The Private Correspondence of George Simpson & John George McTavish 1821 to 1835







The Private Correspondence between George Simpson and John George McTavish 1821 to 1835

Edited by

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2026

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Introduction to

Private Correspondence between George Simpson and John George McTavish

1821 to 1835

John George McTavish[1] was George Simpson's[2] closest friend in fur-trade country, and the recipient of a remarkably frank private correspondence from Simpson between 1821 and 1835 (McTavish's tenure at York Factory and Moose Factory). Simpson noted in 1831 (see below), that these private letters were considered strictly "private and confidential," only for his eyes, and that with this understanding he would write whatever came uppermost to his mind. He thus expected that McTavish letters to him would similarly frank and confidential. Simpson exhorted McTavish to commit these letters to the flames after perusal, an exhortation that McTavish ignored.[3] It appears, however, that Simpson did destroy McTavish's private letters, with the result that we have only Simpson's letters to John George McTavish. These private letters can be found in two collections consisting of the letters inward in the two places where McTavish governed: York Factory from 1821 to 1829 (HBCA B.239/c/1-2); and Moose Factory 1829 to 1835 (HBCA B.135/c/2). Thereafter, McTavish was moved to the Lake of Two Mountains District, and the private correspondence between the two ended. This does not mean that their close association ended, only that they were now near enough to each other (Simpson was headquartered at Lachine and McTavish was close by at Chats) that what private conversations they had occurred in person.

The close relationship between Simpson and McTavish arose only after the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821. Born in Scotland around 1778, John George McTavish had been recruited into the North West Company by his influential distant relative, Simon McTavish. Beginning in 1798, he would spend his first five years in the fur trade learning the business as a clerk at the NWC headquarters in Montreal. By 1803 he was involved in establishing posts along James Bay to challenge the HBC in the region, and by 1808 was serving in the Athabasca region at Fort Dunvegan. He would become a wintering partner of the NWC in 1812, and in 1813 he was sent to command the Columbia District. During the fur-trade wars with the HBC (1816–1818), McTavish was back in the Athabasca, and in 1818 was captured at the Grand Rapid and sent to England to stand trial for his role in this war. The case against him was dismissed by the British courts, and in 1820 he again sailed for North America aboard the *James Munroe*. It was during this transatlantic voyage that McTavish first met and struck up a relationship with George Simpson, who was traveling to North America to take up his new role as governor for the Hudson's Bay Company. While the fur-trade war continued until 1821, after the merger the two men formed a close, lifelong friendship. With the Deed Poll of 1821, John George McTavish became a chief factor and was stationed at York Factory, a crucial depot in the

[1] John George McTavish (b.*c.* 1778–1847). See biographical appendix.
[2] George Simpson, (b.*c.* 1786–1860). See biographical appendix.
[3] Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), n5 page 171.

administration, transportation, and communication system of the new company. As the Simpson/McTavish friendship and partnership developed, McTavish would become not only Simpson's confident and advisor, but his eyes and ears in the Northern Department.[1] The correspondence below shows the intimate nature of this relationship.

That George Simpson, the Governor of the Northern Department of the HBC in 1821, would befriend McTavish is not entirely self-evident. Indeed, after the violence of the fur-trade wars, it is somewhat surprising that Simpson would both champion McTavish, and choose his closest associates from the pool of NWC officers in the new company. This began in 1821 when Nicholas Garry, a member of the London Committee, was sent to North America and appointed temporary president of the Northern Department to do what was necessary to implement the merger agreement and arrange the organization of the company. He met with the NWC at Fort William to implement the merger, but to decide on the postings in the Northern Department, he travelled to Rupert's Land (Norway House) to arrange these. There he met Simon McGillivray of the NWC and George Simpson of the old HBC. The Deed Poll of 1821, which set out how the new HBC would run, had named fifty-three commissioned officers, of which thirty-two were Nor-Westers: fifteen of twenty-five chief factors, and seventeen of twenty-eight chief traders (see Tables 1 & 2). The reason for the predominance of Nor-Westers, according to Douglas McKay, was that the NWC was operated by partners and had therefore produced a more aggressive type of men who needed to be placated in the new concern, and also that they had more men in the fur trade and hence more men of the officer type.[2] In addition to this predominance of officers, Garry, McGillivray, and Simpson gave Nor-Westers control of the most important districts in the Northern Department. They would oversee New Caledonia, Columbia, Athabasca, and Mackenzie River trading districts.

Simpson's attraction to the NWC officers also had a good deal to do with control, loyalty, and temperament. Older HBC officers, like James Bird who was put in charge of the Saskatchewan District, and who had spent far more time in Rupert's Land than the young George Simpson, were hesitant to give up their usual authority. NWC officers, on the other hand, now untethered, frequently gravitated toward and respected the new governor. Unlike traditional HBC officers who had long been wage-earning employees answering to a distant committee in London, NWC officers had operated under a system where field masters were "wintering partners" with a direct stake in corporate profits. Simpson capitalized on this profit-sharing motive continued by the Deed Poll of 1821, earning the loyalty and respect of most of the NWC men who understood and valued this model. Simpson also appreciated the more "gentlemanly style" of the Nor-Westers in contrast to "constricted" views of most the HBC gentry in Rupert's Land. Commenting on Colin Robertson of the HBC, whom he would soon come to abhor, Simpson wrote McTavish, "he is a pleasant entertaining fellow and has none of those narrow constricted illiberal ideas which so much characterize the Gentry of Ruperts

[1] The preceding biographical information has been taken from Sylvia Van Kirk, "McTavish (Mactavish), John George," *DCB Online*.

[2] Douglas McKay had been the publicity director for the Hudson's Bay Company's Canadian Committee, and had edited the *The Beaver* from 1933 to 1938. He wrote *The Honourable Company* in 1936, shortly before he died in 1938. This edition was revised by his wife. Douglas McKay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the Hudson's Bay Company,* rev. ed. (Toronto: McLellan & Stewart, 1949), 161.

Land; as a man of business he does not shine, but his every inclination to conform to well digested regulations and I am mistaken if we do not find him a useful Member of Council."[1]

Table 1 **Twenty-Five Chief Factors Appointed under the Deed Poll of 1821**	
Hudson's Bay Company	**North West Company**
Thomas Vincent – *retired 1826*	John Thomson – retired 1821
James Bird – *retired 1824*	John McDonald (le Borgne) – retired 1827
Colin Robertson – *retired 1840*	James Leith – retired 1821
James Sutherland – *retired 1827*	John Haldane – retired 1827
John Clarke – *retired 1836*	Alexander Stewart – retired 1833
John Charles – *retired 1843*	John George McTavish – retired 1846
Alexander Kennedy – *retired 1831*	George Keith – retired 1845
John Davis – *drowned 1824*	John Dugald Cameron – retired 1843
Joseph Beioley – *retired 1843*	John Stuart – retired 1839
Alexander Christie – *retired 1853*	Edward Smith – retired 1840
	John McLoughlin – retired 1846
	James Keith – retired 1843
	Angus Bethune – retired 1841
	Donald McKenzie – retired 1835
	John McBean – retired 1837
Source: *Copy of the Deed Poll under the Seal of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, Bearing Date of the Twenty-sixth Day of March, 1821* (London: H.K. Causton, Birchin-Lane, Cornhill, 1821), 8-9.	

Table 2 **Twenty-Eight Chief Traders Appointed under the Deed Poll of 1821**	
Hudson's Bay Company	**North West Company**
Jacob Corrigal – never promoted (retired 1840)	William Mackintosh – Chief Factor 1823 (retired 1837)
John Peter Pruden – Chief Factor 1836 (retired 1837)	Thomas McMurray – never promoted (retired 1843)
James Clouston – never promoted (resigned 1827)	Donald MacKintosh – never promoted (retired 1840)
John Spencer – never promoted (retired 1857)	Allan McDonell – Chief Factor 1828 (retired 1843)
John Lee Lewes – Chief Factor 1829 (retired 1853)	Hugh Faries – Chief Factor 1838 (retired 1849)
Roderick MacKenzie – never promoted (died 1830)	Roderick Mackenzie Jr. – never promoted (died 1830)
William Brown – never promoted (died 1827)	Daniel Williams Harmon – resigned immediately
Robert McVicar – never promoted (retired 1830)	John Warren Dease – never promoted (retired 1830)
John McLeod – never promoted (retired 1848)	Angus Cameron – Chief Factor 1839 (retired 1845)
Alexander McDonald – unknown	Simon McGillivray Jr. – never promoted (retired 1839)
Andrew Stewart – never promoted (died 1822)	Joseph McGillivray – never promoted (retired 1831)
	William Connelly – Chief Factor 1825 (retired 1843)
	Peter Warren Dease – Chief Factor 1828 (retired 1840)
	John Rowand – Chief Factor 1826 (died 1854)
	Joseph Felix Larocque – never promoted (resigned 1831)
	James McMillan – Chief Factor 1827 (retired 1839**)**
	Alexander Rod[k] McLeod – Chief Factor 1836 (died 1840)
Source: *Copy of the Deed Poll under the Seal of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, Bearing Date of the Twenty-sixth Day of March, 1821* (London: H.K. Causton, Birchin-Lane, Cornhill, 1821), 8-9.	

Almost all the close and loyal associates Simpson had in the fifteen years after 1821 were former Nor-Westers. The closest ones included John George McTavish, George Keith, James Keith,

[1] Letter of Simpson to J.G. McTavish, January 1, 1822. HBCA B.239/c/1, fo. 66.

John Dugald Cameron, Allan McDonell, William Connolly, John Rowand, and James McMillan. Conversely, those officers with whom he had difficulty with from the first were former HBC officers. These included James Bird, Colin Robertson, and John Clarke. These more recalcitrant officers were sidelined, one of whom quickly resigned. Those NWC officers who did later cross him (John Haldane, John Stuart, and Donald McKenzie) were also sidelined.

Simpson quickly mastered the reins government of the HBC in North America. While the executive control remained with the Governor, Deputy Governor, and Committee in London, the Deed Poll of 1821 had also established the machinery of government by council. These councils (primarily those of the Northern Department and Southern Department) comprising the governor, chief factors and some chief traders in the specific departments would meet each summer to establish regulations, examine the results of the years trading, determine furloughs, mete out discipline, and recommend promotions and retirements to the London board.[1] These councils would be controlled by Simpson to the last detail. Indeed, he often came to these council meetings with the agenda and minutes already drawn up. He used strict administrative discipline, unmatched political maneuvering, and a hands-on leadership style to convert what was intended to be a collaborative governing body into an extension of his own personal will. Before the Northern Department Council formally met each summer at York Factory, Norway House, or Red River, Simpson had determined how each officer would vote. While the London-based Governor and Committee technically approved promotions, they relied almost entirely on Simpson's confidential assessments, and the commissioned officers knew that opposing Simpson at council undercut their chances of advancement and might mean the transfer to unenviable locations.

John George McTavish was an intricate part of this system of surveillance and control. Very soon after the union of 1821, Simpson established an extensive network of private correspondence with chief factors and chief traders, including John George McTavish. McTavish was not only a trusted friend, but as the chief factor in charge of York Factory he was privy to all the secrets and plotting that went on behind the scenes. This kind of information was extremely valuable to Simpson, and he assiduously cultivated McTavish's friendship and the information he provided, and in 1824 McTavish was named to preside at council in the event of Simpson's absence.

While we do not have McTavish's private letters, we are privy to Simpson's responses and can thereby tell what was talked about. In addition to Simpson's almost constant chatter about the strength and weaknesses of other company officers (a kind of ongoing "Character Book") and what to do with these officers, these letters detail a vast range of private gossip, behind the scenes vulnerabilities, and concerns about family members and health.

The two historians who have made the most use of this correspondence are Sylvia Van Kirk[2] and James Raffin.[3] In her 1980 monograph *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur -Trade Society, 1670–1870,* Van Kirk used the correspondence to expose the social transformation of the Canadian fur trade. In particular these letters were used to document how Simpson and McTavish cast aside their Native

[1] Douglas McKay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto: McLellan & Stewart, 1849), 161-162.
[2] Sylvia Van Kirk, *"Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980).
[3] James Raffin, *Emperor of the North: Sir George Simpson and the Remarkable Story of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2007).

"country wives" to marry British women, and how the arrival of these British women created an elite white social clique that actively excluded and marginalized the Native women who had previously formed the backbone of fur-trade society. Raffin's emphasis is on the career of George Simpson, but his use of this correspondence is much like Van Kirk's, emphasizing Simpson's and McTavish's ribald libido and racism. To his credit, however, Raffin reproduces chunks of this correspondence verbatim, and in that way his book serves to mitigate his own view of George Simpson as an unbending and tyrannical leader of the HBC. What these letters convincingly do is show Simpson as a deeply flawed, but complex human being. He was a devoted husband and father to his new bride Frances and their children, and, though not illustrated in these letters, took both an interest in and cared for his children by other women.[1] He consistently protected McTavish, helped invest his money, facilitated his acquisition of the Chats farm, employed his nephews, and offered him any position or posting that McTavish needed or desired. While a good deal has been made of Simpson's somewhat muted criticisms of McTavish in his "Character Book,"[2] it is clear that Simpson never let these views interfere with his promotion of his colleague. He was a devoted friend.

In addition to detailing George Simpson's marriage to Frances Simpson in 1830, and John McTavish's marriage to Catherine Turner that same year, this correspondence covers their subsequent discarding of their common-law wives (Simpson–Margaret Taylor and McTavish–Nancy McKenzie), and Simpson's diligent efforts to find new husbands for their former country spouses, and the arrangements made to care for their children. In addition, George Simpson details how the disapproval of these actions by John Stuart and Donald McKenzie permanently altered his relations with these chief factors. The correspondence also details the birth of his son in the Red River Settlement, his death eight months later, the severe and lingering illness of his wife, and his decision to take her back to England in 1833. His own health problems during this period (1831–1834) had him considering retirement put off, only because of his flagging financial situation.

After his marriage to Catherine Turner, John George McTavish was transferred to Moose Factory (headquarters of the Southern Department), an easier posting with a better climate. As was the case when he was at York Factory, however, McTavish kept Simpson informed on most of what went on the Southern Department, and the foibles of the men that worked there. After decades in the fur trade, however, and having grown increasingly corpulent, McTavish's health began to decline. In 1835 he was given a year's furlough, after which he was transferred to the Lake of Two Mountains District, where McTavish already owned land at Chats. It was a transfer that McTavish requested. This

[1] This can be seen in his letters to John Rowand who was in charge of the Saskatchewan District after 1823. Two of Simpson's sons were posted in the Saskatchewan District.

[2]Simpson, in his 1832 "Character Book," describes McTavish thusly. "Was the most finished man of business we had in the Country, well Educated, respectably connected and more of the Man of the World in his conversation and address than any of his colleagues. A good hearted Man and generous extravagance, but unnecessarily dignified and high minded which leads to frequent difficulties with his associates by whom he is considered a 'Shylock' and upon many of whom he looks down on; rather strong in his prejudices against, and partialities for individuals, which frequently influences his judgement, so that his opinions on men and things must be listened to with caution: is about 54 Years of Age, has of late Years become very heavy unwieldly and inactive; over fond of good living and I must fear is getting into habits of conviviality and intemperance." Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 171.

last move ended the extensive private correspondence with George Simpson as they were now in close proximity given that Simpson was headquartered at Lachine.

Though McTavish made somewhat of a recovery from his health problems, in 1841 his wife, Catherine Turner, died, and, after a period of eighteen months of dreary loneliness, he decided to marry Elizabeth Cameron in 1843. As he told William McTavish, "He had given his children a kind & good-natured mother & companion, that was all." To James Hargrave, he wrote that "he had been accepted by a person that he hoped would comfort his deathbed & do the needful after his demise."[1] After a short illness, McTavish died in 1847. His will, written informally in a letter to George Simpson, left equal amounts of his estate to his family with Catherine Turner, and his family with Elizabeth Cameron.[2]

[1] Letitia Hargrave to Mrs. Dugald MacTavish, York Factory, 10th Septr 1843. Margaret Arnett MacLeod, ed., *The Letters of Letitia Hargrave* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1947), 157.

[2] Letitia Hargrave to Mrs. Dugald MacTavish, 22nd August 1848. Margaret Arnett MacLeod, ed., *The Letters of Letitia Hargrave* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1947), 157.

George Simpson, Rock Depot, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 14 Decem[r] 1821 (Private) [B.239/c/1 fos. 60-60d]

My Dear Sir

Considering the badness of the track – a detention of four hours the first day at Saunder's Tent and the death of a Dog I think we did tolerably well in getting here by 12 O'clock AM the fifth day from York; the white Governor[1] behaved like a Xtian but was fairly knocked up the day he arrived & would have given in two days before if he had not been accommodated wt a 60 ft Sled to haul as it is a curious fact that he Travels better loaded than light. – Miles[2] started yesterday & I follow tomorrow with Fresh Dogs. –

Old Bunn[3] begins to discover that the times are strongly altered & he is not over well pleased at having the Keys to the Store taken from him. You better not trust him with them again but direct Pambrun in the course of the Spring to forward such articles as you may require by the Boat.

Topping[4] is anxious to be sent to Churchill & I think it might be as well to send him by Schooner in order to get him out of the way but in this [do] as you think proper. He cannot however go to York for the Summer as he is totally useless: it may be well to give him a few lines in the Spring for his government. –

I have arranged wt Bunn that my Japanese help mate & her chick join him in Spring you will therefore oblige me by forwarding her. –

Mr. Barnston[5] will deliver you a book which has been lying about here. Be good enough to shove it out of the way as it is now an Eye sore: – [fo. 60]

I expect to make tolerable speed to Oxford & hope to enjoy the Comfort of your carioles as yet I have scarcely tested them as the Road was so bad and the Dogs so weak that I found it necessary to Travel chiefly by the Marrow Bone Stage:[6] –

Winter travelling is quite a luxury compared with the Mosquito season and the sound of the last Trump would scarcely waken me after a hard Days March; [illegible[face already bears the mark of Johnny Frost but I have suffered no inconvenience from the cold weather. –

By this time I hope you are quite recovered & things go on smoothly at York

With best wishes believe me to be My Dear Sir
Yours very truly
Geo. Simpson [fo. 60d]

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[1] A *sobriquet* of the man at the head of a boat brigade. Walter Avis (ed), *A Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* (Toronto: W.J. Gage Ltd., 1967), 851.

[2] Robert Miles (1795–1870) was an accountant at York Factory. See biographical appendix.

[3] This is Thomas Bunn (1764–1853). He was born in London and entered the HBC service in 1797. He served in the HBC continuously until he retired in 1822. See biographical appendix.

[4] This is Thomas Topping from London who was about 58 years of age at the time. In the York Factory accounts of 1819–1820, he was listed as being 55 years old, and that he had been in the HBC service for 16 years. He was categorized as an "assistant". In 1822, he was sent back to England. HBCA B.239/d/210; B239/g/2.

[5] George Barnston (1800–1883). See biographical appendix.

[6] This is a 19th century slang term for walking.

George Simpson, Oxford House, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 20th December 1821 (Private) [B.239/c/1. fos 62-62d]

My Dear Sir

"Great bodies move slow" and here I shall run after a 3½ Days march from the Rock; it might be done in a little more than two days but we lost the best part of Day by Mile's [Robert] Lameness & bad Weather; On the 18th we started from Knee Lake at 3 O'clock Miles p[er] Cariole & self on Duckfeet[?] & by the time I completed say 30 miles to this place at 12 O'clock I was nearly as lame as the Secty; he started this morning with an extra sled for his conveyance and I intend following the day after tomorrow – I hope to get to Norway House on the 5th Day. – Matters seem to go on here much in the usual way and I have duly impressed [fo. 62] economy on the attention of Mr. Tod.[1] –

If the York Ladies could in Spring be prevailed on to collect a few kegs of Cranberries they would be found useful; I should like to have one or two to send to England & my fair rib[2] I have no doubt would indulge me if you will be so good as to let her know my pleasure. –

Believe me as always

My Dear Sir Yours very truly

Geo. Simpson

My writing apparatus gone ahead you must therefore excuse these scraps. G.S.

George Simpson, Norway House, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 1st Jany 1822 (Private) [B239/c/1, fos. 66-66d]

My Dear Sir

Altho nothing of interest presents itself I cannot let this opportunity escape without congratulating you upon our entry on a first year and wishing you many happy returns of to Day. –

We are all as comfortable as our Friend Robertson[3] can make us. Mirth is the order of the Day but of course united with Wisdom –

I experienced some sever Weather on the route from Oxford, men & Dogs froze, but on the whole I did not suffer much inconvenience from the cold and notwithstanding the loss of two half Days we slept but Five nights between the Stages and I intend proceeding tomorrow. –

Mine host has improved much on acquaintance. He is a pleasant entertaining fellow and has none of those narrow constricted illiberal ideas which so much characterize the Gentry of Ruperts Land; as a man of business he does not shine, but has every inclination to conform to well digested regulations and I am mistaken if we do not find him a useful Member of Council. –

The Settlers got all from this place in sufficient time to reach the Colony before the Severe Weather set in but as yet we have had no account from there nor have there been arrivals from any other quarter. –

[1] John Tod (1794–1882). See biographical appendix.
[2] A common colloquial term for a wife.
[3] Colin Robertson (1783–1842). See biographical appendix.

