

Chapter 21

In the Pacific Northwest

RIVAL NATIONS COMPETE IN THE NORTHWEST

AFTER CORTES had conquered Mexico, Spanish explorers ventured farther and farther north along the Pacific Coast. Ferrelo in 1543 discovered and named Cape Mendocino on the point farthest west. The daring English buccaneer, Sir Francis Drake, was sailing off the coast of the present state of Washington in 1579. After plundering Spanish towns farther south, he steered the *Golden Hind* into northern waters to elude capture by Spanish captains who were searching for him. Unable to find a water route back into the Atlantic Ocean, Drake headed westward, crossed the Pacific, and returned to England by sailing around the globe.

Following the voyage of Vizcaino in 1603, Spain did little more than lay claim to land bordering the Pacific. Then a rival appeared, over a century later, to threaten the nation's possessions. In 1724 Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, sent a personal letter in his own handwriting to Vitus Bering, a Dane, serving as an officer in the Russian Navy. He instructed Bering to proceed to Kamchatka, to build one or two boats, and then to sail north to learn

whether or not the continents of Asia and North America were joined by land.

Although the Czar died five days after writing the letter, his heir carried out his orders. In the summer of 1728 Bering's vessel, christened the *Gabriel*, sailed on the momentous voyage through the strait which bears his name. This proved beyond doubt that the two continents were separated by this narrow body of water. Thirteen years later the Russian Government called Bering from retirement on his farm in Finland to take charge of another expedition into the North Pacific. Early in June in 1741 Bering sailed from Avacha Bay, Kamchatka, in command of the *St. Peter*. His partner, Chirikov, was captain of the *St. Paul* with a crew of seventy-six men, one more than Bering had on his vessel. In a stormy gale the two ships became separated and the captains never met again. Chirikov drifted to the island where Sitka is now located. After losing two boats and their occupants in attempted landings, Chirikov turned homeward. He arrived in Avacha Bay early in October of the same year. No word had come from Bering.

On the sixteenth of July in 1741 Bering sighted a high mountain on the mainland of North America. He named it St. Elias.

Hampered by fog and an ailing crew, the explorer turned homeward. His supplies were running low. On the voyage two invalid sailors who still had use of their legs supported sick steersmen at the helm. Finally, after being lost at sea for weeks, snow-covered hills, which the captain thought was the peninsula of Kamchatka, were sighted. The land was only an island. The crew beached the ship and prepared to spend the winter in caves dug in the sandy shore. Here on this lonely island Bering died. The place was named for him. Half the men in the crew were saved by the German scientist, Steller. He dug roots and boiled them to cure scurvy, killed sea cows for meat, and fur-bearing animals for clothing. In the spring the survivors built a crude boat from the wreckage of the *St. Peter* and started home with bundles of valuable furs. Late in August of 1742 the party reached Avacha Bay.

The appearance of these seamen clad in the remnants of luxurious furs started a rush of emigrants into the new country and the islands of the North Pacific. In the scramble for sudden wealth many hunters ventured into the cold waters on clumsy rafts and lost their lives. In 1790 Baranov was appointed manager of the Russian company which was granted a monopoly of the fur business in the new lands. Nine years later he traded articles to an Indian chief for land upon which to erect a trading post, named Sitka for the tribe inhabiting the island. The town became the center of the fur trade which had lured Russians to establish posts in scattered regions throughout the Northwest.

As Russian traders moved farther south, the King of Spain became alarmed. He ordered the occupation and settlement of California. He also sent more explorers to

chart the coast farther north and to try to hold that country for Spain. In June of 1774 the *Santiago* commanded by Perez, sailed from Monterey to explore the northern coast and report on the natives he found. A diary of this voyage was kept by a friar, Juan Crespi, a friend of Junipero Serra.

The native Indians proved interesting to the Europeans. Crespi wrote much about them – their actions, their dress, and their wares. While anchored in a harbor on the western shore of a large island, now called Vancouver, singing and shouting Indians paddled out in long, bark canoes to trade with the strangers. They brought well-tanned beaver skins, finely stitched fur blankets, and neatly woven mats to trade for knives, cloth, and beads. The natives prized highly any scraps of iron. A souvenir-minded sailor traded his knife for an Indian hat with a conical crown and a small brim fashioned of rushes with leather thongs to tie it on under his chin. Along the route, while charting the coast, Perez landed and erected wooden crosses at many places, claiming the country for the King of Spain. The next year Heceta left San Blas on the western coast of Mexico to explore the inlets of the northwest coast. The voyage was a disappointment. Indians murdered his landing parties and scurvy spread among his men.

In July of 1778 Spain's great rival appeared in the person of Captain Cook. Great Britain entered the race for territory and the fur trade of the northwest country. Captain James Cook was a successful explorer because he took care of the health of his men. He forced his sailors to take a daily ration of vinegar, molasses, sauerkraut juice, lime juice, or sassafras tea to prevent scurvy.

He charted the coast line of Alaska and sailed through Bering Strait into the Arctic Ocean until ice blocked his way. He was searching for the mythical Northwest Passage. His splendid job of exploration gave Great Britain a claim to northwestern America at a time when the British colonies on the Atlantic coast were fighting for independence. Little did Russia, Spain, and Great Britain – world powers in that day – realize that the new nation rising on the opposite shore of North America would some day own most of the territory which they were exploring.

In 1787, the year of the Constitutional Convention, six merchants in Boston loaded two vessels with merchandise to trade for furs in the Northwest. The *Columbia* was commanded by Captain John Kendrick, former master of a privateer which had raided British commerce during the Revolutionary War. Captain Robert Gray, another Revolutionary sailor, took the helm of the smaller ship, the *Washington*. The Bostonians hoped to establish a trade like that of the Hudson's Bay Company of Great Britain. On October 1, 1787 the two ships sailed out of Boston harbor. They arrived nearly a year later in Nootka Sound where Perez had anchored on the western shore of the island, later named for Vancouver.

