

Memoirs of life and adventure in the  
Hudson's Bay Company's territory 1819-1825.

By John Edward Harriott

C. 1860



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## Biography of John Edward Harriott

John Edward Harriott was born in London England in 1797 and entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1809 as a twelve-year-old apprentice. He was employed initially at York Factory, but in 1811 was transferred to the Saskatchewan District. Here he worked under John Peter Pruden on the South Branch and at Fort Carlton. Pruden was his mother's brother and these family ties became even closer when Harriott married Pruden's daughter Elizabeth. In 1814 he was described as 5'7" in height "fair, long hair, slender . . . sober, modest and obedient, rather idle and illiterate." He was a fast study, however, and in 1818 his father-in-law, John Peter Pruden described him as "very promising," well acquainted with the trade, and much beloved by the Indians. This opinion seems to have been shared by most of his superiors, even George Simpson, and he made his way up in the hierarchy of the trade fairly quickly. He was promoted to clerk in 1816, to Chief Trader in 1829, and Chief Factor in 1846.

During his career he worked mostly in the Saskatchewan District. He resided mainly at Fort Carlton until 1826, and he took part in the Bow River expedition of 1822-23. In 1826 he was posted to Fort Assiniboine, in 1828 to the Columbia District, 1832 to the Peigan Post on the Bow River, and then to Rocky Mountain House in 1834. Between 1834 and 1854 he was posted either at Rocky Mountain House or Edmonton House, and during John Rowand's absence was in charge of Edmonton House.

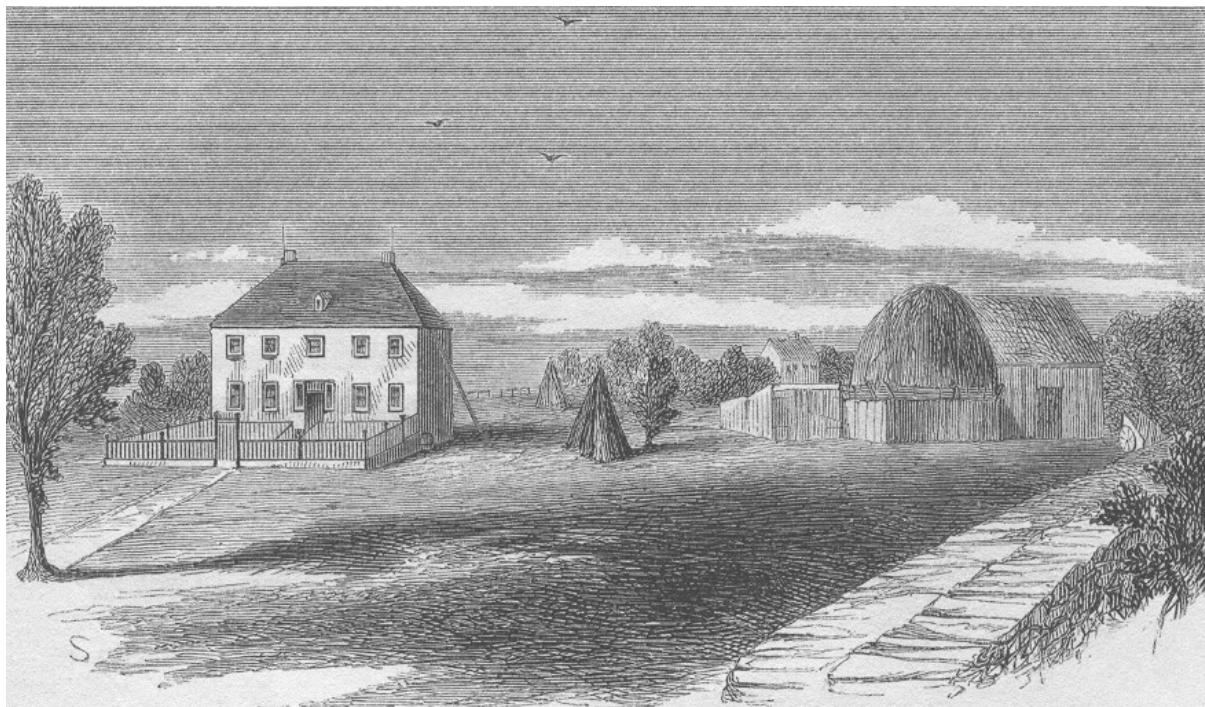
Harriott's first wife, Elizabeth Pruden, died in the 1830s and he married Anne (Nancy) Rowand, the daughter of John Rowand in 1838. She died in 1850 and he then married Frances Bunn in 1853. He retired from the fur trade in 1855 and moved to the Red River Settlement, where he reputed to have written this memoir.<sup>1</sup> He died in Montreal in 1866.

In 1860 Manton Marble visited the Red River Settlement and noted of Harriott that he was "A true gentleman of the old school—that we were within the walls of his house was sufficient reason why he should treat us like princes. . . . From numerous long and interesting

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<sup>1</sup> Given the memoir ended up in the United States, and the fact that Harriott was probably illiterate, it seems probable that the memoir was dictated to Manton Marble who took the memoir back with him to the United States in 1860.

conversations with our host, we obtained many particulars regarding the management and practical working of the Company's operations, and especially regarding the geography of the Saskatchewan district and the district lying between its waters and those of the Missouri and of the Rocky Mountains, from the Kootonais pass northward. In the various capacities of clerk, chief trader, and chief factor, Mr. Harriott had traveled over or resided in many places in this vast territory. Now establishing a trading post at the foot of the Rocky Mountains; now in charge of the Carlton House or of Fort Pitt, on the head-waters of the Saskatchewan; and, again, leading parties, with a rich freight of furs, through a dangerous Indian country; and there, or elsewhere, having such hair-breadth escapes, and such exciting adventures, undergoing such risks, and hardships, and exposure, as would make one thrill to hear, though never to be heard from his lips except by solicitation, which added the charm of unconscious modesty to what was already sufficiently brave and admirable. . . . A view of Mr. Harriott's residence is given [below], and may be taken as a type of the better class of dwellings in the Selkirk settlement. It is built of limestone, quarried from the native rock, and within and without was planned by its owner.”<sup>2</sup>



J.E. Harriott Residence in the Red River Settlement c. 1860  
Located about 1 mile south of Lower Fort Garry

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<sup>2</sup> Manton Marble, “To Red River and Beyond,” *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (February 1861), 311.

## I.

### A Winter Journey from Ft Chesterfield to the Missouri by Mr. Harriott.

This expedition was started the year after the amalgamation of the H. B. C. and the Nor West C. It was to ascertain if the Country in the neighborhood of the South Saskatchewan would support a fort, and also to find employment for a lot of the superfluous hands which after the amalgamation of the 2 Cos. they could not dismiss till their engagements were expired.

They found that the country although very rich would not support a Fort of the size which it would be necessary to have in the heart of the Indian country.

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Mr. McKenzie<sup>3</sup> chief Factor at Fort Chestd [Chesterfield] started 3 expeditions across from the fort. the first he led himself, but he was beaten back by the Gros Ventre Indians. The 2nd by a Mr. Heron a fortnight later which was also turned back. Mr. H. [Harriott] who was with both was put in charge of the 3rd third expedition with 28 servants and 2 Blackfeet guides and another officer of the H. B.C. service (Sinclair). From the outbreak of the French Revolution to the Congress of Vienna.

About the beginning of Novr 1822 Mr. H was put in Command of the expedition. McK. walked with him from the Fort to the crossing of the river and on his way he saw that the engaged Hunter had not a good gun, he spoke sharply to him and had a quarrel whereupon he turned and went back. By this time all the rest of the party were across the river and H was afraid to cross for fear that when the men saw the hunter go they might refuse to go also so H & S crossed the R higher up hoping that the men would follow them. Which they did. That night it snowed heartily and they had to lie down in the snow without anything to eat.