Mr. Robertson urges me strongly to procure him a breed of cattle and says that you made him a present of a Cow private property at Cumberland which he claims as a matter of right: York Factory must be supplied and he will assuredly leave a Breed afterwards if the Cumberland Stock can afford it; that I conceive will meet [fo. 66] both your and his views. –

A few malcontents have been troublesome here in consequence of having their allowance shortened but a good drubbing has brought them to their senses. –

The property is all safely housed and in good order, I have impressed on Mr. Robertson the necessity of his not interfering with our distribution and hope to find matters pretty correct in Spring; – he is making great improvements about the place and in the course of a year or two I expect it will assist us materially in provisions. –

I am anxious to know how you get on with old "impossible" & his colleagues, pray stand on no ceremony with them but have things your own way and all will be right. –

With much regard believe me to be

My Dear Sir

Yours very truly

Geo. Simpson

P.S. I shall not trouble you about the accounts of the people as Mr. Miles [Robert] will address Mr. Spencer[1] on the Subject. G.S. [fo. 66d]

George Simpson, Cumberland House, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 25th Jany 1822 (Private) [B.239/c/1, fos. 69-72]

My Dear Sir

Since I last had the pleasure of addressing you I have been at Death's Door, by a similar attack of Sore Throat to what you had previous to my departure from York, which confined me to bed at Norway House Eight Days; the Sons of Escapapiccs [Sons of Asclepiads][2] did all in their power for me, but the remedy had like to have been worse than the disease as through some unaccountable blunder they administered Aqua Fortes[3] instead of Hartshorn[4] which had well nigh been attended with dangerous consequences; on the 9th however I took my departure from thence and after five days hard travelling through nearly impenetrable thickets and fallen timbers got to Moose Lake and on the 17th arrived at this place in tolerable condition although about a Stone lighter than when I left York. – Here I met with a very warm reception and found things much in the usual way; the Trade has been tolerably good as between this House and Moose Lake they have already collected about 60,000

[1] This is likely John Spencer (1790–1881). See biographical appendix.

[2] The Sons of Asclepiads were an ancient Greek family of physicians who claimed descent from Asclepius, the mythological god of medicine.

[3] A common name for nitric acid, an old alchemy term meaning "strong water".

[4] Hartshorn was a traditional leavening agent and chemical compound also known as baker's ammonia or ammonium carbonate, originally derived from the antlers of red deer. At this time, it was used medically as a sweat-inducing treatment for fevers and snakebites.

Musquash; Mr. Kennedy[1] thinks that he will turn out 200 Packs in Spring, ⅔ of the quantity contracted for: his three Boats & Five Canoes will proceed to Bas de la Riviere at the opening of Navigation with the Musquash, the former to return to Norway House and the latter will proceed under the charge of Mr. Nelson to Fort William. – Heron[2] who now superintends the affairs at Moose Lake is to be the Summer Master here & has had his lesson about provisions and Flett[3] will proceed by the first conveyance in Spring to Oxford. –

I have received Letters from Mess[rs] Leith[4] and Keith[5] of the 20[th] & 22[nd] November and have written both these Gentlemen very fully by the Carlton Express. – The accounts from Athabasca if not flattering are upon the whole satisfactory. The Brigades got to the Lake up to the 27[th] September and took their departure [fo. 69] as follows viz[t]:

20 Sept	New Caledonia	3 canoes
22 Sept	Peace River	2 canoes
23 Sept	Peace River	6 canoes
23 Sept	McKenzie R	4 canoes
30 Sept	Peace R	2 canoes
1 Oct	McKenzie R	1 canoe
2 Oct	Peace R	2 canoes
2 Oct	Great Slave Lake	4 canoes
3 Oct	Great Slave Lake	1 canoe
5 Oct	Peace au Calumet	2 canoes

So that I hope they will get to their Wintering Grounds in good time. They had a bad passage to the Lake in consequence of the low state of the Water and damaged several pieces. Mr. Leith complains very justly of the wretched state of the Gun Cases and other packages also of the Oil Cloths which I trust will be remedied next season: he was in hopes that the Athabasca Brigade could be returned from Norway House as he conceives that the canoes will not stand the Voyage to and from York but on the subject I hope my explanation will make his mind easy. – The Chipewyans have [illegible] the change of affairs like true Philosophers and seem inclined to accommodate themselves to the circumstances; Mess[rs] Smith[6] & Dease[7] equipped 150 young & old at the Lake and Mr. Leith on the whole hopes to do pretty well: I am glad to find he seems to coincide with us on the propriety of making a clean sweep in his department of all superfluous hands and talks of retrenchment as if he really meant to put officers on a Pease Establishment. – I regret to find that the Minute of Council putting Chief Traders under the command of Chief Factors has created a degree of ferment among the former and <u>one</u> of the Gentlemen was extremely violent; Mr. Leith does not mention the name

[1] This Alexander Kennedy (1781–1832) who was an Orkneyman from Braehead, South Ronaldsay. He entered HBC service in 1798, and at this time was a Chief Factor at Cumberland House. See biographical appendix.
[2] This is Francis Heron (1794–1840) from Donegal, Ireland. He entered HBC service in 1812, and at this time was posted to Cumberland District as a Clerk. See biographical appendix.
[3] There were at least three Fletts posted to the Cumberland District in this year.
[4] This is James Leith (1777–1838). See biographical appendix.
[5] This is probably George Keith (1785-1859). His brother, James Keith, was on a year's leave of absence at this time. See biographical appendix.
[6] This is Edward Smith. He was at Fort Chipewyan from 1821 to 1823. See biographical appendix.
[7] This is likely Peter Warren Dease (1788–1863).

but says it will be necessary to bring him out next Season in order to have things perfectly understood below. – I am much concerned that any feeling of jealousy should exist as it cannot fail of being injurious to the interests [fo. 69d] of the business; the Minute in question is certainly according to the true intent and spirit of the Deed Poll and I conceive that while the Gentlemen of the Council should consult the feelings & views of the Chief Traders they must with delicacy yet firmness maintain the power with which they are invested: the Deed Poll distinctly points out the relative situations and duties, that document is the basis of our constitution and if we permit innovations and dangerous precedents to crop in, the whole fabric must tremble into confusion: this will no doubt be a subject of much discussion at York. We must compare notes thereon as without flattery I do not know any Gentleman in the Country to whose sound judgement and opinion I could pay so much respect, in the mean time these remarks are for your private information. –

Mr. Keith complains of the want of many primary articles and the disorganized state of men and Indians, the former we must bring to their bearings in Spring and on the latter he seems to have made a good impression already. – Mr. Larocque[1] is at Lac la Ronge & Mr. McLeod[2] at Green Lake. – Mr. Keith equipped 110 Chipewyans on moderate terms and hopes to make good returns: – he expects to be furnished with Pemican from the Saskatchewan as the Northern Brigades got all that had been collected during the Summer and has applied for 20 Bags; these demands I sadly fear will put us to the most serious inconvenience but we must endeavour to arrange it so that they will not be repeated another Year; on this subject I have written Mr. Leith suggesting as you recommended the propriety of his keeping Provision hunters during the Summer which I have no doubt he will attend to. –

From the Saskatchewan I have no direct information [fo. 70] but the reports from thence are very gloomy; Mr. Pruden[3] (by a private Letter to Mr. Kennedy) had no accounts from Edmonton, about the beginning of the month he had only 30 bags Pemican in Store and his Post was in a state of famine as the Buffalo had not made their appearance; there are a number of War Parties about but they have committed no act of Hostility upon the Traders although they hold out threats: I have seen Mr. Pruden's Letter it is very vague but I have requested him to write me fully and officially to the Upper Post in Swan River: no information that can be expanded upon has been received from that quarter but according to Indian reports the Buffalo have not appeared at Qu'Appelle, I cannot trace this to any source that is to be depended upon, these reports do however alarm me very much and if they prove true the result may be most calamitous –

I can learn nothing of your Friend Mr. Donald McKenzie[4] and shall keep your letter till Spring.

There are only two breeding cows at this place, those from Swan River are ascertained to be really barren but I have secured the best of the former in Calf together with a two year old Bull for York. Also a Sow with Pig and a young Boar; the Horses will be sent from Red River by the last ice

[1] This is likely Chief Trader Joseph Felix Larocque. See biographical appendix.
[2] This is likely Chief Trader John McLeod who entered the service of the HBC in 1811. See biographical appendix.
[3] This is Chief Trader John Peter Pruden (1778–1868). At this time, he was at Carlton House and had been promoted to Chief Trader in 1821. See biographical appendix.
[4] Chief Factor Donald McKenzie (1783–1851) was at this time in charge of the Bow River Expedition. See biographical appendix.

to Norway House; it would be well to get a Cow House and Piggery built in Spring and all the Dogs sent to the Rock to be out of [the] horses way the fancy Kennel excepted.

Between you and I it is my opinion that this place might be in better hands; there are a great number of people here actually doing nothing whereas they might be usefully employed in building as both Tents are in a ruinous state; if something is not done in the course of Spring towards getting the place in order they never will have such an other opportunity: [fo. 70d] the Gentlemen of the old school have I understand entered into a confederacy to keep each other in their comfortable books, but against such party work I shall most assuredly set my face, and I feel satisfied of being supported by the enlightened part of the Council; there is a degree of selfishness, want of liberality and ungentlemanly way of thinking and acting among the people that is truly disgusting but more of this at meeting. –

I have had a great deal of conversation with Mr. Williams[1] about his charge and you may depend on it the Gentlemen to the Southward will find him an altered man; "a la Snodie" is quite expunged and although he has his peculiarity they will find him a straight forward plain dealing man; he now knows the value of Mr. Bethune's[2] assistance and they will draw well together; it is not yet determined whether he goes by Fort William or Martins Fall but I have strongly recommended the former route: he has had a Letter from "Impossible" full of York Factory politics which I saw but it does not breathe treason to the State; the trapping system however seems to have given mortal offence and Mr. Williams has sent him a tartan thereon as self payment was diametrically opposite his orders.

The Ile a la Crosse Canoes left 24 Rolls of Tobacco at this place en depôt part of the quantity alluded to in Mr. Wm. McGillivray[3] Letter. –

If my Article requires anything previous to her departure for the Rock pray let her be supplied (to my account) and if you will solace her with a little Tea and Sugar & any other necessity it will be obliging. –

The White Governor starts either tomorrow or next Day and by Mr. Hargrave[4] you will receive three Trains Dogs, although bad they are the best [fo. 71] I can find but I trust you will have no occasion for them in the Wood hauling. –

There are accounts from the Arctic Expedition Gentlemen up to the 10th July by W. Wentzell[5] who is returned to Fort Chipewyan they were at the Mouth of the Copper Mine River at least the Water was Saltish although it does not appear that they discovered any Isle; they had seen a band of Esquimaux but the latter were so much terrified at their appearance that they took flight, it is however ascertained that they speak the same language as the Interpreter having overtaken an old Man at one of their Encampments who was too infirm to escape; from the mouth of the Copper Mine River they expect by cutting across the Country to fall upon a large River from the east side of the Gt. Slave Lake

[1] This is William Willams from Wales, who was appointed Resident Governor of the HBC Territories in 1818. At the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, Williams was appointed Joint-Governor with Simpson and in 1822 was given charge of the Southern Department. See biographical appendix.

[2] This is Chief Factor Angus Bethune (1783–1858) in charge of Albany Factory at this time. See biographical appendix.

[3] William McGillivray (1764–1825). See biographical appendix.

[4] This is James Hargraves (1798–1865), a clerk under John George McTavish. See biographical appendix.

[5] William Ferdinand Wentzell (1777–1832). See biographical appendix.

which will lead them to Wager Bay and hope to find their way to Churchill in the course of the Season but if their provisions fall short tis probable they will retrace their steps to Fort Chipewyan this Winter.

If you have no information either from Mr. Charles[1] or Mr. Leslie[2] respecting Spence[3] or Linklater[4] for the Summer charge of Churchill I think it would be well to send Kirkness[5] as he is a careful steady man with some Gentleman as a support and assistant; [illegible] if troublesome at the Factory could answer the purpose.

Mr. Williams's Boat is rather small and if the Carpenters have time to build one for me I should like it to be one thaft[6] longer with corresponding breadth & height but after the model of the other. Mr. Williams pulls 5 oars [fo. 71d] whereas 7 oars would answer my purpose better.

I shall endeavor to postpone Councilling until our arrival at York where I expect not to be later than the 1st July but, in the meantime, pray favor me with any confidential hints you may consider useful by the Boat in Spring. –

It is my intention to proceed from hence about the 1st Feby and with best wishes believe me to be

My Dear Sir
Yours very sincerely
Geo. Simpson [fo. 72]

George Simpson, RRS, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 4th June 1822 (private)
[HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 83-83d]

My Dear Sir

I fear you have passed a dismal Winter and that the Salt spray at York does not agree with you but hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in tolerable condition in the course of a few weeks.

Matters never looked worse in the way of provisions than this Season pray therefore let every hunter & fisherman in the neighbourhood be sent foraging and the Trade I suspect will not saturate the pockets of our Chief Factors & Traders we must however keep a bold face to it and pray for better times. –

I am sick and tired of this place here all the black legs[7] of Ruperts Land seem to be congregated and the Gentleman in charge[8] is totally unfit for its management; an effort was made to draw me over to his interest but he knows my Sentiments is prepared for a trip to the Saskatchewan if his party is not sufficiently strong and is not in the best humour, but I see [fo. 83] no reason why those Gentlemen of the old School should not have a few of the Sours of the North as well as the Sweets; had I not

[1] This is Chief Factor John Charles. See biographical appendix.
[2] This is Hugh Leslie. See biographical appendix.
[3] This is likely John Spence (1772–1856). See biographical appendix.
[4] There were numerous Linklaters in the service of the HBC at this time.
[5] This likely James Kirkness (1774–1843). See biographical appendix.
[6] This is an old English variant of "Thoft", "Thwart" or a rower's bench. That is a cross member in a York Boat that helps hold the boat's shape.
[7] A slang term for a cheating gambler or swindler.
[8] This was Andrew Bulger who was Governor of the Colony from March 1822 until June 1823.

been on the spot we would have been both robbed and insulted by Ranville[1] & his followers but on the whole we have got well out of it. –

I caught your Friend Jacco Larante yesterday & had he not paid to the uttermost farthing he would have visited York by this conveyance in bracelets.

Our Free traders Nolin,[2] Forrest[3] & [illegible] Larante are troublesome also Cadotte[4] at Lac la Pluie, no step has yet been taken in regard to them but they must be extinguished if they attempt egress or ingress by the usual Communication this Season. –

Two washerwomen are sent by this conveyance let them be kept inside the Stockades and distant from the young bucks otherwise we shall have more ____ing than washing.

Young McDonell is inclined to be his own Master & addicted to his Bottle keep your eyes upon him and stand on no ceremony if his conduct is incorrect. – Smoking & Grog Drinking must be put down otherways our work will be at a stand & it will be necessary that Mr. Spencer Shakes off all intimacy with the young Gentleman.

If my Damsel is not gone pray send her to the Rock at once as I do not wish to be troubled with a Lady during the busy Season I suspect my name will become as notorious as the Late Gov^{r} in regard to plurality of wives. –

Grant[5] is a fine young man and goes this Season to Canada & England for the purpose of settling his private affairs all the old sores will I hope soon be healed up. –

The Dr. is a fine young rather touchy but may be made very useful, let him have enough to do. –

I am much pleased with and have received great attention from the Gentlemen of the late N.W.Coy. who I have had the pleasure of seeing: Mr. McDonald[6] gives me a Seat in his canoe & we start 3 Days hence. I shall wait for the light canoe until the 11th or 12th at Bas de la Riviere & thereafter make the best of my way to York.

Believe me always
My Dear Sir
Yours very truly
Geo. Simpson

[1] This was likely Joseph Ranville (1779–1846) who was a Metis of Sioux origin born in the Dakota Territory. After the War of 1812 he traded briefly for the HBC in American territory on the St. Peters River. He accompanied Stephen H. Long on his Expedition to the source of the St. Peters River in 1823. He died at Lac Qui Parle, in the United States, in 1846.
[2] This likely Louis Nolin. See biographical appendix.
[3] This is Grant Forrest (1800–1878). See biographical appendix.
[4] This is likely Joseph Cadotte. See biographical appendix.
[5] This probably Cuthbert Grant. See biographical appendix.
[6] The context here does not permit an identification of which McDonald is meant.

George Simpson, Isle a la Crosse, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 12th Novembr 1822 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 91-92d]

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure of addressing you so fully of yesterdays Date that I have scarcely left myself anything to say but must endeavor to pick up some Parish news[1] for your amusement. – It is my intention next Season to vote you a patent for Boat building; the "Eclipse" performed Wonders under Sail she is a prodigy and with 8 good men she will beat any light canoe in the Country from York to Cumberland; it was Neck & Neck race between her & the Saskatchewan Canoe to Norway House in 10 days with strong head Winds and from thence to Cumberland we gained three Days; the Orkneymen however have no ambition to Travel in the Govrs Barge again and beyond Cumberland they did not stir one Inch being fairly worn out; the Season being early on my arrival there I determined on coming on to this place instead of going by Carlton by which I have saved about a month as Green Lake and Beaver River do not take until in the Season. – Parson West[2] and Miss Nosten[?] were encamped in Knee Lake when I passed, he will certainly take the shine out of her before the unfortunate Clerk get possession, I did not speak [to] them as they were about a mile leeward and we were running before a fine leading Wind. –

Mr. McGillivray allowed your Delegation [to] proceed wt the light canoe to La la Pluie as they complained of being weakly manned and La bot likewise accompanied them as a Guide that length so I was glad to retain Tom in office and he promised to restrain his concupiscence in future; – The Montreal Canoe left Norway House the day before my arrival so that we gained a Day upon them. – Mr. Robertson[3] I understand had a most extraordinary story to tell Joseph McGillivray[4] on his arrival from York, it was no other that We i.e. You and I were quite ashamed of ourselves for [illegible] removing[?] him and that we had made a thousand concessions and apologies; that it was very well that he was not at the Council as things would not have gone exactly as they did; that he knew however more of the intrigues of the Cabinet than most people, had a peep behind the Curtain and would do this, that & the other thing; that he was a prodigious favorite wt Mr. Halkett[5] who had paid him the most marked attention & he had opened that Gentlemans Eyes in short he made or attempted to make Joseph believe he was rara avis and would send us all to the right and left: at Norway House he remained one or two days arranging [fo. 91] his Family affairs proceeded to Moose Lake in a Colony Boat, remained there 2 Days building a House for Mam where he left her, had a pitched battle with Baptiste the little Iroquois of the Paw who tis said had the best of it, went on to Cumberland where he told Mr. Leith[6] that he discovered the cause of his removal no other than to make room for Mr. Joseph McGillivray and after having cooly and leisurely settled his domestic concerns and given vent

[1] "Parish news" is an idiom for trivial local gossip.
[2] Reverend John West (1778–1845). See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Factor Colin Robertson. See biographical appendix.
[4] Chief Trader Joseph McGillivray (1791–1832). See biographical appendix.
[5] John Halkett (1768–1852) was member if the HBC London Committee, and in 1822 he travelled with Andrew Bulger (the new Governor of Assiniboia) to Red River to assure the colonists that the estate would honour Selkirk's promises to them. He also presided over a temporary council of the Northern Department at York Factory in August of 1822. See biographical appendix.
[6] Chief Factor James Leith (1778–1838). See biographical appendix.

to his spleen in ill natured & illiberal remarks proceeded to his Wintering Ground for the purpose of giving the Coys. affairs a little of his attention; if the public duty is to be thus neglected and made a secondary consideration we had better shut shop at once as it is quite impossible that any good can come out of it; and we shall be highly culpable if the Council do not prevent a repetition of such conduct by noting in their Minutes their disappointment thereof; if Mr. Robertson is allowed to act in direct opposition to the Minutes of Council I see no reason why every Chief Factor & Chief Trader in the Country should not have the same privilege. Mr. McGillivray seems to have every thing in high order at Norway House and under his management the Expenses of that Establishment will be materially reduced. Mr. Leith is quite an altered man, fat strong & ruddy & seems to have taken an extraordinary fancy to Tom Isbister[1] or his Wife but it is not fair to deal in Scandal I shall not therefore tell all I know; that Gentleman seems to understand economy, will get the District into excellent order and is quite above little Chandler shop tricks in short seems to take a proper & liberal view of things generally. – Mr. Keith has been all politeness and attention and I quite regret having been such a burden to him;[2] both men and Indians seem to be in a high state of subordination; the Department is dreadfully overloaded with families no less than 102 women & children & no less than three births since my arrival here: White Fish seems to be favorable to procreation and had I a good pimp in my suite I might have been inclined to deposit a little of my Spawn, but have become so vastly tenacious of my reputation that no one can say to me "black is the White of your Eye."[3] I have determined on going to Gr. Slave Lake if possible & round by Hays River if it is established and shall make myself thoroughly acquainted with every circumstance worthy of remark in the Department, I already begin to find that the most trifling information is useful at times and can only be acquired by a personal survey of the Country. – The Columbia affairs occupy a good deal of my attention & I have serious thoughts of paying that Department a visit next Fall, my presence there might do some good & I do not fear the hardship of the undertaking; if the Season is at all favourable by starting from York via Nelson River about the same time as this year the Journey I have no doubt could be accomplished [fo. 91d] without much difficulty; the Americans I have no doubt will be there next year and the most expedient steps to be taken in that case is a matter of very important consideration. It had almost escaped me to mention that Robertson [Colin] has been making remarks about the very large Establishment of men kept at York this Season and from the casual enquiries made as to the numbers in other quarters I infer it has been a general topic of conversation but I set these Gentlemen who touched on the subject to rights and they are perfectly satisfied that there are not more than is absolutely required; on this matter as on every other connected with the business I have no doubt we shall be perfectly able to meet any enquiries that the Leaders of the opposition may bring forward; Bird[4] I imagine is at the bottom of that subject as he was eloquent thereon at Red River.