For nearly nine months the Americans bartered for furs and hunted for new lands with more furs. Upon Gray's return to Nootka Sound after sailing through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the two captains exchanged boats. Gray took command of the *Columbia* with a cargo of precious skins and sailed for China. In Canton he traded the furs for a cargo of tea. Returning home by way of the Cape of Good Hope, Gray arrived in Boston on the tenth of August in 1790. He had completed the first voyage



Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE

Alexander Mackenzie was a fur trader at Fort Chipewyan, located at the head of Lake Athabasca in western Canada. In 1789, he led a party in canoes down a large river, looking for a new waterway to the Pacific Ocean. A few notes from Mackenzie's journals tells a story of hardship and adventure on this river named for him:

Clouds of mosquitoes – saw a black fox – large flocks of geese; kill many of them – the hunters kill reindeer – view the sunset at midnight – obliged to tow the canoe – come to rapids – land among the Esquimaux Indians.

The river flowed into the Arctic Ocean. Mackenzie returned to Fort Chipewyan after traveling 1600 miles in 102 days. Disappointed that he had not found the Pacific Ocean, he made another hazardous journey, more for business than for exploration. In 1792-93, he led a party across the Rocky Mountains to the western sea where Russian hunters were gathering furs. Whenever possible, the British traveled by canoe, stopping at Indian villages on the way to make friends for future trade. On this journey, Mackenzie's journal deals with business:

Abundance of animals – see some bears – saw beaver – kill a red deer – make preparations to build a canoe – meet with some of the natives – saw two otters in the river – met trading party of Indians carrying skins of otter, marten, bear, lynx, and dressed moose skins.

around the globe under the flag of the new nation, the United States of America.

Although Captain Gray returned to Boston with a damaged cargo of Bohea tea, Governor Hancock gave a reception in his honor. Arm in arm, Gray and a chief from Hawaii, marched up State Street to attend the party. This first native Hawaiian to visit the United States wore a priceless robe of rare feathers to Governor Hancock's reception.

Although this initial voyage was not a financial success, some of the merchant adventurers decided to risk another trip. Captain Gray bought some shares in the venture from two merchants who were too discouraged to invest money in a second trial. After only seven weeks in port, Gray sailed again from Boston in the *Columbia* on another trading expedition. In less than nine months he was back again in the sheltered harbor of Vancouver. Canoes swarmed around the ship. Native chiefs, clothed in rich otter skins, were welcomed when they came on board. The Bostonians were looking for such furs. Captain Gray led the first party ashore to gather greens for members of his crew who were ill with scurvy. When all had recovered, Gray left this place to find new and unworked territory where more furs could be had for less goods. However, the second voyage of Captain Gray is famous for discovery and not for trade.

Late in April while cruising southward for summer trading with Indians who brought their winter catch to the coast to meet the ships, two great explorers passed at sea. They did not meet. They were Captain Robert Gray of the *Columbia* and Captain George Vancouver of the *Discovery*. One was American and the other was British. Vancouver describes the event in his journal:

At four o'clock (A.M.), a sail was discovered to the westward standing in shore. This was a very great novelty, not having seen any vessel but our consort (the *Chatham*, supply ship), during the last eight months. She soon hoisted American colors and fired a gun to leeward. At six we spoke her. She proved to be the ship *Columbia*, commanded by Robert Gray, belonging to Boston, whence she had been absent nineteen months. Having little doubt of his being the same person who had formerly commanded the sloop *Washington*, I desired he would bring to, and sent Mr. Puget and Mr. Mensies on board to acquire such information as might be serviceable in our future operations.

During the conversation Lieutenants Puget and Mensies told Captain Gray of finding fresh water flowing into the sea about the latitude of 46° 10'. Gray told them that he had waited nine days on the way up the coast to enter that river, only to be balked in every attempt by the current and the breakers. Gray courteously followed the *Discovery* and the *Chatham* to be certain that Vancouver found the Strait of Juan de Fuca which he was seeking. Then he turned southward again in search of furs he hoped to find plentiful along the unexplored river. The bar outside had frightened mariners and kept the mighty stream a secret.

On May 11, 1792 during the spring flood, Gray discovered a channel between the breakers. With a favorable wind and high tide he crossed the choppy bar and sailed into the great river of the Northwest which he named Columbia after his ship. Boit, in his log of the famous voyage, wrote:

We directed our course up this noble river in search of a village. The beach was lined with natives, who ran along shore following the ship. Soon after, about 20 canoes came off, and brought a good lot of furs and salmon which last they sold two for a board nail. The furs we likewise bought cheap, for copper and cloth. — At

length we arrived opposite to a large village, situated on the north side of the river, — the river at this place was about 4 miles over. We purchased four otter skins for a sheet of copper; beaver skins, two spikes each; and other land furs, 1 spike each.

Captain Gray, as on the first voyage, crossed the Pacific Ocean and sold his furs in Canton, China. His cargo brought the sum of \$90,000. Gray's second voyage was a financial success. This encouraged more and more Americans to invest their money in the maritime fur business. Thus developed the triangle of trade in the Pacific. Trinkets were brought from eastern ports of the United States to exchange for furs on the northwestern coast. The furs were taken to China to be bartered for tea. The tea was sold in eastern United States ports at a profit.

However, it was the entrance to the Columbia River, and not the trading expeditions, that brought fame to Captain Gray. Upon his discovery of the Columbia River the United States based its claim to the Oregon country drained by that stream and its tributaries. In less than twenty-five years this claim was strengthened by the overland journey of Lewis and Clark, who traveled down the Columbia River in canoes to reach the Pacific Ocean.

After Captain Gray had courteously escorted Vancouver to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the British captain began to explore the region inside. Thinking he was the first European to chart the shores of the numerous gulfs, bays, straits, shoals, and islands of the jagged coast line, he named the places seen and visited. On the last day in April the third lieutenant called Vancouver's attention to a snow-covered mountain in the distance. The captain promptly named it for the young officer, Mt. Baker. For a base of operations

Vancouver selected a sheltered harbor which he called Port Discovery after his ship. The spot of land guarding the entrance was named Protection Island.

