 tons. The Yellowstone was the first steamboat to ascend the Missouri River above Council Bluffs to Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone River in Montana. She was lost in 1837.

On March 26, 1832 she left Saint Louis, arrived at Fort Union about June 17th and was back in Saint Louis July 7th. This voyage has been called a landmark in the history of the west because it proved that steamboats could navigate the Missouri all the way up to the mouth of the Yellowstone.

The letter shown was written on board the boat by R.P. Beauchamp, a sub-agent under John Dougherty at the Upper Missouri Indian Agency at Bellevue (Nebraska), who was on his way up river on August 8, 1832. He writes "On the evening of the 2nd Inst the boat which I am now on reached Fort Leavenworth --- I went on board that same night & slept in the boat --- Left in the morning of the 3rd Inst and this is now the 8th day --- we shall get to the end of our trip in two days more --- 11th August we got up yesterday morning."

Beauchamp's destination is not given but it was most probably the Indian Agency at Bellevue. Here the boat probably turned back to Saint Louis with this letter as per directive (**By S. BOAT YELLOWSTONE**). Beauchamp died from cholera at Bellevue in August of 1833.





THE WESTERN MAILS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR COMPANY    PLATTE RIVER JUNE 4, 1833

"I have now for the first time since we parted an opportunity of giving you a Scetch of our proceedings since you left here which I have been very anxious to do - But I have now but a very poor means of doing as I would wish you are well aware of the incumbrance of men on such occasions as this therefore Any neglect of my duty I hope you will excuse - Immediately after our seperation last summer I repaired to Salmon river and there made a deposit[cache]of all our goods &c from thence to the Blackfoot country and further north in it than a company of whites ever has been before in search of beaver but found them much scarcer than I had any Idea of - our party in that section Consisted of about 60 men - we made a very extensive tour and caught only about 20 packs of beaver - Mr Vanderburgh[Wm. Henry]overtook us with a party of 112 men on the Dearburn river which was a great disadvantage to us altho in all they caught but about 5 packs of fur while we got 20 - they remained and camped with us until we arrived at the three forks of the missouri [the point where the Gallatin, Jefferson and Madison rivers join to form the Missouri River] where we seperated - I went up the Gallatin and they the Madison and soon after we both had a fight with the blackfeet - Mr Vanderburgh was killed in a few days after we parted - in our fight Bridger[James] was shot in 2 places with arrows - we lost one squaw & the gun which you sold Bridger - Besides one man who was killed out a trapping - Freab[Henry G. Fraeb]starts for St Louis this morning for the purpose of finding out our situation in that place and should matters stand as we expect he will mount another equipment in time to send in our furs this fall. we have now in our service in all about ninety men and is in 2 parties - one of 60 and another of 30 - the one of 60 I have under my command in this quarter and finds beaver much more plenty than I have in any part last fall - we have done very well so far this hunt - I put in cache a few days ago about 40 packs of good fur - I left Sublette[Wm. L.] & Jervey[Jean Baptiste Gervais]in february last on the Columbia[river] with the 30 men - how they have done I donot Know - I hope well - Should this letter meet with you in St Louis I am in hopes you will be no more backward in assisting Freab than you have me last year - even your advise in such a case I recommend him to return and should you not be in St Louis I have directed this enclosed and sent to you wherever you are even to Ireland and should I have the satisfaction of hearing of your being in St Louis I shall depend much on you; you are well aware of the incapacity of our agent - But the nature of our business here does not admit of my absence at present nor indeed to do justice never did - perhaps you may see me in St Louis in nov next for should Freab mount an outfit we will certainly take in our fur this fall - I have written to Mr Aull[James]on the subject of an outfit - you will please see him on the subject and give your real Ideas as respects the propriety or impropriety of the undertaking - Mr Campbell[Robert]there is not one man in the United States which I would rather see at present than you - I have much to say to you but has a bad opportunity and I am afraid you will find but little satisfaction in reading this ill composed address but I hope you will be kind enough to make allowances for my embarrassment at present which you are well aware of - I ask one more request of you if you write to me which you certainly must not neglect leave nothing untold that may concern me in degree - I have been a few nights ago fired on by indians - two balls were shot through my lodge but no further damage done except one mule slightly wounded - the Village is at



Sioux Falls June 4<sup>th</sup> 1853

Dear Campbell I have now for the first time since we parted an opportunity of giving you a letter of our proceedings since you left here which I have been very anxious to do but I have never had any spare means of doing so I would wish you are well aware of the incumbrances of some on such occasions as this therefore being respect of my duty I hope you will excuse I unfortunately after our separations last summer I repaired to Salmon river and there made a depot of all our goods & from thence to the Blackfoot country and further north in it there a company of whites ever has been before in search of beaver but found them much scarcer than I had any idea of our party in that section consisted of about 60 men we made a very extensive tour and caught only about 20 packs of beaver Mr Vanderburgh over took us with a party of 112 men on Dearborn river which was a great disadvantage to us altho in all they caught but about 5 packs of fur while we got 20 they remained and camped with us until they arrived at the three forks of the Missouri where we separated & took up the Gallatin and they the Missouri and soon after we both had a fight with the Blackfoot Mr Vanderburgh was killed in a few days after we parted in our fight Bridger was shot in 2 places with arrows we lost our horse our square & the gun which you sold Vanderburgh's man who was killed and a trapping.



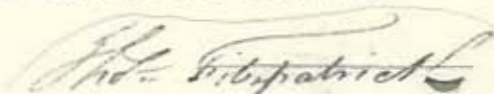
present close by and I intend in a few days to have an interview with them after which I shall apprehend but little danger - however Should they continue hostile we are able to whip them all - the disadvantage will be they may annoy the trappers and prevent them from Scattering in an advantageous manner - you may send me a volume or two such as you know may suit me - Your Friend Thos.Fitzpatrick N.B. be very particular about any letters or information you may send and it would be best to say they are private

Give my respects to Mr.Towns family and also Mr Kyles and any other person which you think I ought not forget if any such there is you will judge".

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On his way back to St.Louis,Fraeb met Robert Campbell,coming out with the yearly supply train,at the mouth of Laramie Creek on the Platte River. He turned around and went back with Campbell to the Rendezvous site on the Green River where they met up with Fitzpatrick. In all probability he gave Campbell this letter. At the Green River Rendezvous in 1835,Dr.Marcus Whitman,removed from the back of Bridger a three-inch iron arrow point which had been imbedded almost three years before in a fight with Blackfeet Indians.

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This letter is best described by the late Dale L.Morgan: "A letter written by Thomas Fitzpatrick from the Platte River,June 4,1833,to Robert Campbell,recounting his experiences since the previous summer,and relating other mountain occurrences while touching upon the situation of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company,of which Fitzpatrick was the 'brains'.This is one of the most valuable and generally informative letters,filling in the picture of that year from the standpoint of the R.M.F.Company,as to which authoritative information has been sadly lacking.It is also significant that Fitzpatrick should say that the brigade he personally led into the Blackfoot country in the fall of 1832 went further north in it 'than a company of whites ever has been before in search of beaver'.It may be that the history of the rivalry between the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and the American Fur Company during the year 1832,which had a bloody climax in the killing of William Henry Vanderburgh by the Blackfeet,has been miswritten by Irving,Chittendon,and all who have followed them,and must be studied anew in the light of this..." D.L.M.1956.

THOMAS FITZPATRICK was born in Ireland in 1799 and came to the U.S. when he was about seventeen years old.He first appears in the fur trade when he joined an Ashley expedition up the Missouri in 1823. In 1830 he joined with Bridger,Fraeb,Gervais & Milton G.Sublette in forming the Rocky Mountain Fur Co.He was with Jedediah Smith on the Santa Fe expedition in 1831 and was the last man to see Smith before Jedediah was killed by the Comanche.In 1843-44 he was a guide to Fremont and in 1846 guided Kearny's Army of the West to Santa Fe.From 1850 to his death on Jan.1,1854,he was the Indian Agent to the Arapahos and the Cheyennes in the area between Bent's Fort on the Arkansas and Fort Laramie on the Platte.Fitzpatrick arranged the great Indian council at Fort Laramie in 1851 and negotiated the treaties with the plains tribes.He was called "Broken Hand" by the Indians and was one of the greatest "mountain men".



To the Governor

Chief Factory

Bas de La Riviere 5th December, 1827

Gentlemen:

It being required by the Minutes of Council that I should write a general letter and not knowing the exact time at which the winter express ought to leave this place, I would rather be before hand than too late and will in consequence send tomorrow to Nettly Creek that my letter may meet those going from Red River to Norway House and it is with much pleasure I have to inform you that we arrived here all safe the 23rd August. When Mr. Mc Vicar arrived here the 27th he found himself so much encumbered that he could not give Berar a passage to Canada and in consequence he remains here as does also the family of Chief Trader Lewes. When Mr. Mc Vicar passed they were all sick and so much confined in the canoe that they would not venture to proceed farther but now I am happy to say perfectly recovered. Not having a copy of the Minutes of Council I am not certain in what manner you intended to have the Winnipeg District settled for the Winter but the arrangements are as follows: Mr. John Robertson and three men winter at Bering's River, Mr. Geo. Setter with two others remain at Nettly Creek-Mc Griur and three men were sent to the ~~Dally~~ and I myself with the remaining four remain here at this place. The Indians was settled much about the usual time and as advantageously I think as a stranger unacquainted with their language that have not the benefit of an interpreter could do it but though they left this place apparently much satisfied and under promise of great exertion-I am not sufficiently acquainted with the local state of the country to be able to form an idea what the result may be-but I expect nothing very favourable. The entire failure of Rice on which they generally subsist in winter will operate against their making good hunts and I am told that many of the Indians both of this place and of Nettly Creek are at the Colony labouring for the settlers and that it is always so whenever as this year the settlers have a good crop and can afford to provide them with provisions. This as a matter of course will operate against the returns but the fault is not mine nor do I know that the evil can be remedied. When I last heard from Mr. Robertson appearances were very gloomy at his place and I have heard that the Americans have an establishment some where about Portage des Rats but it is a report that requires confirmation but if true will operate against the Dally and besides I consider Mc Griur to be no more adequate to the charge of a Post than I am to be Bishop of Assiniboin. Aware of this Mr. Cameron had in the fall made me an offer of Mr. Bue but I am not acquainted with what his capacity may be and besides I could not take the responsibility upon myself for surely had you not deemed Mc Gruer to be fit person you would have provided another and I wish ~~if~~ I may be mistaken in my opinion of him, of both Mr. Robertson and Mr. Setter I have a good opinion and am concerned that nothing in their power to effect will be wanting on their part. The result of our fall fishery has rendered us perfectly independent for the Winter but there is a great falling off in the produce of the farm-of potatoes we have 130 kegs 60 of which I reserve for seed. Pease has entirely failed. Of Oats & Barley we have barely a sufficiency for seed-of wheat we have I think 1743 sheaves thirteen of which judging from the result of fity that is already threshed makes a Bushel and as we shall require forty Bushels for seed and I am told that three Bushels of wheat goes to a Ct of flour if as last year we leave 1000 flour at this place for the passents I bring 2000 in the Spring to Norway House you will find the expenditure of the District will not be great. It is with much



An interesting letter re the Americans setting up a post; the Indians, and conditions in the fur-trade.

Letter was to go by the Winter Express

Letter is from John Stuart (1779-1847)  
Bas de la Rivière 5th December 1827

Font Bas de la Rivière a North West Co. fort near mouth of Winnipeg river, on the south side, a short distance below and opposite the old French fort Maurepas which stood on the north side Built by Toussaint Lesieur for the North West Co. in 1792. McDonnell in his journal 1794 names it Sieur's fort. Thompson 1796 calls it Winnipeg House, and it was also known as Winnipeg River House. Before fort Bas de la Rivière was built the North West Co. had a storehouse for provisions at Otter Point Rock across from the site of old Fort Maurepas, about four miles above mouth of river. Until the time of the coalition 1821 both the Hudson's Bay Co. and the North West Co. maintained forts at this place only a few yards apart. This was probably one of the first posts built by the North West Co. west of Fort William and was an important station on the main canoe route.

John Stuart entered the service of the North West Co. in 1799. He was associated with Simon Fraser in 1805-08, when the latter was extending the activities of the company to the area west of the Rocky mountains; they descended the Fraser River together in 1808. Stuart succeeded Fraser in charge of New Caledonia, in 1809. He became a partner in the North West Co. in 1813, and a chief factor in the Hudson's Bay Co. after the union of 1821.





DIE ELKHORN - PYRAMIDE

LA PYRAMIDE DES CORNES D'ELK



## THE WESTERN MAILS

"To the Governor  
Chief Factors Lc Lc

Bas de La Riviere 5th December 1827"

Gentlemen It being required by the minutes of Council that I should write a general letter and not knowing the exact time at which the winter express ought to leave this place I would rather be before then too late and will in consequence send tomorrow to Nettly Creek that my letters may meet those from Red River to Norway House and it is with much pleasure I have to inform you that we arrived here all safe the 23rd August when Mr. McVicar\* arrived here the 27th - he found himself so much encumbered that he could not give Berar a passage to Canada and in consequence he remained here as does also the family of Chief Trader Lewes [John Lee] - when Mr McVicar passed they were all sick and so much confined in the canoe that they would not venture to proceed farther but now I am happy to say perfectly recovered - Not having a copy of the minutes of Council I am not certain in what manner you intend to have the Winipeg District settled for the Winter but the arrangements are as following. Mr. John Robertson and three men winter at Berings River, Mr. Geo. Setter with two others remain at Nettly Creek - McGruer and three men were sent to the Dolly and I myself with the remaining four remain here at this place - The Indians was settled much about the usual time and as advantageously - I think as a stranger unacquainted with their language that had not the benefit of an Interpreter could do it but though they left this place apparently much satisfied and under promise of great exertion I am not sufficiently acquainted with the local state of the country to be able to form an Idea what the result may be - but I expect nothing very favourable - the entire failure of [Wild] Rice on which they [Indians] subsist in winter will operate against their making good hunts and I am told that many of the Indians both of this place and of Nettly Creek are at the [Selkirk] Colony labouring for the settlers and that it is always so whenever as this year the Settlers have a good Crop and can afford to provide them with provisions - This as a matter of course will operate against the returns but the fault is not mine nor do I know that the evil can be remedied - when I last heard from Mr. Robertson appearances were very gloomy at his place and I have heard that the Americans have established some where about Portage des Rats but it is a report that requires confirmation - but if true will operate against the Dolly and besides I consider McGruer to be no more adequate to the charge of a Post than I am to be Bishop of Assiniboia - Aware of this Mr. Cameron\* had in the fall made me an offer of Mr Buc [Chas. W. Bouc ?] but I am not acquainted with what his capacity may be and besides I could not take the responsibility upon myself for surely had you not deemed Mr McGruer to be fit person you would have provided another and I wish I may be mistaken in my opinion of him, of both Mr Robertson and Mr Setter I have a good opinion and am convinced that nothing in their power to effect will be wanting on their part - The result of our fall fishery has rendered us perfectly independent for the winter but there is a great falling off in the produce of the farm - of potatoes we have 130 kegs 60 of which I reserve for seed - Pease has entirely fail'd & of Oats & Barley we have barely a sufficient for here - of wheat we have I think 1743 Sheives thirteen of which judging from the result of fifty that is already thrashed makes a Bushel and as we shall require forty Bushels for seed and I am told that three Bushels of wheat goes to a ct. of flour if as last year we leave 1000 tile.... at this place for the .... & Bring 2000 tile in the spring to Norway House you will find the expeniture of the District will not be great - it is with much pleasure I have to inform you than in no part of the country I have been at I found the Indians on a better footing then here - it is plain sailing all along - If the produce of the farm fail'd it was because their were no people left to tend to it and the season was unfavourable - I have the Honour to remain/Gentlemen. most respectfully/your obt faithful Servant/

John Stuart .C.T."

"P.S. The original is to be forwarded to Governor [Sir George] Simpson & the Duplicate an triplicate to be sent to Norway House."