Got up next morg started and before they had gone 5 miles met some Gros Ventres. H and his party went with them to their camp, about 500 lodges. The same party which had stopped them before. When he got to the camp he found a war party of about 800 men about to set out on a war party. When H was asked where he was going he told them to the Cypress Mts. They said

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<sup>3</sup> This is Donald McKenzie born on 16 June 1783 near Inverness, Scotland. From 1801 to 1810 he was a clerk in the NWC, and then joined the Pacific Fur Company as a partner until 1813. In 1814 he rejoined the NWC as a partner and stayed with the company until its merger with the HBC in 1821. At that time he was brought into the HBC as a Chief Factor, and in 1822 was put in charge of the Bow River expedition. He also served as the Governor of Assiniboia from 1825-33. He retired from the HBC in 1835 and died in Mayfield, New York in 1851.

all right that is where our party is going we will go together. This did not suit H but he did not say so but told the party of Indians to go on and he would follow as soon as he had got something to eat. But he managed to delay till the afternoon and then started on their trail as if to join them. But as soon as he was out of sight of the camp and it began to get dark he broke off from their trail and again a 2nd night slept in the snow. The next day he started early and went off in a different direction. He soon came to where he saw a lot of Buffalo and Indians running them. Some of them came to him, they were Blackfeet. They gave H a horse to ride to their camp about 300 lodges and were glad to see him. He stayed there two days among the Blackfeet. and in the meantime had many messages from the War party to urge him to come on at last he sent an excuse that his men could not stand the cold of the plains and so he got rid of them. His stay with the Blkft was a singular feast. As soon as he left one tent he had to go off to another to eat there.

Left the Bkft and camped among some sandy hills which were quite close. The next day he had to cross the plain of almost 35 miles to the nearest pt of the Cypress Mts. He followed the trail of the Gros Ventres war party, thinking they were far ahead. When he got near the pt where he had been told to camp by the Indians, he saw the fires still burning which the G.Vs had left. He cautioned his men to make no noise for fear of drawing attention. That night they had very little to eat. The next day he went (there were lots of buffalo round) and shot 3 cows. While he was cutting them up he heard a war whoop close to him and looking up saw 6 of the GV party close on him. He jumped up and as soon as they saw who it was they helped him to cut up his cows and carry off the meat to his Camp. These 6 had quarreled with the war party and had turned. They stayed all night with H. During the night H had a queer adventure. They had some train dogs with them which they had bought from the Bkft. One of these began to bark in the middle of the night and looking up H saw an old scabby bull standing, warming himself at the fire. He drew his gun to him and shot him through the head.

He found from the 6 Indians that the War Party had crossed the Mt. & to avoid them he passed along the foot. He afterwards found that the war party had met a large party of Crows and had been beaten by them & had lost a good many men and had gone home and had spread a report at the Fort that he and his party were killed. He was very glad to have managed so well to avoid them as after their defeat they would have been most troublesome. The day after he shot the Bull the Indians left him to go home and Mr. H made a pair of snow shoes for himself as the snow was deep. He then had to go for several days through poplar woods. The snow melted 2 days after he made his snow shoes and the country was all water. This evg Sinclair went out to hunt for something for supper with H. They killed 3 cows. H 2 and S one. S had forgotten his knife but got H's to see if his cow was fat. He slit her tail and saw she was and then gave H his knife. He was standing on her waiting till H had done with his knife when the Cow began to move and finally got up and made off.

The next day as they were all going up a hill<sup>4</sup> and old savage bull was under a bush. He looked at them and came towards them. H had no idea he was going to do anything as a bull rarely charges without provocation, but when he came close he put down his head and came at them. All the men ran but H and 2 Bkft guides. One of the men got up a tree. H got behind a tree and the Bull came at him and chased him round & round till one of the train dogs came and barked at him. The Bull turned on him and tossed him but his train saved him but then the Bull went to the tree where the man was. It was a smooth dead pine and the man had nothing to catch by so he felt himself slipping and called to H in French for God's sake kill the Bull. H said the whole scene was the most ridiculous.

This day the cold was intense. The men were sitting round the fire very dull as they had no good meat as the bull was not an inviting morsel. They came to H as they were in the habit of doing to see if his feet were dry and took off his shoes and dried them. He took this as a hint to go and kill some of a herd of cows which were close. So he went and got 2. The men all came rushing down the hill to get the meat but the cold was so great they could not cut more than 2 cuts without sticking the knife into beast paunch to thaw the ice and H was the only man who was able to cut up more of the cows than was needed for his own supper.

It was very much on account of this hardihood and perseverance that on this trip that he afterwards gained such influence over the Bkft.

The next day they got to the head of the Cypress Mts. Here they had a most magnificent view of the range of the Rocky Mts although about 8 days off. When about to camp here one of the men shot a cow. While cutting him up a grizzly came at them. He was some way off his gun. He could not get it so went off to camp. It was too late to follow the bear that Evg. but next morg they went and found he had dragged this cow 300 yds to the side of a deep gully where he was with her. He made off however when they came. And as they did not want him they let him alone. Indeed here H had to give orders that no one should fire without directions to do so as there was so much game all around that the men were always for killing when they did not require meat.

After leaving the Cypress Mts they had a plain of two days to cross without wood. They shot buffaloe and collected the dung on the tops of the hills where there was no snow and cooked in the middle of the day and slept at night without fire.

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<sup>4</sup> There is an insertion indicated that reads "The cold was so great he had to go up to camp."

The first day of the journey across the plain to the sugar loaf Mts H was on the top of a hill looking for animals. He saw a herd of cows which he tried to approach. He had to pass a hollow to get to them and lost sight of them for some time. When he saw them again they were running off. He knew he had not started them and he began to look round and saw a war party of 80 Crows – bad Indians, unfriendly Indians. H expected to be attacked and tried to keep as warm as possible walking about not to go to sleep but had to turn in under his blanket at last the cold was so great. The Indians did not come.

The next day they were travelling along the banks of a deep ravine when they saw 3 grizzly bears come out of a hole on the opposite bank. They rushed down the bank and then up towards H's party. He thought they were going to charge him but they turned off and made away across the plains. H fired a long shot and wounded one. I may say here that two days after, he came upon him dead the bears having made for the same point of timber as he was going to. After the bears were gone H went to see the hold. He could stand almost upright in it. And he found it full of grass and wormwood all rubbed up in some way as to make it almost as soft as wool.

The next day they reached a branch of the Missouri with very steep banks. They had found no buffalo but here they saw a large herd across the R. H went off to try and get some but when he was near the top of the opposite bank he found he had to cross a ravine he could not cross without giving them his wind. He turned to try another way and when running down the hill which was very steep, he saw steam coming from behind a rock. He stopped as quick as he could but before he could stop he found himself face to face with a grizzly not 15 ft off. He had no help for it so he had to shoot him which he did and went round and got 2 cows afterwards. It was rather close work to be so near him on such a steep hill.

The next day early they got to the 3 sugar loaves. He climbed one of them & saw a herd of Rocky Mt Sheep. He fired and killed one of them – rolled the whole way down the side of the mt and when they took him up he had not a whole bone in his body. This same Evg he lost 2 of his men. They had to climb a smooth face of rock & ice to get to a good camping place. These two men were not able to get up but were not missed till the camp was made and they could not be found anywhere. The next day H searched everywhere for them but did not find them till late in the afternoon when he found them comfortably camped among some bushes and making no exertions to find the main party. A day or two before this he had had some trouble with his Bkft guides as they were afraid to go any further into their enemies country but by threats and persuasions he had got them to come on.

The next day they started from the Sugar loaves to reach the junction of the Bears R with the Missouri where Benton now stands. It was a very long day over 40 so they had to start before day light. H had again great difficulty in getting his guides to go on. One of them who was a war

chief had had bad dreams & he was sure that they would be attacked at this place by some enemy. However he got them to go on, but neither of them would sleep all night but got together all the wood they could and made a barricade & stood behind it all night. However they were not attacked. The next day they refused to go any further. H tried all sorts of threats, taunts and every thing to get them to come on but they would not. He then told them he would go on by himself with 2 halfbreeds who went everywhere with him and let his party take them back & he thought to shame them in this way but it was no use. He then told S to go back with them to the Sugar loaves and he would follow them if he found the could not get them to come after him. But it did not & He then went off towards the Sugar loaves after S but he did not start till late in the day. He had killed a buffalo and had plenty of meat and as it was a fine clear night he walked on as they had no wood and it was an open prairie . He near morg saw a light burning which [when] he went to it was S & his party. He passed the remainder of the night with them as they had brought some wood and had made the fires they had seen. They started early the next day & as it was very fine & dry all knew where they were going to camp, they separated into groups of 4 & 5. When suddenly it came on a heavy snow storm they could not see Mts or wood or anything. H however kept on and by chance got to the wood. Another party did the same at our place but the rest had to sleep out on the prairie. These Mts are the most stormy places H had ever seen. They could not keep anything but the heaviest logs on the fire. The guides said the reason was that there was a large hole in the top of the Mt and that one young brave had gone up to see what was in it, but the wind was so great he had to get a cord tied to his feet to keep himself from being [sucked] in. He then crawled to the mouth of the hole and saw there a new country. Herds of buffalo and Indian camps and everything like another world. This is their way of accounting for the strong wind.