My families concerns I leave entirely to your kind management, if you can dispose of the Lady it will be satisfactory as she is an unnecessary & expensive appendage, I see no fun in keeping a Woman

[1] Tom Isbister (c. 1793–1836) was a clerk at Cumberland House. Tom Isbister's wife was Mary Kennedy whom he had married on 12 August 1821 at Norway House. See biographical appendix.
[2] Chief Factor George Keith (1785–1859). The burden Simpson speaks of, relates to the conflict the two had opposing each other in the Athabasca District in 1820-21. Both were posted there by the rival companies. See biographical appendix.
[3] An old saying meaning to find fault with someone, accuse then of a crime, or bring a charge against their character.
[4] Chief Factor James Bird Sr. (*c.* 1773–1856). See biographical appendix.

without enjoying her charms which my present rambling Life does not enable me to do; but if she is unmarketable I have no wish that she should be a general accommodation shop to all the young bucks at the Factory and in addition to her own chastity a padlock may be useful; Andrew is a neat handed Fellow & having been in China may perhaps know the pattern of those used in that part of the World: – While talking of Domestic affairs pray could you contrive a private or separate entrance to my apartments in the New Building? such as was in my old quarters; and if Leblanc[1] is not busy I should like a good sized Desk to write at as I found it inconvenient to have my papers loose on the Table last Season. Your old Swan River Cow is at Norway House & proves with calf, she is an Eye sore to Joseph McGillivray & will with a couple of Horses be sent to York in Spring. In talking with Mr. Keith [George] about the Steel Traps this morning we have discovered that he has very little Iron and I am apprehensive we shall not get our number from him. The whole of my Dogs from Split Lake Died of the Distemper that was raging at York but I have been laying Norway House, Cumberland & this place under contribution and am well furnished; Lavallie from Cumberland (who you recommended last year) is my Driver and on the whole we shall have a good set out. – McLeod[2] is a decent young man but not such a sharp fellow [fo. 92] as I took him for, he is thoughtless and requires to be kept at a distance which is done. – Joseph McGillivray visits Red River this winter p[er] Invitation from Clarke[3] and will give you all the News from that quarter; the latter Gentleman will have a difficult Game to play this year and if he does not do it satisfactorily I think Mr. James Keith should succeed him; it requires a man of system to carry the objects of the Committee into effect in that part of the Country and what I have seen of Mr. Keith I do not know anyone better qualified.

The removal of the old North West Books by Mr. McDonald I have reason to think was an arranged plan not for the purpose of inspection but to be in safe keeping; it is extraordinary how wise & considerate some people will be.

It is unnecessary to remind you that we shall have a large Mess next year and that a considerable supply of venison will be wanted: if the Indians could get a few young Deer we should give them another fair change. –

I have jumbled a great deal of deal of nonsense into this apology for a Letter the whole of which is in confidence for your perusal & thereafter to be committed to the flames. Dinner Bell is ringing I shall therefore conclude and with sentiments of much regard believe me always

My Dear Sir

Yours truly & Sincerely

Geo. Simpson [fo.92d]

[1] This is Pierre Leblanc (1782–1838), a craftsman and carpenter. See biographical appendix.
[2] Chief Trader John McLeod (1788–1849). See biographical appendix.
[3] This is Chief Factor John Clarke (1781–1852) who in 1822 was put in charge of Fort Garry in the Red River Settlement. Clarke's overbearing assertion of the company's authority in the Red River colony earned him the deep dislike of both Governor Andrew H. Bulger and the settlers. See biographical appendix.

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, Fort Garry, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 7th Jany 1824 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 125-136d]

My Dear Sir

After wishing you many happy returns of the Season and that each succeeding one may be fraught with every blessing you can desire than that which preceded it I shall give you whatever comes upper most that occurs to me as likely to offer you interest or amusement. –

I do not wish to appear selfish yet it is such a prevailing & fashionable failing that it would look like affectation were I to appear singular shall therefore indulge in a little egotism before I enter on less important topics; My voyage from York was tolerably good considering the low state of the Water having arrived without any accident at Norway House the Twelfth morng after my departure from York though beating Mr. Pangman[?] & his light Canoe by 24 hours; the poor man knew nothing about travelling, the people paid him no respect, they put up early & started late and [fo. 125] I apprehend [I] will make a wiser Voyage of it than [illegible] did the preceding year: At Norway House I overtook Mr. Pelly & suite[1] who had been recruiting two Days and started the fog [following] morning in company with them; in the Lake we had most boisterous Weather – my fellow Travellers were sick the whole passage, my little bark had quite enough of it but behaved admirably & had I been alone would have crossed the lake in three Days but instead of that we took 9 and I had much satisfaction in lodging them safe and sound at Fort Douglas. – The McDonald Family[2] arrived here about a week after us but the Voyage wrought off a vast deal of their gayety and Parson Jones[3] brought up the rear making his appearance about the 20th October. – The Colonists on our arrival were tolerable quiet but ripe for outrage & Violence if their demands and expectations were not fulfilled; the old Credit system we determined on abolishing at all hazards and when this was known plot plans & cabals were forming among the different classes but more particularly among [fo. 125d] the Meurons[4] who had determined either to have their wants supplied as usual or make free with the Stores; we however kept our people as much together as possible erected Bastions got all Mr. Pelly's property into our possession put ourselves in a state of defence & set the whole Colony on defence; this had the desired effect the people became alarmed a police of about 60 was formed Councils held and tranquility restored: Mr. Pelly being a stranger both to the people & the business I had to take the management of things generally and of course the whole odour of these measures was placed to my account, neither of us are as yet over popular but that does not annoy us much, we are however advancing gradually in their estimation and the estate[5] will benefit materially by the steps that have

[1] This was Robert Parker Pelly (1790–1867), the incoming Governor of Assiniboia (the Red River Settlement) (1823-1825) with his family. He replaced Andrew Bulger. See biographical appendix.

[2] This is likely the family of Alexander McDonell/Macdonell. Simpson, in his quickly scribbled letters, often interchanges McDonald with McDonell. See biographical appendix for McDonell/Macdonell, Alexander (b.*c.* 1774).

[3] This was the Rev. David Thomas Jones (179**6–**1844**), a** missionary of the Church Missionary Society. He replaced John West when the latter returned to England in 1823. See biographical appendix.

[4] The De Meurons was the name applied to the members of one of two demobilized regiments of mercenaries which fought on the British side during the War of 1812. Some were hired by Lord Selkirk to serve in the Red River Settlement as a protective force for the colony and settlers in the period after 1816. Given land in Red River, they settled there after 1821. They were a medley of Germans, Swiss, Italian, and French and were quarrelsome, hard to control, and poor settlers.

[5] The Selkirk Estate

been taken. Our Councillors are McDonald,[1] Thomas,[2] Cook,[3] Pritchard,[4] Logan[5] & Jones;[6] McKenzie[7] was out of courtesy invited to attend and both in the House & closet he is our best Senator, the rest are very poor [fo. 126] things. Thomas & Cook useless from age want of firmness & fear of losing their popularity – McDonald [McDonell] a dross designing ill natured wasp, Matthey[8] disappointed because he is not allowed to take a lead, Pritchard trifling, Logan stupid & ignorant & Jones inexperienced; the Councils are held at Fort Garry, I preside & matters are submitted to them as mere matter of form every thing being settled and decided on before they are consulted. – The first question of importance was the defence of the Establishment from the Meurons, every man of them say the old [illegible] I believed wished it in Flames as the name of the Coy is Gall to them and in the course of our discussions on the subject Captn Matthey felt disposed to handle Mr. [illegible] Munier very poorly & made use of an epithet which I did not consider sufficiently decorous and at once brought the Man of War up with an unsuppressed Volley which forced an explanation by way of apology from him. [fo.126d]

On another occasion we had nearly come to a rupture but he was again obliged to pull in his Horns; there is a little scandal connected therewith & may therefore be interesting so you shall have it – Soon after Captn Matthey's arrival he called on Mr. & Mrs. Pelly and in course of their interview he apologized for Mrs. Matthey's not having paid her respects to Mrs. Pelly arising from indisposition but that in the course of a few Days she would have that pleasure; Mr. Pelly immediately consulted me thereon & I at once declared it to be inadmissible on account of her character previous to Captn Matthey's acquaintance wt her; her living at present in a state of prostitution wt him when they must be regularly married and her conduct during his absence and that to avoid hurting Matthey's feeling by shutting their Door against the Woman recommended his writing Matthey a note thereon which was accordingly done; in answer to which Mr. Matthey the following Day addressed him in the most extraordinary Epistle laying down the law as regarded Etiquette in such cases at the different Courts & in different societies in Europe contending thus it was Mrs. Pelly's duty to receive his Wife, that her conduct since she became Mrs. Matthey was inculpable and [fo. 127] any indignity offered to her would be taken up by him as if denied to himself: in short his letter created hostility of the most deadly kind: further correspondence I saw would make the matter worse & feeling that I was instrumental in entering upon it, I insisted on settling it for which purpose Matthey & I had an interview: the folg [following] Day when I told the Gallant Captain such a tale as struck him Dumb with astonishment no other than that Madame Matthey had had an Amour wt young Forrest during the whole of last Winter & Spring that her deportment was loose indecorous and irregular during his absence that she was not only accused of adultery but child murder & that by all accounts she was one of the greatest strumpets in the settlement; this Expose as a matter of course disposed of the intended ceremonial &

[1] This is Alexander McDonell/Macdonell (b.*c.* 1774). See biographical appendix.
[2] This is Thomas Thomas (c.a. 1766–1828). See biographical appendix.
[3] This is William Hemmings Cook (c. 1766–1846). See biographical appendix.
[4] This is John Pritchard (1777–1855). See biographical appendix.
[5] This is Robert Logan (1773–1866). See biographical appendix.
[6] This is the Rev. David Thomas Jones (179**6–**1844**).** See biographical appendix.
[7] This is Chief Factor Donald McKenzie (1783–1851). See biographical appendix.
[8] This is Jacques Frederick Matthey (1777–1850), a De Meuron commander. See biographical appendix.

the Captn wt Xtain resignation pocketed the affront like a true philosopher; he & the Lady live together as usual and as if nothing had happened. – The Councillors last year had the entire management & control of poor Bulger[1] who although clever at his pew was a man of no conduct & exceedingly weak scarcely ever Sober and so anxious to gain popularity that [fo. 127d] no expense was spared to attain it and the consequence is that the Estate suffered dreadfully; previous to his departure he was sore and dissatisfied at being superseded and did any thing in his power to excite the people to the most desperate measures; told the Meurons in a body that they were now shaken off by the Selkirk Family and instead of being free & independent settlers that they were the Slaves of the Coy who would now delight in exhibiting their arbitrary & oppressive authority, held out the same inflammatory doctrine to the Councillors and in short infused such a spirit of disaffection among all classes toward the Coy that the inmates of Fort Garry were exposed to some danger & the feeling against us is not yet entirely removed; it manifested itself particularly two months ago when Cuthbert Grant[2] was assaulted in the execution of his duty by Benjn Gunn[3] & some other discharged Servants on old Scores; he defended himself manfully and gave two of the fellows a pounding which balanced the account as far as regarded him but I accorded the attack upon one of our Clerks as a gross insult on the whole Concern & hauled Gunn up before the Council; they had all determined [fo. 128] on acquitting him. Mr. Pelly, Jones, McKenzie & self excepted. He was however after a three day trial and notwithstanding the most clear & [illegible] prying found guilty & fined £10; On this occasion they exhibited their ill will towards the Coy conspicuously; Macdonell became their mouth piece and fired off a volley of abuse for keeping Grant at the Forks but I handed the [illegible] of Governor very unceremoniously & shut his potatoe trap in a twinkling.

The Committees Letter by Mr. Garry[?] being addressed to the Council as well as the Gentlemen in charge of Fort Garry came under their observation but with a proviso that it should not be made public until my arrival. Mr. Bird[4] however being a member thereof insisted that it should be plastered to the Church Door but was disappointed and no men has got wind than we considered proper. – The old Gentleman is as sore as a Boil and has been industriously misrepresenting the circumstances connected with his retirement to my prejudice; Robertson[5] has taken it up very warmly and means to bring it before the Council no doubt feeling that [fo. 128d] as he is useless the next may be his own turn and so far his penetrating Eye may perhaps see clearly for once; I am however prepared to meet them and having already submitted the case to a higher tribunal & confident in the rectitude of my own conduct I do not regard their threats the whiff of a tobacco pipe. – Robertson is become quite a reformer of abuses because he is so closely watched that he cannot carry them to any great lengths himself and finds fault with circumstances that cannot be controlled because he has not judgement to discover the difficulties: on my arrival at Norway House I discovered that he had been

[1] Governor Andrew Bulger. See biographical appendix.
[2] Cuthbert Grant (1794/96–1854) is best known for leading Métis forces at the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks where Governor Semple was killed. Following the merger of the NWC and HBC he was engaged by the HBC in 1823, but retired a year later and founded the settlement of White Horse Plain/St. François Xavier in the Red River Settlement. In that year, 1824, the HBC appointed him "Warden of the Plains" for £200 per year to prevent illicit trading in the district. See biographical appendix.
[3] Benjamin Gunn (1791–1847). See biographical appendix.
[4] Chief Factor James Bird Sr. See biographical appendix.
[5] Chief Factor Colin Robertson. See biographical appendix.

stirring up the contents of his unfurnished attic to discover some mismanagement on our part but the only palpable neglect of duty was not sending the Discharged Canadians from York with Boat Loads of Goods for Red River without adouting to the fact that none of these men ever saw a Boat before and that Steersmen were so scarce that Mr. Leith[1] was obliged to part wt Gibson one of his Freemen to make shift in one of the Colony Boats – finding he was out in his reckoning [fo. 129] there he got on another tack and declared that we had brought disgrace on the whole Concern (which would not only get wind in the Courts of Law but might find its way to the British House of Parliament & from there to the public print) in discharging Donald Gunn[2] and McDonald[3] from Merrys House[4] these men having been engaged by your directions (without the authority of the Council) to Mr. Work[5] & that the latter Gentleman as well as the unfortunate men who had been thus unjustly treated merely to conceal the discretionary powers you assumed had confirmed this report: both these people I have examined on the subject and they deny that they were engaged or even asked to engage & the only reason McDonald had to suppose he was to be returned in the summer that Mr. Work told him he was to remain in charge until returned by some other Gentleman: in respect to Gunn the sum total of his engagement appears in the enclosed extract of a letter from Mr. Work to him which you can make use of if any further question are asked. –

An American Exploring Party under the Command [fo. 129d] of a Major Long came to this place last Autumn from the River St. Peters and evidently for the purpose of ascertaining the boundary line between the British & United States territory a point on the 49th parallel of Latitude they have fixed about two miles on this side of the Pambina Forts or site of the old Establishment and in order to avoid the risk of infraction of territorial rights we have withdrawn the post to the north of this point; while at Pambina Nolin[6] made himself busy in collecting signatures to our application to the American Govt that those selling & trading to the south of this point should not be disturbed & holding themselves in readiness to sever allegiance to their authority but out of a population of about 300 Souls he could get only 12 names to the document: Major Long from hence proceeded to the Sault St. Mary's via Lac la Pluie & Fort William he appears to have conducted himself with great propriety: the mission is no doubt connected with some object embracing other views than mere information and I should not be surprised to see in the course of an other year a military post [fo. 130] of observation established in our immediate neighbourhood and as the Government appears so anxious about acquisition of Territory & population tis not improbable that they may have an eye towards Ruperts Land and its Floundering Settlement of Red River. –

By advices received from Dr McLoughlin[7] in the Fall it appears that Lac la Pluie is again the scene of opposition; haut of Fou du Lac had sent a party of 12 or 15 and they were to have divided themselves into three establishments but the particular points they had not determined. The Dr. in

[1] Chief Factor James Leith (1777–1838). See biographical appendix.
[2] Donald Gunn (1797–1878). He went free from the HBC in 1822 and settled at Red River. See biographical appendix.
[3] This McDonald was not identifiable.
[4] Merry's House was a small outpost of the Hudson's Bay Company operating from about 1801–1824, 1827–1832, and in the 1860s. It was located southwest of Severn Factory, between Red Sucker Lake and God's Lake near what is today the Manitoba/Ontario Border.
[5] This is John Work (1792–1861). See biographical appendix.
[6] Louis Nolin. See biographical appendix.
[7] Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin (1784–1857). See biographical appendix.

my opinion has gone on a wrong principle this year as instead of meeting them formidably and disputing every Skin with them he has made up his mind to make profits and thereby enables them to get firmly established whereas on the other hand tis probable they would have withdrawn altogether had they found that no relations could be made; there are [fo. 130d] many Establishments over burthened with men & goods while Lac la Pluie is short of both because he would not have them and with the advantage we possess it is really disgraceful to us that this wretched opposition should obtain a footing; the Dr. has made no demand upon us we have however sent him a re-enforcement of six men from this District and I have requested Mr. McDonald[1] Bas de la Riviere & Mr. Bird[2] to forward as many to him as they can spare so that in all I expect he will have 16 to 18 men in addition to his own compliment. –

Mr. McDonald paid us a visit in the Fall he was in tolerable good humour but not over facetious; he sunk one of his Boats in the Winnipeg or rather got it on a sand bank where it filled but there was no damage done to his goods a few of his own Luxuries got wet; he was to have been here to spend the holy days but sent an apology a few Days previous on the score of ill health, had he said ill humour it might perhaps have been nearer [fo. 131] the mark as his Letter is evidently written during a fit of bile; among other things he complains that he has not materials to make up his Accounts the Tariff being incomplete and that it is no fault of Mr. Ross's[3] as he applied repeatedly for the necessary documents in Company notes however with Mr. Bell[4] I find he has the same Tariff with every other person a copy of the Minutes of Council and every thing else he requested so that I have turned the tables on him denied pointedly that any thing was wanting at York and Mr. Ross was wrong; he is violent about Netley Creek[5] & says that all his Indians have been encouraged to go thither although it happens that Pisk[6] has only seen one to whom he gave nothing & from whom he received as much; but the fact is that not an Indian will remain with him, they are all gone to the Plains and I suspect his post will this year do nothing; he is turning his attention to the rearing of cattle, pigs, Bulls & [illegible] not doubt determined to lessen his [illegible] at Bas de la Riviere, I do not believe [fo. 131d] he will visit York this year as he gave McKenzie a hint to this effect and he does not like to throw the chance of a removal away. –

Mess[rs] Bird[7] and Allan McDonell[8] were here about a month ago on a visit they report favourably of the prospects in Upper Red River particularly McDonell at Qu'Appelle; the latter Post we have determined in keeping up & withdrawing the former as the Indians have deserted it and go to Pembina in order to be near the freemen and Americans: Mr. McDonell is not quite recovered but

[1] This is Chief Factor John McDonald (Le Borgne) (1770–1828). From 1823 to 1827 he was in charge of the Winnipeg River District, with headquarters at Bas de la Rivière (Fort Alexander). See biographical appendix.
[2] Chief Factor James Bird Sr. See biographical appendix.
[3] This is Donald Ross (1797–1852), who was a clerk at York Factory. See biographical appendix.
[4] This is John Bell (1799–1868), a clerk at Red River. See biographical Appendix.
[5] Both the NWC and HBC maintained posts near the mouth of the Red River near Netley Creek (Rivière-aux-Morts) at various times after 1800. The Hudson's Bay Company post there from 1812 to about 1816 was know as "Fort William." After the merger in 1821, the HBC operated a post here, at least intermittently, until 1831. HBCA D.232/1-3; B.63/f/1, fos. 4d-5. CMS Records, C.1/M1, Mission Book 1, page 438 (Reel A77).
[6] This is likely Thomas Kipling aka "Pisk" (b.c. 1792). See biographical appendix.
[7] Chief Factor James Bird Sr. See biographical appendix.
[8] Chief Trader Allan McDonell (1776–1859). See biographical appendix.

much better & I think casts a Sharp eye at Miss Allez[1] who is now the Toast of the Settlement; she is about to undertake the management of a School for the instruction of the Female Children of the Gentlemen in the Service; I drew up the Prospectus & Circular which is approved by all who have yet seen it: I think you should send your little Girl, she will be taken great care of & the young Lady I consider well qualified for the situation she is about to undertake [fo. 132] being properly correct in her Conduct well informed & good humoured; Mrs. Pelly takes a deep interest in the business & you may depend on her seeing justice done to the Children. –