## THE WESTERN MAILS

**FORT ALEXANDER**

**Bas de la Riviere**

**1827**

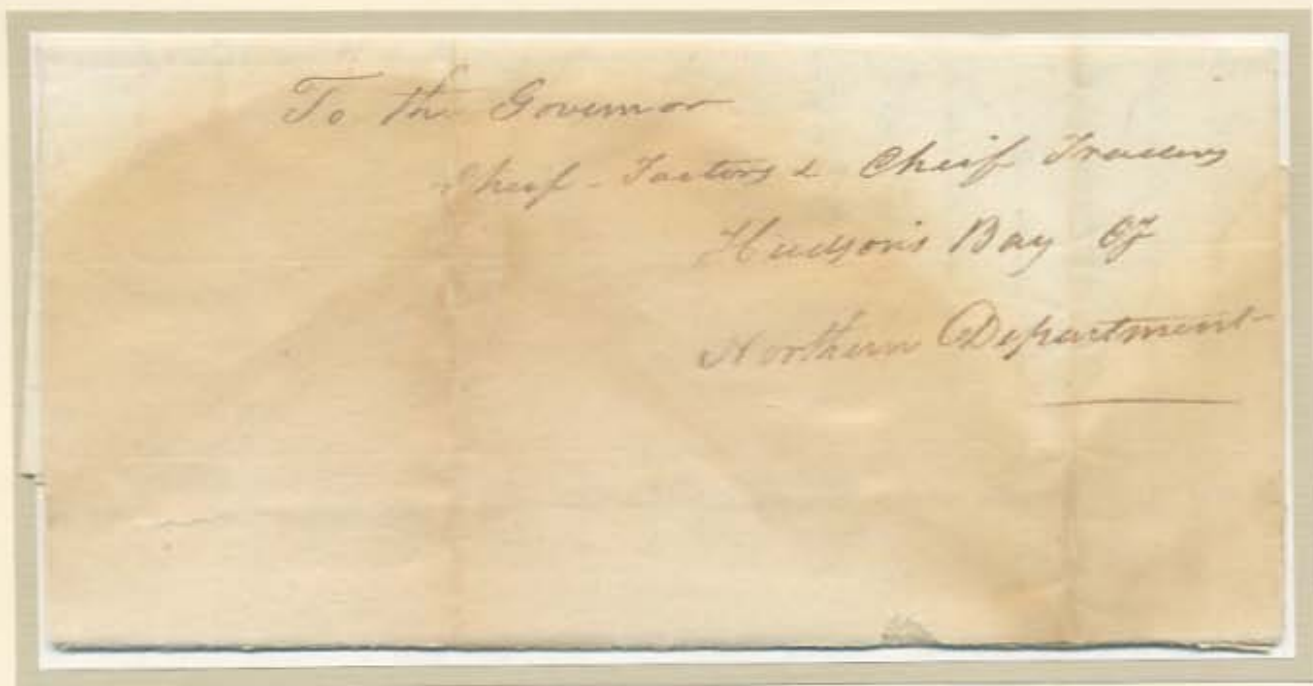
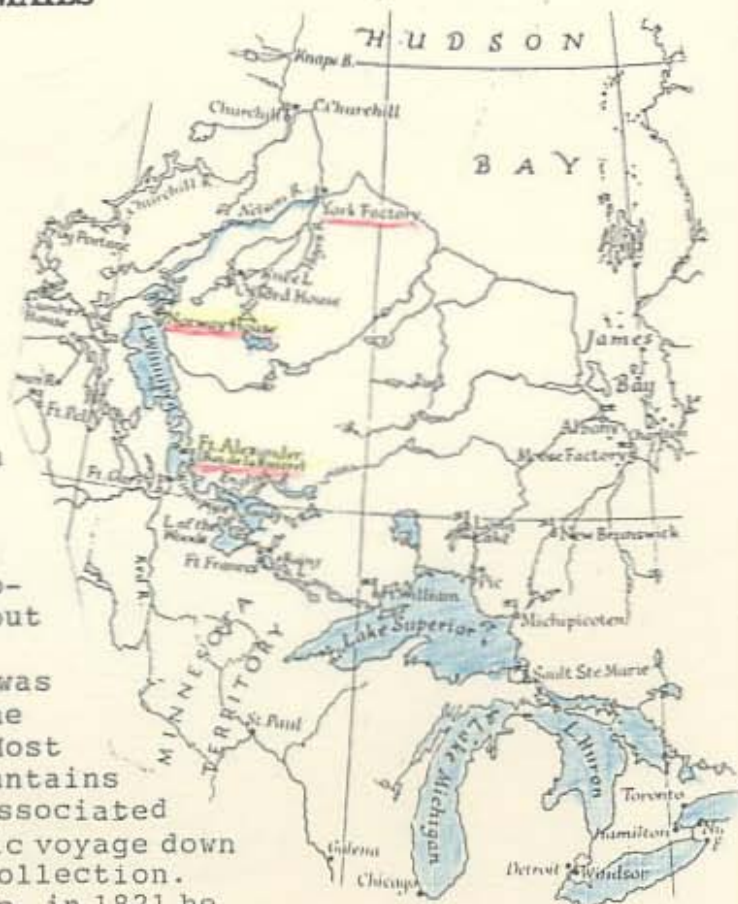
The letter below was carried by the winter express of the Hudson Bay Company, up Lake Winnipeg to Norway House, which was then the headquarters for the Northern Department of the H. B. Co.

This letter was written by Chief Factor John Stuart who was in charge, at that time, of the Winnipeg District.

Stuart gives a detailed report on the Indians and conditions in his district.

He points out the problems of running a farm to raise wheat and produce to support the operation of gathering furs over the water courses of North America. Stuart notes that he has "heard that the Americans have established some where about Portage des Rats", but it needs confirmation.

**JOHN STUART** was born in Scotland in 1779. He was one of the most distinguished officers of the NORTH WEST CO., which he had joined in 1799. Most of his career was spent west of the Rocky Mountains in New Caledonia, now British Columbia. He associated with Simon Fraser and was with him on the epic voyage down the Fraser River, See Simon Fraser in this collection. With the amalgamation with the Hudson Bay Co. in 1821 he was made a Chief Factor and placed in charge of the Winnipeg District. From 1832 to 1835 he was in charge of the Mackenzie River District at Fort Simpson. Stuart retired to Forres Scotland in 1839, where he died January 14, 1847. Donald A. Smith, Lord Strathcona was his nephew.



\*Robert McVicar born in Ireland in 1794. Joined H. B. Co. in 1812. Chief Trader at Fort Resolution, Great Slave Lake 1819-1827. Resigned 1830.

\*Angus Cameron born in Scotland 1782. Joined N. W. Co. 1802 and became a Chief Trader when they merged with the H. B. Co. in 1821. Cameron rose to Chief Factor in 1838 and retired to Scotland in 1845, where he died August 11, 1876.



## THE WESTERN MAILS

"Norway House 12 Augt 1844

My Dear Sir I have now much pleasure in acknowledging receipt of your welcome and interesting favor from the great Metropolis of the 30 March last, which I received this Spring at Red River on the arrival of our mutual friend Sir George Simpson who I was happy to see in excellent health and spirits. - it has offered me sincere pleasure too, to learn that your own health still holds out well tho not altogether free from those pains and ailing to which mortal frame, is heir to. I thank you truly for the ample information on various interesting topics contained in your letter, and only regret that it is not in my power to return the complement to the extent that I could wish. You will, I have no doubt be pleased to learn that myself and family are well and comfortable - still in possession of our old domain, among the Rocks and Swamps of Jack River; I had a very strong inclination to take advantage of my Rotation this season - but the "Exchequer" is too low, and prudence gave the casting vote against my propensity to move abroad for the present, and as new Factors will be coming in, I suppose my next turn will come around some time about the year '54, when I rather think, if I live so long, it will be time for me to clear out. - Our Furs, I am happy to see sold well last winter, with the exception of Beaver - and the quantity sent home was by no means small, yet some how or other, we cannot manage to make profits now adays, tho the trade was never carried on in the country with so little expense; there must be a peg loose somewhere, that is a clear case, but I shall not pretend to say where the leakage is. - The trade of the Department for the last Outfit is certainly very good, particularly in the valuable article of Martins [fur], and as we are now again to hunt Beaver without restraint, I expect the current year will produce something even better than the last, so that if we could calculate, as in former days, on profits rising in proportion to Returns, our present prospects might be deemed somewhat bright - The Columbia too has given large returns for the Outfit but its expenses, I fear, will swallow all up, and probably more; our affairs in that quarter, I suspect are in a very critical state, the Americans are pouring across the mountains by thousands, and if the Oregon question be not speedily settled; some serious mischief will assuredly arise before long - there grasping Republicans, it appears insist on the line of 49 [degrees] to the sea; if they get that, it will be better to give them the whole. The rest will be of little value to England and will rather be a source of trouble and annoyance than of real benefit to the nation; they have no just claim whatever to any portion of the territory, but John Bull [England], good honest soul as he is, terrible when his anger is up, allows himself to be cheated and gulled by every body, who can manage to Bloney and tickle him into good humour, - for my own part, I wish we were well rid of the whole concern, for I strongly fear, we shall suffer the heaviest blows that ever fell on the Fur Trade, - The business on this side of the mountains is going on quietly and prosperously - As many of our gentlemen have lately retired from the service that we had some difficulty this season in filling up the different Districts and Posts so effectively as could be wished but every thing is now on such a regular system that one [large hole torn out] man of business can regulate and [supervise] a large section of country around him [words missing] as you conjectured has relived Mr [Duncan] Finlayson [Chief Factor and Governor of Assiniboia] in charge of Red River and had in addition the Superintendence of Swan Lake River District - You will I dare say see Sir George [Simpson], and likely Mr. Lewes [John Lee, Chief Factor in charge of Mackenzie River district] also who goes home this season. I am sorry to say, with the loss of his right hand accidentally shot off last fall, to them I must refer you for more detailed particulars, and in the mean time, believe me to be/ With much esteem and regard  
My Dear Sir/ yours very Sincerely/Don. Ross"

John Stuart Eqs"



## THE WESTERN MAILS

### THE FUR TRADE AND THE OREGON BOUNDARY 1844-46.

For many years previous to this letter, Great Britain and the United States had jointly occupied the Oregon country, by treaty, which by a years notice could be terminated by either party. The boundary from the Great Lakes to the continental divide was at 49th parallel. The U.S. wanted it to continue northerly on the continental divide to the 54th parallel and thence to the Pacific. The British wanted all the land north of the Columbia River. Sir George Simpson had told the British parliament that if they did not get the Oregon country, they might as well let the Americans have all of it. The U.S. gave up the "54 40 or fight" cry and offered to settle on the 49th parallel, which was finally agreed to in 1846. The folded letter below, written by Donald Ross\*, gives the British view to the controversy in the fall of 1844. See opposite page for the content of the letter.



RAMSGATE  
SHIP LETTER

FORRES  
OCT 18  
1844

**RAMSGATE/SHIP LETTER.** The above cover originated at NORWAY HOUSE 12 August 1844. It arrived in England as a SHIP LETTER at RAMSGATE, where it entered the mails and was forwarded to FORRES, SCOTLAND, where it arrived on October 18th. It also bears the transit marking of LONDON OCT 16 1844. The letter was most likely carried by Hudson Bay Express, up the Nelson River, to York Factory, where it was given to a company ship bound for England. It was two months in transit.

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The letter, besides the Oregon question, draws a picture of the problems in conducting the business of furs across North America. Like any business it had its ups and downs when it come to expense and profits.

Notes: \*Sir George Simpson was Governor and superintendent in charge of all the affairs of the Hudson Bay Company in North America. At the time of this letter he had just returned from England, where he told the parliament about the Oregon question. No doubt that he told Ross as reported in the letter.

\*Donald Ross, 1797-1852, joined the H.B.Co. in 1816 He became a Chief Trader in 1829 and a Chief Factor in 1839. In 1851 he was put on furlough because of ill-health. Ross died at Lower Fort Garry November 19, 1852 and was buried at Red River.



## THE WESTERN MAILS

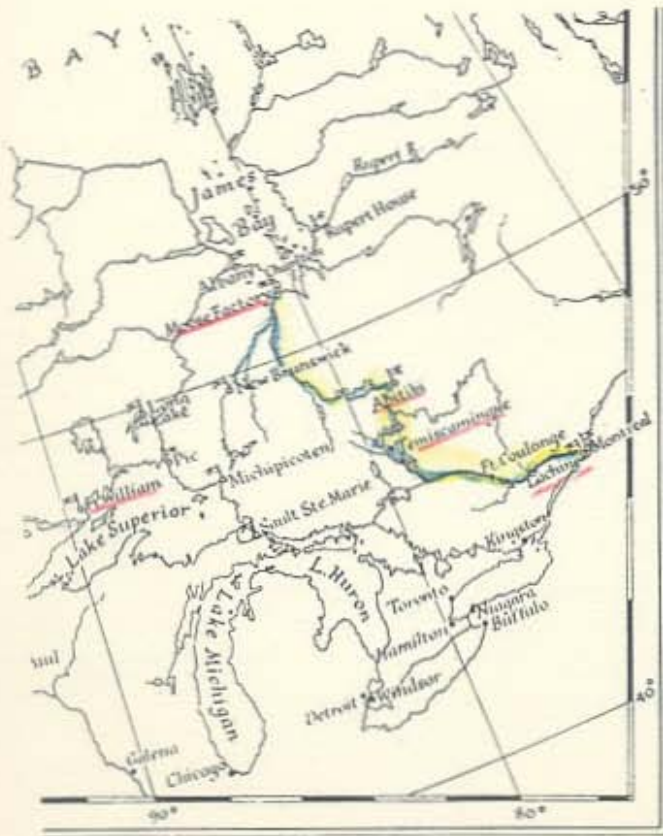
"Moose Factory Ruperts Land Hudson Bay/

Sunday June 21st 1847"

"Dearest Mary What pleasure a letter I received from you yesterday dated 27th February gave me. It was very short but it was news an the first I had received from England since I left - I am glad you and family are well - sorry about your old boy but hope he is better now. I enjoy excellent health cant do otherwise - I never sleep on a bed and seldom under another canopy save that of heaven. I eat plenty but it is all wild food such as fish partridge otter rabbit and beaver meat and I eat it all simply boiled and drink the water for tea." Beardmore then relates to personal and financial affairs and that he has not heard from his father. To continue: "I have had a long journey from Temiscamain to this place and arrived here 3 days ago. I am in a canoe up the Ottawa [river] till it turns East about 50 miles above Temiscamain lake - I then crossed some lakes and the heights of the lands which is the end of Canada and beginning of our territories. It consists of a portage on one side of which the rivers run bothe south an the other bothe North. I then got into the Abibitie River and followed it for 300 miles & more when it falls into the Moose River which runs into the Bay [James Bay - bottom of Hudson Bay]. We go over many rapids and cascades over the latter of which we carry the loading [cargo] and canoes. The loading consisting of furs oil feathers &c. They are done up in 100 lb packs 2 of which I carry on my back for a mile or 2 so that soldiering was nothing to it. We live on what we can get and corn soup. The rivers are very large. The Moose [river] falls into the sea by nearly 12 mouths all islands and on one of which Moose Factory is situated - It is a lovely spot and considered the finest in the country - It is the head of the department and the ship from England comes here. It will not arrive till the end of September and I wait for it so I am informed to day. We have many people here about 80 in all chiefly Scotch and their progeny by squaws [about a dozen words have been heavily crossed out] .Allmost every gent has children by some Indian woman It being the fashion to take what women we wish and put them away when tired [of them]. It is considered no disgrace as a lady when put away is perhaps taken immediately by another gent. This is going now out of fashion much, as we have clergyman in the country and marriage is getting fashionable. They are always called after their lovers names and are considered and behave as wives. One would have thought evil consequences ensued from it, but they have not in this country. There is hardly a legitimate child in the country - I shall send home a good many things for you by the ship which you will accept as token of my love and thanks for your kindness to me. I shall direct it to you and you must forward the things to the persons and make them pay the duty if there is any. If Nathaniel wishes for a collection of stuffed birds and bears [?] I cant get him one, but am sorry to not to be able to make him a present of them as they come rather expensive. At this place Mr Miles [Robert]\* is master a fine English gent we have also another Englishman here which makes 3 of us together which was a thing never known of before in the country as they [others] are all Scotch. He is fat, reads, fond of good living and smokes along pipe and has a rich mellow luscious voice. He is called the fine old English gentleman. Very polite and married to a half breed. He has had 9 children and a good many are still young. 4 grown up and educated in England. The eldest boy eleven - 2 not come out yet and the young lady very pretty - smaller than you and agreeable. Little of the school girl about her. I heard some one thought she was a flirt but cant judge for myself as yet. We have also Miss Hardisty [Isabella]\* here who was educated at Camden Town - rather pretty smiling blue eyes and turns them up most bewitchingly. Her father [Richard Hardisty] takes her up the country where she will see no one but him and Indians all the year round. I have sworn to shoot myself if she goes and the young ladies half believe it. They call us nick names here - I am the Ralydor [?], one Swan and one Bird of Paradise. Miss Miles the Rose, Miss Corcoran Violet. Miss Corcoran is daughter an Irishman rather corpulent & Clumsy and not left the country. She goes up to Canada in the canoes I came down in. The prettiest girl here is Miss Spence Black hair & rather dark we call the Rising Sun. No education..... but she is a perfect beauty. I have now told you most save Mrs Ross à widow. Her hus-



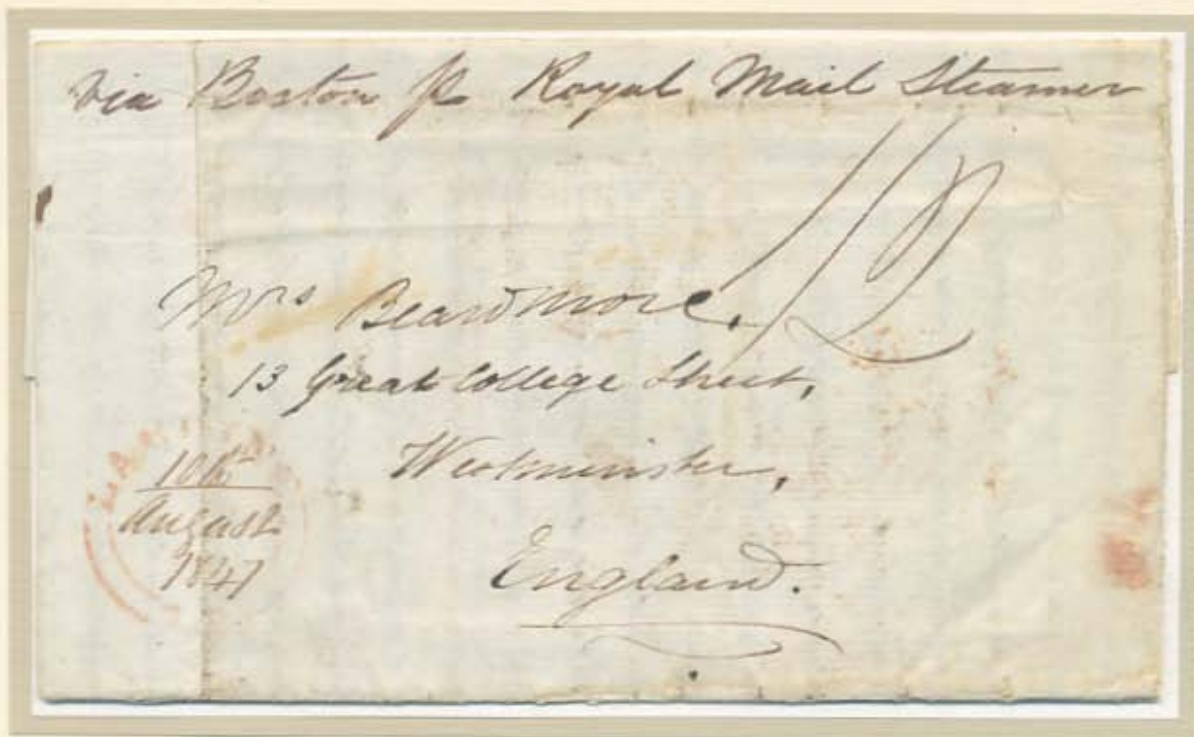
THE WESTERN MAILS



CHARLES BEARDMORE describes his journey up the Ottawa River via Temiscamain and Abitibi lake and Abitibi River To Moose Factory on James Bay. It is perhaps the same route once used by Sir George Simpson from Moose Factory to Lachine. See map and inset for the route as out-lined in yellow. Beardmore gives a good description of the inhabitants and life at Moose Factory and of his journey via canoe.