Next day did not get off till late as it was some time before all the party got collected. The view of the Mt was magnificent and enough to drive a sportsman into ecstasies. All over the Mt, now quite white, you could see Moose deer, bighorn, antelope dotted everywhere and on the open plain herds of buffalo.

The party met with no particular adventure after leaving these Mts for some days (they are now on their way home) till after they had passed the place where H had such a close encounter with the bear. After leaving this river they had a 2 days plain to cross and the 2nd day they left they were caught in a snow storm on the plain and after hunting about for some time they found a little hollow where there was a drift. Into this drift they dug holes and got into them and were soon covered up and they remained here for 2 days & 2 nights without anything except 2 or 3 tongues to eat.

There was nothing of interest occurred from this place till they reached the Bow R. where H saw a herd of deer. He set off to stalk them but on getting near them he saw 2 horses which had been

lost by some party and were now quite wild. They ran up among the deer & set them off and they all went off over the plains together. H thought it useless to attempt to follow so he went back to his camp. Here he told the Indian guides what he had seen. They asked him at once to stay till 12 the next day at this camp and they would get the horses. H did not think it possible but he said he would stay so the Indians set off at once after them and the next day before noon came back with the 2 horses going quietly before them. They had made a smoke of rotten wood which they carried to windward of the horses and they then were able to do anything with them.

The next day they fell in with a party of G.V. Indians the same party they had met with on their way out.

They were delighted to see them, for they thought they had been killed by the war party of Crows which they had met. Although it was 1 a.m. there was soon a fire in every lodge and every one was trying to get them into his lodge. H was run out of tobacco and they were very sorry not have any to smoke with him but at last they found a man who had some. They got a smoke from this place. They had only 2 days to travel along the R to Fort C and all the way was along the river and among Indians who were most friendly. They were glad to get back for their tobacco was done and for some time they had been obliged to cut their musket balls in two and gnaw them round with their teeth to supply H with ammunition to kill animals for food.

## II.

### A Record of the Events at Fort Carlton in the year 1819 and Journey on foot to Edmonton

In the year 1819 before the 2 Cos joined, the Nor West fort was about 3 miles [from] the H.B. Fort Carlton.<sup>5</sup> One day as H.B. boats were coming down from Edmonton to York they saw Indians, Gros Ventres who at this time were unfriendly. They were out on a war party agst the Crees. Notice was sent off at once to the N.W. Fort that there were Indians about. The Nor West people did not bring in their horses. They had about 70 out on the plains. They were all stolen. The H B people kept their horses in the Fort. About 2 weeks after the N.W. were in want of meat so they sent out a party of 4 men in a canoe up the River to hunt. Supposing that the Indians were all gone they had not gone above 3 miles from the Fort when they were attacked and 2 were killed and the other 2 wounded. One had his arm broken with a shot and the other was stabbed.

All this time H. was hunting every day and keeping Fort Carlton in provisions and never saw any signs of Indians but he was always in another direction. About three weeks after the NW horses had been stolen H thought the Indians were off so he told Mr. Pruden, the officer in charge. They had 4 poor horses at Carlton, so they put them out on the plain before the fort. The next morg. H got up early to see if all was right, and the horses were there so H let out all the others 25 of them and he then walked about to see that all was right for some time. He then went in to dress for he had been going about with his blanket over his shoulders. He then went down to the river to fish and after he had got enough fish he was going back to the Fort and he missed the horses. He went to where they had been & there he found the hobbles all lying on the ground cut. He went back to the Fort and got his own horse which he had not put out and set off to look round for them. He found the trail of three horses coming towards the fort so he

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<sup>5</sup> This was the Fort Carlton or Carlton House constructed by the HBC in 1810 at the point where the North Saskatchewan River emerges onto the prairies. From the late eighteenth century it was a place of some importance, where a trail joined the North and South Branches of the river, and where traders heading upriver left their canoes to proceed on horseback up to their posts (hence the Canadian name, “La Montée”). In 1810 both the HBC and NWC built their posts at this site within the same palisade. One of the earliest descriptions of the two posts is that of Franchère in 1814. “We found here”, he says, “as at Fort Vermillion, two trading houses joined together, to make common cause against the Indians; one belonging to the Hudson’s Bay Company, the other to the company of the Northwest: the Hudson’s Bay house being then under the charge of a Mr. Prudent.” By 1819, the NWC has moved their post, as the memorialist here notes, to a location about 3 miles away. This move occurred in the spring of 1816, and, according to James Bird, the NWC made the move partly from an apprehension of “Slave Indians” and partly from an opinion that a settlement on the South Branch would be more beneficial. HBCA, B.27/a/6, fo. 10.

concluded that the horses had been stolen by 3 men so he followed on the trail of the stolen horses hoping to be able to surprise these Indians who had them and get them again but he did not succeed. On his way back to the Fort he shot an antelope and cut him up. Coming back he was on the bank of the river opposite the N.W. Fort and saw that something was wrong for the gates were shut and the men were all in the galleries. He looked over the bank where he was and he saw a large band of Indians in the act of crossing the R to get to the Fort. He made off & got back to Carlton and when he arrived there he found them nearly about him and that 4 men had gone off after him. He then said he would go off after them and tell them he was all right. Mr. P. told him not to, but he waited till P was out of the way and then started and brought back the after the men. However again he missed the men and they got back to [the] Fort and said they had seen the trail of a large band of Indians which they supposed was after H. P now got very anxious and got his horse which had not been turned out either and set off to look for H. They soon met and came back together.

That afternoon the Indians after doing as much harm as they could at the Nor W. Fort passed down the opposite bank and camped about 3 miles lower down for the night. The next morg they came in great force about 500 of them and stood on a hill about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile from the Fort. They then came a little nearer and commenced to sing their war song and dance the War dance. Then some of them came up under the bushes and fired at the Fort but did no harm and they did not return their fire from the Fort. The next morg H went out to see if they were all off, but he did not get to the end of the woods when he saw two fellows making off as fast as they could. He went to where they had come from & he found their saddles and some pieces of leather which they had left in their haste. This was the last of the . . .

## Forts Carlton (HBC) and La Montée (NWC) circa 1815

Above the Upper Bank is a plain level Country covered with Short grass and interspersed with small tufts of Woods of the Aspen kind Where the ground is low and small Ponds of water the grass is long and here it is that we make Hay which is about  $2 \frac{1}{2}$  miles from the Upper bank,

Third & upper Bank about 20 feet of perpendicular but it is rather sloping with a few small aspen trees here & there in the declivity

Carlton House Garden

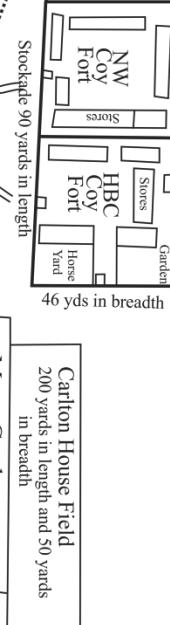
Length 124 yards Breadth 65 yards

The length of this point is about 2 miles and the Breadth of it in the Middle half a Mile from the Upper Bank to the Water Side.

### CARLTON DISTRICT AND THE GROUND ADJACENT

Plains good ground for Cultivation from one end of the Point to the other from the second Bank to the 3 Bank

NW Coy Garden  
Nearly 3 Acres  
of Cultivated  
ground



Road to the River  
To the waterside to  
the House is  
443 yards

Second Bank of about 18 feet perpendicular but turns lower towards the ends.....