The McDonell Ladies do not make such a conspicuous figure as they did at York and I believe are heartily tired of Red River already, we meet the McDonells only three times & Miss Allez only at the Church or Fort Douglas. –

The more I see of Mr. Pelly and his Family the more I like them, he is a sensible intelligent man – most exemplary in private life and firm & correct in business We are together Daily – indeed he thinks the management of things has fallen on me almost entirely but he is now getting Master of his business& the situation is at length well filled; they now reside at Fort Douglas but as the place could not stand another year & the distance from Fort Garry being extremely inconvenient we have employed all our supernumerary hands in erecting [fo. 132d] a fresh establishment for them adjoining this place divided merely by the stockades so that they can protect each other in case of need. –

Mess[rs] Clarke[2] and McMurray[3] left us two days ago after spending the holy days here, they calculate on large returns this year and I do believe there will be a material improvement. – The Committees Letter has annoyed Clarke very much and no wonder as it is very severe more so I think than necessary & had they been possessed of the information which they now have tis more than probable it would not have been written;[4] poor Clarke is likewise in trouble about his private affairs. Mr. Shaw[5] having broken faith with him in declining to fulfil some engagements which he undertook to settle for him when in Canada and it turns out that Clarke instead of being worth the large sums and domains he talked about is deeply in debt; I never saw him behave so well, he was civil polite & guarded in his Conduct since some part of his past follies and I think will improve: – [fo. 133]

Several Families of Settlers withdrew to the States in the course of last Summer and Fall and tis feared that few of them reached their destination having been murdered by the Sioux or Starved to death; One poor man Tully the Blacksmith with his wife and three children left this place since my arrival, the man woman & one of the Children were murdered and their bodies found & the other two children were taken by the Indians to Lac Traverse; these distressing events will I think shut up that outlet but we must endeavor to get some troublesome characters out by other channels. –

Two American Drivers from St. Louis brought a large herd of Cattle here [from] that neighbourhood to this place last Summer & sold them at an average price of about £7 a head I was

[1] This is Marry Allex (1805–1838) who was the daughter of John Allez and Mary Macdonell/McDonald, a surveyor who had immigrated to the RRS in 1822 from Guernsey, in the Channel Islands. See biographical appendix.
[2] Chief Factor John Clarke (1781–1852). See biographical appendix.
[3] This is likely Chief Trader Thomas McMurray (1776–1849). See biographical appendix.
[4] John Clarke as the HBC proprietor of Fort Garry during the governorship of Andrew Bulger, and he had a dispute with him over the trading rights of the Red River settlers. After Bulger complained to the London Committee and Selkirk administrations, the London Committee sided with the settlers and upbraided both Clarke and Simpson.
[5] This may be Angus Shaw (d. 1832). See biographical appendix.

obliged to give Dft[s] [drafts] in payment on account of retired Servants payable 15 April 1825; by the return of those people I wrote to the Committee. –

Halcro[1] is still an invalid & confined to the House he has been in a most dangerous way but is rather on the mending hand yet will never be himself again, in one of his desperate moments he married his woman previous [fo. 133d] to taking the Sacrament; I believe he would now break the bargain could it be done, but in that case would part with the girl as he has now taken a serious religious cast. –

Cuthbert Grant is regularly married to a daughter of McGillis[2] by whom he gets £500 & I believe has some idea of turning Settler with his Father in Law next Season; he is a good tempered well behaved man but quite useless & his Saly [salary] will be £120 saved. – Stewart[3] is stupid Lazy and inattentive he must make his [illegible] next Fall. – McDermot[4] is at Pambina but goes free in Spring and Burke[5] is to be transferred to Mr. Pelly. – He is this winter with Mr. Bird. Mr. Pelly has now got Henderson[6] & Feistel[7] the former I will bring to York as his assistance will be useful in the writing way & he will renew his Engagement if asked to do so; he is a good Clerk & I think we should not part with him. – Feistel will continue with Mr. Pelly and Kempt[8] goes Home by the Ship. – McDonnell's son wishes to be admitted into the Service, his is a fine stout active young man & might do well after [fo. 134] a 7 year apprenticeship in McKenzie River. – I am almost sorry we have renewed Shaw's[9] engagement, he will do us little credit & does not please Clarke;[10] he broke things at Norway House having been drunk two or three days successively and takes no pains to make himself useful at Swan River. –

Your old acquaintance William Flett[11] late of Saskatchewan Died at this place about two months ago and one of the Coy[s] servants "White" a Canadian from Mandan House cannot live 24 hours longer a consequence of having accidently cut the main artery of the thigh too near the groin to admit of being taken up or amputation. Putrification has taken place and must soon terminate the poor man's existence; a son of McGillis broke his leg a few Days ago likewise Sandy Work from Severn: you have now got all the Deaths, Marriages and accidents and nearly all of my news I must however endeavor to file another shot although I scarcely know what to say. – [fo.134d]

Our Stock of Tobacco was very insufficient to meet the demands of the Shop and Trade – we therefore found it necessary to send for twenty rolls to Norway House but the Boat was set fast on the Return Voyage at Leaf River where the Lading still remains and is likely to continue there until the opening of the Navigation. –

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[1] Joshua Halcro (1786–1825) had been a clerk at Fort Dauphin, but becoming ill had spent the winter of 1823–1824 at Red River. In 1824 he was sent back to Britain to seek medical help but died in 18925. See biographical appendix.
[2] Angus McGillis (1774–1842). See biographical appendix. The daughter's name was Marie-Marguerite McGillis.
[3] This likely John Stewart, a Steward at York Factory.
[4] Andrew McDermot (1790–1881). See biographical appendix.
[5] John Palmer Bourke (1791–1851). See biographical appendix.
[6] This is John Henderson from Scotland. See biographical appendix.
[7] Anthony Feistel. See biographical appendix.
[8] This is William Kempt, a surveyor. See biographical appendix.
[9] This may be William Shaw. See biographical appendix.
[10] Chief Factor John Clarke. See biographical appendix.
[11] William Flett (b.*c.* 1762–1823). See biographical appendix.

Your Protégé Louis was under the charge of Mr. Hargrave until the New Year but the boy was so wild and thoughtless and Mr. Hargrave so much occupied that he did little good and without my knowledge or approbation was sent to Board at Mr. Garrocks in order to attend Mr. Harbridges School being too far distant to go daily from this Establishment. Harbridge has no control over his pupils the boy therefore was not likely to benefit much with him and save of picking up bad habits [illegible] subjecting you to a considerable expense as I understand you pay any outlays made on his account I have in consequence directed Mr. Hargrave to get him back and as Mr. Halcro is an idle man have agreed that he shall keep an eye upon & teach him regularly by this means the boy will improve and cost you nothing but his clothing. –

I should like to get into my new habitation [fo. 135] in Spring if it is finished and if not I should be glad that you would put it in a forward state as my old quarters are so crazy that I must go to the expense of a [illegible] Policy – if lodged there again. – Here we are but miserably housed; the Hall is so well ventilated that it is difficult to keep the candles lit in boisterous weather and notwithstanding my room & McKenzies[1] being caulked within these last few days we frequently run the risk of freezing the kitchen communicates behind by a passage of 3 feet and McKenzie's nursery under the charge of Madame Dunud is at the end thereof; The Buildings are in a very dilapidated state & must undergo repairs in Spring; We have only three Females in the Garrison – Madams Halcro, Grant & Denud and the Gov. & Chief Factor are considered two of the most exemplary & several Bachelors in the Settlement. – We see no Compy except on very particular occasions and then show off handsomely, Mrs. Pelly calls here occasionally & to the McDonalds we [2 illegible words] off the weather was so bad that Mrs. Pelly could [fo. 135d] not attend. The Councillors were of the party and a hop terminated the festival;

On New Years Eve we gave an Entertainment to all the Nobility & Gentry which went off very pleasantly. Mr. Pelly gives small parties occasionally his house not admitting of having all hands but the Councillors do not enjoy them so much as they did Bulgers because they are not allowed to encamp under the Table. –

I wish you would be good enough to allow Leblanc [Pierre] to make me a writing board about the size & form of a large writing desk cover with Cloth as my Desk is so much cramped that I cannot write upon it and the continued bending over the Table affected my breast seriously last Season. –

If the white Governor comes up to Norway House in Spring for the purpose of conducting the Provision Craft to Split Lake I shall expect the pleasure of learning from you and by the return of this Express I calculate in being favoured with full [fo. 136] and interesting public and private Dispatches. –

My time is consistently occupied about the affairs of this troublesome Settlement and although I am attempting to study French under the tutelage of Jessop I make little progress; Your multifarious duties no doubt give you little time for recreation yet if the distance did not expend half what really is we would find ways & means to enjoy a little of each others Society than which I can verily assure you nothing would afford me greater delight. –

[1] Chief Factor Donald Mckenzie (1783–1851). HBC officer in charge of Red River. See biographical appendix.

If you cannot decipher this scrawl it is of little importance and you may lay it past until we meet when I shall endeavor to assist you and commit it at once to the Flames and with sincere regard believe me always.

My Dear Sir
Yours most truly
Geo. Simpson [fo.136d]

George Simpson, Fort Garry, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 8th June 1824 (Private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos 154-155]

My Dear Sir

I wrote you so fully in the course of the winter that at present I have little to say and particularly so as we are likely to meet about the time this gets to hand. –

In the event of Mr. McDonell's getting to York before me I think it right to send for your information a copy of a letter addressed to the Chief Factors & Chief Traders at Norway House likewise a statement of the Provisions required to be left on the [illegible]; by the letter addressed to those Gentlemen you will see that I am anxious to get the Colony goods transported as far as Merrys House as soon as possible and at the least possible Expense; it can be done with no inconvenience to the trade if Gentlemen are inclined to exert [fo. 154] themselves and study their own interest: I am satisfied that no detention will arise on your part and would recommend that all the Boats be hauled ashore and repaired immediately on arrival so as to start after resting at York Three or Four Days.

Enclosed you will likewise receive a memorandum of Gov. Pelly and a list of the supplies in Luxuries he will require; his property likewise all belonging to individuals in the Estate I think should be forwarded by the Craft sent down by Settlers for the purpose of transporting in Freight and I think the rate should not exceed 25 to 30p per piece. –

My Boat is now leaving & I shall be off for Bas de la Riviere in the course of an hour, the house is full of people requiring attending & I am bothered out of my senses which is the only apology & I don't [fo. 154d] say you will consider it a sufficient one for this hurried scribe. –

Believe me always
My Dear Sir
Yours truly
Geo. Simpson [fo. 155]

George Simpson, Fort Assiniboine, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 2nd October 1824 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos 173-174d]

My Dear Sir

I cannot think of proceeding further without reporting progress, indeed I have little else to say as nothing connected with business has struck me since we parted worthy of being communicated or which cannot stay cool until we meet nor have we fallen in with any adventure deserving record. –

To Isle a la Crosse we had a fair passage – 22 Days considering we lost 4 days in searching for a guide at Nelson House & wind bound at Point au March. – The Beaver River was lower than it has ever been known we therefore took 10 days to the Moose Portage; the little Beaver[1] did not offer sufficient water to quench the Freeman's thirst we had therefore to proceed by an Indian Track by a succession of long & short Portages & small Lakes to Lac [fo. 173] la Biche and overtook the Dr.[2] (who started 20 days before us and marched with all his might) in Riviere la Biche from which we have travelled in company arrived here this morning & start before Sun Rise tomorrow expecting to reach the Portage on 9th or 10th. – The Beaver River route is D___nd in my estimation and instead of continuing it I now propose next Season that the Columbia light canoe crew assist in taking the Saskatchewan outfit & returns out & in and cross over from this place and the Lesser Slave Lake people in like manner by this means the Lesser Slave Lake business can be done by the Crew of one Boat and the Saskatchewan will afford a reduction of 10 or 12 crew; with this, topping off the Athabasca light canoe & a few more reductions we shall bring down the complement of men for the Northern Department to 500 and I am convinced that we shall do our business better with 50 Clerks than our present quota of 64. – [fo. 173d]

In the event of there being any Express from York after receipt of this have the goodness to send me note of the Provisions that will be required say Pemican Grease & Indian Corn. Likewise the quantity of flour & grain to be taken down and the quantity Flour to be left at Norway House for distribution. –

It is most desirable that the whole of the Depot remains at Norway House should be brought off this Season it has been productive of much confusion & the sooner it is brought to the level of a simple trading post the better. –

If there was a possibility of making a district Shop for the Red River Settlers it would save us much trouble as they interfere with the business of the equipment Shop most seriously.

Since I left you I had once made up my mind to return by New Caledonia and Athabasca but fear that Fraser River does not [fo. 174] break up sufficiently early to accomplish this desirable object; I shall learn more about it as we go along & if not practicable I shall return by Jaspers House cross from hence to Edmonton & accompany the Saskatchewan [illegible].

You will be surprised to learn that our Friend John Stuart[3] has taken to himself a Young rib at Norway House. Chopping and changing seems to be quite the order of the Day. – I am anxious to know how the Ship time passed but must suspend my curiosity until I get to Cumberland when I shall expect a long and interesting volume from you. –

With best wishes & sincere regard believe me to be
My Dear Sir
Yours most truly
Geo. Simpson [fo. 174d]

[1] The Little Beaver River is now known as the The Amisk River. It is a small tributary of the Beaver River.
[2] Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin. See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Factor John Stuart (1780–1847). See biographical appendix.

George Simpson, Saskatchewan River, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 10th May 1825 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 190-191]

My Dear Sir

Here I am safe and sound after having got through a long but pleasant Voyage affording me much satisfaction from a conviction that my presence has done much good to the general interests wherever I have passed. – From the accompanying dispatch you will see that I have taken up the affairs of the West Side of the Mountains very earnestly and so confident am I that the business if properly entered into and conducted on the footing recommended will succeed that I would not hesitate one minute to invest my last shilling into the speculation. The Dr. [McLouglin] fell readily into my views and on the whole I am much pleased with him and Friend Kennedy[1] although talking of retirement is most anxious to see the business taken up in the scheme proposed: on this subject I believe I know your sentiments already and calculate on you supporting the measure; I shall say no more thereon at present but expect that you will favor me with your ideas both publicly & privately as early as possible.

If the majority of our Members of Council fall in with my views & that I find after visiting Red River & the rec[t] [receipt] of my letters by the Ship & Spring – that my presence can be dispensed with I shall start from Norway House about the 1[st] of July for England but on no other condition than that a Council will be held at Norway House for the purpose of settling the opportunity and principal arrangements of the Season and every thing else connected with the business is left to your individual management as I know so much of our Legislators that discard jealousy & dissention would be the order of the Day if a Council was held at York by virtue of the Special Commission. –

The destructive fire at Norway House I fear will put us to most serious inconvenience but our stock of goods at York & the Inventories throughout the Country should meet all the demands of the current year. – Provisions are very scarce, the Saskatchewan will [fo. 190] not bring out 50 bags pemican and unless McKenzie[2] has had a considerable stock of grain we shall have much difficulty in getting through the business of the season. –

My other letter of this Date explains the object of my visit to the Colony; it will be a tedious fatiguing & dangerous journey but it must be undertaken. – Our Friend Macmillan[3] has been an host of Strength to me, he has had no sinecure of it and is really a sterling good fellow. – I expect a long private letter from you on my arrival at Norway House giving all the news public & private which will be a great treat to me as I have heard nothing as yet but what the official documents communicate. – Herewith you shall receive some letters from your Columbia correspondents which I suppose will give you all the chit chat and my Chinook adventures you will have when we meet. – We must this Season make great reductions in Clerks, men & outfits otherwise the business cannot go on well; Every Commissioned Gentleman must now a days have clerks to do their duty and a posse of idle useless Servants; we must really check this extravagance & folly otherwise your Commissioned Gentlemen will never be able to return in Fortunes. –

[1] Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy (1781–1832). See biographical appendix.
[2] Chief Factor Donald Mckenzie (1783–1851). HBC officer in charge of Red River. See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Trader James McMillan (1783–1858). See biographical appendix.

Some of our Gentlemen have broke through standing orders in Council this Season we must bring them to book otherwise our Senatorial proceedings will turn out a bottle of Smoke. – Larocque[1] has done nothing at the Mountain & I have directed the Post be withdrawn; he goes to York this Season but I would recommend you specially avoiding any communication with him except in dry matters of business as he is inclined to be snappish: –

If you have any private letters to my address be so good to forward them by Isbister[2] to Norway House and let him take the regular route in coming up so that I may meet him in the event of starting for the Factory previous to his arrival. – [fo. 190d]

I shall write to you by the first craft that go down & beg to recommend you getting as much of the Colony supplies ready as possible in order that the Boats of the near hand posts be employed in transport immediately after their arrival at the Factory. – Pray secure me comfortable quarters, not a Damp room, if the House you intended for me is not finished perhaps you can give me a berth near yourself. – I expect to be with John Stuart[3] tomorrow but do not suppose my stay at Carlton will exceed one hour as I have not an hour to lose in order to get to the Settlement before the Brigade starts; from thence I shall proceed to Bas de la Riviere where I will wait the light canoe until the 12 June & if she does not appear by that Date I shall make the best of my way to Norway House. –

This I trust will find you well and hearty & free from Scurvy and all other ailments. – McMillan joins me in best regards & believe me always

My Dear Sir

Yours Sincerely

Geo. Simpson [fo. 191]

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 1st June 1825 (Private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fo. 208-209]

My Dear Sir

Here we arrived with our Scalps such as they are but had a very laborious and harassing Journey of it;[4] McMillan is recruiting fast and so was myself until late last night when I was attached by a violent Bowel complaint which has placed my name on the Drs. list. – Even Pelly and Friend McKenzie[5] & all the other good folks at this place are as I left them; McKenzie accompanies us as far as Norway House but goes no further as it is necessary he should assume the Govr on Gov. Pelly's Departure: in the event of his Council approving my plan of visiting England and falling in with my views in respect to the Legislation of the Season I shall proceed direct from Norway House as both Govr Pelly & myself are of opinion from the present tranquil state of the Colony that McKenzie is sufficiently competent to the management of its affairs for the Season. – Govr Pelly is more popular [fo. 208] than

[1] Chief Trader Joseph Felix Larocque. See biographical appendix.
[2] Tom Isbister (c.1793–1836). See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Factor John Stuart (1780–1847). See biographical appendix.
[4] They travelled overland from Fort Carlton.
[5] Chief Factor Donald McKenzie assumed the Governorship of Assiniboia in 1825, after Gov. Pelly departed. See biographical appendix.

he was last year and very decidedly so as he is really a worthy good man: Mr. Jones[1] retains his popularity with many and the Catholic Gentlemen who have more influence in this Settlement than all the Gov^rs^ Councils & great men put together make a very proper and discrete use thereof; they merit every attention we can shew them as they are well disposed towards the Company and should it hereafter escape me I think it would be wise to repeat the present of Luxuries made last year; to this matter I request the favour of your attention. –

I shall expect to receive an answer to my communications from the Saskatchewan at Norway House before the 1^st^ July as if I do go to England I must be off by that date but on the contrary you will see me at York about the latter end of this Month; when you will receive a Budget of News from me & if I have not the pleasure of communicating wt you personally you will be on [two illegible words] at great length both public & private: [fo. 208d]

The Garrison is full of people waiting an audience of me. I must therefore stop and I trust with sincere regard

Believe me always Yours most sincerely

Geo. Simpson [fo. 209]

George Simpson, Norway House, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 28 Aug^t^ 1826 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 283-284]

My Dear Sir

Pray write McLeod[2] very particularly on my point as he is ever more stupid than Pruden.[3]

Charles Forrest[4] might be a useful man here as a support for McLeod if you think so & think he can be spared from Oxford it may be well to send him up. – The people should be dispatched as early as possible as they have much to do before Navigation sets fast. [fo. 283] I find Rossil has been at the Factory gates for his wife if he makes his appearance again I hope he will have cause to recollect it. I can learn nothing of him here – pray keep an eye on the commodity if she brings forth any thing in proper time & of the right color let them be taken care of but if any thing be amiss let the whole be bundled about their business. – Whatever she requires in moderation may be given to her. –

I shall expect the pleasure of hearing from you by the [fo. 283d] Ship and Winter Express & do me the favor to let your communications both public & private be full. –

Ever yours most Sincerely

Geo. Simpson

P.S. Your affairs shall meet the same attention as my own and the arrangements of them I trust will give you satisfaction. It may be well to write a note to McKenzie saying that if Rossille appears at Oxford he is to have [three illegible words] & if any Indians harbour him they shall have no supplies. G.S. [fo. 284]

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[1] Rev. David T. Jones. See biographical appendix.
[2] Chief Trader John McLeod (1788–1849). See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Trader Peter Pruden (1778–1868). See biographical appendix.
[4] Charles Forrest, a brother of Grant Forrest, died in 1851. See biographical appendix.

George Simpson, Lac la Pluie, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 9th Septr 1826 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 289-290]

My Dear Sir

Here we are again after a boisterous passage and about to prosecute our Voyage in an hour hence.