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*Moose Factory, Ruparts Land, Hudson Bay,  
Sunday June 21<sup>st</sup> 1847.*



This folded letter was carried by the Hudson's Bay Company Express from Moose Factory to LACHINE as per postmark "10th August 1847", where it entered the mails. It was rated "1/2" (1 shilling 2 pence) and forwarded to Boston. Thence via "Royal Mail Steamer" to England, where it arrived August 28th as per receiving handstamps. It was 51 days to Lachine - 18 to England



## THE WESTERN MAILS

band died a year ago. He was crazy for 2 years before he died in consequence of a blow on the head which he received. She is educated and intelligent and will be married to the Dr Kennedy [John]\* in a day or two. We have a parson here of the methodist persuasion he reads the church of England prayers regularly. He was liked much by all before his marriage but he went to England and brought out a wife and they are no favourites now. She is horridly vulgar I soon saw and all I can say for him is he is a methodist. He is disagreeable by complaining of every thing and not.....the manners of the country. They go home this fall by the ship most probably. 2 R[oman] Catholics arrived here the other day to our surprise and are going to set up opposition. I must now wish you good by dear Poll and will trouble you [several words heavily crossed out]. I expect a large parcel by the ship with the things I wrote for. With love to children and Nat. Have the Jones heard from me do you know. Your loving brother/Charly Beardmore."

\*\*\*\*\*



**CHARLES BEARDMORE** was a clerk with the Hudson's Bay Company 1847-1849. From other letters, not in this collection, Beardmore went to Vancouver Island in 1849. **ISABELLA HARDISTY** was the half-breed Cree Indian daughter of Richard Hardisty. She married Donald A. Smith who was a Chief Factor of the H.B. Company. In 1897 Smith and Isabella were raised to the peerage of the British Empire as Baron and Baroness Strathcona and Mount Royal. See Smith letter from Labrador in this collection. **RICHARD HARDISTY** was born in 1792 in London. He joined the H.B. Company in 1817 and was promoted to Chief Trader, retiring in 1861. Hardisty died at Montreal in 1865. **ROBERT MILES** was born in England in 1795 and joined the H.B. Company in 1818. He rose to Chief Factor in 1844, retiring in 1861. Miles died in 1870. Beardmore's description of "the fine old English gentleman" is very similar to Sir George Simpson's description of Miles in his Character Book. **JOHN KENNEDY** was born in 1805, the eldest half-breed son of Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy. He was educated in Scotland obtaining a medical degree at Edinburgh. John was appointed a Chief Trader in 1847 and died April 3, 1859.



18

NOV 15 1842

*Faint handwritten text, possibly an address or recipient name.*



*Faint handwritten text, possibly a name or address.*







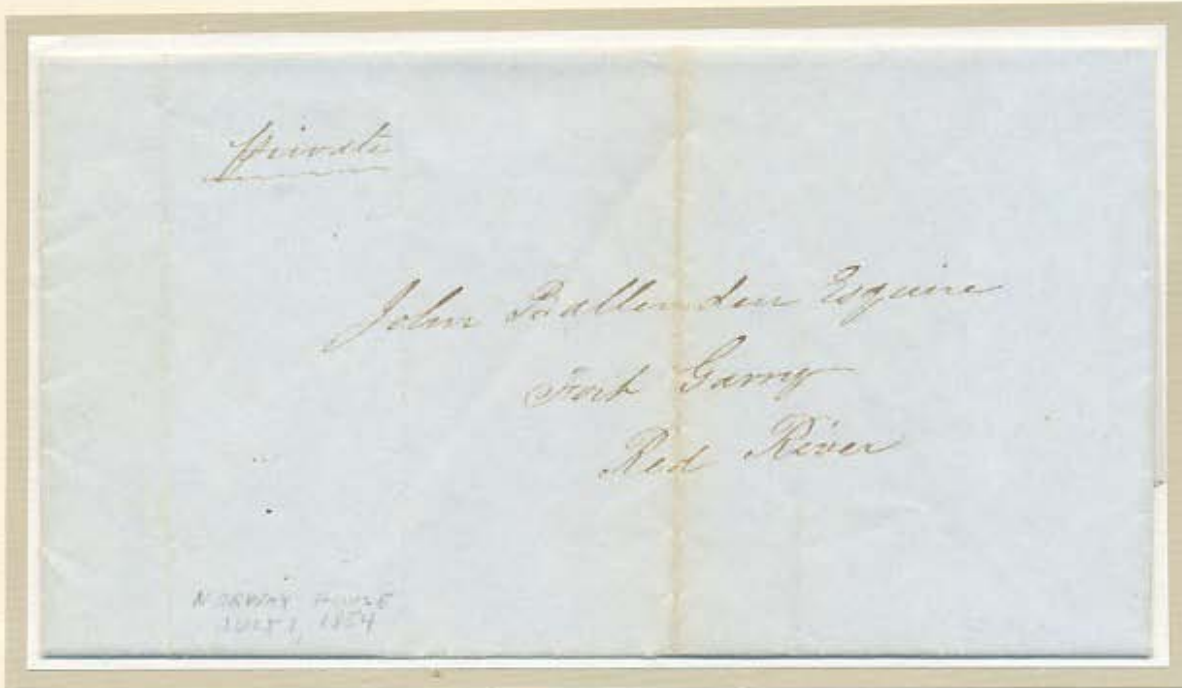
THE WESTERN MAILS

*Norway House 1<sup>st</sup> July 1854.*

John Bell writes from "Norway House 1st July 1854", to John Ballenden, at Fort Garry on the Red River. He sends his condolence on the unexpected death of Mrs. Ballenden and thanks him for sending his daughter Jane some books, which "shall give her satisfaction and aid in passing agreeably the long and dreary nights of the far north; to which remote quarter we have to retrace our steps in a week hence, to my great disappointment. I brought out very handsome Returns from A - District, among which were 13,000 Martins besides other valuable furs. The Gentry were all off for Y.F. [York Factory on Hudson's Bay] previous to my arrival, and with the exception of Mr. Finlayson [Nicol, Chief Factor, retired 1855 and died 1877] I had not the pleasure of seeing them."

*John Bell*

\*\*\*\*\*



\*\*\*\*\*

The folded letter was carried by express canoes from Norway House down lake Winnipeg to the Red River Settlement and Fort Garry on the Red River. JOHN BELL was a Scotchman, born about 1799, joined the North West Co. in 1818 and the Hudson's Bay Co. on its coalition with the N.W. Co. Served most of his time in the Mackenzie River district and at the time was probably going back to Fort Good Hope on the Mackenzie River. He retired as a Chief Trader in 1860 and died in 1868

JOHN BALLENDEN was born about 1810 in the Orkney Islands of Scotland. Joined the Hudson's Bay Co. in 1829, became a Chief Trader in 1844, Chief Factor in 1848, retired in 1856 and died December 7th of the same year.



DONALD MCKENZIE & JOHN DAY

J.A.Osborne, attorney for Donald McKenzie, writes to Wilson Price Hunt, the postmaster at St.Louis, regarding the sale of a lot in that city. The following extracts are from the letter in which he asks for advise as to the value of the lot so he can city. He wants to get an idea as to the value so he can sell it. The following extracts are from the letter: " From the high estimation, in which Mr.McKenzie has ever appeared to hold you, and the unbounded confidence reposed in you.....I know Mr.McKenzie would be better satisfied with what you might say, than information from any other source" He then adds a "P.S. Can you give any clue yet, to John Day's Will, which I see noticed in the correspondence?"



The historical significance of the letter lies in the "P.S." and the three men identified below and thier relation to the International Fur Trade of North America:

**DONALD MCKENZIE** born June 16, 1783 near Invernes, Scotland. He was a cousin of Sir Alexander McKenzie and emigrated to Canada in 1800, entering the service of the North West Company. In 1809 entered the service of the American Fur Co, and in 1811 he made the overland journey to Astoria, in the company of Wilson Price Hunt, John Day and others. He rejoined the N.W.Co. in 1813 and was made a Chief Factor at the union with the Hudson's Bay Co. in 1821. He was in charge of the Red River Colony and governor of Assiniboia 1825 to 1833. McKenzie retired in 1835 and settled on an estate overlooking Lake Chautauqua, Mayville, N.Y. where he died January 20, 1851.

**WILSON PRICE HUNT** was born March 20, 1783 at Asbury, N. J. He was the leader of Astor's overland expedition to found Astoria, Oregon in 1811, arriving at Astoria Feb. 15, 1812. With the outbreak of the War of 1812, he concluded the sale of Astoria to the North West Co. in 1814, ending Astor's Astoria adventure on the western shore of North America. Hunt was back in St. Louis by 1817 and was made postmaster of that city. He died April 13, 1842. His heritage to history and the fur trade was his Astoria experience.

**JOHN DAY** was born in Virginia - his date of birth unrecorded. He made the epic overland journey to Astoria and spent his remaining days trapping for the North West Co. in the Snake River country of Idaho. His last will was "signed and sealed" by Day's fellow trapper Donald McKenzie, on Feb. 15, 1820. Day died on the following day. The John Day River and John Day Oregon are named for him. He had been hired by W.P.Hunt as a hunter to the Astoria expedition in 1811. SEE J.J.Astor's letter in this collection.



Academy Bay House

Lachar 25 March 1848

James Hinson Esq

Dear Sir

I received in decem. last a letter from

Mr M Lean Stewart Esq. Coll. Crown dues at Quetta, intimating<sup>d</sup> the Crown having  
a Rent amounting to £225.17.8 for Crown dues on a raft timber taken out by  
Angus Cameron & laid up by your Men & embarked in the little river<sup>d</sup> in which he  
requests me to let him know to how abouts the raft is laid up - The Rent is 225/569  
dated By Down 30<sup>th</sup> August 1842 signed by Angus Cameron.

The Raft attended to & laid up for the winter in the Mouth side of the Island ready to be sent  
to Quetta in the opening of the Navigation and as I have no correct account of the size of  
the Timber & cubic contents of the whole, I should feel obliged by your furnishing me an  
abstract of the same taken from your books, or else to favour me with some estimate or bill  
regard to the Raft, and please to give that Mr Cameron has given a bill of lading and  
sent successive Licenses of which he appears to have had three in all &c.

20.168	1 <sup>st</sup>	July 1840	20,000	feet	at 1	} 65,000	21 <sup>st</sup>	£275.16.8
31.5	2 <sup>d</sup>	Sept 1841	30,000	do	do		22 <sup>d</sup>	£67.14.2 amt paid
15.12.6	3 <sup>d</sup>	May 1842	15,000	do	do			
67.14.2								

Waiting your reply I have the honor to be

Dear Sir

Yours me. Obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

James Keith

Crown Timber Office

By Down



PAID

James Stevenson Esq<sup>r</sup>

Green Timber Office

By Town





THE WESTERN MAILS

Know all Men by these Presents, That J. Francis P Blair Jr  
 \_\_\_\_\_ as principal, and we Robert Campbell and Ceran St Vrain  
 \_\_\_\_\_ as securities, are held and firmly bound unto the

STATE OF MISSOURI, in the full and just sum of Five thousand \_\_\_\_\_ dollars,  
 to the payment whereof, well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors, administrators,  
 and assigns, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents, sealed with our seals, and dated, Saint Louis, this  
third — day of June — 1848 .

*The condition of the above obligation is such,* That if the above bounden Francis P Blair  
Jr Administrator with the will annexed \_\_\_\_\_  
 of George Bent \_\_\_\_\_ deceased, shall well and faithfully execute the said last will and  
 testament, and shall make true and faithful inventories, returns and settlements of accounts of the estate of  
 the testator, according to law; and shall, moreover, do and perform all other matters and things touching  
 the execution of the said last will and testament, as are or shall be prescribed by law, or enjoined on him  
 by the order, sentence, or decree of any court having competent jurisdiction, then this obligation to be void,  
 and of no effect, otherwise to remain in full force.

Francis P. Blair Jr ○○○○○○  
 SEAL. ○○○○○○  
Robert Campbell ○○○○○○  
 SEAL. ○○○○○○  
Ceran St Vrain ○○○○○○  
 SEAL. ○○○○○○  
 ○○○○○○  
 SEAL. ○○○○○○  
 ○○○○○○  
 SEAL. ○○○○○○

Recorded 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1848  
Peter Ferguson  
 Judge of Probate

FRANCIS P. BLAIR Jr., the administrator of George Bent's estate, was a brother of Montgomery Blair, Lincoln's postmaster general and a good friend of George Bent.  
 ROBERT CAMPBELL was a partner of William Sublette. SEE this collection.  
 CERAN St. VRAIN was born near Spanish Lake in St. Louis County, on May 5, 1802. He engaged in the Santa Fe/Mexican trade as early as 1824. In various ways he was a partner and associate of Charles and William Bent - Bent, St. Vrain & Company. From 1855 he made his home at Mora, New Mexico, where he died October 28, 1870.



Codicil to the last will and testament of George Peat, who died at Fort William on the Arkansas River, on the twenty third day of October A.D. 1847. as follows - To wit -

First In regard to my will now in force, New Mexico, I wish all the dispositions of property therein specified carried out and fully complied with agreeably to the tenor and effect thereof.

Second - at the making of the will aforesaid, one of my children now living was not born. I now request that child shall be considered an equal heir with my other children and that they shall all equally inherit share and share alike.

Third I had promised my wife fifty head of cows or cattle, but being doubtful of having that number for my share I wish her to have all that may belong ~~to me or my share of company stock~~ - be well as there now belonging to me in the possession of St. Marcellin <sup>Spain</sup>.

Personally appeared before the undersigned Commissioners for taking declarations of inheritance, duly commissioned by his Excellency the Governor of New Mexico, the persons whose names are hereunto subscribed, who being duly sworn depose and say - that the foregoing Codicil to the last will and testament of George Peat now deceased, is correctly set forth, and fully expresses his last wishes regarding the disposition of his property, as manifested to their presence at a short time previous to his death, to the best of their knowledge and belief.

Subscribed and sworn to at Fort William

New Mexico territory, 27<sup>th</sup> October 1847

E. S. Hempstead

Commissioner of

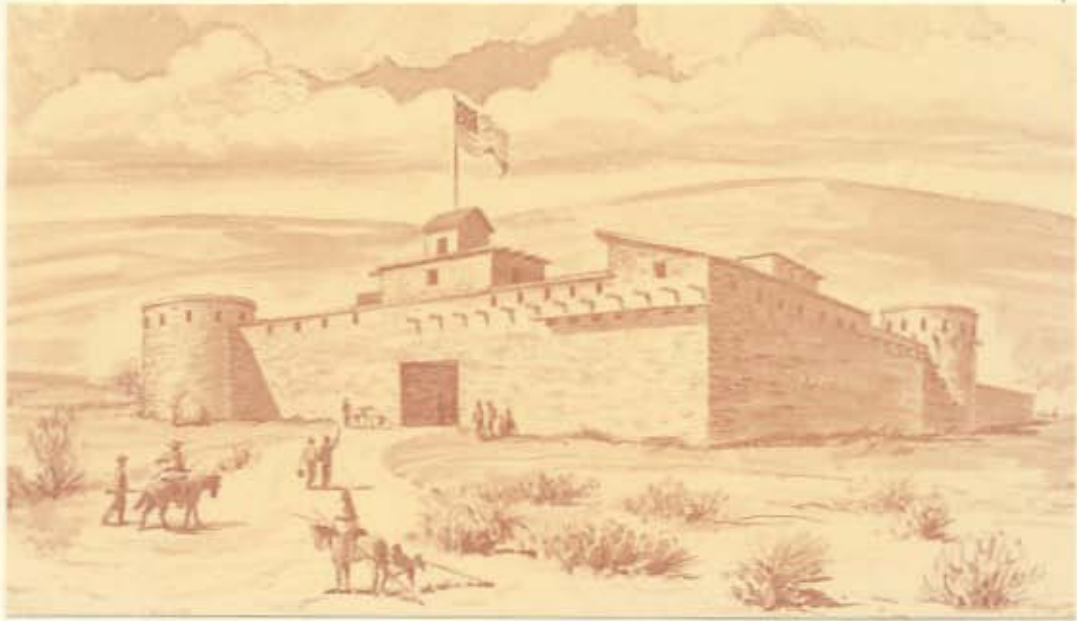
Thomas Fitzpatrick  
William W. Brew  
Jno L. Hatch  
John Smith

The above was made before being sworn to.

E. S. Hempstead com<sup>r</sup>



## THE WESTERN MAILS



### CODICIL TO THE WILL OF GEORGE BENT 1847.

This document was made shortly before the death of George Bent, who died at Fort William [BENT'S FORT], on the Arkansas River, on the twenty third day of October A.D. 1847, where it was sworn to on the 24th, before E.L. Hempstead, commissioner and testified to by : Thomas Fitzpatrick, William W. Bent, John L. Hatcher and John Simpson Smith. The Codicil leaves all his estate to his wife, Cruz Padilla and a son and daughter, who had been born after he had made the original will. Thus the reason for the codicil. Also the cattle that "may belong to me in the possession of Marcellin St Vrain".