From the first bank to the second has been covered with Poplar & Aspen Woods, but is now nearly expended for the use of the Houses in Fencing & Building. It is a firm light soil and every kind of garden vegetable I have no doubt would grow well into it. Only it would be bad to work on account of the Rocks and Trees.

## Journey on Foot from Carlton to Edmonton

Some days after the horses had been stolen the Fort was getting badly off for provisions so all the men were given guns and told to hunt for themselves and H was sent off to Edmonton for horses, a distance of 500 miles to be gone on foot. He got a Cree to go with him and he started one morg. and was to pick up his Indian companion at the NorW Fort. When he got there he found the fellow quite drunk and unable to walk. At last he got him started and they crawled along the Indian leading a dog which had some shoes and a piece of maple sugar tied on his back. At last H missed the fellow and went back to look for him. He found him fast asleep and the dog had cut the cords of his pack and was eating the sugar. They only made 7 miles that day. The next morg H shot 4 ducks and made breakfast. The first food they had had since the day before they left the fort. That evg they went to camp at a little cluster of pines. The Indian and he divided here to look for game. They saw 3 bears and shot one but when they came to cook him he was so bitter from having eaten worm wood they could not eat him. While at supper the dog began to bark and they had to make off into the woods and sleep away from the fire for fear of enemies.

They started the next morg to cross a plain and they shot 2 cows. There happened to be some wood near so they made a fire and had a roast at once. They then started and it was late before they got to the wood at the other side of the plain. When they got there they made a fire and had a sleep. H had put his foot that evg in a Badger hole and had renewed an old sprain. The next morg when he got up he could not walk but with a great effort he started to run and as it was a case of must he soon got warmed to his work and was able to proceed.

They had not gone many miles when the Indian called out that there were Indians which he declared to be a war party of Bkft. H told him to stay there and he would go and see what they were and that if they were Bkft he must look out for himself. H went on and soon saw that it was not either a war party nor Bkft but a family of Crees that he knew well. The old man was in great distress as seeing H obliged to walk & carry his own blanket so he insisted on his taking his only horse. This, however, H positively refused to do. He however took a dog and the old woman made a parcel of his blanket and things and tied them on their best dog and gave him to H. They started H leading the dog, but he soon found he was too heavy loaded so he took off his coat and put it on the dogs back and too the blanket himself. They soon fell in with a herd of deer. H gave the Indian his dog to lead while he went and shot one. After he had fired the herd happened to pass close to the Indian who could resist the temptation so he let go the dog and fired. The dog as soon as he was loose set off to the camp and took H's coat with him. They travelled on for several days H wearing his blanket like an Indian till they got to a small Fort of the H.B.C. at Moose lake in charge of an old Canadian. H's clothes were so torn and wearing his blanket as he did the old man. Hellou thought he was a half-breed so they sat talking Cree for

some time. And the old man gave them some tobacco and dry meat as is the way with the Indians. H allowed him to go on thinking he was a halfbreed for the joke but by and by one of the men came in who knew H and called out here is Mr. H and then the poor old mans confusion and sorrow at having made such a mistake is quite indescribable, and then he commenced to prepare his best food and to cook the best he had for him, and by the by H said that he very much preferred the dry meat to the cooking.

The next morg he was out looking round when he met Mr. Fisher, a gentleman in charge of a N.W. post. He asked him to breakfast with him which he did and bought a horse from him with his watch. He then started with this horse for Edmonton, and sent the Indian back to Carlton with other horses from the HB Fort. He then went on by himself and had to go follow a hunting trail through a part of the Country in which he had never been before to join the broad trail to Edmonton. This was the most anxious day he ever had spent in his life for in many places the trail was very indistinct. At last towards evg he saw a hill which he knew and which had a pine hammock at the foot of it. He made for this hill at once and got to the pine hammock, but not till he was wet to the skin by a close thick rain which had commenced to fall. He had his fire bag dry however and got a fire lit and took off his clothes to dry. He had got a capot and a pair of leather trousers at Moose lake, and eat his supper of dry pounded meat. He then went out see how his horse was getting on who he had tied to a tree. The horse was so frightened as seeing him coming in the dark and with nothing but a loose white shirt on that he made a rush and broke the cord and galloped off. H had to follow as well as he could the sound of his feet and after a great deal of trouble succeeded in catching him. He then went back, rolled himself in his wet blanket and lay down with his feet to the fire.

The next morg he started and had not gone far before he fell in with an old Canadian free trapper called Carron who had been in the service of the H.B.C. He was on his way to Edmonton also to get some supplies. They were both glad to keep together for company and the old man was so useless and old that he could never have reached Edmonton without the assistance he got from H. Some of the tributaries of the Saskatchewan R. are a good size and this year they were unusually large. The last they came to before arriving at Edmonton was call the Red Willow R. It was very full and there were an immense number of bull dog flies at it. H had a piece of tent leather with him for anchoring a kind of sack or raft for crossing these rivers and carrying keeping his things dry. This day they were in such a hurry to get across on account of the flies he did not make his parcel as flat as usual and after getting it tied up he put his gun on the top, made it fast and prepared to start hauling it by a piece of cord with his teeth. He had kept his shirt on till the last moment and threw it loosely on the top. The currant was very strong and he had not gone far before the raft upset and everything becoming saturated with water got so heavy that he was not hardly able to haul it after him. He was drifted about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile downstream and had almost made up his mind that to save his life he must let go his parcel when he saw

some willow branches which had been broken were on a piece of broken bank. There was his only chance so he made an effort and got hold of them. By good luck they were fast to the bank and did not give way so he tied the string by which he hauled his parcel to these to the willows and scrambled up on the bank. The parcel was so heavy he was not able to get it up himself so he went up to the crossing & got over the old man and the horses. They then together got the parcel up and got their clothes dried but H had lost his shirt and without a shirt late that night they arrived at Fort Edmonton.

Arrived at Fort E. H made his application for horses to take to Carlton, but an extraordinary instance of the way things were managed at that time in the Co. presented itself.<sup>6</sup> This Fort was rather an important one and there were 3 men each at the head of a particular department. The consequence was there was no head at all and no system so to each of them as H applied to him for the horses said he could not give them, he had no power to do so. So after a great deal of work H had nothing for it but to buy some horses which some of the servts had on his own account. He then got 6 which with his own horse was 7 horses to take back to Fort C. He then asked for a man to go with him. This request also no one would take upon to comply with so he started by himself with the 7 horses on a journey of 500 miles.

At last he started and commenced to cross a plain about 30 miles to a cypress wood. He was wet to the skin as the rain had been tremendous. He was riding through the wood trying to keep his horses together which were running in all directions tormented by the flies. He came on a string of buffalo meat this he picked up and threw across his horse thinking that he would have a good supper but still uneasy at having such clear proof that there were Indians about. However he was disappointed of his supper as he lost it again when galloping after his loose horses. After going some way further through this cypress wood he stopped and camped and had to have recourse to a bag of pemmican he had, but here again he was sold as the bag had had red ochre paint in it and he could not eat the pemmican as it was mixed with the paint. So soaked to the skin he had to turn in for the night supperless. The next morg it was sill raining but towards noon it cleared off and he got on the top of a hill and made a fire and got some of his clothes dried. He then had to set to work to get his gun dry but the wood of the stock had got so saturated with the wet that that the wood about the lock had swollen and he could not get the lock to work at all so he had to take off the lock and cut out some of the wood and at last he got it all right. He then went to a lake which he saw and shot some ducks which he cooked at once for breakfast. He lived for 4 days on the duck he shot at the different lakes he had to pass and the fourth day he saw one old bull. He made the horses fast and took one and went after him but as

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<sup>6</sup> In 1816, James Bird, the Chief Factor of the Edmonton District, and resident Chief of Fort Edmonton, was, on the death of Robert Semple, appointed acting Governor of the Northern Department of the HBC. From that point he ceased to reside at Fort Edmonton. Thus from 1816 until 1821, Fort Edmonton was governed by a succession of clerks and chief traders.

he did not know if the horse could run. he got off & stalked him. He fired and broke his shoulder but still the bull was able to get away at a good pace. He went back for his horse and went after him but the horse after going a little way gave up so he got off and chance however brought the bull within shot of him when he killed him. He then went back and got the rest of the horses and came back and made a fire and cut up the bull. He dried a good deal of the meat over the fire laying it on branches stuck in the ground and bent over the fire. All the next day his road lay across a plain which was covered with buffalo but he did not shoot any as he had as much meat as he required. His great anxiety now was to hit an Indian path which crossed the mountain here & which he had heard of. If he found this path, which was the only one across the Mt as it was thickly wooded, he would save a great distance going round the Mt. It was not easy to find it as it was not at all distinct & he had also his horses to look after. However by good luck he found it an got across the Mt and from that on to Carlton without meeting any adventure more remarkable than those that are always occurring to travellers – horses straying away at night and such like little things.