Vancouver took particular pleasure in naming places for his friends. Today, maps list more names conferred by Vancouver than by any other explorer in this region. Port Townsend was named for the marquis of that name; Hood Canal, for Lord Hood; Mt. Rainier for Rear Admiral Peter Rainier; Howe's Sound for Admiral Earl Howe; Port Gardner for Admiral Sir Alan Gardner and Port Susan for his wife. After spending two weeks examining a waterway, Vancouver named it Admiralty Inlet in honor of the Board of Admiralty which directed operations of the British Navy. Vancouver was generous in giving recognition to his officers who assisted him in carrying out a thorough, scientific job of exploration. Port Orchard was named for the clerk of the *Discovery*; Whidbey's Island after Joseph Whidbey of the *Chatham* who found the island and went around it; and Puget Sound for Lieutenant Peter Puget, whose careful work of charting and exploring was deeply appreciated by Vancouver.

Under a date line of June 4, 1792, Captain Vancouver wrote in his journal:

On Monday, all hands were served as good a dinner as we were able to provide them, — it being the anniversary of His Majesty's birth; on which auspicious day, I had long since designed to take formal possession of all the countries we had lately been employed in exploring, in the name of, and for His Majesty, his heirs and successors.

Accompanied by several officers, Vancouver went ashore to take formal possession of the country while gunners on board the ships fired the royal salute. About three weeks later, while rowing to

land to cook breakfast, Vancouver spotted two small vessels at anchor nearby. The commanders, Galiano and Valdez, belonged to the Spanish Navy. They were engaged in exploration to continue charting the inland waterways which had been partly surveyed by Spanish explorers the year before.

The Spanish and British officers, strangers in strange lands, entertained one another on their ships, examined one another's charts and traded information. They went off together to continue exploring. The Spanish vessels were too slow to keep up with the *Discovery* and the *Chatham*. Vancouver had to go ahead because he was due at Nootka to take possession of territory surrendered by Spain through a treaty made with the British Government.

CLAIMS ARE SETTLED WITHOUT WAR

BY RIGHT OF DISCOVERY and exploration four nations – Russia, Spain, Great Britain, and the United States –

held valid claims to the northwestern coast of the continent of North America. Yet, a situation which might easily have led to war was settled peaceably over a period of years.

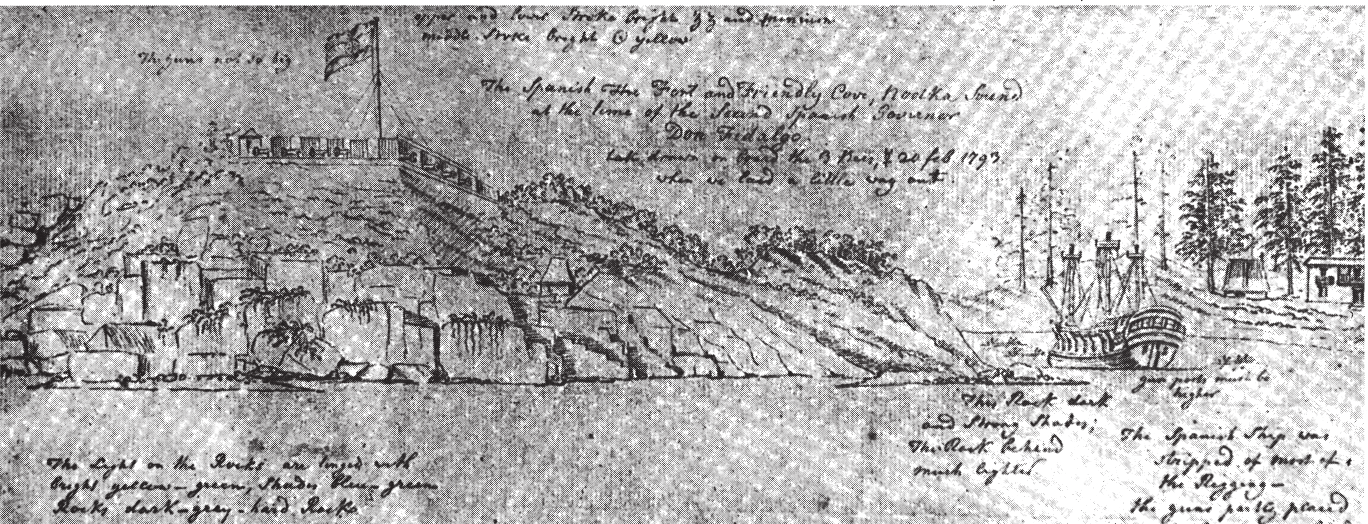
Spain claimed possession of Nootka on the western coast of the present Vancouver Island because Perez had discovered it in 1774. Great Britain did not accept Spain's claim to lands washed by the Pacific Ocean. Sir Francis Drake and Captain Cook had also skirted the Pacific shores. A diplomatic difficulty arose when an Englishman sailing under the Portuguese flag attempted to plant a Chinese colony at Nootka. The Spanish officer in the port seized some British trading vessels. The controversy was settled when Spain signed a treaty in October, 1790, agreeing to restore the British buildings at Nootka and pay damages. Spain sent Quadra, marine commissioner, to Nootka and Great Britain sent Captain George Vancouver to arrange the transfer of property and territory.

The two men met and became good friends. Quadra explained that much of the difficulty was due to a misunderstanding

SPANISH FORT, NOOTKA SOUND, 1793

Sketch of the Spanish fort with guns mounted on a hilltop to guard landings on Nootka Sound, Vancouver Island. This was drawn at the time the British arrived, according to treaty, to take possession of the fort.

Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia



but that he had repaired the houses, and was ready to turn over the property, including cattle, hogs, and chickens, as well as the gardens which the Spaniards had planted. Quadra renamed the island Quadra-Vancouver to commemorate the historic event. Vancouver did not complete the negotiations and the British did not actually take possession until several years later. The Spaniards gradually retreated from the northern coast as far south as California and made no further claim to northwestern America.