\*\*\*\*\*

**GEORGE BENT** was a younger brother of Charles Bent, first U.S. civil governor of New Mexico, who was murdered in the Taos revolt Jan. 19, 1847 and William Bent the founder of Bent's Fort. William had three sons that he named after his brothers, Robert and George, by his Indian wife Owl Woman, a full-blood Cheyenne; and Charles by his second wife Yellow Woman, Owl Woman's sister. Charles, who joined the Indians in the war that swept the southwest against the whites, was killed in 1868. William's son George died in a Cheyenne camp on May 19, 1919.

**THOMAS FITZPATRICK** was born in County Cavan, Ireland, in 1799 and came to the United States before he was seventeen. He was an associate of Jedediah Smith and at the time of this codicil he was the Indian agent for the Upper Platte and the Arkansas. He died February 7, 1854 while on government business in Washington D.C. SEE more on Fitzpatrick in this collection.

**JOHN L. HATCHER** was born about 1812/13 in Botetourt County, Virginia. For many years he was a trader and hunter at Bent's Fort. In later years he went to Oregon where he died on his farm April 29 1897/98.

**JOHN SIMPSON SMITH** was born in Frankfort, Kentucky in 1810. He was a trader at Bent's Fort and served as interpreter to the Indians. In 1851 he was the official interpreter at great Treaty at Fort Laramie and shortly afterwards he accompanied Fitzpatrick with a delegation of the Indians to Washington. Smith had an Indian wife and a son named Jack, who was killed at the Sand Creek massacre in 1864. John Smith spent his last days with the Southern Cheyennes in the Indian Territory, where he died June 21, 1871.



Mr Kenneth McKenzie  
St Louis Mo.

Dear Sir

Please pay the bearer fifteen  
Dollars and charge the same to Your Acct. Servt.

St Louis May 25th 1840.

Colin Campbell

The Bearer I. B. Lefairre is well known to me

J. B. Sarpy

COLIN CAMPBELL was a clerk and trader in the employ of Pierre D. Papin, who was the agent for the Upper Missouri Outfit of the American Fur Co. at Fort Pierre. At the time of the above note Campbell, along with Jacob Hasley, was in charge at the fort. Papin had moved to Fort John in 1839/42. No data on the birth and death of Colin Campbell, as well as I. B. Lefairre, the bearer of the note. John B. Sarpy was a cousin and partner of Pierre Chouteau Jr. See John B. Sarpy in this collection - "Sept 4, 1854".

List of Furs in Two 13 lbs.

420 Pats  
9 Coons  
1 Fisher  
4 Minks

1/2 1840



Bill of sale  
for a negro  
girl named  
Louisa a  
Slave for  
life of yellow  
complexion,  
about seven-  
teen years of  
age, and her  
child a Boy  
about four  
months old,  
to have and to  
hold said negro  
Girl & child  
unto said  
Kenneth Mackin-  
zie... forever.  
for the sum of  
350 dollars.  
September 5, 1843.  
Signed S, Russell.

Know all men by these presents that  
I Samuel Russell of the County of  
Saint Louis State of Missouri do and  
in consideration of the sum of Three  
hundred & fifty dollars to me in hand  
paid, the receipt whereof is hereby ac-  
knowledged, have granted bargained  
sold & transferred, and do by these presents  
grant bargain sell and transfer unto  
Kenneth Mackenzie, his executor ad-  
ministrators and assigns forever, a certain  
negro Girl named Louisa a Slave for  
life of yellow complexion, about seventeen  
years of age, and her child a Boy about  
four months old, to have and to hold  
said negro Girl & child unto the said  
Kenneth Mackenzie his executor admi-  
nistrators & assigns forever. And I do  
hereby covenant, that the said Negro  
Girl Louisa & Child are Slaves for life  
and are sound in body & mind and  
that I have full power and authority to  
sell said Slaves, and that they are free  
& clear of all Lien, Mortgage, Claim  
& incumbrance whatsoever. In  
testimony whereof I hereunto set my  
hand & affix my seal this 5th day  
of September Eighteen Hundred & forty  
three

Witness  
S. Russell

S. Russell



New York January 8<sup>th</sup> 1832

Genl Wm Ashley

Dear Sir

Your favour of 5<sup>th</sup> inst is to hand conveying a letter of enquiry which we herein return. The only information we can give you in answer is, that while in the Rocky mountains last Summer we were informed that a man named Montgomery who was attached to the American Fur Co's party had been killed by the Blackfoot about a year since while on exp<sup>ts</sup> to meet Fontenelle & Drapps. but we know not what his Christian name was, nor where he was from originally - Consequently we can give you no information to be relied on -

On 31<sup>st</sup> December we wrote you of our arrival here and the terms on which we could make our purchases, as this letter has probably not reached you we will give you a summary of its contents, and request an answer as soon as possible -



# THE WESTERN MAILS

## SUBLETTE TO ASHLEY 1833

Letter written by Sublette & Campbell to Ashley from New York, January 8, 1833, replying to a query from him about David Thompson, reportedly killed in the Rocky Mountains the year before. The letter illustrates how Ashley had come to be a national clearing house for information about men and events in the Rockies.

"New York January 8th 1833"

Genl Wm. H Ashley/Dr Sir Your favor of 5th instant is to hand concerning a letter of inquiry which we herin return. The only information we Can give you in answer is, that while in the Rocky Mountains last summer we were informed that a man named Montgomery \* [David] who was attached to the American Furr Cos. party had been killed by the Blackfeet about a year Since while on express to meet Fontenelle & Dripps, but we Know not what his Christian name was, nor where he was from originally - Consequently we Can give you no information to be relied on - On 31st December we wrote you of our arrival here and the terms on which we could make our purchases, as this letter has probably not reached you we will give you a Summary of its contents, and request an answer as soon as possible - On presenting your letter to Mess Wolfe Spier & Clarke and mentioning the time which we require - Eighteen months - they told us that they were in the habit of doing business on 6 or 9 months but the letter of introduction coming from you they felt disposed to aid us as much as in their power, and that by having your acceptance they would give us credit of twelve months viz 6 months credit on the goods and 6 months longer bearing interest - We wish you immediately to this effect requesting authority to draw on you at Twelve Months Supposing the amount to be about Three Thousand Dollars - Since then we have been laying aside our hardware the amount which we cannot exactly ascertain but suppose it will be between Three and Four Thousand Dollars - we now await your answer and Mr Sublette will remain here until he hears from you - please direct to Care of Wolfe Spier & Clark - they say we can either make it payable here, in Washington City, or St Louis - we prefer St Louis. Sublette & Campbell

Mr Tracy informed me that you had instructed him to pay me Seventeen Thousand five Hundred Dollars. On this amount I intend remitting fifteen Thousand Dollars to St Louis to meet my Note in Bank due there 9th February - I Called at Jno C Halsey & Co this morning and find there is no disposition made of the 4 Hhds [Hogsheads] furr in their hands - Jno C Halsey has gone to Europe and the partner says he will try today what can be done, and ascertain what is the highest offer

Wm L Sublette"

\*\*\*\*\*

\* David Montgomery and John Gray (a half Iroquois Indian) ,while in search of Andrew Drips trapping party, were ambushed by hostile Indians on March 9, 1832. Montgomery was killed and Gray , badly cut-up ,barely escaped with his life.

This letter also shows Ashley's influence in financing fur hunting expeditions for Sublette and Campbell and the problem of selling the proceeds of the hunt after getting it down to the market from the mountains.

Cover postmarked NEW YORK JAN 8 - rated 37 and then crossed out because it was addressed to a member of Congress.

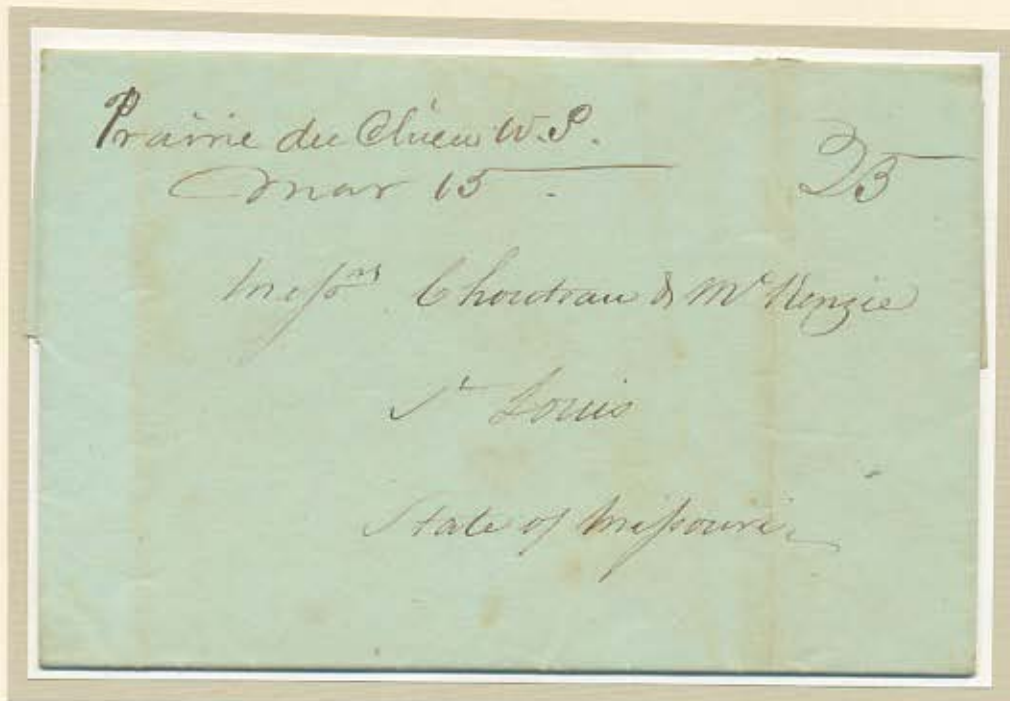




*INDIAN RECORD of a Battle between the PAWNEES and KONZAS delineated on a BISON ROBE.*



THE WESTERN MAILS



Letter dated "Prairie des Chiens 11th March 1839", to Chouteau & McKenzie, by Joseph Rolette. It is a short request regarding a memorandum which concerns him and J. B. Fairbault of St. Peters M[innes-ota] and Chouteau & McKinzie. Of special note is Rolette's request: **"In case you determine to fulfill the memorandum please annex to mine Eight good Painted Buffalo Robes."**

Postmarked at "Prairie du Chien W, T, Mar 15 [1839]" - rated 25 cents.

\*\*\*\*\*

Indians painted scenes of exploits, warfare and culture on tanned hides of the Buffalo and Deer. Even in 1839 they were in demand as they are today, but now very rare. See opposite page for a miniature by Amos Crooked Eyes whose mother and father were killed at the battle of Wounded Knee in December of 1890. Amos was about 80/85 when James Hanson, Museum of the Fur Trade, Chadron, Neb. gave me this memento in 1965. The two circled heads, with the Buffalos, indicate his parents have gone to the "happy hunting ground" in death. On Dec. 20th 350 Sioux Indians, under Chief Big Foot, were surrounded by the 7th cavalry with 4 Hotchkiss guns, in their camp at Wounded Knee Creek, S.D. In the process of disarming the Indians a gun was fired and in the screaming and cannon fire that followed, over half the Indians lay dead or dying on the snowswept ground. Thus in tragedy ended the thirty years war for the Western plains. Some say that the 7th Cavalry got their revenge for the defeat fourteen years earlier at the Little Big Horn.





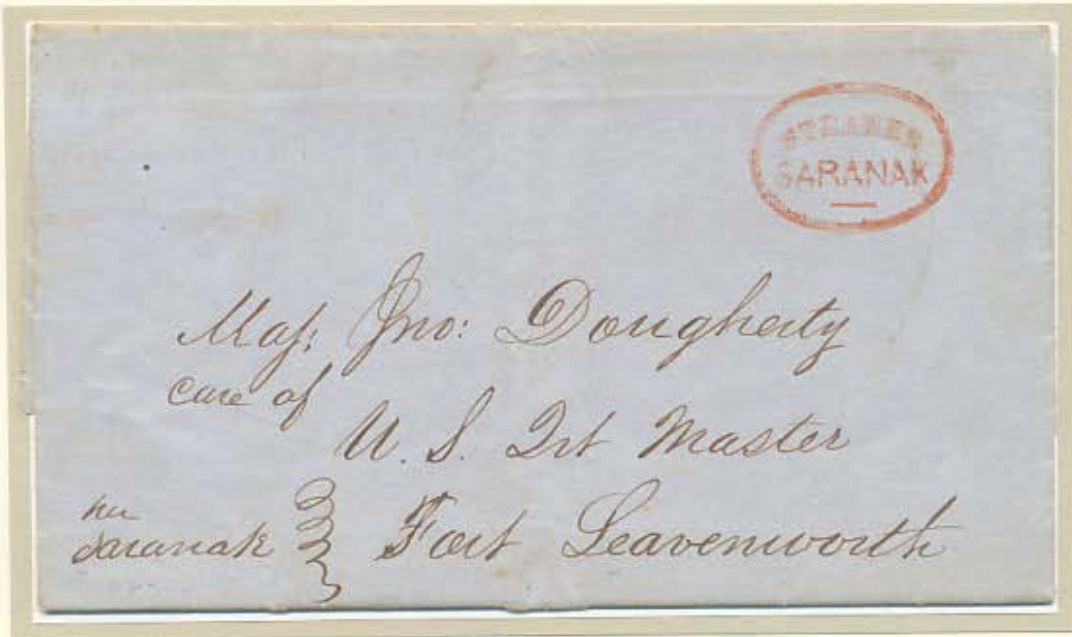
*Native Woman and Assinibon Child*

Engraved and Published by G. S. & Co. New York.





SARANAK. Side-wheeler of 198 tons. Built at Elizabethtown, Pa. in 1846. for the Missouri River trade. She was abandoned in 1854. Covers shown were used in 1849 & 1850. The one with the red marking was written by Robert Campbell of Fur Trade fame. The recipient was the Quartermaster and Indian Agent at Fort Leavenworth.





The United States,

To The Steam Boat "Warrior"

Dr.

1835  
October

For passage of Joseph M. Street Indian Agent  
and the Sac Chief Pashapa-too from Fort  
Desmoines to Rock Island

\$30 00

I certify on honor that the above trip was  
taken in obedience to the orders of the Indian  
Department returning from a tour to the  
Sac villages on the Desmoines River. I  
therefore make this my requisition on Lt. S.  
Beach for thirty dollars, to be paid to the S.  
Boat "Warrior", as above for the foregoing  
amount.

I CERTIFY, that the above account is just and true, and accordingly make my requisition  
on ~~J. B. Beach~~ Lt. J. Beach, Military Disbursing Agent, Indian Department, to pay to  
Joseph M. Street the sum of thirty  
Dollars and \_\_\_\_\_ Cents, in full thereof.

Joseph M. Street U.S. Ind. Agent

\$ 30 00

Lt J. Beach Received, ~~Fort Des~~ Rock Island of  
~~J. B. Beach~~, Military Disbursing Agent, Indian Department, Thirty  
Dollars and \_\_\_\_\_ Cents, in  
full of the above account.

(Signed Duplicates.)

Joseph M. Street U.S. Ind. Agent



## THE WESTERN MAILS

"P. Chouteau Junr Esq/New York

St. Louis May 8, 1852

Dear Monsieur Since the arrival of our express from the Missouri, we have been so busy that I have not time [opportunity?] to correspond with you. However, my official correspondence with the house has kept you quite well or up to date with what has happened since your departure. Having a copy of the extracts of letters from the upper Missouri which relate to the returns pr. 0/51 [Outfit 1851], I enclose them - these gentlemen address us as if they ought to continue and I believe that they will do it, with the exception of Picotte [Honore], who perhaps will refuse. Accordingly to all that our gentlemen from the Missouri tell us, it would seem that our opponents must be doing a very weak trade, but our experience ought to have taught us not to place a great confidence in the estimates they make of our adversaries' business. I cannot comprehend or reconcile how if Picotte has made only 900 packs in the district of Fort Pierre he will collect a total of 4000 packs, and our opponents only 1500. Be that as it may, he must have a great decrease in quantity, if I don't count on more than 75 to 80,000 robes [Buffalo], against 93,000 last year. I hope that you will soon be able to send me the balance sheet in question that you promised me in your letter of the 29th, ultimo, that I have just received. If Mr. Lamont has promised it to you, undoubtedly he will furnish it in time. I would very much like to be able to count on the one from C. M. & S. \* provided that it be correct as [on the one] that Mr. Lamont promised you. Sarpy [John B.] and I count on quickly receiving a definite answer concerning our interest in New York. You know that we consent to withdraw, but we would very much want to know exactly what the time of our discontinuation is. Before leaving for the Missouri, Sarpy wants to make certain arrangements and if it were possible before his departure that he and I know what is owing to us on the proposition of Sanford [John F.A.] \*\*, we would like it very much. [We believe that the New York house now has interests that are too large for us to be considered in and really we are not. ?] I have just received two large orders from the upper Mississippi to be filled at St. Louis. [I shall attend to what is required in New York & in England for the goods are trifles. Moreover I am more sure than ever that in cotton goods we can do better than with Grant & Barton and for hardware certainly better than with Hyslop. All are very expensive. . . . Jos A. Sire"

\*\*\*\*\*

\* Chouteau, Merle & Sanford, one of the many companies Pierre Chouteau was a partner in. Reorganized in 1852 as Pierre Chouteau Jr., Sanford & Company.  
\*\* John F.A. Sanford was born in 1806 in Virginia. In 1825 he was a clerk for Wm. Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis. In 1826 he was made the sub-agent for the upper Missouri. In 1832 he married Emilie, the daughter of Chouteau, who bore him a son, Benjamin Chouteau Sanford. Emilie died in 1836. Sanford resigned as Indian agent in 1834 and went to work for Pierre Chouteau Jr. in 1835. In 1838 he was made a partner in Pratte, Chouteau & Co. and in 1841 he was in charge of the New York office. He remarried in 1852 and by 1853 he was a wealthy man. In 1853 he became involved in the famous Dred Scott case. Scott was a negro belonging to Irene Emerson the sister of Sanford. In 1836 Irene's husband, Dr. John Emerson an army surgeon, had taken Scott to Fort Snelling, where Scott married Harriet, also a negro, that Emerson had purchased from the Indian agent Lawrence Taliaferro. On their return to Missouri Dred Scott with the financial aid of Henry T. Blow began proceedings in the courts for his freedom on the grounds that his residence at Fort Snelling, where slavery was prohibited by the Missouri Compromise of 1820, had made him free. His appeal in the state courts failed. Dr. Emerson had died and Irene had married Calvin C. Clifford, a radical anti-slavery congressman and did not want to appear in the case. By a fictitious sale she transferred ownership of Scott to Sanford and the case was taken to the U.S. Supreme Court as Dred Scott vs Sanford. In 1857 the highest court in the land upheld the lower court - that he was not free for the reasons claimed. Dred Scott died September 17, 1858. Some say that he died a free man, but the record is not clear. John F.A. Sanford died May 5, 1857.