At Bas de la Riviere I met Grant[1] he is ready to embark on the Snake Expedition on our own terms, but he apprehends that a two years supply of ammunition, tobacco & other necessaries could not be taken from York; he is however to consult D. McKenzie[2] on that subject and if he thinks the Scheme a good one the people will be secured in the course of the winter and the party in readiness to proceed as they may be [illegible] on my arrival in the Spring; it will not do to allow them to visit any of our Establishments in the Columbia except Fort Vancouver in May of June 1829 as they would derange the business of the whole Department. – if the enterprise cannot be carried into effect otherwise it must be abandoned: Mr. McKenzie will address you on the subject by Winter Express and I think McMurray should be at York & in readiness by the 1st to the 5th of [Feby or July] at all events. – I have been reconsidering the object of your trip to Severn and when I reflect on the magnitude and responsibility of your charge I think it may be deferred; it would occupy you fully a month and occasion more anxiety than good for you indeed it has already cost myself not a little and if it is not undertaken by the time this gets [fo. 289] to hand I would recommend it being abandoned. – In respect to your Spring Voyage I fear you cannot get to Jack River and through your business there in time to me at Bas de la Riviere when I have approved D. McKenzie & Grant to be on the 10th or 12th May; if therefore you cannot get there by the 12th or to Red River by the 15th I think you had better remain at Jack River until I join you. – Our one eyed Friend[3] had nearly quarreled with me but we parted good Friends; he will not start this year but goes to Canada on Furlough next & told me in confidence that "by God" he would not budge until 1829 when he would avail himself of his rotation & return no more; I replied that if he got a rotation he might [illegible] go down next year but to hold himself in readiness for crossing the mountains. – I presented the letter to the Committee on the subject of your Expenses for his Signature, he had heard of it before and had prepared a speech on the occasion, after hearing him out I put one or two home questions to him and without answering them he took up the pen and did the mindful. – He found great fault wt you for giving him green strouds instead of blue and sending him no [illegible] which of course was all design. –

If our inland Friends complained of their outfits this Season I think they ought to do so with some reason next as in my humble opinion they ought now that Beaver Hunting is discouraged to be reduced fully ⅓ in dry goods particularly and our annual Indent to be under £12,000 including charges and the Red River Outfit: if this be not done and a few more clerks and men got rid of we shall not do so well as we ought to do; if you therefore make up the outfit [fo. 289d] on that principle say ⅓ off the outfits of this year we shall muster Strength enough to carry it through. –

[1] This is Richard Grant (1793–1862). See biographical appendix. He did not participate in the Snake Expedition this year.
[2] Chief Factor Donald McKenzie (1783–1851). See biographical appendix.
[3] This is John McDonald (le Borgne or "one-eyed McDonald) 1770–1828. See biographical appendix.

We should in future take special care that not a Bale be unpacked at Jack River as the delay & inconvenience occasioned by unbaling & repacking is truly vexations. Mr. Stuart [John] lost more than a week thereby this year. – Robertson [Colin] is at this place, his Wife was so ill as to be unable to proceed with Allan McDonell; If she is better by the time Ross [Donald] comes in the course of a day or two they will embark wt him; – Your friend McIntosh[1] I find is not true blue! in talking of the Rock Store [illegible] he said that he could not help himself he was influenced by Mr. McTavish: it is not worth talking about but shows what sort of Gentleman he is. – Allan McDonell & Ferries[2] go on tolerably well they passed here about the 20th July: Your old companion Charbonneau may be inclined to be mutinous and had his skull fractured for his troubles by Ferries wt the but end of a Gun. –

Our delicate Friend & I draw very well together he sometimes spins my patience out very fine but on the whole he is a pleasant travelling companion and I do not apprehend that we shall be treading on each others toes in the course of the Winter. – Pray look out some employment for Robertson [Colin] if he goes down next Season, say the making up a new Tariff of advance in checking the old one. If he gives the least sign of trouble or dissatisfaction I mean to propose that he starts immediately wt 2 or 3 Indians to give us a specimen of railway making prepatory to entering in it to a greater extent in [illegible] the folg Season. – McIntosh[3] says he has written you and as I have to give our Friend Omand a [illegible] turn you must excuse this hurried Scroll. Pray tell the Dr. with my comptˢ that my [illegible] are in excellent condition. Pray believe me to be My Dear Sir Ever yours

Most Sincerely

Geo. Simpson

Do not lose sight of the Commodity. G.S. [fo. 290]

George Simpson, au Cloche, Lake Huron, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 26th September 1826 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 292-293]

My Dear Sir

If you can manage to get through the Winter tolerably well I shall consider it a stroke of great good fortune that the ship does not arrive as it will save from £10-12,000 and teach every man in the Country economy: I know we are miserably short of every thing except Ammunition we can however continue to live and if our Gentlemen do but exhibit moderate talent the Natives need not materially fall off and the Trade will be the most profitable that has been known these last 20 years. – Immediately on arrival in Canada I shall request the Committee to forward to New York Twine in the event of the Ship not having got out and secure about 50 Rolls Tobacco to be brought up in Spring. In your distribution you may calculate on this and if the Brigades cannot go down you should have a scheme to the outfits prepared so as to get through our business at Norway House as early as possible. I shall be anxious to learn from you whether by the return of the Prince or [illegible]. – I am curious to know

[1] This is likely William McIntosh (1784–1842). See biographical appendix.
[2] This might be Hugh Faries/Ferres (1779–1852). See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Factor William McIntosh (1784–1842). See biographical appendix.

how you & the ex-Gov^{r} [1] met you would no doubt have been [illegible] to see him debark at the Launch and he would no doubt have been delighted to see the wonderful improvements & alterations that have taken place at York since the Days of [illegible]; [fo. 292]

The recent changes have frightened Haldane[2] out of his senses likewise Chief Trader Clouston[3] they gave in their resignations and luck go with them. Haldane was as smooth as oil and from the tenth outwards we were excellent Friends. – Williams visited him in rec^{t} of the Dispatches & by way of giving me less to do than otherwise [illegible]. So far so well. – With all the good folks in this quarter I shall draw very well they are delighted with the changes that has taken place and unanimity I think will be the order of the day – . – I tried "very hard" to make old McDonald[4] resign but he would not "go good" I made him foam with rage & immediately afterwards tears of gratitude: he goes down next year on leave of absence & I think we shall manage to keep him down. – We had a high scene about your expenses but I made him sign the letter in spite of his Talk; Haldane signed it at once likewise all the other Excellences except Bethune [Angus] he would have been off if he could but it would not do he had no good argument to bring forward. – Allan McDonell is only two days ahead of me. I shall be at Timiskaming before him having made up my mind to visit it before going down. Ferris [Faries][5] I shall encamp with tonight and shall give your respects to one of his Wards. There is much need of reform in the Department; Mr. Brown[6] is too much at his Ease & has been too long here those before went on the D.C.; Lewis or Brown will do better after having passed one winter & Mr. Brown can visit [illegible] in the North. – Kennedy[7] will no doubt write you from Albany; – he is a very good fellow. Beioly[8] appears a regular steady man who understands his business he has sent me some useful [illegible]. [fo. 292d]

Your namesake I did not see but he is a keen fellow & has given me a deal of valuable information. – North Lake Huron and Timiskaming I think can be supported from Moose and I am much mistaken if we do not lop off a few thousand Expenses next Season. –

By the Columbia letters you see we are bound down to pacific meeting with the Americans that completely [illegible] our half breed Snake Expedition as they were going for Beaver on such terms as they could be found. – McKenzie & Bethune [Angus] have failed and tis expected there will be dreadful crashing in Canada this Fall. – Jefferson and Adams died the same day the anniversary of the independence – so much for American news. –

The American Fur Coy have lost a great deal of money and are beginning to fall into disrepute with both the Nolins & thus our people – Morrison has left them in disgust. – I have secured La Fleur for Peace River & mean to get Sayer at £30 as Interpreter none of the Clerks have exceeding £50 & are all dissatisfied. – The saly^{s} [salaries] in this quarter are high. I mean to set about reductions in earnest and it is high time to break through the luxuries system that has found its way into these

[1] This is William Williams. See biographical appendix.
[2] Chief Factor John Haldane (b.**c**. 1775–1857). See biographical appendix.
[3] This is Chief Trader James Clouston (b.*c*. 1788). See biographical appendix.
[4] This is Chief Factor John McDonald (le Borgne). See biographical appendix.
[5] This is Hugh Faries/Ferris (1779–1852). See biographical appendix.
[6] This may be Chief Trader William Brown (1790–1827). He was on furlough this year and would die the following year. See biographical appendix.
[7] This is Alexander Kennedy (1781–1832). He was chief factor at Albany at this time. See biographical appendix.
[8] This is Chief Factor Joseph Beioley (1785–1859). See biographical appendix.

regimes. – Concerning the horrible weather we have had we are doing tolerably well and often visiting Timiskaming. I expect to be at Montreal as early as McKenzie was last year. – With warm regards believe me always,

My Dear Sir
Yours Most truly
Geo. Simpson [fo. 293]

George Simpson, Osnaburgh, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 11th Augt 1827 (Private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 324d-325]

My Dear Sir

It is probable that a Letter I shall have the pleasure of addressing you from Moose (if the Albany Wolves do not dispose of me [illegible]) will reach you before this can get to hand; I shall now therefore mainly report progress. – We have had rain days since we left York. Not six hours on end dry and a cussed country to travel through; on the whole however we have made a tolerable passage getting here the tenth morning from Norway House: in a few hours we shall proceed for Albany where I hope to arrive on the 16th. – A Half Breed stupid Canadian Clerk "Delaronde"[1] with an old Orkneyman "Peebles"[2] & half a Doz Women with about 20 children form the Establishment at this place; the rest of the people being on the Albany voyage. – Our Friend Kennedy[3] has managed things very badly as there is no guide for me here & I must trust to poor old Saunders who has not been beyond this place for upwards of 20 years. –

It was fully understood I believe before we parted that you are to come up to Norway House [tear in page] – I shall hope to have [fo. 324] the pleasure of meeting you about the 17th June and it may be well that you make the necessary arrangements to pass the following Winter inland say at Bas de la Riviere as the constant residence at the Coast must be ruinous to your constitution. If I go to the Columbia John Stuart will probably accompany me which will leave an opening for you. – You must look about for a proper person to superintend the affairs of York during the Winter, it cannot be left to Hargrave [James] as he has no commission & Miles [Robert] who will in all probability be a Chief Trader is hardly able to attend to his Books. – Do me the favour to weigh this subject well in all its bearings, it is one of some importance. – On second thought I consider it better to trust to Stewarts honour than require the Hundred pounds security. – Leith [James] accompanied me to Norway House point where we passed the day together Wind bound he is a fine correct honourable fellow. – I like him much – . – You will have heard that Franklins letter that Robertson [Colin] was making a noise about [what] was found in the Columbia Packet: I am glad of it as it shuts his foul mouth: – his is the most [illegible] man I ever [fo. 324d] knew and if he had greater weight would do much mischief in the Country. – You have been over kind and attentive to the young Gentlemen about you & it may

[1] This was Louis Denis Delaronde (b.*c.* 1800–1868). He served as a clerk and postmaster in the HBC's Albany and Lake Superior districts from 1821 to 1866. See biographical appendix.
[2] This was James Peebles (b.c. 1778–1840). He was a "middleman" who spent his entire career in the HBC (1801–1836) in the Albany district. See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy (1781–1832). See biographical appendix.

be wise to keep them at a greater distance in future & some of our grave Councillors are even so mean I understand as to pimp the Women of the establishment in order to get at the chit chat of the place you may properly overlook all those ungentlemanly attempts at annoyance and the most effectual means of crossing over those wretched people is to treat their ill nature with the contempt it merits. – If I had not been particularly desirous of parting with every person in the Country on good terms this Season I should have given Master Robertson [Colin] a little of my mind en passant at Oxford keep an eye upon my Domestic concern.

With inalterable regard Believe me ever
My Dear Sir
Yours most – Geo. Simpson [fo. 325]

George Simpson, Moose Factory, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 15th September 1827 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 328-332]

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure of addressing you from Osnaburgh by my Guide Saunders. A few days afterwards I got to Albany and was accompanied from there by our Friend Kennedy [Alexander] to this place where we arrived on the 24th ulto; in a Season of high water between Lake Winnipeg & Osnaburgh the transportation is tolerably good, but in ordinary seasons after the month of July the Portage de L'Isle route is the best; by either the track for a light canoe from Norway House to Osnaburgh to Albany is a free River, and the navigation good; from Albany to Moose is a very unsafe & uncomfortable trip. It occupied us 6 days, but the distance might by a light canoe be done in one – we made several longer days last Spring – The Ship got to the outer road on the 11th. She had a very severe squeeze and will require an expensive repair; the broken side was shoved out here, and the carpenter thinks she will get safe home; she took her departure on the 8th Instr. – Bell was very civil, McCormack was his [illegible] Terry & Reader his mates & a prime crew. I do not admire the Prince Rupert, she is wall sided and so [illegible] that to get her sufficiently down in the water she cannot cross the bar except with high tides; she will answer better for York and I have mentioned it [to] Mr. Pelly. – Here I found Christie[1] & Louis[2] – Beioley[3] & Clouston[4] arrived a few days afterwards; Beioley [fo. 328] started for Rupert's Rover on the 11th, Louis [Lewis] to Michipicoten for his Family on the 12th, & Kennedy [Alexander] for Albany on the 13th; Clouston must go to Sligo and will not be missed except as a bull; he is quite a non descript, and I am glad he is out of the Service as it was vexatious to see such a cub holding a commission while so many fine fellows remained in the background: there is still a fellow named Corrigal[5] here, who I have great ambition to Shoulder out of the Country; George

[1] Chief Factor Alexander Christe (1792–1872). See biographical appendix.
[2] Chief Trader John Lee Lewis (Lewes) (1791–1872). See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Factor Joseph Beioley (1785–1859). See biographical appendix.
[4] Chief Trader James Clouston (b.*c.* 1788). See biographical appendix.
[5] This is Jacob Corrigal (1792–1844). He was at the time a chief trader in the Ruperts River District. See biographical appendix.

Flett[1] late of Cumberland or rather Moose Lake, could buy & sell a Dog of his before breakfast the coldest day in Winter; the fellow would be overpaid at £40 per annum; had I seen him, his resignation would now have been on its way to England, & if I live long enough I shall make a point of seeing him should it cost me a march of 500 miles; it is really a disgrace to the Fur Trade to have such a blockhead attached to it as Partner. – Beioley [Joseph] is an economical, painstaking, useful little man, reminds me much of little Dr. Thomas[2] and I should be very sorry to see him leave the Country, but a hint about crossing the Rocky Mountains would send him without delay across the Athabasca. – Christie [Alexander] is a sterling fellow, not a finished man of business, but makes up for it by great steadiness commonsense attention to his charge; he is a valuable man and there is not a Commissioned Excellence [fo. 328d] in the Department so fit for the situation he holds. – Kennedy [Alexander] you already know; he still considers himself a "North man" and has a desire to leave the Country sooner than I could wish; I have prevailed on him however to take another 3 year Lease. – George Keith is in a funk. He is afraid he will not acquit himself to our [illegible] satisfaction, and is quite perplexed & burdened about nothing; he is a good but poor body, and Donald McIntosh[3] & the Captain are determined to show that if those names had been forwarded up in Lake Superior earlier (now adopted) it would have cleared from 1500 to £2000 per annum more than it has done as late years. – The Clerks that I have seen are very so so; Gladman[4] their accountant here & Finlaysons Brother[5] at Osnaburgh are the most promising; the only recommendation that Good[6] has is that he has some handsome daughters. The Fur Trade must not however pay for that, as I have put him in the way of being reduced from £100 to £50 p[er] annum and the difference must be made up from private account – The Dr.[7] I do not think much of, he promises and professes much, but does nothing; he goes wt Louis [Lewes][8] because he can take observations. – Kennedy's son is an Idiot and we must get rid of him: if I had time I would hand you my report on the rest, [fo. 329] but it will do equally well next season – bye the bye you shall have my rough draft. – This is a charming place for a Bay side retirement, and with you I could pass a winter in our Age here very well. –

I am not at all surprised that Williams[9] was out of humour at being removed, as he had every comfort about him and cost the Fur Trade a little short of £1000 per annum in private housekeeping expenses business expenses of £5000 per annum more in mismanagement of the business; I could tell you some stories about his management that would make you laugh, but shall bottle them up until we meet. – My Despatch to the committee will show you all our views, prices, and arrangements which I hope will please you; the only measure I have in contemplation not already noticed is to abandon East

[1] This remark by Simpson seems to be in error. The George Flett late of Cumberland/Moose Lake had gone free to the Red River Settlement in 1823. There appears no other George Flett on the account books at this time. See biographical appendix.
[2] Thomas Thomas, a former temporary Governor of the Northern Department of the HBC, and in 1827 one of the principal settlers of Red River. See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Trader Donald McIntosh (1773–1845). See biographical Appendix.
[4] This was George Gladman Jr. (1800–1863). See biographical appendix.
[5] This was Nicol Finlayson (1794–1877). See biographical appendix.
[6] This Richard Good (1780–1850). See biographical appendix.
[7] This is William Hendry. See biographical appendix.
[8] John Lee Lewis (Lewes), chief trader (1791–1872). See biographical appendix.
[9] This is William Williams, the erstwhile Governor of the Southern Department. See biographical appendix.

Main and pass further on between Big & Whale River: that country is rich & was abandoned because the living was not palatable. –

I fear McBain[1] is not going on so well as could be wished at Lake Huron; he is constantly dissatisfied about goods, prices, private accounts and ascribes his want of success in Trade to every but the right cause, his own mismanagement; he is very anxious to retain his place but I have written him that if things do not look better next [fo. 329d] Spring he must go on discharge: Cummings[2] is a good [illegible] trader & can be spared from Swan River; if he gets his Commission he will be a very fit man for Lake Huron, and is already down on my sheet for it. – Bethune [Angus] I think likewise requires a move, he is too much of the Gentleman for St. Marys, requires a finished Clerk, a confidential man, improvements about his house &c &c and Sells to amt. of £50 per annum; if A. McTavish[3] gets a Commission I think he & Bethune might change places. – Haldane [John] wrote me 3 or 4 very private Letters previous to his departure from Michipicoten, and I believe he would have been disposed to revoke his notice of retirement on a very slight invitation to remain; but we are well rid of him, he is all self, and had not other study than his own comforts; and he has done no good since he came to the Department on the contrary, a great deal of mischief having him the cause of much dissension, & whenever dissension exists in the Country the general interest must suffer: I could not do less than reply in the same tone to his courteous letters, the main drift of which was to get letters of introduction to some of my Friends in London which however I did not choose [fo. 330] to understand, and we parted as smoothly as any two could do between whom not one particular of Friendship of good will ever existed. – I have letters from James Short up to the middle of June, he is in a pack of troubles, and I am anxious to get his aid: in the River St. Maurice, it appears that a very desperate affair has taken place: a Clerk belonging to the opposition having Shot one of the Coys Servants who instantly dropped down dead: this unfortunate affair arose from some altercation about Indians, in the course of which Our Friend & his party seized some Indian Canoes that were laying at or near the opposition house the proprietor being indebted to the Coy, and some three [illegible] (the same Day) while one of our new Friends was in the act of handling a canoe belonging to the opposite party he was fired at, but whether the main object was to seize the Canoe or not, does not appear: O'Dogherty[4] who you may recollect to have heard of in New Caledonia and who I sent up to St. Maurice last Winter was the only witness, his evidence & deposition [fo. 330d] does not convince me, that we were not the aggressors and I am very apprehensive that the business will make a great deal of noise to our prejudice in Canada: I am anxious to be on the spot before the Trial takes place, and from that Keith [James] has not been sufficiently atune in hiring & retaining the best council. – Another affair it appears has taken place in the Grand River – McGillivray of Day & McGillivray[5] the most troublesome opponents we have, robbed an Indian of 30 Beaver Skins belonging to the Coy

[1] Chief Factor John McBain/McBean (1778–1854). See biographical appendix.
[2] Cuthbert Cumming (1787–1870) became a chief trader in 1827. See biographical appendix.
[3] This is Alexander McTavish (1784–1832). See biographical appendix.
[4] William St. George O'Dogherty. See biographical appendix.
[5] This refers to an independent trading firm fronted by Ithamar Day and Murdoch McGillivray. They operated along the Ottawa River, Lake Nipissing and surrounding regions from the mid-1820 to 1830. Day and McGillivray retired from the Ottawa River trade at the end of the 1829-30 season, after having suffered severe financial losses. Norman Anick, *The Fur Trade in Eastern Canada until 1870, Vol. 1.* Parks Canada Manuscript Report No. 207 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1976), 153.

which were sent from Lac du Sable under his charge by Thomas[1] the Clerk in Charge to Fisher[2] at the Lake; the Furs have the Coys mark, and were taken by force; a criminal prosecution is therefore brought against McGillivray who is in custody, how this may affect the Trade I cannot know, but hope it will put a stop to McGillivray's opposition who bye the by is a very clever fellow to whom I would have no objections to give a Salary of £150 p[er] annum. –

Poor Severight[3] by the last accounts was on his Death bed – Keith [James] you will be pleased to learn is recruiting his health, he says he adhered strictly to <u>all</u> my prescription except as regards <u>Castor Oil</u> [Fo. 331] and derives much benefit therefrom; he rides Decky out and in to Town daily & a brisk young <u>filly</u> in the Country; the good old Gentleman is become quite a rake – wonders you see will never cross. –

I have said in [illegible] nothing more on a certain subject since we parted and have not even thought much of it, "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof"[4] and if the Son of Neptune is useful he must be indulged. – Pray do all in your power to forward the views of the Committee in Zoological matters, I send you a parcel of circulars which you will oblige me by sending inland if an opportunity presents which however I am doubtful of after this gets to hand: Messrs Colub and Jury are members of the Society [two illegible words] brother in law to the former is one of the Cice Presidents, and takes a great interest in the objects of the institution. Mr. Colub writes me very particularly on the subject which I am anxious should not be lost sight of. – Colin Fraser[5] the Piper is strongly recommended to my notice, I understand he is a man of good health and a stout active well-behaved fellow: he does not expect or understand that he is to be a Labourer but an upper or better kind of Servant: do me the favor to show him a little indulgence, he might be useful about the Stores or in the Steward department & could mess with George. – I shall expect to hear from you by the Ship & hope to shake you by the hand on or before the 18th June.