Russia's claims receded with the fur trade. Russian trading posts extended farther inland and down the coast until competition cut into the profits. American traders, more than the British, broke the monopoly of the Russian American Company to whom was entrusted the extension of the Russian influence on the North American continent. Baranov, the director of the company, was an empire builder. Under his capable leadership Russian trading posts by 1812 were extended as far south as Fort Ross, about fifty miles north of San Francisco. The company was required under the charter from the Imperial Government of Russia to establish agricultural settlements around their trading posts wherever soil and climate were favorable. Fort Ross was to render a double service for hunting sea otter and supplying grains and meat for trading posts farther north. Since most of the inhabitants of Fort Ross were hunters from the Aleutians, where farming was unknown, little wheat was harvested.

In an effort to make Fort Ross a paying venture, Baranov resorted to doing business with the Spaniards. Although officials from the Presidio called regularly upon the Russian commander of the fort and asked

him to leave California, both Spaniards and Russians remained on friendly terms. It was against the law to trade with any country except Spain but the Californians openly bartered with the Russians. Ranchers and missionaries were glad to exchange grains, peas, tallow, meat, flour, and hides for bulk iron, copper kettles, cloth, wax candles, tobacco, and sugar brought into ports by Russian ships. Many a sweet-toned bell tolling in a mission belfry was cast in the Russian foundry which Baranov established in Sitka, Alaska. Russian hunters paddled their boats through the Golden Gate, past the Presidio, to catch sea otter in San Francisco Bay, and to trap beaver on a stream which still is called the Russian River. They tried boatbuilding to make Fort Ross pay but the post's revenue never equalled the cost of maintenance. It was too far away from the posts in the north and the British and Americans were gaining control of the country in between. Meanwhile, California became Mexican territory.

In 1838 the Russian American Company had asked permission of the Imperial Government to abandon the post in California. It was 1842 before the hundred inhabitants – men, women, and children – departed in a rickety old boat for Sitka. Captain John Sutter, the Swiss immigrant who had received a land grant of thousands of acres in the Sacramento River Valley, purchased their cattle and other livestock, guns and fort equipment, and other movable property. He needed guns for Fort Sutter, since he had received his huge grant from the Mexican governor of California by promising to protect that part of the province. The Russians gradually abandoned their trading posts in territory worked by Americans and British where competition was too keen for them. They



Courtesy of the Bancroft Library

**ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH,
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
IN SITKA, ALASKA**

This church with an Oriental dome and spire consoled isolated Russians living in a bleak land far from home.

retreated into the northern Pacific to hunt for fur-bearing animals on the numerous islands and the mainland of Alaska. The Indians soon became shrewd at bargaining and sold their furs to the highest bidder.

Following Gray's second voyage Americans entered the maritime fur trade of the Northwest in ever increasing numbers. The ships of the Boston traders were floating department stores. They had many articles to tempt an Indian hunter to part with a precious sea otter skin. The cargo of a Yankee trading vessel consisted of plenty in weapons – muskets, powder, pistols, flints, shot belts, leather powder flasks, shot and ball articles that always caught the eye of a native hunter. Bars of iron, iron pots, brass rings, sheets of copper, knives, scissors, hatchets, brass and copper tea kettles, pie pans, buckets and spoons, and anything made of metals sold well. Cloth, blankets, trunks, combs, looking glasses, pewter

jugs, and buttons attracted the Indian women.

The retreat of the Spaniards south into California and of the Russians north into Alaska, left Great Britain and the United States competing for the territory lying between. In 1818 the United States and Great Britain agreed that citizens of both countries could occupy any of this country without being asked to leave by the governments of either nation. In 1824 and 1825 the United States and Great Britain made treaties with Russia, agreeing that 54°40' would be the southern boundary of Russian territory, and that British and Americans would not advance beyond that line. Thus 54°40' became the northern boundary of the disputed Oregon country. By the Florida treaty with Spain in 1819 the northern boundary of Spanish territory had been defined as the forty-second parallel, which became the southern boundary of Oregon.

Although "Fifty-four Forty or Fight" was a slogan of the election in 1844, when James K. Polk was elected President on the Democratic ticket, the United States did not gain fifty-four forty, nor did the nation fight for it. By this time so many citizens of the United States had moved into the southern part of the disputed Oregon country, that the region was practically occupied by them. The British held the trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. Again territory was won by settlers who tilled the soil and lost by traders who trapped for furs. In June, 1846 the Oregon controversy was settled by dividing the country on the forty-ninth parallel "to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island; and thence southerly through the middle of said channel, and of

Fuca's Straits, to the Pacific Ocean." A later dispute over which country should claim San Juan Island was settled peaceably by arbitration. San Juan now belongs to the state of Washington. Great Britain's share of Oregon became British Columbia. The portion allotted to the United States was divided into Washington and Oregon.

"SEWARD'S ICE BOX"

AFTER THE Monroe Doctrine had been announced in December, 1823, the feeling grew among citizens of the Western Hemisphere that it would be an advantage if no part of the Americas were possessions of European nations. Although the Monroe Doctrine was not officially mentioned in negotiating the purchase of Alaska, it probably influenced the deal. During the terms of President Van Buren and President Polk there was some talk among Congressmen about buying Alaska. Not until the War Between the States, when the Confederate vessel, the *Shenandoah*, was raiding Union commerce in the North Pacific, did the need arise for naval posts in that region. William H. Seward, Secretary of State in Lincoln's Cabinet, seriously considered the purchase of Russian territory. Soon after the end of the war the opportunity came.