P. Chouteau Junr Esq  
New York

1852

St. Louis May 8. 1852

Cher Monsieur

Depuis l'arrivée de notre vapeur du Missouri nous avons été tellement occupé que je n'ai pu quasi correspondre avec vous, cependant ma correspondance officielle avec la Maison vous a à peu près mis au fait de tout ce qui s'en passe depuis votre départ. Ayant une copie des extraits de lettres du Vase Missouri qui se rapportent aux lettres pr. O/S. je vous les remets à joint. Les Messieurs nous parlent comme s'ils devraient continuer à se croire qu'ils la font à l'exception de Rivette qui peut être le refusé. Il s'agit tout à que nous disons nos Messieurs du Missouri il semblerait que nos Opposés ne doivent faire qu'une bien faible brèche, mais notre expérience doit nous avoir appris à ne pas placer une grande confiance dans les estimés qu'ils font de leur retour de nos adversaires. Le

Yos A Sire

Joseph A. Sire was born at La Rochelle, France on February 19, 1799 and died at Saint Louis, Missouri July 15, 1854. He was a partner in the firm of Pierre Chouteau Jr. & Co. He was also a well known steamboat captain on the upper Missouri. See William Wilson letter April 23rd, 1843 for the voyage of the steamboat OMEGA in this collection.

J'espère que bientôt vous pourrez m'envoyer la feuille de balance en question & que vous me promettez par votre lettre du 29. dernier, que je recevrai à son instant.



THE WESTERN MAILS

Prairie des Chines 25 May 1839

ff 500. 00

At Sight please pay to the order of  
Major J. F. Smith five hundred and eighty five dollars U.S. Cur  
being the amount due to me by the Estate of late Capt Alex  
of the 5 Reg<sup>ts</sup> U. S. Infan<sup>try</sup> as it will appear by his note dated  
the 10th day of July Eighteen hundred and thirty eight

John Graham Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Shepherdsville —  
State of Kentucky

A. H. Hooe  
Capt. 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment  
U.S. Inf.

"Prairie des Chines 25th May 1839

Major Smith Your esteemed favor of 12th Apr addressed to Capt Hooe [Alexan-  
der Seymour] was sent to Mrs. Hooe - Having no acquaintance in Louisville or in  
the State of Kentucky - she requested me to ask you the favor to draw the amount  
of the within note and in case the note was not Sufficient, she encloses you a  
draft - The Boy they do not want back - as they have written for another one -  
what Capt Alex promised him, they are ignorant, but as to his claiming  
his freedom from he having lived in a free Country would not be sustained, it has  
been decided in Philadelphia and in this Territ[ory], that an officer was order-  
ed to Such a Post, and that he had a right to take his Servants with him as well as  
Bgggage - that he [servant] had no right and this [was] not acquired by his Stay-  
ing - the right of a Citizen of the State or Territy where he was Stationed -

Respectfully/your obdt Servt/Jos Rolette"

N B - You can allow three months To Mr. Graham provided  
you can make the Money Sure either advise me or Capt Hooe  
at S Peters [Fort Snelling, St. Peters]"

Jos Rolette



Floyd

Box 153, Taylors Falls, MN 55084  
April 4, 1999  
To: Floyd Risvold, Lucile Kane

Thank you for showing me this interesting letter, one full of questions, some of which I think I can answer. Others could possibly be answered by further research in the National Archives. If I go back to the National Archives this summer I could possibly check for evidence, but at the moment I don't have more answers.

I do know, or surmise the following:

1. The letter writer is Joseph Rolette Sr. See letter of Rolette in the Sibley Papers, April 23, 1838, Roll 2. Bruce can also authenticate his handwriting.
2. Rolette refers to Madame Hooe. She was his daughter, Emilie, married to Capt. Alexander Hooe. She seems to have been at Fort Crawford at this time; her husband was stationed at Fort Snelling.
3. Captain William Alexander was in command of Company C of the Fifth Infantry at Fort Crawford, I think this was his last command before his death in October. . He was, however, at Fort Snelling in September, 1838. I don't know why he was there, possibly on temporary duty, but I can't tell without checking records for Company C. He and Capt. Hooe are both shown as patronizing the sutler's store at Fort Snelling at times during that month (see copies of pages attached). He died a month later down river [at St. Louis?]
4. "The Boy" mentioned in the letter could have been a servant [the army did not call them slaves] of Hooe who loaned him to Alexander [ a common practice among officers]. The Paymaster Settlements do not list a likely male servant for Hooe during this period. He had one black female servant named Lucy and at different times two male white servants named Farley and Welsh. Hooe or his wife could have employed others but he was entitled to only one at government expense so only one would have been listed on his returns. Similar returns for Alexander would have listed a servant or servants but I did not get Paymaster Settlements for Fort Crawford in my Fort Snelling research. .
5. "Dred" or "Dread" or more properly, "Etheldred," could not have been the Boy, in my opinion. Again, my reasoning is based on the Paymaster Settlements. They list him as a servant or "Slave" [Dr. Emerson's designation] of Dr. John Emerson . Emerson loaned Dred at various times during 1836-1840 to Dr. Wolcott and possibly other officers [but I do not find him as working for Hooe]. I have found nothing to suggest that Emerson didn't continue to own him or that Emerson wanted to get rid of him. The records place Dred at Fort Snelling with his wife Harriet during 1839 and the first part of 1840.
6. One would think that probate files for Captain Alexander would list a servant-slave among his possessions, if he owned this Boy , unless he only had him on loan. Sometimes Adjutant General records give clues as to where probate records were filed and the names of officers' beneficiaries. I have found similar information for Fort Snelling officers.
7. Another brief note on Dred may be worth recording because the letter suggest that the Boy was not valued very highly. The view of Dred as "lazy" "shiftless" etc seems to have had little substance. The weight of evidence seems to make him a more substantial and reliable character both at Fort Snelling and later at St. Louis.
8. Rolette appears to be in error about the legal status of a slave in free territory at this time. Rachel v Walker [4 Mo 350] in 1836 concerns a slave who worked for Lt. Stockton at Fort Snelling and Fort Crawford. She sued for her freedom and her owner was judged to have forfeited his ownership of her as a slave "by virtue of the ordinance of 1787." Still another case, that of "Ralph" the first case to be decided by the Territorial Supreme court of Iowa, also held that slave to be free by virtue of living in the free territory of Iowa. [Palimpsest 1938: 33-43]. The chief justice in the Iowa case, , incidentally was a former West Point graduate and army officer, the brother-in-law of Chaplain Ezekiel Gear, long time chaplain at Fort Snelling.
9. There are other fascinating threads in the letter that tempt untangling, but this may be enough for now.

Thanks again,

Helen M. White

C: to Bruce/Lucile/ Floyd

Helen



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# FLOYD E. RISVOLD

---

4801 UPPER TERRACE

• EDINA •

MINNESOTA •

55435

Helen M. White  
P.O. Box 153  
Taylors Falls, Mn.

May 18, 1999

Dear Mrs. White:

Many thanks for your informative letter, which Lucile Kane forwarded to me. You may be right in your opinion that Dred Scott "could not have been the Boy", but I still think that he could have been.

My reasons are based on the Dictionary of American Biography, Scribners 1946, Vol. XV, p. 488/89. See attached copy of same.

This and other sources place Dred Scott at Fort Snelling in 1836/37/38. Not in 1839/40 as you state. What is your source for this time period?

Dr. Emerson did leave Dred Scott at St. Louis on his return from Fort Snelling in 1838 and was given an honorable discharge from the army in 1842 and died in 1843. The ownership of Dred Scott passed to his widow who hired him out to various persons, including army officers. to Quote the DAB Dred Scott was " shiftless and unreliable", which you say that it " seems to have had little substance".

As to Rolette saying that "it has been decided in Philadelphia and in this Territory", it could very well have been, but this could be checked out if necessary. However, I think it will not change the question one way or the other - It could still be Dred Scott.

In my opinion, Rolette's comments about "the Boy", has more to do with Major Smith to whom the letter is addressed, than to Alexander and Hooe. It could be that Smith had inquired, on behalf of Mrs. Emerson and/or Dred Scott, as to the possibility of Dred being hired out or even sold, so that he could come back to a free territory!?

In any event, I thank you and and I would think that we could agree that we do not know who "the Boy" was, other than a slave, or who "they" are as in the letter. Your comments will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours;

  
Floyd E. Risvold



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FLOYD E. RISVOLD

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4801 UPPER TERRACE

• EDINA •

MINNESOTA •

55435

Helen M. White  
P.O. Box 153  
Taylors Falls, Mn.

May 28, 1999

Dear Mrs. White:

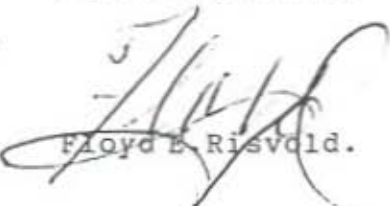
Many thanks for your informative letter, which Lucile Kant has forwarded to me. You may ~~may very~~ well be right in, your opinion, that Dred Scott could not have been "the Boy".

If the records are correct, that Dred Scott was at Fort Snelling in 1839/40, then there can be little question as to who "the Boy" was. Dred Scott was already at Fort Snellig, so they could not send him back - Dred Scott was not "the Boy"!

So I am left with a number of questions, thus: who was "the Boy" - who were "they" - and "what did Capt Alex promise him [the Boy?], they are ignorant" ???.

In any event, your comments and anything you can tell me will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours;



Floyd E. Risvold.

Just before I started to type this I learned that you are in the hospital and I want to wish you a speedy recovery.





#### THE CASE OF THE SLAVE DRED SCOTT

Dred Scott was an American negro born into slavery about 1800. He was owned by Dr. John Emerson, a U.S. Army surgeon and traveled with Emerson to various army posts, on the Mississippi river, between 1833 and 1838. In 1838, or before, he sued for his freedom, on the contention, that a slave living at Fort Snelling, in a free territory, was free on his return to Missouri, a slave state. The Missouri courts decided that Scott was "not free", that he was still a slave and Emerson had as much right to take him as well as he did to take along his baggage to a free territory. Finally, in 1857, in one of the most far reaching slave cases to reach the Supreme Court, he was again denied his freedom. This, of course led to Civil War, Emancipation and Civil Rights. Dred Scott died September 17, 1858.

In 1836-37-38 Dr. Emerson took Dred Scott with him to Forts Armstrong and Snelling and on his return to St. Louis, in 1838, he left Dred with Mrs. Emerson. Under date of "Fort Jesup La July 10th 1838", he wrote to the Surgeon General of the army, on some personal problems, in which he included that **"even one of my negroes in Saint Louis has sued me for his freedom"**. Emerson was given an honorable discharge from the army in 1842 and died in 1843. The ownership of Dred Scott then passed passed to his widow who had been hiring him out to various persons, including army officers. Dr. Emerson had been at Fort Snelling in 1839 and the fore part of 1840, but it's highly unlikely that he would have taken Dred with him after being sued by Dred. To quote the DBA\*, Dred Scott was "shiftless and unreliable", which most likely was the real reason they did not want the "boy" back. Joseph Rolette's letter probably was in response to an inquiry by Major Thomas Floyd Smith, on behalf of Mrs. Emerson and/or Dred Scott, as to the possibility of Dred being hired out or even sold, so that he could come back to a free territory. There can be little doubt that the boy is a slave and wants his freedom. The time frame fits the case of Dred Scott.

\*\*\*\*\*

\*DAB Dictionary of American Biography, Scribners 1946, Col. XV, p 488/89.  
Capt. Alexander Seymore Hooe, Bvt. Major 1846, commanded Ft. Crawford 1846/47 and died Dec, 9, 1847. Mrs. Emilie Hooe was the daughter of Joseph Rolette, agent of the American Fur Company at Prairie du Chien.  
Letter is postmarked at "Prairie du Chines W.T./May 24 Paid 25" - 1839.



**PRAIRIE DU CHIEN.** The post office was established Nov. 13, 1823 in what was then the Michigan Territory. On July 4, 1836 it became part of the Wisconsin Territory. It was the second post office in what is now the State of Wisconsin. Cover above bears the second earliest postmark "February 15th" 1825 with the frank "J.H. Lockwood/Postmaster/Free" It was at Prairie Du Chien in August 1825 that the Great Council with the Indian tribes of the upper Mississippi was held. Cover below bears the only known straight line postmark in private hands - "PRAIRIE DU CHIEN DEC 1" 1836 Wisconsin Terr. Letter was written by Joseph Rolette the agent for the American Fur Company. Probably the most noted and influential fur trader with the Indians at the Prairie.

PRAIRIE DU  
CHIEN  
DEC. 1, 1836







LOCKPORT, ERIE CANAL.

NOV. 9. 1834.

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

HURON LIGHT HOUSE - OAKLAND COUNTY

GEO. M<sup>c</sup> DOUGALL - FIRST POSTMASTER

ESTABLISHED JAN. 26, 1826

NAME CHANGED TO FORT GRATIOT

DEC. 16, 1826

GEO. M<sup>c</sup> DOUGALL - FIRST POSTMASTER

ST. CLAIR COUNTY ESTABLISHED SEPT. 10, 1822.

THE SITE OF ONE OF THE EARLIEST MILITARY POSTS ESTABLISHED WEST OF MONTREAL. DENONVILLE, GOVERNOR OF CANADA, ORDERED HIS COMMANDER AT MACKINAC, M. DULHUT, TO "REPAIR TO THE STRAITS OF DETROIT AND ERECT THERE A MILITARY POST." THE ORDER, DATED JUNE 6, 1686, SHOWS DULHUT BUILT A STOCKADE AT THE MOUTH OF LAKE HURON IN THE SAME YEAR. THE EXACT LOCATION OF FORT GRATIOT, FORT ST. JOSEPH, AS THE SITE WAS NAMED, WAS MAINTAINED EIGHT YEARS. ON MAY 14, 1814, MAJOR FORSYTHE ARRIVED TO ESTABLISH A MILITARY POST. THE WORK WAS DONE UNDER CAPT. GRATIOT, FOR WHOM THE FORT WAS NAMED. IT WAS OCCUPIED UNTIL 1822 AND THEN VACATED UNTIL 1827. AGAIN OCCUPIED, IT WAS ABANDONED APRIL 1, 1829.





"Fort Gratiot Michigan

October 17, 1828"

Dear Brother I am here waiting good weather to proceed to Green Bay. We passed here last Sunday evening ('Tis friday) but were driven back on Tuesday in a violent gale of wind after losing an anchor & being exposed for nearly two days to considerable danger. We have the Steam boat **Henry Clay** & after being driven back I landed my command upwards of 200 men at this old stockade work which has been unoccupied during about nine years\*. The Steam boat ran down to Detroit for wood & returned this morning. My men are on board again but the Captain says he cannot think of setting off again until weather clears up a little. It so happened that Capt. Beall [Thomas J.] 2nd Inft. was on his way here from Fort Brady [near Sault Ste. Marie] (outlet of Superior (this is the outlet of Huron) and we arrived here at the same moment in the same storm. Capt. B. landed with his men & the next morning I joined him occupying old buildings in ruins. We had but little or no furniture but the novelty of the event & the feeling of safety from stormy weather has made the time pass very agreeably. Lts. Ramsay Ryan & Engle [James] are with me & Dr. De Camp [Samuel G.I.], who with Capt Beall made quite a respectable Society for this deserted & otherwise desolate position. I had not time to write to you from New York after the day was set for my departure which was the last of last month, ever since which time I have been constantly busy with these rascally recruits who have no idea of discipline - & think they have a right to please themselves without consulting their officers - & take it to be a great pice of unkindness to have the bottles of whiskey broken though we breake them by dozens. On the Canal [Erie, completed in 1825] the whole route from Albany to Buffalo we did nothing (the officers) but watch the arrival of our bages at the [canal] locks where we always found grog shops & where we had as much to do as could occupy us in breaking bottles & ordering the men on board their boats. I have passed a considerable extent of country but in such haste & under such circumstances as to have me no opportunity for observation. The population has gradually thinned to almost nothing. My next stopping place will be the Island of Macinac (it is now so written & pronounced [was MICHILIMACKINAC]) - It is near the outlet of [Lake] Michigan & there is on the Island, besides Military Post a trading fur compy establishment [American Fur Company]. I shall land a portion of my command & proceed to Green Bay. We have the best vessel on these waters & an experienced Captain who will carry us safely through although the season is getting late for navigating these stormy inland and fresh Seas. I have never seen such enormous waves on the Atlantic as I saw last Tuesday while returning to this place. The Capt. says we need not under any circumstances expect a more boisterous time. ....brother Ethan [Allen Hitchcock, captain - later Maj. Genl.]"