When however he got to Carlton he was at the opposite side of the river and after firing a great many shots & seeing no one come out to bring the boat to take him across he made up his mind that the Fort had been abandoned so he started to go up to the N.W. Fort. However as he was going up the bank of the R. he saw an old woman come out of the fort. He fired again and she saw him and then some of the men came out and brought the boat. He found them in the most miserable condition almost starved and the men hardly with the strength and energy enough left to go out to try & shoot some ducks. They had not heard his shots they were in such a sunken helpless condition.

The next day H got them all to leave the fort with him, and left only Pruden and one man in charge went off to some lakes where there was a quantity of berries and where there were a great many geese & swans &c. He soon shot enough to feed them for some days and then left them on an island in the lake while he went on to look for buffalo. He was very successful for the same day at the end of the lake there was a herd of buffalo. The grass was very long and rank so he got off to crawl on them. He had not yet got within shot when he came to a kind of half lake half swamp of stagnant water but still very deep. He had to cross this to get near them but it was so deep he had to undress and leave his clothes and hold his gun and powder out of the water with one hand. He was just able to get across touching bottom all the way with his toe. He now had to crawl through the rank long grass perfectly naked to reach the buffalo. He however when he got within shot succeeded in getting 5 of them. He then went back and got his clothes & two boys he had with him and the horses and got the buffalo cut up and started off to the island where he had left the families. He call to them to bring the canoe but they not thinking he could be back so soon would not go for fear of Indians, so he had to make a heap of his meat and put up some handerchiefs to keep off the wolves and go off to some timber about

two miles off and camp and make his supper in a very bad humour at the people on the island not coming for him after he had taken the trouble of coming back that day in order to give them a good supper of buffalo meat. The next day they saw who it was and came off in the canoes to him and then they all went back to Carlton together and the Fort was once more alive and again had plenty of provisions.

A few days after he went out again in the same direction to hunt and after going about 35 he could not find any but made his supper off choke cherries. He found buffalo the next day and also a lot of Indians on their way to the Fort to trade and now their difficulties were for the season over as there were lots of Indians to hunt for them.

### III.

#### Return Journey of Harriott from the South Saskatchewan to Fort Carlton in May, 1823.

In May 1823 the Fort on the South Branch of the Saskatchewan was deserted. All the party went to Carlton. The whole way down was one continual hunt. The party was large and buffalo and other game numerous. Arrived at Carlton they found Sir G.S. the Govr there. A few day after their arrival Sir G. set out for York and took all the people with him except Mr Pruden who he left in charge with H. and 7 men. A day or two after P sent out to hunt but the party came back without any game as there had been an alarm of Indians. So H said he would go and P said he would go also by water and H would go by land with horses and 2 boys which they did. There as on the 3rd day a n alarm of Indians. They thought it was a Bkft war party but on closer examination H went up and found out it was a party of Stone Indians their friends. They went up to them at once and got some dried meat for they had not yet found buffalo and then went on down river and got the next day 6 bulls. The next day they got 3 more bulls and put some of the meat in the boat and the rest on the horses and set off to Fort C. On their way there they met another large band of Indians which they were also afraid were Bkft but they were Crees which were friendly. One of his men was the same man that was stabbed by the Gros Ventres when out hunting for the N.W. Fort after the horses were stolen at Car[!]ton. He always when he saw Indians said his arm began to twitch, and said they were G.Vs.

H was once alone at night on the plains near C. and there was a little bluff of wood where he was camped for the night. The only wood for 50 m. He heard steps and got up to see what it was a grizzly which came up and stood and looked at the fire and then turned away. He did not fire at him as he was not sure of him in the dark. And being alone did not risk the shot.

Once on the Athabasca R when in the boats going from the Columbia R to York they were firing at geese and disturbed an old she bear and cubs. They climbed trees at once and H fired at and shot one and then another. The 2nd was only wounded and stuck his paw into a fork in the tree and hung there. H tried all he could to get him down. He fired at his paw but to no purpose. There was close to the tree the bear was on a pine so H got a long stick and climbed up this pine and began to poke at the bear to try and get him ----. The brute however was determined to have his revenge and after the manner of chimps gave H a watery reception which he was not prepared for at all.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Indication for an insertion that reads: "The same day H killed 6 lynx, 2 bears & 2 otters. The otters he killed at the same shot but he only saw one when he fired. He had seen him dive and as the water was quite clear watched him till he came up again to breath knowing that he would just put up his nose and go down again. When he put up his nose he fired and to the surprise of all there were 2 otters splashing in the water. The other must have come up just at the same moment and at the same place."

There is an old Indian story of a man approaching 3 bulls and he saw a grizzly approaching them at the same time. The man lay quiet. The bear attacked first one bull and killed him then another and killed him. The 3rd however kill the bear and the man killed him which made 4 lives for one shot.

IV.  
A Journey from York Factory to  
New Caledonia in 1828

Started from York about the middle of July and nothing of interest occurred till after they had passed Fort Edmonton. Left Edmonton with 40 raw hands and one old hand to guide the canoes of which there were 4. The Expedition was led by Mr John Dease a Chief Factor. And the great difficulty was in ascending the Athabasca R with the raw hands.

The day after they started from Ed one of the canoes broke up. The Crew was distributed among the others. The next day another broke up but now they could not take them in the other canoes as there were only two left. H in one & J.D. with the guide in the other. So this crew had to start on foot to make Jaspers Ho. H managed to work along with his crew of raw hands, in a kind of way, having to get out every now & then to mend the canoe. One day they struck on a rock and sunk in shallow water in the middle of the R. H got his blanket and stopped up the hole and managed to get ashore to where he could get gum & bark to mend the canoe. The next day they had to pass a part of the R called the Rapid des Morts on account of the no. of persons who had been drowned there. This was the worst part of the R. This rapid is about 1 m. in length and is very rough – and such thick brush that it was very difficult to drag the canoe up with cords and the men were not sufficiently experienced canoe men to pole up. So he had to send a man on to cut the worst branches out of the way. H remained in the canoe with one other man. He had two others to clear the cord and he had all the other hands at the end of the line hauling her up the rapid. When they got to the head of the rapid the cord broke. One of the two men who were behind however caught it and gave it a turn round a tree, but the jerk which the canoe gave at being so suddenly stopped broke off the head. H jumped at one to the stern to keep her bows out of water and managed to paddle to shore. What now to do he did not know. His canoe was awfully broken. J.D. had left them and was a long way ahead, and H had his wife with him so that it was almost impossible to attempt to make Jaspers Ho on foot. So he made up his mind to mend the Canoe. He then got all the baggage out and made the men carry it till had to they had got quite over the rapid and then he was able to get the Canoe up light once over this rapid. It was comparatively easy work and he managed at last to get to Jaspers Ho 3 days after J.D.s. party.

I was forgetting to mention that while at the rapid the crew of the 2nd canoe which had broken down came upon them. They had lost themselves and had been 3 days without food. They had made a circuit and had struck the R below where they had started from. H gave them something to eat and gave one of them his gun and they started again for Jaspers but still H managed to get there first. They waited two days at Jaspers for the other to come up but when they did not come they had to start without. They now were reduced to about 35, the officers and Mrs H were mounted and there were about 35 pack horses as they had to take provision for the way.