Russia had reasons for wanting to sell the country. That nation's navy was not large enough to defend the long and jagged Pacific coast. Since Alaska was a hunting ground, not actually a colony, and the valuable sea otter was being pursued to extinction by traders of three nations, the distant country ceased to be worth defending. The British and especially the Americans could afford to pay the native



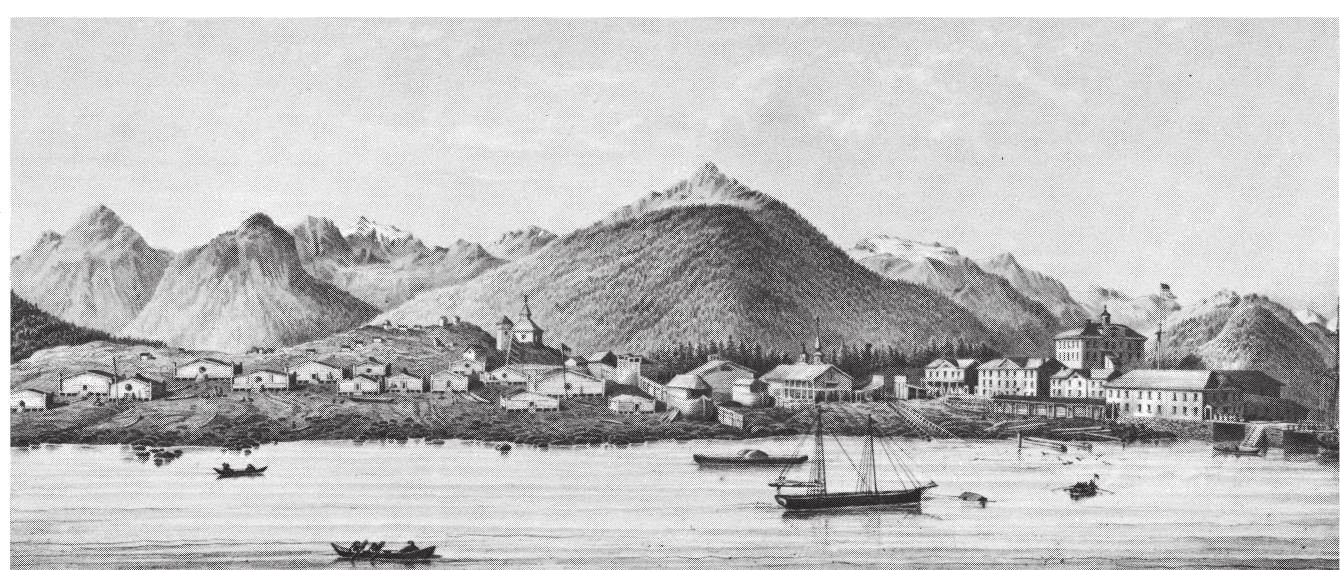
Courtesy of the Bancroft Library

DOG SLED IN ALASKA

Travel by dog sled was common in "Seward's Ice Box" before the airplane took over transportation.

hunters higher prices for skins because they could sell them where they brought the most money. The Russian American Company, favored with a government monopoly, had to sell furs at home. It could not meet this competition. Russia permitted the fur trader to exploit the new country and leave it. It neglected the settler who would have stayed and defended it.

A Russian ambassador arrived in Washington in February, 1867 and hinted that Alaska might be bought. Seward immediately discussed the matter with President Johnson. Since the purchase would need the approval of the Senate, the Secretary of State quietly consulted a number of Senators who agreed to support the measure. Seward was so anxious to get the agreement signed that he asked the Russian agent to urge his government for approval of the price, \$7,200,000. The two men were together on the evening of March 29th when the message of acceptance arrived. They



Courtesy of the Bancroft Library

SITKA, ALASKA SOON AFTER TRANSFER TO THE UNITED STATES

Sitka, founded by Alexander Baranov in 1804, was headquarters for the Russian-American Fur Company. About 600 half-breeds and civilized natives from the Aleutian Islands lived in huts on the slope rising from the waterfront. For these hunters and fishermen, the fur company built a small church on a hill at the end of the palisade separating them from 300 Russians commanding the post. The larger buildings on the other side of the high fence provided living quarters for company officials, their offices, and the warehouses where furs were stored.

worked on the treaty that night, completing it by four o'clock in the morning. On the ninth of April the Senate ratified the treaty by a vote of 37 to 2.

On October 18, 1867 the transfer of the territory was made at Sitka, the Russian headquarters. At three o'clock in the afternoon one hundred Russian soldiers in full dress uniform formed in front of the Governor's castle. Two hundred United States soldiers, also in full dress uniform, paraded opposite the Russians. Salutes were fired from Russian batteries on shore and from the United States ship in the harbor. The flags were changed. Then the Russian captain stepped up to the American general and said:

General Rousseau, by authority from His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, I transfer to the United States the Territory of Alaska.

Some of the Russian inhabitants returned to their native land. Some remained to become citizens of the United States. The territory was ceded before it was paid for, since only the House of Representatives can appropriate money. Not until July 14, 1868 did the appropriations bill pass in the House and Russia receive payment. Many citizens opposed the purchase. They ridiculed the deal by calling it "Seward's Folly" and spoke of Alaska as "Seward's Ice Box." They did not foresee that the time would come when Alaska would be the strategic outpost of defense for the entire continent of North America. The purchase price of \$7,200,000 is a small figure when compared with the sum realized from the yearly output of minerals, oil, lumber, fish, and furs in this area one-fifth the size of the United States.

In the end the United States gained most of the territory in the northwestern part of North America through negotiation. The nation held it by populating it. Under the form of government existing in the United States, all citizens had the privilege of going into any territory belonging to the country; of engaging in any business or following any profession that they wanted; and of selling their products and services wherever they brought the highest price. Under freedom of enterprise Americans by the thousands crossed the

PACKERS ON CHILKOOT PASS NEAR SKAGWAY, ALASKA, 1898

In July of 1897, sixty-eight miners returned from the Klondike in northwestern Canada to Seattle with over a million dollars in raw gold. They started a gold rush. Fortune hunters crowded ships from Seattle bound for Skagway, the northernmost port on the Inland Passage to Alaska. During the spring of 1898, thousands of goldseekers and packers, their backs loaded with supplies, toiled up Chilkoot Pass. At the top, they crossed into Canada for the long trek of 570 miles to Dawson in Yukon, entrance to the Klondike Gold Region.

Courtesy of the Bancroft Library



plains and rounded the Horn to develop the vast resources in the Northwest.

LOGGERS FELL THE TREES

IN THE SPRING OF 1792 when Captain Vancouver had sighted the mainland of North America through a misty rain, he wrote in his journal, dated April 18:

The shore appeared straight and unbroken, of a moderate height, with mountainous land behind, covered with stately forest trees.