\*\*\*\*\*

\*This was one of the earliest Military Posts established west of Montreal.









ERIE CANAL NAVIGATION COMPANY.

Way-Bill for the



Wm C. Burtch

from *Albion*

to *Rochester*

*May 12<sup>th</sup>*

1823.

Passengers' Names.	No.	Where from.	Where to.	Dlls.	Cts.	No. Birth.	Way.
<i>Mr. Walker</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Albion</i>	<i>Rochester</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>08</i>		
<i>Mr. Kellogg</i>	<i>2</i>		<i>Jordan</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>48</i>		
<i>Mr. Ingalls</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Rochester</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>36</i>		
<i>Mr. Suffs</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>—</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>36</i>		
<i>Mr. Payne</i>	<i>1</i>			<i>6</i>	<i>36</i>		
<i>Mr. Hanford</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Rome</i>		<i>45</i>		
<i>Mr. Fisher</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Weeds</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>50</i>		
<i>Jennings</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Pittsford</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>00</i>		
<i>Genesvort</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Monty</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>75</i>		
<i>Hortsen</i>	<i>1</i>			<i>3</i>	<i>75</i>		
<i>Young</i>	<i>1</i>			<i>3</i>	<i>75</i>		
<i>Toulon</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Syracuse</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>44</i>		
<i>Mrs. Akin</i>	<i>5</i>		<i>Lyons</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>40</i>		<i>—</i>
<i>Mr. Hardin</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>Rochester</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>36</i>		
			<i>W.D.</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>60</i>		

\*THIS



ERIE CANAL, LOCKPORT  
 (VEREIN STAATEN V. N. A.)





B. P. CONWAY.

L. E. TONLINSON.

**B. P. CONWAY & CO.**

Commission & Forwarding Merchants, Grocers & Produce Dealers,  
PIG IRON CORNER, FRONT STREET,  
**PORTSMOUTH, OHIO.**

**SHIPPED** of good order and condition, by **B. P. CONWAY & CO.**

on board the good Canal Boat *Gallant* whereof *Carny* is Master,  
now lying at the Port of **PORTSMOUTH**, the articles marked as below, which are to be delivered without  
delay, in the like good order and condition, at the Port of *Chillicothe* unto  
*A S Mc* or Assigns, he or they paying Freight at the rate  
of  $1\frac{50}{100}$  per *ton*

*Wagon 3 1/2*

In witness whereof, the Owner, Master, or Clerk of said boat hath affirmed to Two Bills  
of Lading of this tenor and date, one of which being accomplished, the other to stand void.

Dated at Portsmouth, this *4<sup>th</sup>* day of *June* 185*3*

Marks.

Articles.

*A Specimen Mc 1 ox Cart 1000*  
*Chillicothe*  
*Ohio*

*Chp*  
*Paid Freight less 2.75-*  
*our by 25-*  
*\$3.00*

*J. P. Carny*





To this to Cart Specie no 21

1847

3/10

Spencer's Key Eng

Chillicothe

Ohio

1847

SPENCER'S KEY ENGINE

CHILICOTHE OHIO

1847

H. B. CONWAY & CO.

Consisting of Tavernkeepers, Grocers & Traders Dealers

CHILICOTHE

PORTSMOUTH

1847

By witness without

1847





*Illustration of a Pack Train*  
By G. H. R. S. P. 1850

THE WESTERN MAILS



STEAMER ISABEL was a side-wheeler of 326 tons, built at Saint Louis in 1854. She operated in the Missouri river trade and was lost in 1854.

"Saint Louis March 4th 1851

"Major John Dougherty / Dr Sir A Telegraphic despatch has this day been received by Col . . . . from Washington City directing him to not make any arrangement for transportation to [Forts] Kearny or Laramie and the inference drawn from this is that both posts will be abandoned in consequence of congress having reduced the appropriation so low as to prevent either post being kept up - This news is of so much importance that I have concluded both to write you by the Steamer Isabel and by mail and it will be necessary for us to determine on what course we will pursue in regard to the remainder of the stock of goods at Laramie and Kearney - it will be too soon to determine now until we hear official instructions but I think no time is to be lost in you coming to St Louis to determine on our course - in the mean time I will make arrangement to send out goods to either post but it may be well for you to write Tutt [John S., suttler at Fort Laramie] and let him know so that he may trade off his goods and also that he might possibly arrange to come down - I wish you would at once come down - / Robert Campbell"

\*\*\*\*\*

Major Dougherty, in partnership with Robert Campbell, held the Suttler contract at Forts Leavenworth, Kearny and Laramie. As it turned out, Kearny and Laramie were not abandoned by the government. Ft. Kearny was abandoned by the military May 17, 1871 and Ft. Laramie on November 9, 1894. SEE more on these historic forts in this collection.

Robert Campbell was a St. Louis merchant - Robert Campbell & Co. and a partner with Wm. L. Sublette in the fur trade. SEE more in the fur trade section in this collection.




K. Mackenzie

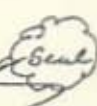
Continued

K. Mackenzie is to pay in cash for said Robes, Furs & Peltries three days after such delivery, that time being considered necessary to make a correct count of them

In witness whereof the said parties have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written

In presence of -

Robert Campbell 

Northrup, Chick 

K. Mackenzie 



This contract is an agreement with Robert Campbell and Northrup & Chick, to deliver the Buffalo robes, furs & peltries purchased by Kenneth Mackenzie, at the prices listed on each, by July 15, 1856. Signed by all parties concerned. Although Mackenzie retired from the American Fur Co. in 1834, this shows that he was still active in the fur trade as late as 1856.

**KENNETH MCKENZIE** also MacKenzie - both are used in his papers in this collection. Mc Kenzie was born in Rosshire, Scotland on April 15, 1797, of distinguished parentage. He came to Canada in 1816 and worked as a clerk in the North West Co. until its merger with the Hudson Bay Co. in 1821. In 1822 he went to St. Louis and became an American citizen. That same year he became a founding member and president of the Columbia Fur Company. See Wm. P. Tilton letter, "Galena, Ill/March 24, 1830", in this collection. The C. F. Co. became so aggressive on the Upper Missouri, that the A. F. Co. worked out an agreement that led to the merger of the two companies in 1827. The C. F. Co. became the Upper Missouri Outfit of the American Fur Co. with headquarters at Fort Union. Here McKenzie ruled over a vast territory and was called "King of the Missouri". Hiram M. Chittenden, in his History of the American Fur Trade called McKenzie "the ablest trader that the American Fur Company ever possessed". McKenzie retired in 1834 from the A. F. Co. and in 1838 organized the Chouteau & McKenzie Mercantile Co. in partnership with Pierre Chouteau Jr., as a subsidiary to the Western Dept. of the American Fur Co. In 1840 he bought out Chouteau and it became McKenzie & Company. McKenzie married Mary Marshall of Nashville, Tenn. June 26, 1842 and remained active in business until his death on April 26, 1861.



Articles of Agreement made and entered into this Fifteenth day of March A D Eighteen hundred and fifty six, by and between Robert Campbell & Nathrup & Chicks of the First Part and Kenneth Mackenzie of the Second Part, Witnesses -

That the said Kenneth Mackenzie has purchased of Nathrup & Chicks their entire collection of Buffalo Robes Furs Peltries etc which they may have in the season of Eighteen hundred & fifty six until the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1856 at the following prices, viz  
Raccoon Fifty six cents (56) each Large Wolf One 50/100 dollars (1.<sup>50</sup>) each, Small Wolf one dollar (1.<sup>00</sup>) each, Wild Cat Thirty five (35) cents each Mink One dollar (1.<sup>00</sup>) each, Gray Fox Thirty five (35) cents each, Badger Thirty (30) cents each, Opposum Eleven (11) cents each Pole Cat Twenty five (25) cents each Horn Cat Twenty five (25) cents each Muskrat Ten (10) cents each, Panther One dollar (1.<sup>00</sup>) each, Otter Two dollars (2.<sup>00</sup>) each Beaver Two dollars (2.<sup>00</sup>) per pound) Black Bear Three dollars (3.<sup>00</sup>) each, Shaved Deer Skins Fifty one (51) cents per pound, steer in Hair, Thirty one 1/2 (31 1/2) cents per pound, Swan Skin (10) cents each dressed Deer smoked One 25/100 dollars (1.<sup>25</sup>) per pound dressed Deer unsalted One 10/100 dollars (1.<sup>00</sup>) per pound, Buffalo Robes & Black Calves Three 20/100 dollars (3.<sup>00</sup>) each, Red Calf Thirty (30) cents each all damaged skins to be taken at a valuation -

Said K Mackenzie is to receive said skins Robes at the Wharf at Saint Louis and pay all expenses of Drayage and labor. The said Nathrup & Chicks are to forward the skins as they receive them and all are to be delivered by Fifteenth July Eighteen hundred & fifty six, and consign them to Robert Campbell by whom they are to be delivered to said



THE WESTERN MAILS



FORT UNION.



James W. Murray of Esq.

1846

THE WESTERN MAILS

Fort Yukon, North America  
 May 20th 1849

My dear James

Some most welcome letter from Dundas Cottage, dated Sept 26/48, was duly received on the 20th of December last (the soonest it is possible for a letter to reach this from home) by the return of the men I had dispatched to the rocky mountains with our winter packs. Many many thanks for so long and interesting letter, I wish I could scrape together matters of equal interest, with which to make some recompense but from the end of the world, what can I make a letter of? In instance, I might tell you that the lady of Enack-te-shah (the old chief, aged about 70) lately gave birth to a son. That I see all another chief, has just been married to his fourth wife (she young enough to be his granddaughter, and that said four ladies live together in one lodge, in unity and love - that my esteemed Red skin friend 'Nak-lachio' is still 'eterna' and so forth - - the fact is all I can write about, for which you care any thing, is concerning myself and family - and by making anything of a long epistle out of that it becomes very 'dry reading'. You will please therefore consider of this when receiving letters from me, and not expect such as you could me. It is true what you say, that I did complain of you not writing to me but three days have long since passed away, and you will soon again have a good long word from me, so long as you continue to write regularly. - I certainly was surprised when opening that invaluable packet, to see letters from each of my elder brothers, all dated at the same time from the paternal camp. It gave me very great pleasure indeed to hear of you all being well, and so many of you being permitted again to meet together. And would I ever give it down, that is, of a short time - but I live in the pleasure of hope. The time is coming, when if you are in Scotland, England, Ireland or abroad (which is Henry Williamson's definition of the four quarters of the globe) I shall find you out, and we shall make up for lost time. But when that time is to be is what all the present writing, I cannot exactly tell. It is notwithstanding the happiness I feel by hearing of you all being in good health, I must say that Archy and Thom's accounts of their situation and prospects causes me much anxiety. by such packet, I can only hope to hear of them being once more made weal in the world, and God grant that they may be successful; so for yourself, you appear to be well - a slight and nervous some such and I hope health keeps good them is our desire.

**FORT YUKON, RUSSIAN AMERICA** This was a fur trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company. It was built in 1847 by Alexander Hunter Murray in what was then Russian Territory. The fort is located near the confluence of the Porcupine and Yukon Rivers just inside of the Arctic Circle. The letter shown was written by Murray from Fort Yukon on May 20th, 1849. Four days later Murray arrives at the Lapierre House where he makes a further entry and the letter is forwarded by an express of the Hudson's Bay Company. It was most probably carried outside of the mails to its destination in Scotland. The drawings on the address sheet are probably self portraits of Murray as he was somewhat of an artist.

This letter is probably the earliest written from the interior of what was then Russian America.

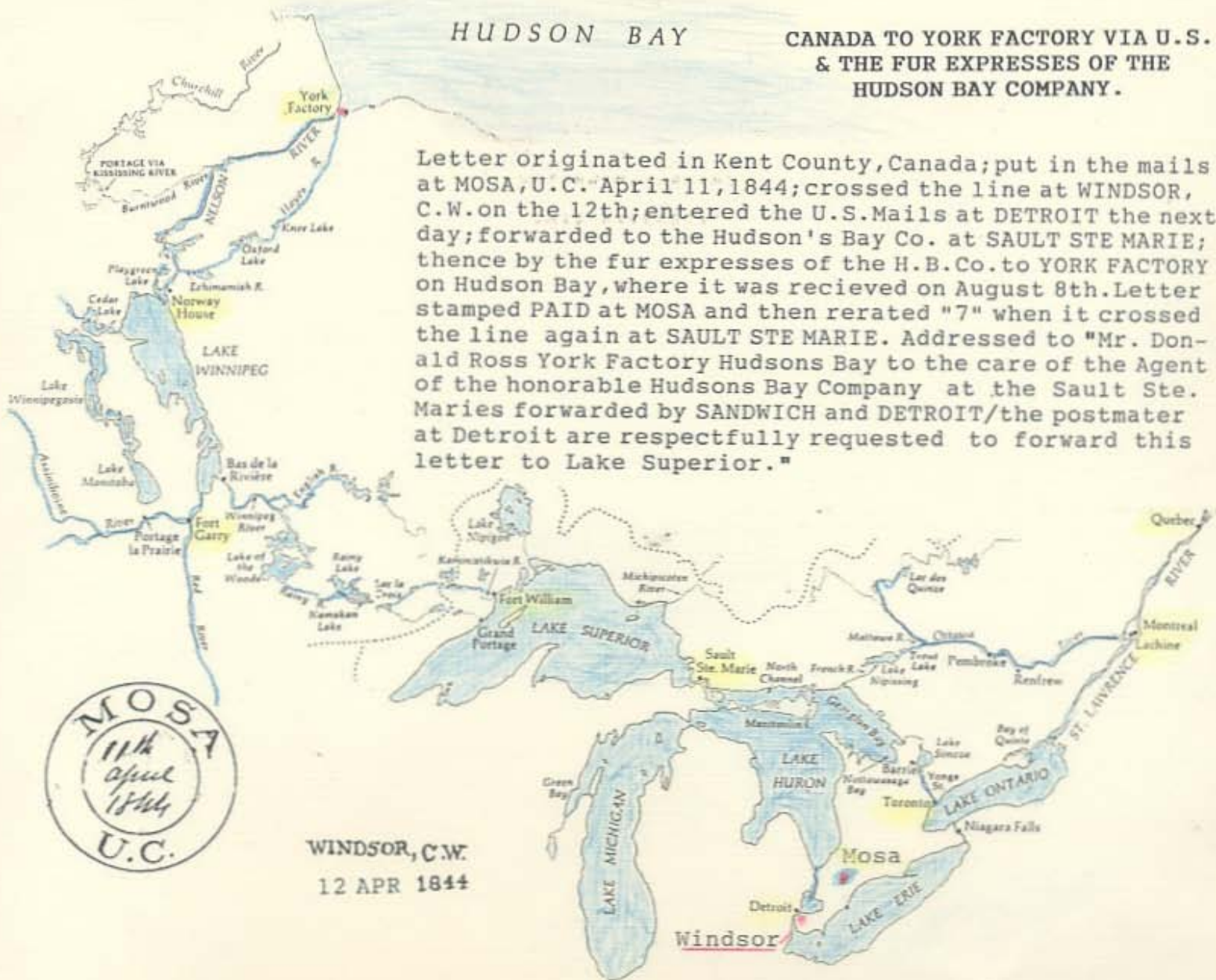
of you, regularly repair to the kitchen fire side, and take a pipe on the latter pipe: Then see them who condemn this is a vigil, atrocious and depraved habit &c. &c. I have heard all sides of the question, and tried both ways, and this day finds me a respectable smoker & smoker.



HUDSON BAY

CANADA TO YORK FACTORY VIA U.S. & THE FUR EXPRESSES OF THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY.

Letter originated in Kent County, Canada; put in the mails at MOSA, U.C. April 11, 1844; crossed the line at WINDSOR, C.W. on the 12th; entered the U.S. Mails at DETROIT the next day; forwarded to the Hudson's Bay Co. at SAULT STE MARIE; thence by the fur expresses of the H.B.Co. to YORK FACTORY on Hudson Bay, where it was recieved on August 8th. Letter stamped PAID at MOSA and then rerated "7" when it crossed the line again at SAULT STE MARIE. Addressed to "Mr. Donald Ross York Factory Hudsons Bay to the care of the Agent of the honorable Hudsons Bay Company at the Sault Ste. Maries forwarded by SANDWICH and DETROIT/the postmater at Detroit are respectfully requested to forward this letter to Lake Superior."



**DONALD ROSS**  
 born in Scotland in 1797.  
 Joined H.B. Co. in 1816;  
 Secretary to Geo. Simpson 1826;  
 to the Columbia with Simpson 1828;  
 Chief Trader 1829;  
 Chief Factor 1839;  
 in charge at Norway House 1830-1851;  
 died Nov. 19, 1852.