The first night it was a tremendous gale. They had to camp very early. The horses could not make any way against the storm. They camped in a juniper swamp on the bank of a lake. There was a good deal of snow on the ground and everything was frozen hard. The extraordinary part of this camp was that they were camped on a sort of stormy ocean on dry land – and if they laid anything down it was upset immediately – and all night they were rolling about like a ship at sea. The way it was accounted for is quite simple. They were camped in a juniper swamp. It was only the first frost so the swamp was not completely frozen and the roots of the juniper were all round. The storm was so great that the roots were all heaving and rolling about so that to anyone lying on the ground it had quite the feeling of being like a small boat at sea in a storm.

The next night they camped at Le Roches house, a small post which has since been called after a Mr Le Roche who had had a hunting station there and which will probably be one of the posts if a mail route is ever established across the continent. Mr H heard a rushing sort of noise and jumped out to see what it was. J.D.'s tent was pitched close to his & he found it was on fire. One of them had got up early to look after the horses and had made a large fire close to the tent. The wind was strong and had blown the fire towards the tent. It had taken fire and J.D. was hardly able to get out, however he made a rush and got through the burning sheeting of the tent and H was there to help him and to put out the fire which was all over him.

The next day they had to cross the river and as it was not yet frozen and too deep to ford, they had to make rafts. Owing to the carelessness of the men one of the rafts upset and by bad luck H's winter stores were on this – two kegs of sugar and 2 sacks of flour and some other things pemmican & c were all lost. For the next three days nothing occurred of importance except a horse occasionally rolling down a hill with his load – till they got to the Height of land the highest part of the Rocky Mts to be traversed by that route. In crossing this they found the snow so very deep that they had to change the horse that broke the track every three or four yards. It took about 5 hours to cross this, and then they commenced to descend at the W. side of the Rocky Mts. It was snowing at the top of the pass but as they descended the snow changed to rain and when they got to the foot of a level plain where they could camp there was no snow at all and H found a strawberry in blossom. It had taken 4 hours to come down the pass from winter snow to spring. This was the beginning of Novr.

For some time they travelled along the bank of one of the branches of the Columbia R which at this season was easily forded. They kept crossing and re-crossing it the whole day. At last they arrived at a point of land which they had to cross. This point was so blocked up with fallen trees that it was almost impossible to get along as some of the trees were more than 10 ft in diameter, and in making a circuit to avoid one you were very likely to fall in with others so that to get round one tree you might have to make a detour of more than a mile. On one occasion H in making a detour got so entangled that he lost his way and after wandering for some time he &

two others heard the voices of the rest of his party. He went in the direction of the sound & found them at some distance below him, & he was at the top of a sloping rock as smooth as glass but rather than go round the way he had come and then take the way the others had gone he determined to go down the rock so he led his horse to it and got him on the rock where he slid down it the whole way and lodged at the bottom in the brush without having sustained any injury. The two others although most unwillingly to do so were obliged to follow him as neither of them were good enough woodsmen to follow their own tracks back again. The next day they arrived at Boat Encampment without any further adventure.

Arrived at boat encampment they met with a very serious disappointment. The party which had come up to meet them with the boats and to guide them down the Columbia had despaired of their coming and had started in one boat leaving one boat for them in case they should arrive. There was another boat there also which they were able to get but they had to start down the Columbia with their raw hands and without any knowledge of the river.

While at Boat Encampment J.D. wished to kill one of the poor horses which had carried his load all the way across the Mt. H was strongly opposed to this as they had quite enough of pemmican to carry them through, but J.D. was so anxious to have fresh meat that he persisted in killing the horse. That evg at camp H would not touch the horse meat for supper but eat some pemmican. The next day J.D.'s boat was ahead and H, as he was following, saw a fine large caribou on the bank. H was most anxious to get him and made his men keep quiet hoping he would take the water but he did not do so and H was obliged to fire a long shot at him as he went up the bank. He did so and killed him dead on the spot. He looked upon it as a sort of reward for having so vigorously opposed the killing of the horse.

The same evg they got to Upper Arrow Lake and there fell in with a party of Indians. There was with these Indians a Canadian called Jollifaux who had been with the party which had gone up to meet H's party. He was a first rate voyageur and experienced guide. He had been left with these Indians to collect furs. He was now put into H's boat so that he had at last a good steersman to take him down the river. They were detained at their camp at the head of Upper Arrow Lake for the greater part of the day by headwinds but in the afternoon they got off and paddled on all night in the middle of a the most tremendous storm of rain but they arrived the next morg at the end of the Lake just as day was beginning to dawn and soaked to the skin. Here they put ashore and went up to the woods a distance of about 25 yds. In going that distance the guide which was in J.D.'s boat and which had come up the Athabasca with him fell down with fatigue and before he was able to be carried up to where they were going to camp was dead. J.D. now tried to make a fire for his boat, but not having taking proper care of his fire bag he could not make a fire and had to come a get a burning log from H's fire. This was a great thing for H for there is nothing a traveller is as much ashamed of as not being able to make his own fire. The

next day they were about to start when J.D. very much to H's disgust took Jollifaux out of his boat & put him into his own so that H had only had the good of his guide for one day and that not in a bad part of the journey. They had only one more camp between this and Colville where they arrived early the 2nd day.

At Colville H and his party left J.D. and went on down the Columbia R. to Okanagan. They arrived there without any adventure except that one of the boats got filled with water going down one of the rapids. At Okanagan H left Mr. Ross who had come from York with them to go on to Vancouver while H went across by land to New Caledonia. H tells one or two anecdotes about Ross and about the care he took of himself when travelling. He went the whole way from York to Vancouver without wetting his feet. And again he used to cover himself so with rugs and oilskins that when he got up in the morg there was a regular steam out of his bed.

H and his party travelled on horseback for 12 days from Okanagan to Thompsons R a post of H.B.C. without any adventure. After leaving Thompsons R they had a R to cross, and here they met a band of Kamloop Indians and H wanted to get some canoes from them to cross the R which was not yet frozen but so independent were these fellows that he had to do down into their underground houses to make a bargain with them. He describes these houses as a large square hole dug in the ground about 10 ft deep - and you go down into them by a ladder made out of a tree with notches cut in it - and coming out at the same hole as is made for the smoke. He also describes their canoes as made in a most unusual manner. They are made of pine bark and instead of being curved up as canoes usually are the bark is cut down from above to a point below in this shape



which makes them most difficult to steer. H had great difficulty here in getting his horses across as the current was so strong it carried many of them 3 or 4 miles down the river. The Indians were most disobliging and would not do anything to help them get the horses together and it was past midnight before they got them together.

Nothing in particular occurred till they got to Frazer R when one day one of the horses who was carrying two rolls of tobacco of 90 lbs each. The Bank was steep and the horse missed his footing and rolled all the way in to the R but the rolls of tobacco saved him and he was able to swim

down the R to a place where he landed and they recovered him all right. Nothing else of interest occurred till they got to Alexr.<sup>8</sup>

At Alexr H had to make provision for a Winter journey across Stewart's Lake. After leaving Alexr they had a journey of several days along the Frozen ice or the sides of Frazer R bordage, and then had to leave the R and go across the Country which was deep with snow to Frazer's Lake. H made a pair of snow shoes for himself and when the rest of the party saw the advantage of the snow shoes they cut up their leather trousers and got him to make a kind of small snow shoe for them called bear's paws. They also fell short of provisions & were two days without eating when they fell in with an Indian lodge. The old man was very friendly but he had not anything very substantive to feed 11 hungry men. At last he gave them a dog which the men killed and eat and he gave H himself some berry cake. The next day was the last of the year and the men were all most anxious to get to Frazer's Lake to spend New Years day at the post then but they had to camp before they got there and did not get to the post till late on New Years Day.<sup>9</sup> During the whole of journey from Alexr to Frasers Lake H had a gun but never once got a shot at anything. He says it is the worst country for game he ever saw.