Believe me with unfeigned regard
My Dear Friend
Yours most sincerely
Geo. Simpson [fo.331d]

Pray keep a sharp look out upon Madame, if she behaves well let her be treated accordingly, but on the contrary send about her business & the Child taken from her – Should any accident happen to me & that the youngster lives till 4 or 5 years old he will in all probability be claimed by some of my Friends in England or Scotland. –
G.S. 15th September 1827 [fo. 332]

George Simpson, Timiskaming, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 26th September 1827 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 336-336d]

[1] This is Charles Thomas. See biographical appendix.
[2] Alexander Fisher (1783–1847). See biographical appendix.
[3] This is John Siveright (1779–1856). He would be promoted to chief trader in 1828. See biographical appendix.
[4] The full phrase from Matthew 6:34 is "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," which means each day brings enough challenges of its own without worrying about tomorrow.
[5] Colin Fraser (1807–1867). See biographical appendix.

My Dear Sir

Here I found a few days ago Allan McDonell[1] & Faries[2] every thing goes on well in this neighbourhood no appearance of opposition and the Indians much attached to us. Moose is no distance from here not exceeding 6 days light canoe work in the month of June although I have been 9 days travelling part of the time laid up by bad weather. – After next Season we shall have no communication with Canada the route is safe and the Indians can do all the transport to Moose. – I mean to be off in the morning & hope to be in Montreal on the 1st or 2nd no accounts from there since I wrote you from Moose. [fo. 336]

I was much pleased wt Fraser[3] & he must be put in the same footing with Severeight & Heron.[4]

I have been writing Christie a long letter and am tired & sleepy [illegible] & Faries are [two illegible words] like trumpeters on the other side of the partition . . .

Believe me ever

My Dear Sir

Yours most Sincerely

Geo. Simpson [fo. 336d]

George Simpson, Trout Portage, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 16th July 1828 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fo. 356]

[Note at top of page] Tell Finlayson[5] that I shall leave his Notes from here at Oxford. – My commodity is ill. –

My Dear Sir

Tell Ermatinger[6] that I shall leave lines for him at Jack River. –

We are getting on steadily considering the state of the water & the weakness of some of our Freemen. Delonais has scarcely got sober yet, Dupret is ill the Piper[7] cannot find sufficient wind to fill his Bag & Peter is good for nothing: I shall begin to blow them up after passing Desertion ground. – Lesperance[8] has lost 2 men Primeau returned Lame to York & an Indian has deserted I have therefore directed the White Govr [9] to make over 2 of his Indians to here & there being a Scarcity of

[1] Allan McDonell. See biographical appendix.
[2] Hugh Faries. See biographical appendix.
[3] It is likely that this is Thomas Fraser (1777–1849) a Clerk at Abitibi at the time. See biographical appendix.
[4] Unclear who is meant here as there were two Herons (brothers) in the service at the time.
[5] This is likely Duncan Finlayson (1795–1862) as he was stationed at Red River at this time. See biographical appendix.
[6] This is likely Edward Ermatinger (1797–1876). Although both Ermatingers (Edward & Francis) were stationed in the Columbia, Edward had accompanied the York Factory Express from Vancouver to York Factory in 1826–27, and was on his way back to the Columbia. See biographical appendix.
[7] This was Colin Fraser who served as the piper to George Simpson on his trip from York Factory to Fort Vancouver (1828–1829). See biographical appendix.
[8] This is Alexis Lesperance (b. 1796) who was a York boat guide at this time. In 1828 he was hired as a guide for George Simpson on his trip to the west coast. See biographical appendix.
[9] As noted earlier, the term "White Governor" was A *sobriquet* of the man at the head of a boat brigade.

Rum at Norway House I have taken 2 Kegs from Lesperance. Pray recollect that the specimens in Zoology are to be addressed to A. Colvile[1] Esq. H.B. House London & do me the favor to write that Gent[n] a few lines saying that they are sent to him at my request. It will not be necessary to show my Despatch to any of the Gent[n] at York: – My Duplicate likewise of the Minutes of Council will of course be sent by Canada. – I shall address you by Cadotte.[2] –

Believe my Ever
Yours most Sincerely
Geo. Simpson [fo. 356]

George Simpson, Isle a la Crosse, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 4th August 1828 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 360-361d]

My Dear Sir

From the date you will see we are not flying but on the whole making a steady march of it; the people conduct themselves well and although some of them have little to spare we have no complaints; Petit[?] was about to show the cloven hoof[3] restoring money by [illegible] a [illegible] wt the paper but I brought him to his senses in the course of the day by compelling him to sing in spite of a sore throat. On the whole I think we shall get on very well. – The Dr.'s[4] fire is all vanished, he sleeps on his watch, complains of the cursed portages, discerns no beauty in the scenery & wishes himself back at the Factory, he is a good-tempered weak kind of body – McDonald[5] is full of laugh and small talk, & does not fail to let it be known that he is a Partner & man is so sickly that tis probable I shall have to leave him in Athabasca.

Canute[?] is not making such a good march of it this year as last owing perhaps to the schoaling of the Water; but he thinks [fo. 360] we have not found the River particularly low; Maligne was in a fair state and all the rest of the voyage being tolerably good: – I expect to meet him tomorrow or next day & if he has sufficient confidence in himself will recommend his going by the Nelson River to save time. –

I shall write a few lines to Mr. Jury[?] likewise to my Friend Mr. Webur[?] which I request the favour of your forwarding. –

By the Ship you will receive Duplicates of the continuation of the Public Despatch the original which through some accident I left at Montreal – pray send me a copy of it in the course of the Winter – likewise the Despatch by the Ship but it will not be necessary to send them to the Chief Factors &

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[1] This is Andrew Wedderburn Colvile (1779–1856) who was a member of the HBC London Committee. See biographical appendix.
[2] This is likely Laurent Cadotte (1786–1874), who at this time was one of the guides of the Portage La Loche York Boat brigades going from York Factory to Portage La Loche and back. See biographical appendix.
[3] "Show by the cloven hoof" is an old English expression that means to reveal a hidden evil nature or a true bad character. The phrase comes from traditional folklore and religious imagery depicting Satan disguised as a human, but giving away his true demonic identity through his split, goat-like hooves.
[4] This was the Doctor Julian Richard Hamlyn who accompanied Simpson on his trip to the Columbia.
[5] This is Archibald McDonald (1790–1853). See biographical appendix.

Chief Traders by the Winter Express. – If there be any private letters have the goodness to forward them under cover to Rowand[1] likewise. –

I hope things have gone on smoothly at York. Pray give any assistance in reason to Robertson [Colin] in order that you may part well as I think tis probable you will [fo. 360d] have very little intercourse with each other after the present Season. – I have written to Mr. Garry[2] that you have some idea of going home next season & that tis probable I shall recommend an exchange between you and Christie [Alexander][3] an account of your health, but this is done in confidence to him so that he may not mention it in his private correspondence of next Season – I am most anxious that we should be in England together for more reasons than one & I am in great hopes that I should be ordered home next year. – Every fresh Day brings out fresh stories of that unfortunate man Tippo He is the most vindictive ill natured creature under the Sun & in order that his remarks may not be attended to I Have given some of my Friends a letter of his private character. –

I am not at all satisfied what has reached me about/wt Wm. McGillivray[4] & I think he & our Friend Stewart[5] are too near each other, it is therefore my intention to take him & his wife with us to New Caledonia & there leave them taking from thence if necessary others Douglas, Sale[?] Pambrun[?] or Dease, poor Stewart is too easy & good natured; he is really a good man but often grossly imposed on. –

Believe me ever wt sincere regard
My Dear Sir
Yours most truly
Geo. Simpson [fo. 361]

P.S. If young Dease[?] be still at York have the goodness to say wt my best wishes that we shall expect him back & put a [illegible] into the public letter stating the cause of his return, that we are much pleased wt him & hope to see him again in the Country.
G.S. [fo. 361d]

George Simpson, Dunvegan, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 20th Aug. 1828 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 362-363d]

[1] John Rowand (1787–1854) was then the chief factor at Edmonton House. See biographical appendix.
[2] This is likely Nicholas Garry (1782–1856) who was the Deputy Governor of the HBC in London. See biographical appendix.
[3] Alexander Christie who was then in charge of Moose Factory. See biographical appendix.
[4] William McGilliwray (1796–1832) was the son of John McGillivray, a former NWC partner, and Simpson called him "a half breed of the Cree Nation". He was the son-in-law of Alexander Stewart. See biographical appendix.
[5] Alexander (Sandy) Stewart (1780–1840). See biographical appendix.

My Dear Sir

AM – this is the last opportunity I shall have of addressing you until I have the pleasure of doing so in person – nothing occurs to me to be said under an official cover. – The officers of this Dept[m] are in a highly promising state, the business of every Post appears to be conducted with the utmost economy & attention & the Gentlemen are every establishment I have visited are very popular wt the Natives & Mr. Stewart [Alexander] particularly so with all parties high low Black & white; the Natives are peaceable, well disposed & anxious to please, the country is rich in large & fur bearing animals and in short every thing appears just as it ought to be. – I find Mr. Smith[1] at the Lake, his body & soul seems devoted to the prosperity of his charges and the light of his ambition on Earth is to bring McKenzie River to the top of the list; this I think he may do if he is provided with means as that District [fo. 362] unquestionably possesses great capability.

He thinks that two new posts may be established wt the prospect of great advantage in which I agree with him. One on the North branch of the River Liard for the [illegible] Indians (about 100 strong) which would return about £2500 worth of Furs and another on the Nahany River for the Nahany Tribe also for the Yembahotany[?] & Toobo chatanys (West of the Mountain) which would yield about £2000 worth. We also think that a Gentleman & 4 men might be usefully employed in exploring the country about Vermilion & Peels River – All this I am anxious should be set on a proper train next season and to do so it will be necessary that 4 instead of 3 Boats be sent in with say 10 additional Winterers & 5 to return retiring servants, these I think may be made up by 5 or 6 of the Orkney Servants coming out this season & 8 or 10 recruits from Red River respecting whom I shall address Mr. McKenzie[2] from here; I am desirous if possible of reserving the Canadian recruits for the West side of the Mountains & in order to fill up vacancies in [fo. 362d] the home country, but if the complement for McKenzie River cannot be made up from those Sources you can take 3 or 4 or 5 hands out of the light canoe which will probably get to Norway House before I do. – It is not safe to allow Joseph McGillivray to remain in the neighbourhood of Canute Jaune I have therefore booked him for McKenzie River & he can go in direct from Norway House in charge of the Boats; I mention this for your <u>private</u> information in order that arrangements may be made accordingly & shall endeavor to be at Norway House before the Boats start as to see that troublesome Gentleman off; his destination must be kept a Secret until the day of his embarkation otherwise he will find ways & means to start obstacles. – I have promised the McKenzie River men something in the shape of a Regal & therefore by that in addition to the usual Stores for the District a Keg of Sugar or Molasses, a Bag of Flour, a Keg of Pork & a Roll of Tobacco be sent in for that purpose. The outfit indent is about 170 pieces but the craft may be filled up to 200 pieces wt supplies for Athabasca as Friend Joe can very well stow himself on the top of 50 pounds. [fo. 363]

We are getting on tolerably well, this is a delightful Country and although we have only three fair Days since leaving the Eachemamus I have enjoyed the Voyage very much; Wm. McGillivray & his wife are with me, that young man has already been two tours in Athabasca & particularly so with

[1] Chief Factor Edward Smith (d. 1849). See biographical appendix.
[2] Donald McKenzie (1783–1852) was then in charge of the Red River District and Governor of Assiniboia. See biographical appendix.

an easy Father in law,[1] a brother in law on one hand & a Friend, Vamsoki relative on the other: Clouston[2] has been ill used which I am sorry for & must keep a Secret on our Friend Stewart's account; I shall leave McGillivray in New Caledonia, the change will be of Service to him. – I have almost made up my mind to go down to Fort Langley at all hazards but shall not determine finally until I get to Thompson River. – McDonald [Archibald] endeavors to make himself agreeable & sometimes fails; he is not a McMillan [James], the former is all jaw and no work, the latter all work & no jaw. – The Dr.[3] is a poor d__l but very well disposed – Colin [Fraser] breaks in by degrees. I rub him against the grain as frequently as with, he is a piper and nothing but piper. Tomma Petit the best man in the brigade. I have only had one dust up wt him, he had one day a sore throat & could not sing but two or three heavy drams & a polas observation brought forth music in a twinkling. – I shall hope to hear from you at the Mountain & Red River & with true regard between us forever.

My Dear Sir
Yours Most Sincerely
Geo. Simpson Dunvegan

20th Augt 1828 I arrived here last night & start Tomorrow G.S. [fo. 363d]

George Simpson, Stuarts Lake, New Caledonia, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 22nd Sept 1828 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/1, fos. 365-366]

My Dear Sir

I have had the pleasure so frequently since parting with you at York that little is now left for me to say beyond reporting progress. – We arrived here 8 Days ago & about an hour after being housed Connelly[4] made his appearance from the Columbia; he was detained so late in consequence of his people being employed on Drs.[5] War Expedition agt the Murderers of McKenzie & Party.[6] McLeod[7] commanded the Land party 60 in number & the Lieut.[8] co-operated wt the Cadbro:[9] had the business been left to the latter he would have made short work of it, but McLeod was shy instead of striking terror our extraordinary caution has taught the Natives to look upon us as poor timid creatures unable to protect ourselves or to resist the outrages they commit on us – 7 men Women &

[1] This is Chief Factor Alexander Stewart. See biographical appendix.
[2] This is likely Robert Clouston (1793–1850). See biographical appendix.
[3] Richard Hamlyn. See biographical appendix.
[4] This is William Connelly (1787–1848), Chief Factor in charge of the New Caledonia District. See biographical appendix.
[5] Here Simpson is referring to Dr. John McLoughlin (1784–1857), Chief Factor in charge of the Columbia District. See biographical appendix.
[6] This refers to the murder of Alexander McKenzie (1795–1828) and four HBC engages in early 1828 by members of the Clallem Tribe. See biographical Appendix.
[7] This was Chief Trader Alexander Roderick McLeod (1782–1840). See biographical appendix.
[8] This was Lieutenant Aemilius Simpson (1792–1831), a British Royal Navy officer, who joined the HBC as a maritime surveyor, hydrographer, and ship captain. See biographical appendix.
[9] The *Cadboro* was a small, two-masted wooden schooner built in Rye, England, in 1824 and purchased by the HBC in 1826. It played a major role in the maritime fur trade, exploration, and supply logistics along the Pacific Northwest coast of North America.

children were destroyed, the village & their property of all descriptions burnt & themselves severely frightened. The Lieut. & Chief Trader had many quarrels; the former pressed an immediate & determined attack but the latter could not be brought into action. Several days were occupied in portaging [fo. 365] and when McLeod was at length forced out by the Lieut's taunts, Ermatinger[1] rose & 6 men did all. – Douglas[2] in this quarter showed a little more spunk, his Interpreter Waccan[3] put a bullet into the head of a Villain who murdered Duncan Livingston,[4] another interpreter last Spring & Douglas with his own hand beat the Brains out of one of the Fort George murderers about 3 Weeks ago. – All is now quiet here – Connelly has things in high order, the returns next Spring will be 150 Packs & profits equal to £10,000; he tells some extraordinary stories about Tippo who must have been a constant annoyance to him. – The Columbia Ship arrived early delivered her cargo in good condition & sailed early in Aug^{t}. – Ogden[5] arrived in Aug^{t} wt 3 to 4000 Beaver & reports that the Blackfeet destroyed an American Trapping party: – I proceed from here Tomorrow wt 20 men send the Canoes round by Frasers River to the Forks of the Thompson River & ride (myself McDonald & the Dr.)[6] across to Kamloops then to the Forks & from thence proceed to Fort Langley: the Indians below the Forks are numerous & troublesome but we are tolerably [fo. 365d] well prepared & I trust will get down without accident. – If there be much danger in going by Pugets Sound I shall return via Kamloops & Okanogan & go down the Columbia; there does not appear to be much love lost between Connelly & the Dr.[7] but they keep on fair terms. – This is a cursed country to travel through the portages long & cramed wt fallen timbers – [illegible] bad & dense hitherto – abominable as we have heavy rain daily. I am although nearly tired of the Voyage & my fellow Travellers – the commodity has been a great consolation to me as the Dr.'s [Richard Hamlyn] wise saws are by no means concerning & Archys [Archibald McDonald] jokes are become abominably insipid. The Dr. is really a green fellow; he came to me last night (after being all Day occupied in putting his Arms in order) with a face as long as my arm & perfectly grave to request permission to go on a War Excursion against the Babines but as yet I have to learn in what those poor D___ls have offended him. – I shall have a number of curious things to tell you when we meet. Till then & ever believe me wt Sincere regard Yours most truly Geo. Simpson [fo. 366]

George Simpson, Saskatchewan River, Wind bound within a days march of Carlton, to J.G. McTavish, York Factory, 10th May 1829 (private) [HBCA B.239/c/2, fos 8-11]

[1] This is Francis Ermatinger (1798–1858). He has left a detailed description of this punitive expedition. It can be found in: Lois Halliday McDonald (ed.) *Fur Trade Letter of Francis Ermatinger written to his brother Edward during his service with the Hudson's Bay Company 1813–1853* (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1980), 97-116. See biographical appendix.
[2] James Douglas (1803–1877). See biographical appendix.
[3] Waccan, or Jean-Baptiste Boucher (1789–1849), was the interpreter at Fort St. James in 1828. He was a French-Cree Métis man who originally arrived in the region with explorer Simon Fraser in 1806. He served for decades as the HBC's primary interpreter, provisioner, and unofficial policeman in this region.
[4] Duncan Livingston, a half brother of Waccan, was also an interpreter for the HBC in the New Caledonia District. After he was killed by the member of the Babine Nation in 1828, Waccan traveled 130 miles alone into Babine territory, walked directly up to the accused killer in front of his companions, and shot him point-blank. .
[5] This is Peter Skene Ogden (1790–1854). See biographical appendix.
[6] This Archibald McDonald and Richard Hamlyn. See biographical appendix.
[7] This is likely Dr. John McLoughlin. See biographical appendix.