On nearly every page of his journal kept while exploring the Northwest, there is some mention of the wonderful trees. The British were a seafaring people with an eye on timber for building their ships.

The lumbering industry of the Northwest began with a tiny sawmill erected by the British Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River in 1827. The first missionaries who journeyed to Oregon with trappers in the 1830's expressed surprise at finding several sawmills along the great river.

A small party of immigrants, who had come overland in a covered wagon to Portland, decided to seek new homes farther north in the timbered wilderness. On the schooner *Exact* they arrived at a point which they first named New York, visioning a great city there, like the metropolis of the Atlantic seaboard. Since this city was only a dream, the place was called Alki, which, in the Indian language, meant bye and bye. In November, 1851 twelve adults and twelve children landed on the beach in a cold drizzling rain. These settlers had barely finished crude log huts for shelter when the brig *Leonesa* arrived from San Francisco, seeking a cargo of pile



Washington State Historical Society

EARLY LOGGING IN MASON COUNTY OF WASHINGTON

Teams of oxen drag huge trunks of trees over log roads to the lumber mills. Cuttings lying on the hillside show the wasteful methods of early logging in the great forests of the Northwest.

timber for building docks in the harbor of the fast-growing port of the gold rush. The pioneers felled trees near the water's edge to fill the order. They found it difficult to load 35,000 board feet of logs in the shallow water of Alki Point. Several families moved to the east side of the bay. There the hills sloped down to a deep-water shore line, making a natural harbor on their doorsteps. They named their settlement Seattle after the friendly Indian chief of the Duwamish tribe, who, as a boy of six, had gazed in wonder at the

Discovery anchored in Puget Sound.

The rapid growth of the lumber business may be judged by advertisements appearing in *The Columbian*, the first newspaper in the state of Washington. Its first edition was published in September of 1852 in Olympia. Seven weeks later the following advertisement appeared:

TO SHIP OWNERS AND MASTERS OF VESSELS: The undersigned is just completing an excellent new DRY DOCK three miles below Olympia on the west side of the Harbor, which will soon be ready for the accommodation of



**SEATTLE, CHIEF OF THE
DUWAMISH AND OTHER TRIBES
LIVING ALONG PUGET SOUND**

Dr. Henry A. Smith, early settler of Seattle which was named for the great chief, wrote about him:

Old Chief Seattle was the largest Indian I ever saw, and by far the noblest looking. He stood nearly six feet in his moccasins, was broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and finely proportioned. His eyes were large, intelligent, expressive, and friendly, when in repose, and faithfully mirrored the varying moods of the great soul that looked through them. He was usually solemn, silent and dignified

ship owners and masters of vessels for the repair of their vessels. — Cargoes for spars for the China or English markets will at all times be furnished at the docks.

In 1853, the first shipment from Puget Sound to a foreign country was a cargo of ship spars to China. From such small

beginnings grew the lumber industry of the Pacific Northwest. Stands of Douglas fir, 200 to 500 years old, were common on the rainy side of the mountains in Washington and Oregon. In the fog belt farther south in California grew redwood trees 1000 to 2000 years of age. The fur hunters trapped animals in these forests but did not cut down the trees except for cabins and fuel. After settlers arrived in large numbers companies were formed to purchase thousands of acres of mature trees. Logging began on a wholesale plan. At one time nearly half of the nation's lumber supply, one-fifth of its wood pulp, and half of its plywood came from the Northwest.

Finally, the reckless cutting alarmed the public and laws were passed to regulate it to prevent the timber from being exhausted in a generation or two. Mountains, once covered with straight pine, tapering Douglas fir, and bluish-green spruce were barren except for stumps and snags. A bald range, shorn of its glory, makes a silent and moving appeal. Now, the lumbermen have rules for rotated forest cutting and tree planting to insure a steady supply of timber, and state and federal laws regulate the industry.

JOB CARR'S CABIN

Job Carr built his log house in a forest where the land was cleared later for the city of Tacoma.



FISH THRIVE IN NORTHWEST WATERS

SALMON LIVE ALONG the northwest coast where the geography of the region suits their way of life. The adult fish live in salt water but salmon spawn in fresh water. Their eggs are laid in little lakes and sluggish streams miles inland from the ocean. The fish need larger rivers to ascend to these spawning grounds in fresh water.

Salmon was big business before the white man came into the Northwest. Sometimes several thousand Indians

gathered at The Dalles and in the long narrows of the big bend in the Columbia River when salmon were running. Men speared the leaping fish. The women and children dried and salted them for the winter food supply. With plenty of fish to feed the crowds, the Indians carried on trading at the same time. The Plains tribes brought buffalo hides and beaver skins to trade for shells and dried salmon. However, the natives gathered along the rivers during the salmon runs for fun as much as for fishing. They sang, danced, and made merry.

The diaries of adventurers and mission-

FORT LANGLEY ON THE FRASER RIVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

On June 28, 1827, James McMillan of the Hudson's Bay Company left Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River with two boats and 24 men to build a fur-trading post on the Fraser River. A month later, he chose the site on the south bank of the Fraser River below the mouth of the Salmon River, and named it Fort Langley after a manager and stockholder of the company.

Fort Langley was built to regain the coastal fur trade for the British company whose business was suffering from the competition of the "Boston Peddlers." After Captain Robert Gray returned from voyages to the Northwest and reported a wealth of furs, merchants of Boston loaded ships with cloth, hardware, trinkets, guns and ammunition to trade with the Indians for furs. These Yankees cut into the profits of the British and Russian traders.

Archibald McDonald, who succeeded McMillan, turned to fishing and farming to increase business. In a letter written in 1831, he wrote that "the loss in skins was more than made up by 220 barrels of salmon." Barrels for shipping salmon were made at the post. He planted potatoes, grains and vegetables, and raised pigs, cattle and horses. The great salmon industry of the Northwest began at Fort Langley, a fur-trading post.

Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia



aries who crossed the plains to Oregon tell in glowing terms of the abundance of salmon and of how they enjoyed the fresh fish after living for weeks on dried buffalo meat. One scientist told of seeing salmon so numerous in headwaters of streams that the Indians waded into the pools and killed the fish with cedar paddle boards.

The early settlers also salted and dried salmon as the Indians did. They depended on it for winter food. Before the arrival of the pioneers who occupied the land, hunters and trappers carried dried salmon in their packs wherever they went. The fishing industry was established about 1800 by the Northwest Fur Company, which later merged with the Hudson's Bay Company. Salmon was salted and cured to supply the company men who were tracking through the wilderness. By 1835 the Hudson's Bay Company was shipping about 4000 barrels of salted salmon per year to the Hawaiian Islands. In 1836 over 67,000 salmon were sent to the company's trading posts along the upper Fraser River. In the year that the first settlers came to Elliott Bay, Chief Seattle, for whom their village was named, brought Dr. Maynard from Olympia to start a fishing business and give employment to members of his tribe. Barrels of salmon were packed in brine and shipped to San Francisco. Although the fish spoiled enroute, the venture established the fishing industry as the second commercial enterprise on Elliott Bay.

The Fraser River with its many tributaries and its chain of lakes is the greatest sockeye river in the world; and sockeye salmon know it. So do fishermen who caught over 195,000,000 of this species in the Fraser River between 1894 and 1917. It was in 1863, during the War



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SALMON FISHING ON THE FRASER RIVER

Simon Fraser, a clerk in the Northwest Company, was sent from eastern Canada to western Canada to establish new fur-trading posts among the Indian tribes west of the Rocky Mountains.

On May 22, 1808, an exploring party led by Simon Fraser left Fort George to paddle canoes down a large river not yet traveled by white men. Was this great river the Columbia? It was a hazardous voyage over treacherous rapids, through narrow rock-walled canyons, and with encounters with unfriendly Indians. In the swift current of the stream, canoes sometimes gathered speed of thirty miles per hour. The party sighted the Georgia Strait on the second day of July, proving that the river was not the Columbia. It was named for Simon Fraser. The river became famous for fish, not furs. It was the favorite waterway of salmon.

Between the States, that the first salmon was canned on this river in northern Washington. Three years later the first cannery was built on the Columbia River. It was the canning process, more profitable than salting or drying, that made fishing a leading industry in the Northwest.

Salmon are caught going up the rivers because the adults never go back down to the sea again. They lay eggs and die. When hatched the young fry remain in these quiet waters until they can swim freely.

They then work their way to the ocean. The young of sockeye and king, or chinook salmon, may stay in fresh water until their second spring. Those starting to the ocean as yearlings have a better chance to survive; but their real growth takes place in salt water. The king salmon, largest of the five common species, likes to spawn in deeper and swifter waters. The average weight of king salmon is twenty-two pounds but fish have been caught weighing sixty pounds and more. Being strong and heavy the chinooks like the wide Columbia River with its large tributaries and sometimes lay their eggs in the main channels of streams. This large species, a deep pink color, brings the highest price in markets. As a result many have been trapped for the fisheries on their upstream runs and too few have reached the spawning grounds. Their numbers are declining.

The rivalry between fishermen from Canada and the United States damaged the sockeye industry in the Fraser River country. In 1937 the two nations made a treaty to work together in guarding the sockeye from over-fishing and to build ladders to aid the salmon in getting over dams and other unnatural barriers in streams. Some years before, another treaty rescued halibut from over-fishing and restored the normal supply to fishermen of both nations. The future of this business, like lumbering, depends upon conservation.

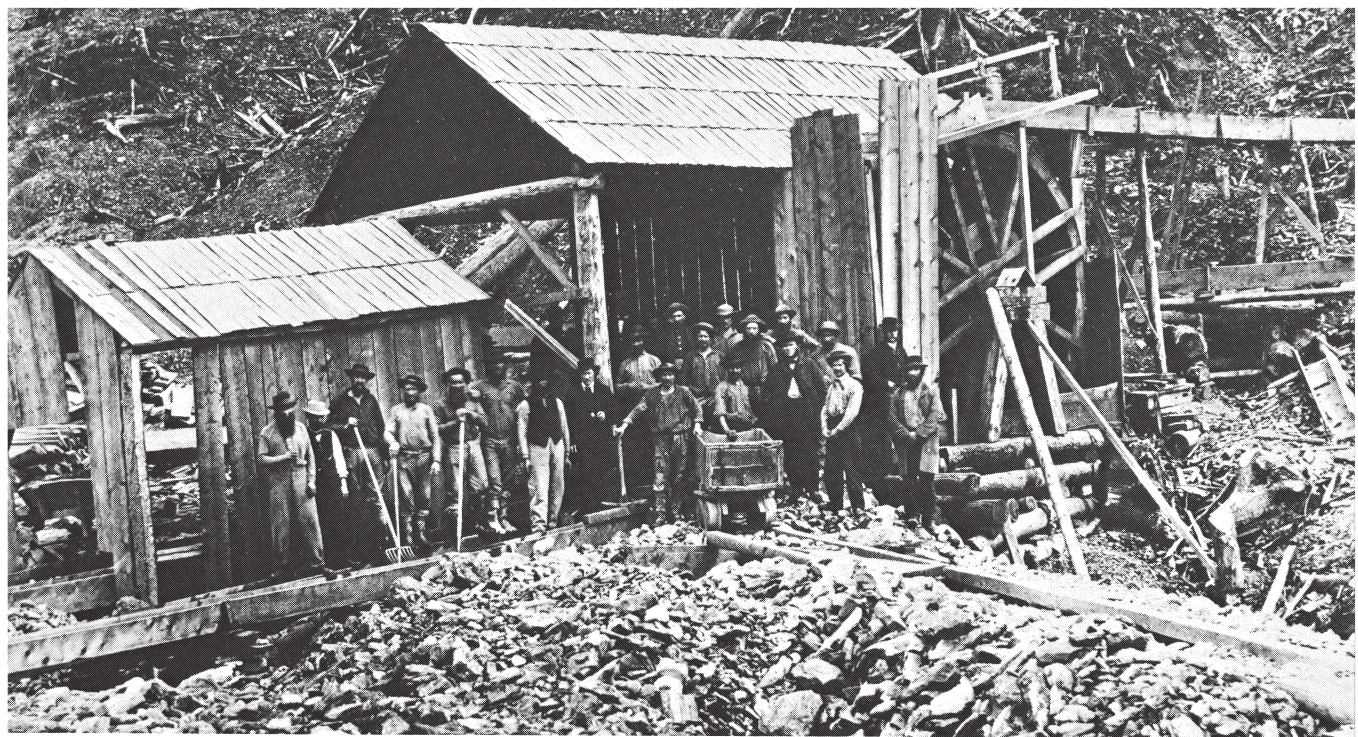
In some places logging has destroyed the watershed and the streams where salmon spawned have dried up. However, the greatest hazard to the fish are the dams blocking the rivers to store water for irrigation and to generate electric power. Sometimes, the struggling salmon are lifted to the top of a dam by elevators which operate like canal locks. Salmon have a