From Frazers Lake to Stewarts lake which was the end of his journey was only 40 miles over a range of mts – so the next morg. H started again with his 10 Pork eaters to get across along the edge. He watched his opportunity and all jumped together and succeeded in getting on the ice but everything they had was lost and they were wet to the skin and the cold was so great that day that before they got up the bank they were frozen perfectly stiff so that they were not able to bend their knees but had to crawl up the bank. H had as usual managed to keep his fire bag dry and after some difficulty to get a fire made and get their clothes thawed & dried. But now they were in a nice fix. No arms or ammunition nothing to eat no blanket and 3 days journey in deep snow to Fort Alexr however there was nothing for it but to start and so they did – and walked on keeping when it was possible on the bordage. H always keeping first the others following at little distances from one ano. at last one of the men gave out but so desperate was their situation H could not turn back to see after him. After walking some way along the bank they came to a place where there was nothing but drift ice and where they were some way above the water & the R had risen and was about 3 ft deep over the bordage. The bank was also steep

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<sup>8</sup> This is Fort Alexandria in the New Caledonia District. It was built by the NWC in 1821 on the west side of the Fraser River near Alexandria, BC. After the merger of the HBC and NWC in 1821, it became the transfer point for goods and furs moving in and out of New Caledonia. Furs from northern posts were transferred to Fort Horses which transported the furs to Fort Kamloops (earlier known as the Thompson's River Post or Fort Thompson).

<sup>9</sup> Insertion noted at this point. It reads: "At Frazer Lake he found everything in a great state of commotion and great many Indians about. They had killed one of the company's men the day before."

above them. What was to be done? They could not go back as they were not strong enough to do so. H asked his man what they were to do. The man said it did not matter as they were lost but that he would do what ever H did. There was a very steep slope down to the waters edge and H watching his opportunity slid down this and jumped on to a large piece of ice which was floating past in this way he got past the pow [?] and was carried close to shore a few hundred yards lower down. The man did the same and in this way they escaped and arrived the same day at Fort Alexr.

After stopping a week at Fort A he started on his return trip with 2 trains of dogs one of 2 and the other of 3 dogs. He had his wife and provisions for 4 days. He had also two men with him. The day they left Alexr they met H's man who had given up. He had managed to live on roots and had got on.

They kept on now for 4 days up the R without any adventure – till they came to where H had made his cache of provisions. H was on ahead and he was most anxious to see that his cache was safe. He took a stick and rammed it down into the snow and he found his bag all right so he supposed that all was right and was in high spirits. Soon after the men came up and they began to open the Cache – but to their disgust they found that it had been opened from behind and all their provisions were taken. What was now to be done. We had either to go on or go back. If they went on they had 7 days if they went back only 4. That night they had nothing except some chocolate. H lay awake all night but at last made up his mind to go on. They next morg he was going ahead and at a distance he saw an Indian tent. He went off at once to it and asked the man to sell him some provisions. He would not as he had only enough for himself. H offered him a blanket for 50 or 60 salmon although the usual price of a blanket is about 800. At last he bought 10 salmon & a dog for a blanket & a shirt and with this they got on for a few days till they came to a large lake which they had to cross. In crossing this H saw a large band of Indians he went off at once to meet them and found they were women returning from hunting rabbits and with an immense no. He easily managed to get as many as he wanted from them and with this provision he reached Frazer Lake.

#### An Instance of Indian Gratitude once at Rocky Mountain House.

A poor miserable Bkft boy came to H and asked him for some powder and ball – although not customary to do so H was so struck with the boys manner that he gave him some – 10 rounds. About 3 years after there was a band of Bkft come to trade. Before going out to meet them H went into the horse yard and saw there a very fine young horse which did not belong to the Co. He asked whose it was and he found that this Indian had brought him and left him there. He had made a vow that whenever he was able to get a horse worth presenting to H he would do so in return for his kindness in giving him the ammunition and for fear that H might want to pay him for him he had brought him and left him and then gone off.

V.

Narrative of an attack on Fort Edmonton in 1825 and an Account of Peacemaking between  
the Cree and Blackfeet Indians at Fort Carlton<sup>10</sup>

In 1825 H was at Edmonton on his way to Fort Assiniboine. A party of Stonies about 70 came on a horse stealing expedition. There was an Irish man there called Welsh<sup>11</sup> in the Co's service. He had 12 horses and they were the first stolen and were sent off. Afterwards about 50 more were stolen and they were sent off also but 2 half breeds followed them and found there were only 2 Indians with them & they attacked them and killed one and got back the horses.

At Edmonton they had to keep a strict watch over the horses – day and night. At last the Indians were determined to make another attempt. They did so at night but were found out and one man was taken and all the horses got safe into the fort. The next day they were all coming up in a most independent way to beg and were singing and making a row. Welsh & about a dozen others were riding about on the look out and went off to meet them. They were all coming together towards the fort when Welsh got so mad that he set to and beat the Indians over the face with his whip. The Indians began to defend themselves and fired several shots. The party from the fort fired also and killed 2. Then a regular running fight commenced the Indians making for some wood which was there. 2 more were killed during this. H was in the row – Welsh had fired his gun and was following an Indian who was on foot to stab him with a bayonet he had. The Indian turned round and shot Welsh. The ball went in at his breast and came out at his side piercing his arm. He galloped towards H and when he got to him jumped off his horse and a great stream of blood came out of his nose and mouth. H thought he was dead but he got up and ran off to the Fort with his gun in his hand. H went after him. The man rushed into his own room which had a door of Communication with the Indian house. As he was Interpreter the prisoner taken the day before was here and before H came up he had gone in and stabbed him twice with the bayonet and when he came in they were both lying beside each other, the Indian dead. Welsh however got well but was killed a year after by the bursting of a canon.

The fight thus begun lasted the whole day. The Indians had made this cover into a barricade and had dug holes in the sand and lay there. They wounded 5 of the men from the Fort. One man, an Indian whose gun missed fire got a ball which broke his wrist and then went through his body

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<sup>10</sup> This incident is described in more detail by Hugh Dempsey in his “Battle at Fort Edmonton: fur traders under siege,” *Alberta History* (Winter 2011).

<sup>11</sup> This is probably John Welsh who entered HBC service in 1814 (he was born about 1796 near Wicklow, Ireland). In May 1827 he signed a five year contract as an interpreter in the Saskatchewan district. In this contract he was promised “lenity” in laborious work in consequence of his being wounded. HBCA, Biographical Sheets.

and lodged in the skin of his back. H cut the ball out and the man lived for years after. He was an Assiniboine himself. After this he was called Wellington.

Once at Carlton there was a party of 18 Crees at the fort. There was an alarm of Bkft. There were 2 Bkft women in the fort that H had bought from the Crees. He sent these women out to tell the Bkft of whom there were 8, that there were Crees in the fort. They said they did not care but came on. H went out himself to meet them and tried to dissuade them from coming on – but they said they had come away from their Camp to fight Crees and they did not care whether they were killed or not but that they would fight. Then the Crees all came out of the fort and came down to where they were but H kept between the two parties, and then took them all up to the Council house to stay all night. He set the Crees at one side and the Bkft at the other and he staid between them. The night passed by the two bands doing and saying all they could to insult and enrage one another. A Cree would get up and taunt the Bkft by saying that in such & such a place he had killed one of their people and then the Bkft would do the same. In this way they passed the night. Towards morg the Crees began to sneak out. H wondered what they were after and soon found out that were stealing the Bkfts horses. He then as soon as it was daylight sent off a lot of his men & made them bring all the horses to the door of the Council Ho and then told the Bkft to take their horses and go. He went out for about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile with them & then told them to be off that they were no longer under his protection and that they must take care of themselves. He then went back to the fort and told the Crees that the Bkft were no longer under his protection and that now if they wanted to kill them to go and try and do so but they would not. And so the matter ended.

A Party of Bkft left their Camp to come to Carlton to trade. They had only been 3 or 4 days gone when a messenger came to say that the Camp had been attacked by Crees and a great no killed. They immediately turned and went back to set matters right, and doing so lost several days. Afterwards they started again for Carlton. When there one day sitting in the Council House with H smoking and talking a poor miserable starved devil of a Cree rushed in and came up to H and called out to him to save him. This fellow had been with the party which had attacked the Bkft Camp and on their return had got separated from his party while they were in the bush eating Cranberries. He had been 9 days separated from his people and was starving when he arrived here. He knew at once that the Bkft were in the fort but he knew also that if he did not get something to eat at once he must die that night so he went into the fort and put himself under H's protection at once. H had hard work to save his life but he succeeded in doing so by taking out his pistols and telling the Bkft that before they killed the Cree who had come to him for protection they must kill him. A year or two afterwards H caught this same Cree in the act of stealing his horses. He declared of course he did not know whose they were but H did not consider this any excuse.