My Dear Sir

Before replying to your truly acceptable & most valued letter of the 10th Decr received at the height of land on the 25th Ulto. I shall give you a very brief outline of the principal incidents and occurrences which have come under my observation since I last had the pleasure. From New Caledonia whence my last to you was dated I proceeded to Kamloops and there down to Fort Langley where I found our sterling Friend McMillan [James] (of whom I have not lost sight up to the present moment when his is mowing down a beard of 6 days growth along side of me) and leaving McDonald [Archibald] in charge we proceeded to Vancouver by Puget Sound where we arrived on the 25th Octr. – There we found Drs. McLoughlin & Todd,[1] Lieut. Simpson, Barnston[2] & Birnie,[3] Manson[4] we brought wt us from Langley leaving Yale[5] in his stead. – The Dr. [McLoughlin] was busily employed getting in his crops & things look on the whole tolerably well. – Ogdan [Peter Skene] had arrived in Augt wt fair returns & was off again, we have not since heard of him, he brought the report of an American Clerk & party of 11 in all having been cut off by the Blackfeet, which is partially confirmed. – McLeod [Alexander Roderick] had been off on a War Party agt the Clallams but did not show either courage or generalship. – The Eagle Captn. Grave[6] had delivered his Cargo in good Condition & sailed wt the returns in Augt. – In Augt an American party of 20 coming along the coast from San Francisco wt about 350 Horses & 1000 Beaver & proceeding to their rendezvous at Salt Lake were attacked on the banks of the Umpqua about 150 miles from Vancouver (by the Natives) of whom 16 were killed, the conductor Smith [Jedediah] with the 3 remaining found their way to Vancouver where they passed the winter having lost all their property except about 7 to 800 Skins which we purchased from them. – McLeod [Alexander Roderick] and a strong party was sent to avenge the Massacre but did nothing, & lost the Season; [fo. 8] he is now gone to Buona Ventura[7] a very rich Beaver County near San Francisco wt no pay and a party of 35 & is expected back in Augt or Sept 1830 wt 4-5000 Beaver. – Ross [Donald] arrived wt the Express at Vancouver in Novr & the Lieut [Aemilius Simpson] started in Decr for the Sandwich Islands wt a cargo of Deals[?] & fir a few supplies & some fresh hands. – Timber tis found will become a valuable article of export both to the Sandwich Islands & Spanish settlements commanding $70-100 per 1000 ft of Inch plank & we have it in view to combine it wt the coasting trade, the latter occupying our shipping during the summer & the former during the winter. – In February an American Coaster, the "Orphir" came into the Columbia & opened shop immediately and was joined by his consort the "Convoy" in March. One of them will probably remain during the summer. They have compelled us to lower the tariff & Muskets are now Selling at a Musket per skin & guns at 4 Skins other articles in the same proportion. – Previous to Lieut. Simpson sailing from the Sandwich Islands the Wm & Ann Captn Swan arrived from England intended for the coast

[1] William Todd (1784–1851). See biographical appendix.
[2] This is George Barnston (1800–1883). See biographical appendix.
[3] This is James Birnie (1799–1864). See biographical appendix.
[4] Donald Manson, (1796–1880). See biographical appendix.
[5] This is James Murray Yale (1796–1871). See biographical appendix.
[6] The Eagle, built in 1827, was a brigantine operated by the HBC in the Columbia and Pacific Northwest trade. It was captained by John Costellow Grave from 1827–1832.
[7] The Buenaventura River had been speculated as running from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean through the Great Basin region, but proved to be non-existent. The Sacramento River, however, was sometimes referenced as the "Buenaventura".

well manned & fully equipped for trade to have been made over to the Lieut [Simpson] at Vancouver. – She sailed in Compy wt the Ganymede in Sept the latter having the principal part of the outfit on board. They parted in the Bay of Biscay during a gale and as the Ganymede is a dull sailor she is not expected in until some time this month. – The Cadbro & Wm & Ann sailed in company from Sandwich Islands Lieut. Simpson having put 10 [illegible] on board the Wm & Ann making his complement 26 in all, it was soon found that she outsailed the Cadboro & suddenly becoming impatient he proceeded – crossed the Bar in the evening of the 10th March in company wt the American Vessel "Convoy" before mentioned and struck in the South Spit[1] where she was totally lost not £100 worth of Cargo being saved and melancholy to relate every soul was massacred by the Clatsops on landing in the Boats at their Village – Lieut. Simpson crossed [fo. 8d] the Bar on the evening of the 12th and was the first to bring in this distressing intelligence which deranges all our plans of operations. – Measures were forthwith commenced to punish the murderers & MacMillan [James] went down to Fort George wt that object, but it was found impossible to do anything there and the Americans would not co-operate. – Should any accident happen the Ganymede (which God forbid) the whole of the west side of the mountains will be in a horrible state as the Stores are empty at every Establishment. – We left Fort Vancouver on the 25th of March found things at Walla Walla in good order, likewise at Okanogan & Colvile, the returns fair throughout. – At Okanogan I had letters from New Caledonia; the returns of that District are equal to those of last year; two of the men coming down wt the packet from Stuart's Lake to Alexandria; Macdonald & Clairmont[2] I am grieved to say were drowned by the upsetting of a raft in which they were descending the River and one Iroquois was murdered[3] by an Indian in the course of the Winter at Frasers Lake which in addition to 3 men drowned last Season in the Columbia and a man killed in the Spring by Indians making a loss of 7 lives in that district during the last 12 months. – Connelly [William] is quite in a fever and does not turn out the clever fellow I took him to be his good fortune has spoiled him; but more of this when we see each other. – The American trapping parties are all ruined, they passed the winter at the Flat Heads when Smith [Jedediah] our late guest joined them this spring; they must break up & tis probable many of them will fall into our ranks as they are generally speaking outcasts from society, vagabonds who cannot continually look to their own Country. Ashley[4] & his prodigious fortune made in the Snake Country is all hunting. – The opposition on the coast is very Strong no less than 7 Ships employed therein. Nass is their principal mart for [illegible] Skins which find their way from the Northern Parts of New Caledonia and the British Territory inland from the line of coast made over to the Russian by the late Treaty. – We have it in view to form an Establishment at Nass but it will require 50 to 60 Men & Officers, [fo. 9] this Establishment in co-operation with 2 Vessels and with a good understanding between us & the Russians (whose interest it is as much as ours to drive the Americans from the Coast) would give us the entire command of the Trade of all the territory we have a right to on that side of the Continent. – I have addressed the Principal Officer at New Archangel on the subject offering to supply their concern wt all the British produce or manufactures they may

[1] Clatsop Spit
[2] Francois Clairmont and Ignace McDonell drowned coming out with Express in the spring of 1829.
[3] Jacques Toranquash was murdered by the Natives on 20th January 1829.
[4] William H. Ashley of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

require at a very moderate advance and an arrangement: I am in hopes it may be concluded between the Company & the Directors of that Concern at St. Petersburg. – Immediate appearances in the Columbia are gloomy occasioned by the great loss of life in that quarter but I have not altered my opinion as to the great value and importance of that extended Country to the Fur Trade and although many may differ with me thereon I shall use my utmost exertions & influence both in England and at our country to press our Trade & discoveries in that quarter. – Towards these objects I consider it desirable that I should be in England in October or earlier if possible. The regular Ship will Sail in Sept and I mean to forward a despatch from Red River so as to get to hand before her departure and an other to replace the Wm & Ann will in all probability sail in Nov. at least I mean to recommend such with a double years outfit between them as we cannot trust to supplies from hand to mouth as heretofore. – We shall require about 30-35 Men for the Columbia & New Caledonia this year which can be made up from the Orkney men of last Fall wt the Canada recruits of this Spring & some fresh hands I expect to get at Red River. Pray take care of McKenzies River, Smith [Edward] will not require so many as he applied for having re-engaged all his people; it will be necessary however to make up the Crews of 4 Boats for the Portage and to send 8 fresh hands in so as to enable him to establish another Post – Plante will be sent down in time to go to the Portage & I have requested Mr. Leith [James] to engage one of the Boladyers[?] for the Trip. – Fort Good Hope appears to me the best place for Tippo and I mean to propose him accordingly to go on wt the Roads from [fo. 9d] Norway House. – The Saskatchewan has done wonders this year, the returns are more valuable than last and provisions abundant. – Pray bear in mind that you will require to have a large supply of various kinds in readiness for the Ungava Country as the "Beaver" Sloop may be expected at York about the time the Ships will arrive from England. A Cooper I think will likewise be required and Staves, Hoops &c for Oil – also an outfit of goods for the year. – The Ship builders & sailors are intended for the Columbia; Sinclair[1] remains and Taylor[2] who was unable from ill health to cross the Mountains last fall – going to York with the Saskatchewan brigade and to England if we do not absolutely require his services as I am by no means satisfied wt his excuses for not pushing on and shall not protect even a Brother in Law[3] when at fault, by the bye my fair one accompanies his lady to Norway House, I left her at Edmonton wt such a rotund Belly in front as to disqualify her from working her passage. – We expect to get to Carlton tomorrow if it moderates in the evening, but it has been blowing a perfect Hurricane all this morn^{g}. – from Carlton we proceed direct for Fort Pelly & Red River and hope to be at Norway House by the 15th or 18th May if the Lake be open of which I am very doubtful as the Season appears backward here and I am apprehensive it will retard your movements.

I do not wish you to detain the McKenzie River Brigade until my arrival although it appears doubtful that you can get them off earlier. We shall not delay them an hour for Tippo as he can follow in the Athabasca Boats. – I am glad you have done everything to prevent the possibility of a complaint from Robertson [Colin]; he is full of his Winter Road and I think favourably of it under proper management. – By the enclosed Document you will observe that I have been scheming likewise; do

[1] This is likely William Sinclair Jr. (1794–1868). See biographical appendix.
[2] George Taylor Jr. (1798–1844). See biographical appendix.
[3] The George Taylor mentioned here was the brother of Margaret Taylor, the consort or country wife of George Simpson, hence" brother-in-law".

me the favour to study it well as I want your opinion upon it fairly & frankly without considering that it is mine. – Our Friend McMillan [James] (who by the bye is a regularly bred ship hand) is the master [fo. 10] of the flocks(?). – I am anxious to settle all our councilling business at Norway House this Season so as to render it unnecessary for me to go to York as by extending my Journey that length it will not be in my power to visit Moose & be in England by the time I have fixed. – That is the principal reason for my forwarding this Express which carries a Summary to Robertson [Colin] & McIntosh [William] and if this meets you between Norway House and Oxford which I think is likely pray forward the Bearer to Robertson without delay; McLeod [John] will forward my Letter to McIntosh by the other Route. –

McIntosh's ailments you may rest assured are got up for some purpose known to himself, he is full of trick & cannot for the soul of him go to work in a manly straight forward manner. – I am truly sorry to [illegible] Sandy Stewart's[1] determination but hope he may still be persuaded to abandon it. I do not see that it is possible for him to get a furlough this Season. McMillan [James] is determined to accompany us in our Travels and therefore avails himself of his own rotation, you get Rowand's [John] and we must transfer Connolly's [William] to Leith [James] as I stand committed to him. – Tis possible that McMillan may go down in charge of the Despatches for England in which he will accompany me from Canada and if not he will take the round by Moose along wt me. You & Leith will of course go by the Ship & tis not improbable that we may meet in London within a few Days of each other.

I am truly grieved my Dear Friend to observe the gloomy & despondent time in which you write and trust you will believe me sincere when I assure you that I feel for you as if you were a Brother: I shall therefore expect that you will open your mind to me without reserve and that you will council me without hesitation in the fullest sense of the word as well truth. I can assure you that I do not know any thing which could offer me so much real satisfaction as being serviceable to you in any way or enabled to offer you relief: – I have found in you a staunch steady & [illegible] Friend [fo. 10d] and if you have one on Earth that is bound to your hand [illegible] & soul I can with sincerity & truth say it is Geo. Simpson.

P.S. I am not well by any means neither am I ill. A trip across the Atlantic however I think would recruit me. – Dr. Todd [William] & Ross [Donald] are with us. G.S.

Carlton 12th We arrived here this forenoon & start at 3 Tomorrow morng. Nothing fresh occurs to me – McLeod [John] will be directed to forward this until it meets you & the bearer will then go on to Oxford if they fall in with you on this side. G.S.

[1] Alexander (Sandy) Stewart (1780–1840). See biographical appendix.

George Simpson, 73 Tower St. London, to J.G. McTavish, Dec 5, 1829
[HBCA B.239/c/2, fo. 33-34]

My Dear Sir

Your valued favour of 1st Inst. reached med yesterday by which I am happy to find that yourself & fellow Travellers got safe to Edin.[1] – I heard of you some days ago by a letter from Mr. Ellice[2] who speaks of you in the kindest manner; he seems anxious to promote your views & expresses a wish to compare notes wt me on the subject (to which end I suppose) he writes me to see him at Scarboro [Scarborough] on my way North. I wrote him immediately in reply and shall make it my business to see him. – I trust you will believe me since when I say that I am most anxious to serve you – but from the footing in which I stand with the Board I am delicate about acquainting[?] it. Mr. Ellice is a member; he is the colleague equal & Friend of the whole & can say & propose any thing without giving offense and if what he said [fo. 33] or proposed did give offence he would care very little about it. If my backing is secondary any thing he might propose or any thing you might propose could do you a benefit I should be delighted by the opportunity of giving you my support. – I have thought on this subject long & frequently but do not see my way clear. I shall soon however be wt Mr. Ellice and trust we will be able to devise some scheme which may be brought to your advantage. – My complaint is in a fair way of being received. I have only been once out since you saw me at the HB House on Wednesday last. Today (Saturday) I go to my Uncle where I shall remain until Thursday. – How does it happen that you parted with McMillan [James]? – I see you are something like myself, shy with the fair – we should not be so much so with the Browns. You have no good excuse & therefore must muster courage, "a faint heart never won a fair lady." I have a very good one but hope with the assistance of Sir Ashly Cooper[3] to get it soon re[illegible]. – The enclosed letters came to hand [fo. 33d] a few Days [ago] I did not know where to forward them until rect. of your letter. – I expect to leave this for the North about the 2nd of Jany but fear I cannot go round by Camp[b]letown – if twin packets I shall return that way, write me the time it takes between Edin & your place & from the latter to Inverness. I should like to see you either at Edin or Inverness or at your Brothers but time is now so scant and I am so ignorant of the West Country roads & modes of conveyance that I scarcely know how to regulate my movements. – pray write me on rect. of this. – . Our Friends here frequently Speak of and desire to be most kindly remembered to you.

Let me know if you have any fair cousin or acquaintance likely to suit an invalid like me. ~~She must not look~~ I am on the look out for something for you. – What does McMillan say about those matters, is he getting his ground tackle in order?

Believe me ever
Yours Sincerely
Geo. Simpson [fos. 34]

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[1] Edinburgh

[2] This is Edward Ellice (1783–1863), London businessman and member of the HBC London Governing Board/Committee. See biographical appendix.

[3] Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st earl of Shaftesbury (1621–1683) was an influential English politician and one of the original major financial backers and stockholders who helped found the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670. His descendants were all prominent English politicians and businessmen. Which Ashley Cooper Simpson is referring to is not clear here.

George Simpson, London, to J.G. McTavish, 26th Decemr 1829
[B.135/c/2, fos. 35-36]

My Dear Sir

I am delighted to learn by your valued Letter of 16 Inst. that you had entirely recovered from the alarming attack you have had. I heard of your illness from Ross[1] some time ago. – We have now all had our time and I trust it is over for good. – I have not a moment to spare being just going out for Dinner. – Tomorrow evening at 7 I take the Mail for York, the 29th I propose spending at Scarborough wt your Friend Mr. Ellice and on the 1st or 2nd I shall be at the Black Rose Edin. and at Inverness about the 7th. – I should be delighted if you could meet me in the North; My headquarters will be at the House of an Uncle of mine [fo. 35] "Duncan Simpson" Bellevue near Beaudry about 10 miles from Inverness where no man on earth could be more Welcome than my inestimable Friend J.G. McT. – I shall be in that quarter about 10 days & must then return my steps direct South as I shall be expected at the H.B. House about the 25th. – Would you believe it? I am in love – how I may get rid of it tis probable I may know tonight, but I trust in the proper Legitimate way. – Do my dear Fellow muster courage and attack some fair one; if Sibliments[?] are talked of, say as pot said, by J__s I shall [illegible] my B___ks in her. – I shall write a note to McMillan [James] to meet me in the South if you join us we shall make a happy trio. All our Friends here enquire frequently [fo. 35d] & kindly about you. Last night I was nearly in the same state as you was the Night before you left Town & you may easily fancy how my head is today. –

In great haste believe you ever
My Dear Sir
Yours most sincerely
Geo. Simpson

Pray write to me on rect. of this to Bellevue near Beauly. G.S. [fo. 36]

George Simpson, Edin., to J.G. McTavish, 31st Decemr 1829
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 37-37d]

My Dear Sir

I arrived here late last night but did not see your Friend Mr. Ellice on my way down having received a note from him at York intimating that the Road by the Coast was blocked up by Drifts and dispensing wt my visit as we are soon likely to see each other in London. I intended having gone on to Scarborough by the Coach Tuesday morning & to that end the Mail by which I came from London. I have lost a day going so that through some Blunder as to the delivery of Mr. Ellices Letter as had it got to York as intended & should have provided [illegible].

Tomorrow Morng at 6 I go on to Dundee and join the Mail there at 1 AM (the 2nd) & hope to be wt my Friends on the 4th. – My stay in the North shall not exceed 10 days & I hope to be home

[1] Donald Ross (1797–1852) was also in Scotland at this time. See biographical appendix.

about the 20th on my way back. I should like much to see you either here or there but particularly there & do me the kindness saying whether I shall have that pleasure or not. On the [fo. 37] 25th I shall be in London God willing. – Since turning this page Rea[1] of Orkney & Kennedy [Alexander] have popped in. – I must stop short to join wt them & to overtake the Mail.

Ever Yours
Most Sincerely
Geo. Simpson [fo. 37d]

George Simpson, Bellevue, to J.G. McTavish, 8th Jany 1830
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 39-40]

My Dear Sir

The information contained in your much valued letter of the 1st Inst. has delighted me exceedingly & I trust when we next meet I shall be enabled to congratulate you on the happy event. – Since my arrival here one the 3rd Instg I have been in a very dangerous state closely confined to my room & chiefly to Bed from something approaching to a determination of Blood to the head. – Copius bleeding and Leachings wt opening medicines in abundance have been administered & others still – prisoner I am rather better but so weak that I can wt difficulty across the Room and at this moment there is such a tremor over my whole farm that I can scarcely hold a pen. – Before I [fo. 39] left London I had been feeling my way in your fashion – a cousin under 18 is the fair one, You have seen her, she stands No 2 in the list at Grove House and the preliminary arrgts are adjusted but cannot be brought to a close until my return from America in the autumn of this year – for which purpose I mean to apply for leave of absence. You now have the whole secret, it is still a secret to all except the fair one, her Father & Mother, myself & you and I do not mean to say anything about it until about starting for New York. – You will of course bring your Lady in to London in the course of next Month when myself & Friends shall be delighted to see you & her. – I propose leaving this place for London as soon as I can travel with safety – probably in a week hence. – [fo. 39d] I have not seen or heard of McMillan [James]. – I cannot write more without power, my head is quite giddy and my hand trembles, in short I am quite weakly. Do not say anything about my affairs until we meet. – Write me to the Post office Edin – to be left till called for. –

God bless you & may every happiness attend you.
Ever yours most sincerely
Geo. Simpson [fo.40]

[1] This may be William Glen Rae (1808–1845), a clerk at Fort Garry, who had returned to Britain for medical advice at this time. He was the brother of John Rae who would join the HBC in 1833. See biographical appendix.

George Simpson to J.G. McTavish, 15th January 1830
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 41-41d]

My Dear Sir

I arrived here at ½ past 9 this Evening & had taken my place in the Mail for Tomorrow Morning when I learnt wt much pleasure that you was in town and in order to have the benefit of a long chit chat wt you got the seat transferred to the Sunday Mail. – I [illegible] wt McMillan [James] at Perth at 3 oclock today. I am [fo. 41] far from well & have been at Death's Door since I last wrote you – As you are an early Man perhaps you will favour me wt your company to Breakfast tomorrow about 10. – Knock me up if you come before I am down Stairs. –

Ever Yours

Geo. Simpson [fo. 41d]

George Simpson, London, to J.G. McTavish, 26 Jany 1830
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 42-43]

My Dear Sir

I am sure you will be glad to learn that my health is much improved and that I got to town without much fatigue or inconvenience on Wednesday morning after parting with you. The Dr. has me still on his list but I mean to transfer myself to that of the Cook in the course of a few Days. – I am most anxious to know how your Matrimonial scheme succeeds and sincerely hope it goes on well; if not to me the disappointment will to me be great, to my intended better half awful and to your own very serious injury & discomfort. – when I left London [fo. 42] for Scotland it was settled that I should return to England next year (fall) for the purpose of getting married but on my arrival the other Day I pressed our immediate union so warmly & seriously that the Father & Mother gave way; with the Lady I had little difficulty as she was as anxious about it as myself. – I merely await your & McMillans [James] arrival to get spliced; the Lady understands that she is to have the happiness of Mrs. McTavish and Mrs. McMillan's Society[1] during the passage: we proceed from Montreal p[er] Canoe, touch at Red River in going, She accompanies me to York and in the Autumn to Red River where we shall pass the Winter; we take a Maid Servant from here with us and a man & maid servant go by the Ship to join us wt our heavy Baggage at York., – You now have all my plans, Mantua makers [fo. 42d] and Milliners are at Work, the Parson will be in request in about 3 Weeks hence & then the important duties devolve on myself. – Pray muster courage – do not be diffident "a faint heart never won a fair Lady." If Miss [illegible] knew you as well as I do she would not be so squeamish – but if you do go to work with your wonted energy sure am I that you will come off succ[essful]. I had a letter from McMillan the other day. I feel for him very much, he is quite broken hearted and he has a cause as the Lady was on a Death Row when he wrote. She is young however and I trust her case is not so serious as he seems to construe it. –

Write me soon & with Kindest remembrances to your Brother, believe me

[1] James McMillan was to marry Eleanor McKinley, and John George McTavish was to marry Catherine Turner.

My dear Sir
Yours most Sincerely
Geo. Simpson [fo. 43]

[On Envelope] Come with us to Ellis & before dinner you will get her alone in the drawing room – She has fears about leaving her friends but [illegible two words] it would be madness in her to lose so very respectable a mytar – Her mother has not yet declared – Tomorrow you must see both father & mother when the girls leave.