St Germain 7 Juin 1821 -

Cher Peter votre lettre du Premier Juin  
à Manard & Vallé Nindetres Reuse on vous  
envoie 2 Baril de Sella et Pour le Certain  
1 Sac de Farine sur les Laurent ou votre  
maison sil lia de la farine à Bellevue -  
on vous envoie de davantage sur leau noir  
Dans se qua M<sup>r</sup> Felix Vallé vous envoie de

Bellevue on envoie Charet dix  
Deux nevon qua leau noir et comme le  
vous dit que sila farine est prêt à Bellevue  
une Party de la Charge de se deux Charet  
an farine et mais quel prendron a Bellevue  
serat par vous et le reste par les Dabouat  
les autres Charet Non chez vous vous  
Les changerai au huit au tar que vous  
pourrai Il on de bon team et peuse portay  
from 11 to 1200<sup>+</sup> Je vais que vous faite Charet  
votre huit par m<sup>r</sup> pain Come Il la tournée  
de Bellevue chez Luis alege vous pouris



Fort Laramie June 29 1864

Mrs. Robert Lambeth

Albany

Dear Madam

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of the month of the

Pacific Telegraph Co at Omaha to remit to you for

months credit like number system (550) value

the same Co. on the 29<sup>th</sup> of the month to remit for months

credit eight hundred dollars (\$800) value by return

to my letter book written to inform you value of our

added in a P.S. Please find enclosed for months

credit the check value

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

of \$64.00

Philadelphia 25<sup>th</sup> May 1795

Dear Robert

A few moments since I received your  
letter by Mr. Keble - He made no stay at my house  
Philadelphia in a few days, in consequence of  
concluding to write you a few lines and as they  
they will contain nothing however more than thanks  
for your attention and that all is well &c &c - My  
last was by Mr. Keble since which nothing has occurred  
that would be worthy of mentioning my confinement  
to the stone prevented me from seeing Mr. Keble as  
often as I could have wished - The Society of Friends  
I had found to be interesting and agreeable - from  
the little it was my fortune to experience I had  
wished it had been of more extension and duration  
but the week was doubtless well executed and by  
I presume the acquaintance is forgotten

I have had no letter from you I thought since  
that wrote you but it may be possible he  
has by this time taken his station in the Regiment  
establishment and that he is better employed than  
and if he has not written you it will be for  
want of time and waiting until he can  
more accurately inform you of the prospect  
of affairs



Richard M. W. C.  
Nov 28 1855

Wm. Lloyd Garrison

11/28/55

18  
Cape Girardeau - Mo.

Mr. Robt Campbell  
Dear Sir

We arrived at this place this morning we went the goods to Capt. Ellis and received a letter from Mr. Lempp's like were two bags containing three hundred and forty one dollars and a five dollar bill South Carolina - the disc<sup>t</sup> of which I shall return when negotiated there - you credit him with the whole amount say 346\$ - We met the Phearis and suppose you must have received the goods although I had not an opportunity of ascertaining that they were aboard - We are incessantly troubled on the river, a noisy Captain and crew that know no superior - so that you can partially imagine our situation the papers are very agreeable -



1871

Mr. Robert Campbell

St. Louis

Mo.

Henry H. H. H. H.

30<sup>th</sup> Street  
1875



General Hayes

Capital Grounds

1823. Ramsay books

Storia — 3<sup>d</sup> Augt<sup>h</sup>

Recd — 8 —

Ans? new required —

Mr A. W. Bostwick

appt am: Ice Company

St Louis

Dany 3



Peoria 3 aught 1823

Dear Sir  
With the good orders to be sent by  
Gabriel Dany, you will send 2<sup>th</sup> young  
Hyson Tea & 4<sup>th</sup> Chocolate - you will  
also send 1<sup>th</sup> Black Pepper, and in addition  
to the necessary Provisions for the two men  
for the voyage, please send 100<sup>th</sup> Pork

I am  
yours truly  
Starr, brooks

M O N Bostwick

Wheeling May 9<sup>th</sup> 1825.

Mr. Robt Campbell

India

We arrived here the previous

two days later than I anticipated  
low stage of the water, in consequence of  
which, I shall take the mail stage for  
Baltimore instead of going through Pittsburg

I wish you would have the cloths turned  
over and beat frequently, and the woollen goods  
generally, to prevent the moth from injuring  
them - perhaps you had better bring the  
stove prownets from upstairs likewise the  
bees, feathers have them cleaned and suspended  
in the stove - shall give Mr. Forsyth a mail  
order to send on from Louisville Hope every  
thing moves on well

Yours respectfully

James Heyle

— 1/6 —



1820

Montreal 11<sup>th</sup> Feby 1820

Mess<sup>rs</sup> Hamilton & Cummings

Gentlemen

We were favoured in course of Post with your Letter of the 20<sup>th</sup> last month, and should have answered it sooner but waited to see Mr Berthelot who has been out of Town for some time. The information you give will enable him to get his Goods insured, and we observe that the Gun Powder was to be removed the next day.

Your accounts with Mess<sup>rs</sup> Berthelot & Polette have been examined and we find you omitted to give Credit for one of your Drafts, and some other small errors were discovered by Mr Berthelot; we annex a note of the whole and have carried the

M. W. LUBERY  
B. N. A. P. S. 1871

STANSTAD  
NOV 11 1871  
I.C.

Traveler's Order  
to Evansville

John  
1871

EVANSVILLE  
NOV 11 1871  
I.C.

12 1/2  
4 1/2

Amasa P. Hulbert, Esqr.

Evansville  
Canada East.

300-



1812 Rate 80 - 1000 mi. = 12 1/2 ct



Burlington, Nov. 23, 1844.

Mr. Hallbert

Dear Sir

You wished us to write you about  
Pelts & Furs & we now comply with your wishes.

Pelts are worth from 12 1/2 to 75 cts. - depending, of course,  
upon their goodness. Cloths (woolen) are selling at  
lower prices in market than they were six weeks ago &  
Wool has also fallen off some. This will influence  
the prices of Pelts to some extent. We are anxious  
to buy & will pay you a fair price for them. Of  
course we can afford to pay as much as any one that  
knows their value & we are disposed to do right, by you  
should you get a lot.

Furs will do pretty well this year, though they  
will fall off considerably from last year's prices.

We shall be more particular in cutting them this year  
than we have been hitherto, as we find that we have  
been too much in the habit of paying more for unprime  
skins than they were worth, & a loss of money by so doing  
has been the consequence, which has taught us better.

We mention this that you may be particular in  
buying them, as it will not do to pay high prices  
for unprime skins. If all the buyers will adopt  
this course, the error of paying too much for poor skins  
will be soon corrected.

Red Fox will be lower than  
they were last year. Last season the catch was



Engraved by J. H. B. & Co. N. Y.

See the Engraving of the Stone Walls

### THE STONE WALLS

UPPER MISSOURI

Published by HENRY R. LIPPINCOTT & CO. N. Y.

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ASCC-6000

10

Lapointe, N. W. }  
April 17 1850 }

John W. Carter Esq  
St. Louis  
Mich

Handwritten note or signature

La Pointe March 30 1851

My Dear Son

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of this Month I rec<sup>d</sup> yours of the 20  
of Jan<sup>y</sup> last and feel very much rejoiced to find you in such good  
Health and spirits, and I hope you may long enjoy yourself and  
Family in your new House and am very glad to hear that you  
~~got along so well~~  
with your House so well without running into Debt. I think you  
now <sup>may</sup> feel pretty Independent, I find you are sowing your  
Farm by plowing in green crops which pleases me very much  
indeed, I find you raised a fine crop of Corn last year which must  
have been done by good Cultivation which I think by following  
it ~~you~~ up you will soon find yourself Independent but  
lay up money, you must be sure to sow ~~clean~~ seed and  
plenty of it and lay down no more land with your  
~~Paul~~ <sup>Paul</sup> Barn Chaff for your grass and, by proper manage-  
ment you may clear your farm of all the foul seed  
which will be one of <sup>the</sup> best Farms about you.

I hope you will clear & fence your 20 Acre lot for  
a Pasture for your cows and Oxen you will <sup>be</sup> doubly profit-  
Table to you to have them where you can find them when  
you wish, I rec<sup>d</sup> a Letter from George the same time  
I rec<sup>d</sup> your last, in which he says he thinks that he  
gave me too much encouragement about meeting me



F. H. Dennis  
Dec 11 1840  
Mrs. Hunt 413 7th St

1840

Walter D. Crozier }  
No. Dew. Dec 14 }

25-

ASCC - 100<sup>00</sup>

Earliest recorded PM.

Paid 1840  
S. S. S. S.

David Coker Esq  
Shawville, Oct 20  
Grand River, Mich



Lafayette 16<sup>th</sup> September 1840

Dear Mr. Bay  
Lafayette

Dear

I have nearly time to write a few lines. It has struck me that perhaps the payment of the four thousand on the ballance has been neglected, and if so I beg of you to have them immediately issued for their full value. If you are in want of funds you may draw on Mr. Coates <sup>at New York</sup> for money enough to pay it, who I have requested to pay it.

I have not much news to tell you - we are all well. Julia and my wife, respecting to every way to follow the course "multiply the seed" are you shall be very anxious on their appearance of their names &c.

How is your get along with the first.

Please write me soon word to St. Marys Michigan

Very truly yours

Chas. W. Johnson

D



# THE WESTERN MAILS

## CANADIAN FUR TRADE

"Mishipicoton 27th August 1831

"Your most welcome & long looked for letter, I had the pleasure of receiving p. the Montreal Canoes on the 25th of May, by which I was made happy to hear that you are all well. . . . in order to enter into a full detail since leaving York Fort, I will begin as follows. In my last from York, which you might easily perceive was written very hurriedly [sic] I mentioned that I was to leave for the Red River in a short time after, accordingly doing so, I left there in a boat manned by 8 men, & loaded with goods for the Red River in company with Mr Mc Millan, the mode of travelling being a novelty to me I found rather awkward, but soon became acquainted with it. I must say that I found Mr Mc Millan a little severe, but hearing that such was his manner upon young men I did not mind it. I certainly was astonished at the hard labour which the men have to undergo, but most of them being Half breeds of the country they stand it out well, having nothing to eat but the dried meat of the Buffaloe, which Europeans for the first time generally detest but is reckoned to be very nourishing. The The Governor [Sir George Simpson] & his Lady soon overtook us tho' not leaving York till five days after [we did] & very quickly got ahead of us, the Governor's boat of course, being better manned. I was quite surprised to see Mrs Simpson endure the fatigues of the voyage so well. We arrived after a voyage of 28 days from York the Governor arrived two before. Mr Finlayson arrived a few days after in a light Canoe, but did not leave York till the Ship was about to leave for England. I was obliged to leave my trunk at York, as it was rather large in the portages, & I was afraid I would have to leave some of my clothes, but fortunately having a friend Mr Thomas Simpson, I brought them all along with me. . . . Red River is reckoned to be a distance of 700 miles from York fort; it is a fertile, level country as far as the eye can reach; there is a Colony which was established by the late Lord Selkirk in the year 1812, where there are a number of inhabitants from Sutherlandshire, the Island of Lewis Rosshire &c. All the retired gentlemen & Servants from the Service generally come & reside here, so that in all, it makes up a little population. My principal employment was continually in the Shop selling & keeping an account of what was sold; after Mr Finlayson's arrival, it was so crowded, that they were three of us kept quite busy, there is Paper money in circulation by the Company, from one Shilling to five, ten & twenty, very fortunately for me I was a little acquainted with calculating, as it is a thing very much required here. The fur bearing animals are few, in comparison to other parts of the country, the wolves are the most numerous particularly in the plains, but luckily they are not large nor so ferocious as the Scotch wolf. In the farming way Mr Mc Millan was employed a little putting in order the ploughs & harrows which came out from England, as I was required in the Shop, I could not attend, there was a little ploughing done but had to give it up till Spring, on account of the hardness of the land. I believe it is the Governor's principal motive to endeavour to establish a Sheep farm. As we had a long & fine autum which continued till about the 15th of Novr, the Governor & his Lady enjoyed themselves riding & as soon as the River froze driving about in their carriage. I had the pleasure of being out with them one day; the Governor driving two in hand. They have got a very neatly furnished cottage, we were delighted during the winter with Mrs Simpson's music upon the Piano, which I may say has been the first within the Hudsons Bay territories, she is certainly a most pleasant, sensible woman. Such entertainments I was not to enjoy. . . . the Governor gave me instructions [to] make ready for a winter excursion, as I was to leave in a few days with the Express for Mishipicoton [Island] on Lake Superior, he mentioned that he thought the farming here would be too little to take up my attention & I have no doubt. . . . but the Governor has got my interest at heart. Having got things ready, I left Red River in company with a Mr Chief Factor Cameron



CANADIAN FUR TRADE



The folded letter was carried by the Montreal canoe" to Montreal where it entered the mails as per postmark, "NOV 8" 1831. Thence by ship to Dingwall, N. Britain (Scotland), via LIVERPOOL/SHIP LETTER, where it arrived on "DEC 12 1831. At Montreal it was rated "PAID 18 3/4" to Scotland and "PAID 6" the local Canadian rate. The "Add/1/2" is an accountancy marking that was applied at LIVERPOOL.



NOTE: Alexander M. Hay joined the Hudson Bay Company in 1831, having come from Scotland to York Factory on Hudson Bay. In the letter he describes the voyage, by canoe to the Red River settlement and his short stay as a clerk. He mentions several important traders and factors in the fur trade, especially the Simpsons. Sir George Simpson was the governor of the H.B.Co., in charge of all the affairs of the company in North America - probably the most important person in Canada. Simpson had gone back to England and got a bride and this was their honeymoon voyage to the Red River. The piano mentioned was brought over from England and was the first one in that part of Canada. Hay describes his voyage by snowshoes and canoe to the Island of Mishipicoton in Lake Superior. SEE map of his journey. Here he learns that he has been assigned to a post in Lake Huron, where, as it turns out, he will spend the next 10 years as a clerk. At the time of the letter he was about 21 years of age. Simpson kept a "character book" about personal who worked for the company and wrote this about Hay: "has been the greater part of the past two winters on snowshoes."



## THE WESTERN MAILS

[John Dugald] who was paying a visit to the Governor - I had a sledge drawn by three dogs to carry any little articles I required & was obliged to leave the rest, but will get them here by the first opportunity. Mr Cameron had his carriole drawn by three dogs to convey himself. I think that you have heard a little of the mode of travelling in the winter, it is certainly most fatiguing walking with Snowshoes, but how fatiguing & not to show a bad example to young men, I was determined, my spirit would not fail me, as I believe it is the longest tramp ever undergone by a young man their first year in the Indian country. I found Mr Cameron very kind & attentive, we arrived at this place after a march of 12 days, it is called Fort Francis in honor of Mrs Simpson; I parted with him [Cameron] after a short repose of three days, accompanied by two Canadians who could not speak a word of English but however I made out with them in French & arrived at the next Post after a march of five days; I left the following day with the same men for the next Post called Fort William, between which places we expected to find provisions at a certain post, but unluckily found none & were obliged to march for 2 days without eating one morsel, now, my Dear Brother walking all day long upon Snowshoes which are more fatiguing than I can really describe & arriving at night without having any thing to support the body, is killing, but thank God, I was not the least the worse of it & arrived at Fort William upon the 11th of Feby which I may remark is the day your letter is dated from home. Fort William is situated at the entrance of Lake Superior & is reckoned to be distant 800 miles from the Red River. The following day after arriving the gentleman in charge told me that I was not to proceed any further till open water, as the Governor wrote him to that effect & he mentioned that he himself would not allow me [to] go any further, as I was most vigorous, in already performing such a long journey, particularly being a new hand. I also fell in with the young man Mc Kenzie who came out along with Geo. Ross, he mentioned, that I showed real Highland Spirit, enduring such fatigue & Starvation. The Packet was forwarded immediately by other men. I have now brought you to my journey's end, which, I have endeavoured to describe as minutely as possible, but I entreat of you at the same time not to mention the circumstance, as it may be the occasion of more harm than good, if such come to Governor Simpsons ears. At Red River I found Mr Finlayson [Chief Factor Duncan] very kind & attentive, indeed I may say that he acted towards me like a brother - he is only clerk still in the Service, but this you will not mention. . . . There is a Chief Factor Mc Kinzie [Donald, also Gov. of Assiniboia 1825-33] at the Red River who paid me great attention - he knew our late father well - most likely mother will know him, as he is of the Achinglerrach family. . . . I left Fort William on the 10th of June in a boat manned by 9 men, in company with Chief Traders Mc Intosh & Mc Murray and arrived here after a voyage of ten days through Lake Superior, which is reckoned to be the largest Lake in North America, (it is rather an Inland Sea) - Mr Keith is the person in charge, a brother of Mr James Keith [Chief Factor and superintendent of H.B.C. affairs at] Lachine - . . . Mishipicoton is not so far distant from Montreal as from the Red River." AT THIS POINT the writer remarks on the political situation in England and France - "that the Duke of Wellington has resigned" and the length of time it takes to get mail from Scotland. He then continues: "A canoe has just arrived from York Fort which brings intelligence of Mrs Simpsons being safely delivered of a son, . . . I anticipated the pleasure of passing the winter here, but I find instructions have come for my removing further South to a Post situated in Lake Huron. . . . I received a letter from Mr Finlayson wherein he mentions his being promoted to Chief Factor in the Service & that he was to leave for the Columbia [river] in a few days after. I believe Mr Thomas Simpson winters at the Red River. I have seen Simon Ross, he passed last winter at York fort & is now so far upon his way to the Canada Department, he looks quite well. . . ." END QUOTE. The balance of the letter pertains to personal matters. It is signed: "A.M. Hay"

\*\*\*\*\*





## THE WESTERN MAILS

"En Route" August 7th, 1838  
to York Factory for Company ship to England  
arrived at Deal and received London 18 Oct.

Letter is from Alexander Roderick McLeod (c. 1782-1840), he entered the service of the North West Company in 1802. He became a chief trader with the Hudson's Bay Company at the time of the union in 1821. He was appointed chief factor in 1836 and was in charge of the Athabasca district when this letter was written.