## VI.

### Manners and Customs of Indians in the Northwest and Harriott's Influence

Sookoowa adopted H's daughter Keechee paah-mistah – White Buffalo

Big Snake – Omak-keetchis Kee-knee

There is a custom among the Indians that when a number of men are collected at a certain ceremony where they go without eating or drinking for 3 days the men all boast of their exploits in war and any woman may come in and before them all declare herself virtuous & true to her husband.

Infidelity is a great crime and a man finding his wife out in infidelity is allowed to kill her and though she may belong to the most powerful family in the tribe they never try to avenge her if killed for such an affair.

H's influence among the Indians was so great that he once was able to keep peace among the Crees and Bkft for 12 winters & made them confine their fighting to the summer afterwards. When he found he could restrain them no longer he made them confine this fighting to certain districts so that another tribe would [not?] annoy the other when coming to trade with him.

On one occasion he had made such an arrangement with the Crees. There was a party of Bkft coming to trade at the fort and had a good way to go before they got within the peace boundary. A large party of Crees heard of this and set off after them but before they overtook them, the Bkft had crossed the river which was the boundary. After they had crossed this R the Crees had lots of opportunities of attacking the Bkft but would not do so but followed them on to Rky Mt Ho. which was H's post at the time. The Crees camped on a hill near the fort where they could see the Bkft drinking and sleeping away their time and in no way expecting an attack and quite unprepared and all their horses feeding & straying round. But so great was H's influence with them that they never molested them in any way, but after the Bkft had gone off came down to the fort and made their trade.

H made a chief called Red Feather his friend for ever by once saving his life. There was a large party of Bkft in the fort and it was H's custom always to get one of the head men of the tribe to help him to clear the fort at night. Red Feather was 2nd war chief of the tribe. One night H had got the chief to clear the fort. R.F. did not like to be ordered by him so he resisted. The head chief pushed him out. The next day in the mess some of the 2 chiefs met and had a quarrel. The head chief (Great Bear) drew his knife and rushed on R.F. They would have fought and killed each

other only H interfered. This interference was the commencement of a friendship which lasted for life.

The commencement of H's acquaintance with Gt Bear as at Fort Chesterfield in 1822 when they were building the fort. There was a large party of Bkft about and had been trading and getting liquor. They had been drinking for several nights and H and his party had been obliged to sit up all night to supply them. Mr. Rowan was of the party. The fort was not yet finished & they were living in leather tents. One night there was a lull and no one came for liquor so H & the rest turned in for a sleep. Soon a man came and wanted to get in but they had the door of the tent fastened and they pretended to be asleep. The Indian went off in a rage and said he would soon make them open the tent. They all went out while he was away and got into the bushes. Mr. Rowan was in one near the tent. The Indian came back with his gun and had it pointed at the tent. He was near R. R jumped on him and wrenched the gun from him and knocked him down. This raised the camp and there was about to be a row but Gt Bear came up and made them a speech telling them that they should be ashamed of themselves for annoying these people which had come then to trade with them and to supply all their wants and so dispersed them.

There is a custom among the Indians of the young boys of 14 or 15 going out and staying on the top of some hill for 3 days without eating, and to try and go to sleep and dream of some animal or bird or something or other – what ever they dream of they take as their familiar or guardian angel and pray to it, and imagine that it is in some way connected with this life and experiences a kind of influence over them.

In 1822 at Chesterfield, H was in a Camp of Gros Ventres. An Indian rode up to the Camp on a horse, a good runner which H recognized as being one of those stolen from Edmonton in 1819. H went up to the man and told him so. The man laughed, got off the horse and gave him to H and told him that he had more need of him than he had himself and to take him.

Once on the Saskatchewan H was in charge of a number of boats going to Edmonton. He had a good many Crees on board and one chief in his Full dress. They had got to an open part of the R where the Land sloped down to the bank of the R from a considerable distance. All at once there was a cry of Indians. H looked up and saw the Prairie covered with Bkft, a War Party of about 1500 all coming on at Full speed towards the boats. H says it was the most splendid sight he ever saw to see this charge. H's own boat at this time had got aground and was stuck. H however managed at once to get ashore and went out to meet them. There were some of the chiefs in advance of the rest of the party and among these one or two that H happened to know very well and to have great influence over. He got them to ride along the bank of the R and keep the rest from attacking the boats. They did so and then they formed a ring and sat down to smoke. There was however one chief a very powerful one, whose brother had been killed by the Crees and who

was most unwilling to join the smoke and till he did so there was no dependence to be placed upon him and his party. The other chiefs all got round him and kissed him and hugged him and did all they could to soothe him down. At last he came and led up to H a beautiful white mare and put the halter into his hand and gave her to him, expressed regret that a cloud had come over him for a short time but that it was gone now. So he sat down and smoked and all was right. H however told the chief that he could not take the horse with him in the boat but asked the chief to bring it with him when he came to Edmonton to trade. This he did and H found the horse at Edmonton waiting for him when he got there. About an hour after there was another alarm and H got out to see what it was. It was a small party about 30 of the same band who had got separated from the others under a chief called Red Feather, one of H's greatest friends among the Bkft. Here he had not trouble for the moment he saw it was H he got off his horse and came up to him and took off all his clothes. H did the same and there they exchanged clothes which is the greatest proof of friendship that an Indian knows. He also gave H a horse for his daughter which he took to Edmonton for him also.

Once the Head Chief of the tribe of Bkft Soo-koo-wa came to H's post Rky Mr Ho. and had his daughter with him. She was dirty and badly dressed but was a very good looking girl and about the size of H's own daughter. H made his daughter take her away and get her washed and dressed in one of her own dresses. When she came out she looked so well that the chief was delighted. He never forgot it afterwards. He adopted H's daughter & was always bringing her presents.

H and another man had been out hunting buffalo to supply the fort with meat. They had 7 horses with them, 6 belonging to the Co. and one of H's own, a splendid horse the best runner in the Country. They had finished their hunt and had sent the meat home by the boats and they were taking the horses home by land. H was not riding his own horse but was driving him along with the others. They met a party of young men Bkft who were out for mischief. H cocked his gun and held it ready not knowing what might follow. They came up & began to talk and be very friendly and were all round H without making any unfriendly demonstration so H was put off his guard. One of them asked him for a piece of tobacco. H put back his gun on the saddle and was going to give the fellow the tobacco, when one of them snatched his gun and rode off. H rode after him to make him give it up but the fellow stopped cocked it and told him not to come on or he would kill him. The others now got round him and told him to go away that they did not wish to do him any harm; they then drove off the 5 loose horses and H had to go home. This was the only time he ever got the worst of any affair with Indians. He got back all right to Edmonton and 2 days after the Chief Soo-koo-wa came to the Fort and told H that he had found his horse with one of his young men and that he had brought him back to him. There was no chief with this party of young men.

A Mr. Sinclair of H.B.C. was going up to Rky Mt HoO. with a train of goods to H. They had commenced to ascend a Mt and were camped for the night. A party of Bkft came and stole all the horses of the party and they were unable to go on. Sinclair knowing what influence H had with the Bkft set off after the Bkft and got to the Camp.

He went at one to the lodge of the chief & told him he was a friend of H's and that he was going to meet H but that he had had his horses stolen and that he could not go on without them and asked him to give them back. The chief said at once that as he was a friend of H's he would give him back the horses.

One of the clerks of the H.B.C. was with H when out on an expedition, he was wounded by a buffalo and was not able to go on with the rest of the party. They were near a Bkft Camp at the time and H took the man to it and left him there. He also left a Cree Indian with him to take care of him. H then went on and the two men were to meet him at a certain place when able to travel. A few days after they had been with the Bkft a party of Crees attacked a Bkft camp which was at a little distance and killed a good many. The Bkft all came from the camp which had been attacked and rushed into the camp where the two men were and declared they would kill the Cree. They however had got into the chiefs lodge and lay there. And the Chief went and stood at the door and told his people that these men were friends of H's and that they must not touch them and that they must kill him before they got into the lodge to them, and then they went away.