homing instinct which leads them to the spawning grounds of their forefathers – to die. To get there, many are forced to accept the aid of man's invention.

FARMING IS VARIED IN THE NORTHWEST

THE CASCADE MOUNTAINS divide the states of Washington and Oregon into two kinds of climate, moist and dry. On the ocean side where rainfall is plentiful, the forests are dense, the soil is rich, and the crops are abundant. On the eastern side the rainfall is light because few clouds blowing in from the sea can cross the range without dropping their moisture. Seattle, on Puget Sound, has an average yearly rainfall of thirty-four inches; while Spokane, in the eastern part of Washington, has less than half that amount, sixteen inches. The rodeo town of Pendleton, Oregon, east of the mountains, has an average yearly rainfall of only fourteen inches; while the rose city of Portland, near the seacoast, has three times as much rain, forty-two inches in all. This variety of climate accounts for the variety of crops in the Northwest. On the rainy side of the mountains the farmers specialize in fruits, vegetables, and dairy cows. On the eastern side they depended upon wheat, forage, and beef cattle until irrigation, in some places, enlarged their production.

For irrigation and power the Northwest has its own great river, the Columbia. This stream rises in the Canadian Rockies and flows about 200 miles northwest before turning south for the 500 mile run to the United States border. The Columbia enters this country in the northeastern corner of the state of Washington.



Provincial Archives, Victoria, British Columbia

GOLD MINERS — AURORA CLAIM ON WILLIAMS CREEK — 1867

When gold was discovered among the headwaters of the Fraser River in Canada, mining was added to the leading industries of the northwestern part of North America.

Miners working the Aurora Claim on Williams Creek were averaging \$20 a day in September of 1867. Some of the ground on bedrock of this stream yielded \$2.25 to the pan.

Ninety miles west of Spokane, in Columbia Canyon, the river is spanned by the Grand Coulee Dam, containing enough concrete to pave a four-lane highway from Seattle to New York City. Behind this barrier twice the height of Niagara Falls, the river backs up to form a reservoir, named Lake Roosevelt for President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This body of water extends almost to the Canadian border, a distance of 151 miles.

The Grand Coulee Dam, costing about \$225,000,000 was constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation. As water reaches a vast area through an irrigation system with 4000 miles of canals, the settlers will begin to pay a certain amount per acre for the

water to repay the Government for the costs of construction. That will take a long time. In the meantime electric power, generated by the falling water, is being sold to private companies and for defense projects to make payments.

The Bonneville Dam, below Columbia Gorge, was the largest until the Grand Coulee was built. Both have large power-plants. However, much of the power generated at the Grand Coulee must be used to pump irrigation water up to the desert land because the million and more acres to be irrigated are at a higher altitude than the dam. The Northwest needs more electricity for its industries and more dams are being constructed in the Columbia River.

Who owns the Columbia River? What state has prior right to the water in the stream? On July 16, 1952 Congress approved the Interstate Compact Commission drawn up by representatives from Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Wyoming, and Montana to settle by agreement the use of water in interstate streams. In October of the same year, at a committee meeting in Yakima, Washington, a permanent organization was formed with headquarters in Boise, Idaho. The States of Nevada and Utah did not join the compact. At this meeting, however, these states and the Dominion of Canada were invited to send representatives to meetings of the Interstate Compact Commission.

Since the days of the first settlers, water from the Columbia River has been used for irrigation, but for land near the stream. The Wenatchee Valley on the eastern side

HOOD RIVER VALLEY IN OREGON

Hood River Valley rises gently from the Columbia River to the base of Mt. Hood, an extinct volcano, rising to the height of 11,245 feet. This land was a forest of evergreens when the first settlers came over the Oregon Trail. Today, dairying and fruit farming are leading industries.

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of the Cascade Mountains was a semi-desert. A missionary, Father De Grassi, taught the Indians to irrigate the valley with water from the Columbia River. In 1872 Philip Miller, a homesteader, planted the first apple trees in this valley. More settlers came and planted apple trees where the soil was rich, the days were sunny, and the nights were cool. The apple industry, however, waited for the railroad, the Great Northern, in 1892. The first carload of apples was shipped from Miller's ranch in the fall of 1901. Now the Wenatchee Valley, thirty-five miles long, claims to be the "Apple Capital." The orchards are watered from the Columbia River and small tributaries that flow down from the mountains.

Farther east and south are the rolling wheat lands of Washington. The soft white wheat grown in the Pacific Northwest makes a moist flour preferred for cakes and fancy pastries. As more land gets water, more orchards and more fields spread over the landscape. Many of the crops that flourish on the rainy side of the Cascades can be grown on the dry side east of the mountains with irrigation.

The stockman is still secure on the plains of eastern Oregon where no great river flows to be harnessed for irrigation. To cowboys riding the range and herders minding their sheep, the Pendleton Roundup is the big event of the year. It is ranch country east of the Cascade Mountains in Oregon. Without irrigation the farmer will not arrive to run his plow through the stockman's pasture.

MAP:

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