The first part of the letter are personal matters, the mails and his sons education. "Until I reached Norway House, the 11th ulto, I anticipated leave of absence, but it must be deferred till '39 [1839]. . . . then if God spares me, I shall take a turn to the civilized World, on Furlough, but whether I will cross the Atlantic or not, is uncertain. . . . Mr. E<sup>d</sup> - Smith went down, and the charge of Athabasca [district] resolved on your humble Servant, I past the last season at Fort Chipewyan [on Lake Athabasca]. F. Bectcher, by appointment went to G. Slave Lake - P. [Peace] River, as the year before, our success in trade would have been very good had G. S. Lake returns been equal to last year, or even the proceeding one, but unluckily it hardly came up to the half of the last years amount. Still the District shows an amount of L 10,634 [English pounds] for the British market, all saleable Furs. - other parts of the Northern Department, will also experience a depression in Returns on outfit '37, and the current outfit is not likely to be turned to better advantage, letting alone, the effects of a bad season, such as the last, there is still a much greater evil lurking about, i. e. the small Pox, it has [caused] awful ravages among the Plains Tribes in the Saskatchewan, & very late accounts from [Fort] Carlton [N. Saskatchewan River], states it to be among the Beaver Hill Crees, as yet we know not of its having proceeded Northwardly, but a rumour to that effect was circulated in the early part of the last winter and the Natives, as is generally the case on such occasions, felt sensibly alarmed, & in actively resulted there from, and will last until the cause is removed, Vaccination has been resorted to, as the most effectual means of avoiding the Contageon - My winter residence will be [Fort] Dunvegan [on the Peace River], it is considered expedient that I should see most of the Posts fall & Spring, which I admit is very proper, but it is attended with inconvenience, arising from my being so much out of the way, when thre Expresses [Hudson Bay Co.] pass and repass. Mr. Campbell [Robert, Chief Teader, H. B. Co.] is now at Ft. Chipewyan to reside there both Winter & Summer with three men, the other Posts are allowed only two each & nine & twenty including a Guide is allowed for the Summer Voyage, with with the strangest injunctions against employing any natives to assist in the transport over P. la L - [Portage la Loche, Clearwater River to Lake Methy] I have adhered there to, and intend keeping to the letter of the law. Our Boats are deep, 64 pieces forms the Lading that each have - we have several days advance on the last year, yet I am not very certain of reaching by Water. - My wife & children, are gone to R. R. [Red River settlement] with a view to their improvement. . . . Sincere Regards & Esteem/A. M. M. Leod.

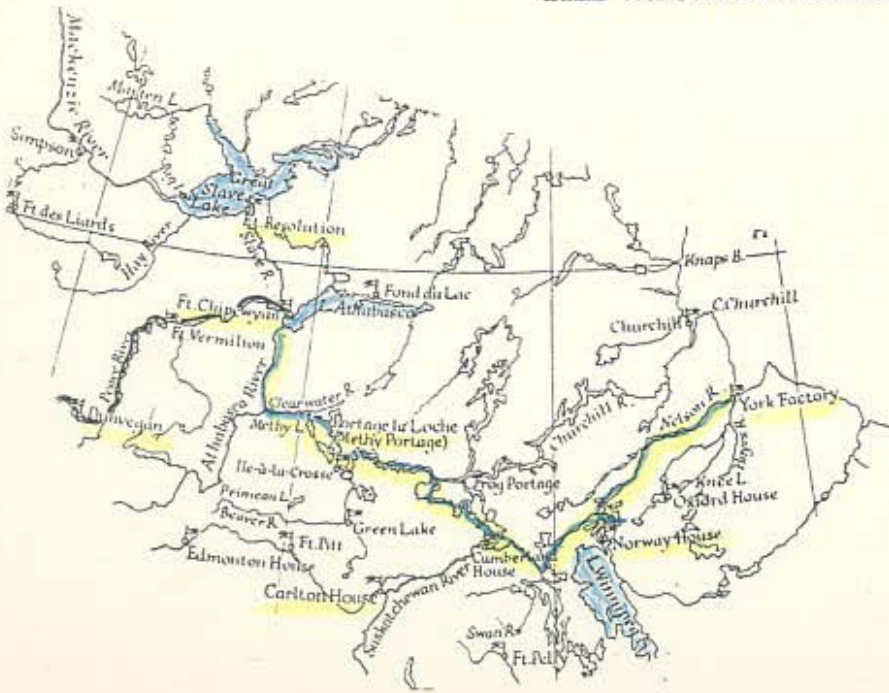
John Stuart Esquire. "

Note: " In September last, to my no small surprise, who should I meet one day as I was passing the Fort Gate at Slave Lake, but my son Alexander on his way to MCK - R - [Mackenzie River] to support R. Campbell, in the long contemplated project of establishing Deases Lake [Post], to which place they were to have incource of the present Summer. Alexander holds the situation of an apprentice Clerk - "

Note: \* Edward Smith a partner in the North West Co. was made a Chief Factor on the amalgamation of the N. W. Co. with the Hudson Bay Co. in 1821. As the letter indicates he was in charge at Fort Chipewyan until he went on leave in 1837-38. Smith died in 1849.



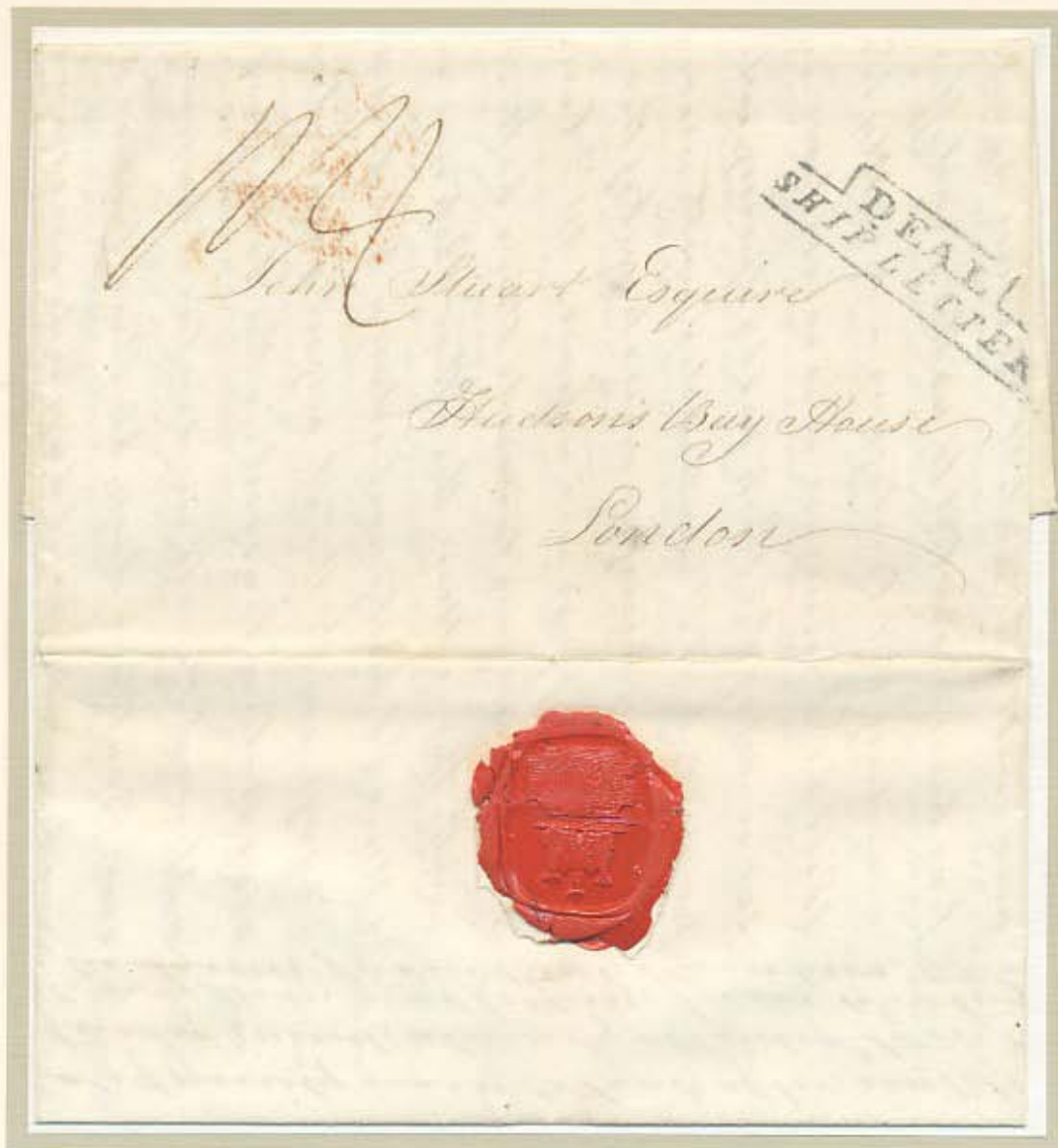
THE WESTERN MAILS



DEAL SHIP LETTER

Letter written while "En Route" from Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca to York Factory via Norway House. See map on left for the route taken and the Posts mentioned, highlighted in yellow. Also see other letters in this collection to John Stuart who was a Chief Factor in the H.B.Co., returning to England in 1836, retired in 1839 and died January 14, 1848.

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY "EN ROUTE"



1/4 sterling  
collect-8d.  
incoming ship  
letter fee, in-  
cluding 2d to  
ship captain  
plus 8d. inla-  
nd postage  
from Deal to  
London-74miles



## THE WESTERN MAILS

From Fort Chipewyan Dec. 28, 1827.  
to Red River Settlement.

To the Governour Chief Factors and Chief Traders

Gentlemen/

Proposing to send off our dispatches on the 2nd January with an account of the Company's affairs in this district up to the present date, I have to state that our craft—that is to say two boats, who returned from Norway House on the 16th July, reached this on the 14th Sept. and the other two having left Took Factory on the 19th July arrived here on the 3rd October. I shall not trouble you with a detail of the various Occurrences of the voyage—it will I hope suffice, that the property and people got here in safety; the last boats however had considerable obstacles to surmount, owing to the very low state of the water in Riviere La Loche with heavy cargoes—obstacles which in all probability would have deprived our outfits of the supplies for the natives at the usual period, had not Mr. C. T. Simon McGillivray who accompanied them, and by his judicious management ultimately succeeded in getting them her in due time. La Londe the conductor, of the craft for this district, I look upon as no longer fit for that duty—having no more command of the men than a common steersman.

Having myself arrived here on the 15th Sept., I lost no time in making a distribution of that part of the outfit received by the first boats—but—before I could not send off until the last with Mr. McGillivray had arrived, meantime I, with the able assistance of Mr. P. W. Dease whom I found here waiting for the remainder of the Mackenzie's River outfit made various arrangements and settlements with the Indians, so that by the time, Mr. McGillivray arrived, I had little less to attend to than finishing the distribution, which being completed on the 4th, both Peace River and Great Slave Lake outfits with their people left this on the 5th and 6th—as also Mr. Dease for Mackenzie River. On the 7th I commenced equipping the Indians, and the plantation was clear of them on the 12th, not however without considerable difficulties. occasioned by the very limited and inadequate supply of goods I had to Distribute among such a number of Indians, having received a considerable increase to the usual number.

At the period of their departure, several of them / I was sorry to observe / were afflicted with symptoms of the chin-cough, it seems that contagious disease had been carried hither by our people from Norway House, and had prevailed with considerable violence among the families of our establishments, bu has in no case proved fatal, and they are at present in a state of convalescence, and I sincerely hope, the natives may be in a similar state, but hitherto we have had no accounts from them.

They have been of all descriptions, the men and boys, including 39 Cree, fitted out as fur hunters and disposed of to the best of our judgement in various territory, and altho but very indifferently supplied, yet they promised to exert themselves as usual, and I have the satisfaction to inform you that not the least murmur of discontent, appeared in consequence of the non-impotation of liquon / of which by the bye, I still had some apprehensions / but now I may safely assure, we will have no more of it in this quarter for our part, we certainly feel no desire, that it should ever again be introduced, tho some apprehension might have been entertained of a deficiency or even a difficulty in procuring the necessary supply of provisions for carrying on the business of the district, but if we may be able to judge of the future by the result of the last summers trade of that indispensable article, our supplies will be abundant and cheap, in fact we will have to restrict them to a certain quantity, having actually on hand between our three establishments a sufficiency of material for making up 200 bags pemican.

The natives of Fort Chipewyan and Great Slave Lake have been as obedient as could be expected to our orders not to destroy the beaver during the summer season, and we did not receive upwards of sixty from the whole, the Beaver Indians being more destitute and more in the habit of making their hunt by the gun and have killed a considerable number.



21

at 2

3. ...  
... Camp ...

at Chipewyan 28<sup>th</sup> Dec 1827

Gentlemen

Proposing to send off our  
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 detail of the various occurrences of the voyage - it well I hope  
 suffices, that the property and people got here in safety; the  
 last Boat however, had considerable obstacles to surmount,  
 owing to the very low state of the water in Riviere la Roche with  
 heavy Congress - obstacles which in all probability would have  
 impeded our departure if the assistance for the natives at the usual  
 prices had not been ... who accompanied

them and  
 in getting  
 the Craft  
 that duty  
 a few more  
 on the 15<sup>th</sup>  
 that ...



H.B. CO'S POST, CHIPPEWYAN ON ATHABASCA LAKE,  
 300 MILES NORTH OF EDMONTON.

Photo by CHAMBERLAIN

ly succeeded  
 ductor, if  
 fit for  
 than  
 arrived here  
 but -  
 McCallister



continued: -

On the 21st Oct. Mr. William Mc Gillivray who had passed the summer in charge of Great Slave Lake arrived here in canoe with four men and ten packs furs, being about half the summer returns of that post, by him I likewise received a letter Mr. Chief Factor McGillivray stating the safe arrival of himself and property, and his perfect satisfaction of the management and conduct of W. McGillivray in his summer arrangements.

From Peace River, where men were too few to send down a boat as usual, I had received no intelligence until the 15th inst when Mr. Paul Fraser arrived with Mr. Campbell's dispatches which contain satisfactory accounts of the business of that quarter up to the date of his letter the 5th inst.

On the 25th inst agreeable to appointment I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Simon McGillivray arrive from Great Slave Lake, in order to assist with his advice in carrying on our future operations and various arrangements. It is gratifying for me to learn and no doubt will be satisfactory to you, that the greatest harmony exists among the different tribes of Indians in this district, not only with each other, but the white likewise.

What the general result of their united exertions will be is at this early period hard to say, the season so far has been very unfavorable to the hunting of small furs, as we have not actually an inch of snow, and the weather has not withstanding been very cold, which will render the killing of large animals extremely difficult, and unavoidable starvation, consequently, good hunts cannot be expected.

I have taken the liberty to forward herewith to Mr. C.F. McTavish, the requisition for outfit 1828, with fervent hopes of it being completed. I beg to have to inform you that with a desire of getting to head-quarters as soon as possible, I mean to send off three boats, which will I have no doubt contain all the packs that may be made at this place and Seal River with which they shall proceed as soon as they can from this. As I am aware the P.K. boats may be here about the 15th May and for the returns of Great Slave Lake, I propose leaving a complement of nine men including guide, and take out two canoes, with which I expect they will reach Fort Factory, much about the same time as the boats, so as to return with them. I find however that without hiring some extra hands, I shall be short of hands to take out the craft, and that you may have a clearer view of my situation in that respect I shall take the liberty of laying before you the following statement upon which you may rely.

There are in the district including 4 interpreters  
 45 men---to take out 3 boats... 21 men  
 two loaded canoes 9 men  
 Messrs Smit & Stewart's canoe 6 men---30 men-9 men left  
 Required for summer establishment 3 men, incl. interpreter  
 Great Slave Lake 4 men  
 Fort Chipewyan 3 " "  
 Fort Vermilion 3 " "  
 Dunvegan 3 " "

It appears evident by this department that we must recourse to the hiring, if possible some of our half-breed or face-men in order to get out our returns as well as to accomplish the views of the Gov. & Council, altho perfectly aware of my acting in this case beyond the powers with which they were pleased to invest me with, yet I flatter myself that rather than the general interest should suffer, I hope they will condescend to approve of the means which necessity alone has compelled me to adopt to avoid existing obstacles.

I showing a deficiency of 4  
 embrace this conveyance likewise to inform you that the 45 men, only 13 of whom are under actual engagement, past ensuing June, and the rest seem nowise inclined to



THE WESTERN MAILS



continued:-

renew their contracts, nor have I as yet made application to any, their grievances for the ill-assorted and scanty supply of necessaries which they received both here and at York Factory, being as yet too fresh in their memory. I still entertain hopes, several will hire before the embarkation, no means in my power shall remain untried to hire the whole if necessary and possible, being too well aware of the difficulty and trouble invariably experienced in hiring them at York Factory, and finding nowadays, that there are any supernumerary hand at that place, they therefore show much reluctance to hiring inland.

Adverting to last summer's transaction in this district, I have every reason to feel satisfied with the invariable good management of the gentlemen who were left in charge, and our arrangements for the ensuing summer, are as follows:-

Great Slave Lake Mr. C. T. McGillivray with 3 men incl intr.  
Fort Chipewyan William Mc Gillivray with 4 men incl intr.  
Fort Vermilion P. R. Paul Fraser with 3 men incl intr,  
Dunvegan Colin Campbell with 3 men incl intr.

I beg to inform you that Mr. Robert Clouston, assistant clerk at this place, having duly given notice of his intention to leave the country this year goes on accordingly at all events it was my intention he should accompany the boats and for which purpose, such a person for that purpose is indispensable in future, but for such, as well as an assistant to Mr. C. T. McGillivray which appears to me equally necessary for the number of Indians reporting at Great Slave Lake, being too many for one manager for which reason I take the liberty of making the suggestion for your consideration.

Having nothing further to mention, worthy of your attention, I beg leave to subscribe with all manner of respect,

Alex. Stewart.

"FORT CHIPEWYAN Dec. 28, 1827"

Letter is from Alexander Stewart (d. 1840) entered the service of the North West Co. in 1796 as a clerk. Later he was placed in charge of a post on Lesser Slave Lake; and in 1812, he was placed in charge of the Athabaska River Department. He was made a partner of the North West Co. in 1813. At the time of the union of 1821, he was made a chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Letter mentions: - "Two boats who returned from Norway House the 16th July reached here on the 14th September and the other two having left York Factory on the 19th July arrived here on the 3rd of October"