George Simpson, London, to J.G. McTavish, 13th Feby 1830
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fos 44-45]

My Dear Sir

I am truly delighted by the information which your valued communication of today conveys. I am satisfied from your [illegible] frequent & good taste you must have made an excellent choice and from what I know of you I feel equally satisfied that the Lady will be one of the happiest of her Sex. Permit me to congratulate you most warmly on the happy event and to assure you that you & your intended have my best prayers. – My Frances will be delighted when I tell her this afternoon the pleasing news I have received likewise my other Friends of her House who will feel anxious until they have the pleasure of being introduced [fo. 44] to Mrs. McTavish. It is a curious circumstance that we are both to be made happy the same Day as at 11 oclock AM of the 22nd I likewise lose my liberty. I am vexed beyond measure that you cannot be present and had our arrangements not been too far advanced to be delayed now I should certainly have deferred it until your arrival. From Church we return to my uncle's where a few Friends will meet us at "Dejeune a la Fouchet" as the Frenchmen call it, and then about 2 P.M. I and my Spouse start off for Turnbridge Wells where we should have a day or two to ourselves & be back about the 25th. – and on the 26th we must make the Ladies known to each other. I shall leave a Line for you at our Friend Scott at Tower St. before starting. – We go by the Packet of [fo. 44d] the 8th and I shall write to L'pool in a few days to secure passages. – I take a maid Servant who with your Man George will be all the attendants we shall require as the former will do all the Ladies will require on the passage & the latter answers our purpose. – I shall endeavor to secure the whole of the Ladies Cabin for ourselves which means we keep all interlopers out & sup wt our Wives which is desirable: – I am grieved about poor McMillans disappointment beyond description. – Pray offer my kindest respects to your betrothed in which mine would be delighted to join yours cordially if she knew how things are but my Friends at Grave House will be ignorant on the subject until I go down to them in the Evening.

Believe me ever yours
Most Sincerely
Geo. Simpson

Pray rest a day at York – You will kill Mrs. McT. if you come over right through by the mail.
G.S. [fo. 45]

[Note on envelope] I am sorry I cannot mention the young man to the Board as I have already said we require no more than the 3 already engaged in order to keep out young Sandy but tis probable we can make room for him after your arrival here. G.S.

George Simpson, London, to J.G. McTavish, 16th February 1830
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 46-47]

[Note at top of this page] P.S. We had no opportunity of showing your Friend Mr. Campbell any [illegible] as I was unwell. Scott daily engaged. [illegible two lines] I mentioned to Mr. Pelly[1] on Saturday that you were taking out a Wife to which he made no difficulty but laughed and appeared pleased. G.S.

My Dear Sir

Our Friends of Grave House were delighted by the news I communicated to them on Saturday but particularly so my fair one, who looks upon Mrs. McT (that is to be) as a Sister already. – They regret exceedingly that they cannot ask you & Mrs. McT to take up your quarters at Grave House while you are in Town as I and my Spouse will occupy the only Spare Room they have but as it is very desirable that the ladies should see as much of each other as possible before Starting I have suggested that we should get a lodging for you in the immediate neighbourhood of my Uncles so that while you & I are attending to our out Doors business they will be going on together with their arrangements. – I have just written to [fo. 46] the Agent for Packets at Liverpool to secure the fore Cabin for our own party exclusively. We must not drag the Ladies by the Mail to Liverpool – Rapid transportation – as it may be injurious previous to commencing the Sea Voyage; our best plan will be to take a Travelling Carriage & drive Post, this will take you and Mrs. McT, myself & Lady & our two Servants & possibly we may stow McMillan, clap on 4 Horses get away the 4th & reach LPool by easy Stages the 7th. – Pray do not lose time at Edin. although the date of our departure is deferred, as you will find full employment here the few Days you have to spare.

I am afraid we cannot get you a first rate lodging in our Neighbourhood as the Houses are all small but we shall endeavor to find a Snug Comfortable place, indeed Mrs. Simpson is to be on the lookout today and in the course of a day or two [fo. 46d] hence I shall write you to the Bar of the "Black Swan" York (one of the Houses at which the Edin. mail Stops) giving you the address so that on alighting from the Mail at the Bull & Mouth you can at once take a Hackney Coach & proceed to your lodging. – If you were to put up at the London Coffee House the Ladies could not see much of each other except at [illegible] periods & the Coach House itself would be a fortune, but by being within a few hundred yards of each other they can be together as much as they please. –

[1] This likely John Henry Pelly (1777–1852), Governor of the HBC from 1822 to 1852. See biographical appendix.

Pray do not Travel too rapidly from Edin., take a day of Rest as the journey through would assuredly knock up Mrs. McTavish, to whom be good enough to offer my own & Frances's most kind & Sunny congratulations & best wishes. Accept the same yourself & believe me Ever yours most truly

Geo. Simpson [fo. 47]

George Simpson, London, to J.G. McTavish, 17th Feb. 1830
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 48-48d]

My Dear Sir

I wrote you two days ago and have since then been looking out for a Lodging for you in my vicinity but I regret to say that there is not a place in that neighbourhood which would suit you. – I therefore think your best plan is to go direct to the London Coffee House. – This morning I had an intimation from my Uncle's wife that the Ceremony must be delayed until the 24th so that you have two days the start of us, we start immediately after Breakfast on a little trip & shall be back on the Saturday. In the meantime let my Uncle know when you come to town, so that Mrs. [fo. 48] Simpson may call on Mrs. McTavish as she is most anxious to become acquainted with her.

I have nothing new to communicate & shall not address you to York. –

In hast, Ever Yours

Most Truly

Geo. Simpson

I am just starting to Drs. Commons for a license [fo. 48d]

George Simpson, York Factory, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 10th July 1830 (confidential)
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 50-51d]

My Dear Sir

I am very much hurried and therefore shall write you but a short Letter now. You will however hear from me fully in the Fall. – I trust you got safe to Moose; that Mrs. McTavish continues in the enjoyment of good health and high spirits and that you are both as comfortable & happy as you could desire to be. – Our Friend Stuart [John] was not over pleased when he heard of your marriage, he let fly a growl or two but it was soon over; to me he was most complimentary & polite and I reconciled him in some degree to your affairs before we parted. – My stay at Bas de la Riviere did not exceed a few hours. At Fort Garry we were received most kindly by the Gov[r][1] & his Lady, he took the intimation of your marriage very cooly (as he does most things) at first but, after the lapse of a Day or two he opined with me in private very seriously thereon and as exceedingly wrott [wrought], charged you wt having deceived the Woman, deceived him, her relatives in short with deception throughout, I got a

[1] This was Chief Factor Donald McKenzie (1783–1851) who was Governor of Assiniboia. He was also the uncle of Nancy McKenzie who John George McIavish had abandoned to marry in Scotland. See biographical appendix.

little warm also – a few sharp words passed between us. He was to have written you but thought better of it and agreed to drop the subject. I however expressed my surprise that he now for the first time should have taken any notice of his Niece and mentioned that he knew some years ago that it was your intention to part with her; this I said from recollection of your having told me some years ago that you had written to DM [Donald McKenzie] expressing a wish that he should look for a place for her at Red River and asking his advice on the subject of parting wt her: He positively declared that he never had such a communication from you. I was equally positive that he had, and it was chiefly on that point that we got animated. If you have his answer let me see it. You told me you did write him. You could have no object in saying so to me if it was not so: it is possible the subject may be revived by him wt me & I wish to be prepared – I nettled him a while on the manner in which he got rid of his own Woman; He was very Warm, but will soon cool I however think it will be the cause of his correspondence wt you [illegible]. – The news astonished everybody at Norway House & elsewhere. – At Oxford we were very politely received by Robertson [Colin], but his Lady did not make her appearance. Our stay there did not exceed an hour. – Finlayson[1] conveyed [fo. 50] the news to the old Lady[2] at my request in the most delicate manner, she was very much affected but is now getting over it, begs that she may not be forced to take another husband which I assured her through both the Stuarts & some other Friends, that she should not. It was high time you parted with her, she has done your character an infinity of mischief, not since the news reached her but before in the course of the Winter to Miles [Robert] by Women & others through whom it has leaked out; she charged you wt gross cruelty, beating her even wt a Poker, taking Women into the Room, locking her out, employing Spence in pimping and for what distressed & horrified me most of all Drunkenness: there never was such a malicious Villain on the face of the Earth; she was disposed to repeat these things since but I got Alex Stewart to put her on her guard: The Drunkenness she charged you wt was not the occasional excess or any particular Ceremonial meeting, but Solitary Brandy & Water [illegilble] & to such excess that George[3] was frequently under the necessity of taking the Bottle from you and putting you to bed. I trust I need not say that I did not believe it, many however do; I was however certain in my own mind that it could not be so and under that impression, had a private interview wt George for the purpose of contradicting the charges when necessary if untrue & of bending him down to secrecy if it should unfortunately turn out that it was true; but he thank God relieved me by assuring me in the most Solemn manner that he never saw you the worse of Liquor from excess in Solitude, that he rarely saw you so at all & that when if ever so it arose from a consensual meeting arising out of some particular circumstances such as a holiday. – Thus assured I am looking out for an opportunity of contradicting it in a formal manner by this many evidence and for that reason chiefly keep him this Season, his absence moreover would be very [illegible] at present as we have no one to manage the Cuddy in [illegible] absence who starts tomorrow & further he is averse to going himself. If you want him next year say so & he shall be sent, but he is an expensive Servant as he says that between Wages & Presents you make his Situation equal to £40 per annum. If you do not want him back send his

[1] This Duncan Finlayson (1795–1862). See biographical appendix.
[2] McTavish's former country wife, Nancy McKenzie (also known as "Matooskie").
[3] This is George Thorne (b.*c* 1809) from Sorel, Quebec. George Thorne was earning £30 per annum as a Mess Servant at York at this time. HBCA B.239/g/10.See biographical appendix.

things gone to Moose back to England by the Ship of this or of next Season in order that they may come to York. –

Your management here is the subject of a good deal of [illegible] out of Doors, the high wages & allowances given to Tradesmen & Servants & the large presents & allowances to Families. Miles [Robert] has picked out 20 lbs tea given to Spouses the [illegible] in presents in the course of one year & makes no secret of it, he is an open mouthed ill natured idiot and I have some difficulty in keeping him quiet. – Weights & Measures in the Shops & Stores and false credits to the Depot are likewise talked of; I have contradicted & explained the Weights & Measures reports through [fo. 50d] Hargrave,[1] Harkness[2] & Jebhos. Pray do not alter the system & Scale of Measures & Wages of Moose and [illegible] up the allowances to Gentlemen at Wintering grounds and on the Voyage. You are [illegible] charged wt [illegible] in giving cases & other articles to our Gentlemen without a charge & to an other without say McMillan [James] had one last year not chd [charged] to his account & Finlayson [Duncan] one charged to accts., in short any thing that ill nature can invent is caught at but will soon blow over, nothing is said out of Doors in my presence, but I am watching for an opportunity of taking the subject up therefore from yourself, no uneasiness upon it. – That in the bustle Toil & hurry of business irregularities may have crept in likewise for the sake of [illegible] & quietness as possible in some instances, but that they could have been understood. I never can & never will believe. – I cannot find the Book containing the North West Wintering partners credit wt the House of McGillivray Thain & Co in Robertson's writings, it was delivered by me to you the year I went to the Columbia. Pray send it to me or say where it has been left as I require it for reference frequently. – I think I also left wt you the Trustees Discharge of the Debts owing by Joseph and Simon McGillivray to the House at some time, do me the favour to look out for it among your papers or say where you think it is as I cannot find it.

I am happy to say you have received possession of the Chats Farm. Stewart[3] behaved very handsomely in the business & gave it up & in giving it up makes you a present of £1000 at least; I was glad to settle wt him while he was in the humour although I have no reason to think he would have altered his mind and I have paid him for it the £500 you got & £25 in trust by my private draft in the Coy as I know you was short of funds there. – I have written you a few lines distinct on the Subject as also about the letter of credit for £1000 give to you at Liverpool. –

Flora[4] has been sent to Bas de la Riviere and will be taken to Michipicoten by Mr. Stuart [John]. – To the old Lady I have given a credit in the Shop for £25 & she spends the winter wt John Stuart – She has got the Crockery & other trifles Your property found here except the Books which Hargrave [James] will look out for the purpose of being sold. Miles [Robert] says the clock is the Coy's [6 illegible

[1] James Hargraves (1798–1868), a clerk at York Factory. See biographical appendix.
[2] Andre/Andrew Harkness (b.*c.* 1796–1869) was a shop porter at York Factory at this time. See biographical appendix.
[3] It is unclear which Stewart is meant here. The Hudson's Bay Company acquired Chats, also known as the Chats Rapids Post, or Lac des Chats, as a result of the amalgamation with the North West Company in 1821. The post was located on the Ottawa River at the Rapides des Chats. In 1828 the HBC purchased Chats Farm, located opposite the rapids, and relocated the post. In April 1837 Governor George Simpson wrote to J.G. McTavish stating that since Chats was no longer a productive trade establishment the Hudson's Bay Company would sell the property to him.
[4] This was likely Flora McTavish, the daughter of John George McTavish and Nancy McKenzie, the country wife he had just abandoned.

words] I shall not dispose of it until I hear from you further thereon. – Peter Dease[1] goes to New Caledonia & Connely [Willliam] comes out next year [2 illegible words] your rotation for him or rather leave it blank. Simon McGillivray[2] goes to the Columbia – Joseph[3] returns from the Severn. J.W. Dease[4] is Dead of an abyss on the side of the Columbia. Charles[5] goes to Athabasca & McKenzie[6] to Isle a la X – Clarke [John] to Canada & Robertson [Colin] to Swan River – J. Stuart has been enquiring about his Diamond Ring. –

God Bless You
Ever Yours mo Truly
Kindest Regards to Mrs. McTavish.
Geo. Simpson [fo. 51]

Pray did you leave the Spy Glass wt black leather case which I gave you or have you taken it away. Leblanc [Pierre] thinks you left it & so does George [Thorne], but I cannot find it although the whole Factory has been Searched. G.S.

If you have it I do not want it. G.S. [fo. 51d]

George Simpson, York Factory, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 30 July 1830 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 52-53]

My Dear Sir

When I had the pleasure of addressing you by Mr. Stewart I threatened you with a long letter by Mr. Clarke [John] but now find myself so much pressed for time that the long one must be further deferred until I get leisurely seated at Red River for the Winter when you may expect Volumes. – Your Friend Stewart has really behaved like a kind hearted generous fellow, in giving you up the Chats Farm, it has made me his Friend for life and had you under a weighty obligation to him. – You ought to communicate wt Kulb about that Property and to beg that he will give instructions to the clerk in charge of the Establish[t] to look after the Timber & prevent people from cutting it down. There is a man named (I really forget his name at the moment) situated within your boundary line on the Riviere au Cuion who lays claim to the right of Building in the Mill Seats, the man should be warned off without delay, as occupancy for a certain length of time gives a Legal title: I have written Keith [James] on this subject but it may be well that you hear it in [illegible] and take up again next year – This man I would discharge without loss of time, he is an eye sore & a nuisance and if allowed to remain dozens may give you trouble. It is quite a dwelling place and should be closely watched to guard against encroachment as in the course of a few years it will be a very valuable property. I wish I had its fellow

[1] Chief Trader Peter Warren Dease (1788–1863). See biographical appendix.
[2] Chief Trader Simon McGillivray Jr. (1791–1840). See biographical appendix.
[3] Chief Trader Joseph McGillivray (1791–1832). See biographical appendix.
[4] Chief Trader John Warren Dease (1793–1830). See biographical appendix.
[5] Chief Factor John Charles. See biographical appendix.
[6] This likely Donald McKenzie Jr. (1787–1865). See biographical appendix.

on the opposite Shore so as to offer the prospect of our being Neighbours at some future period although I think I shall have a freehold of 6 feet by 4 long before you quit the Fur Trade as I am by no means in good health. – I forget whether I mentioned the changes that have taken place in this Dept^mt^ in my last or not. – Charles [John] returns Stewart [Alexander] at Athabasca & George McDougald[1] returns Simon McGillivray at Slave Lake, the latter being appointed to the Columbia: P.W. Dease [Peter Warren] goes into the charge of New Caledonia & Connelly [William] comes out next year, he is not well & will probably visit the Civilized World. – Robertson [Colin] has cleared the Winter Road, incurred much expense destroyed a great deal of provisions, damaged most of the pieces 150 still remaining in the Woods – killed 6 of the oxen – in short they made an infernal jumble of the business & confused & confounded every thing connected to it. He goes Swan River & Clarke [John] goes to look after his Estate in Canada & place his Boys in university – Oxford I presume. – He talks of returning, I wish he would commit it to writing in a legible shape. – McLeod [John] goes home in ill health & will be succeeded at Norway House by Ross [Donald]. – Wilson[2] at Split Lake is ill & was [fo. 52] to be relieved by Joseph McGillivray who retires next Season but I afterwards thought he would be likely to derange the Post I have therefore given him permission to go to Canada & pass the Winter with his Friend McIntosh [William] at Cumberland which McIntosh alone agreed to in consideration of it keeping him clear of his Son in Law Wilson. – Dr. McLoughlin [John] & Heron [Francis] have got into it but I have found it necessary to go to the Drs. assistance & gave Heron a Dressing who is nothing more or less than an idle, indolent Lawyer. – Poor Dease (J.W.)[3] you know is no News. He and the Dr. [McLoughlin] had a row and I understand it went as far as it could well do without Powder & Ball which was reserved for a mornings interview at the Wind Mills. – Hamlyn [Richard] had even the impudence to kick agt the Dr. and came out accordingly, he winters at the Colony on private account. – (By the Bye have the goodness to tell Dr. Hendry[4] that he will not be required at the Sea Coast as Hamlyn has gone there; I ought to have resolved this in the public Letter but it is now too late and you can give him the information in a formal shape.) – Barnston [George] is likewise in his high House has given notice of retirement & coming out; he is a Silly lad & must be allowed to take his own course. – Kittson[5] also withdraws foregoing that he is an absolutely necessary man. – McLeod[6] has [illegible] the Buona Ventura Expedition, made 2500 Beaver up to Oct. last, but feigned a scarcity of ammunition to get Home instead of remaining out until next Aug^t^ according to instructions; crossed the Mountains of the Clamath Country on his way back in Nov. lost upwards of 200 Horses left his people in starvation & distress, all his Furs in cache where they will be lost or Stolen by the Indians & come back to Vancouver in Feb^y^ to pocket his commission as he expected but lo & behold he met wt a disappointment: he comes out next spring but what to do with him I know not.

Your old woman is gone to Bas de la Riviere with John Stuart & got all she wanted to the tune of £25: She has been handling your Name most unsuccessfully but I sent her a message by Christie

[1] George McDougall (b.*c.* 1787–1850). See biographical appendix.
[2] This is Andrew Wilson (b.*c.* 1787–1835). See biographical appendix.
[3] John Warren Dease. See biographical appendix.
[4] This is likely William Hendry. See biographical appendix.
[5] This is likely William Kittson (1792–1841). See biographical appendix.
[6] Chief Trader Alexander Roderick McLeod (b.*c.* 1782–1840). See biographical appendix.

[Alexander] Alex[r] Stewart & Finlayson [Duncan] that if she indulged further in such malignant falsehoods you would drop her forever: she was a good deal offended at first but it soon wore off. – Hargrave [James] will have given you an acct. of the Sales at Auction, the Acct. is put to your credit, there are Books still unsold which will be disposed of next year – Miles [Robert] has handed me a list of cases for which no charge has been made to the Gentlemens accounts pray let me know how it is whether it was intended they should have been charged or given to them gratis say McMillan [James], Jones [Rev[d]], Todd [William], Heron [Francis] & Fisher. – The Wages & allowances of Tea Sugar Butter &c to the people of the establishment are much talked about; I do find some of this high for instance Wilson [Andrew] at £45; he is a worthless drunken vagabond to whom £30 [fo. 52d] would be overpayment besides the maintenance of 2 Boys: there are only £5 difference between his & Leblanc [Pierre]. These high wages excite much dissatisfaction & we must pull them down when the existing contracts expire & get fresh ones. Pray do not alter those at Moose. McKay[1] is the only more extravagant wage in the South & he must come down or return & advances of every description should be lopped off & I very nearly had a dust wt Mr. Clarke [John] about the Lad Spence whose services to you he noticed in a very improper manner in the boling[?] Room before C[illegible] & his men, C[illegible] saw the impropriety of it & took it up when I went away after giving him a little [piece] of [my] mind: this Lad is quite broken in constitution & totally useless. I sent him with Lewes [John Lee] to Oxford as it would be hard to send the man in his present miserable state to his poor Father at Red River. – While writing the last paragraph Moody[2] your old acquaintance called to say that you had given his wife to the amnt. of £14 in his account the winter he was in Athabasca without his orders & begging that his acct. should be re-credited wt that sum. – I turned the fellow out of course and I mention it to show you how oft[en] people are to complain of grievances when they know we are unprepared to meet them: in like manner I am pestered Day after Day by Gentlemen as well as Servants about Mr. McTavish's promises Mr. McT said this that & the other thing. – Pray let me know where the Book cont[g] the Gentleman's accounts NW is to be found, I am frequently applied to on the subject & let me know if you have the Trustees discharges of Simon & Joseph McGillivrays Accounts if you have do me the favour to send them likewise the Book of Accounts if you have it. –

Alex McTavish[3] I suppose was very much enraged at his removal from Albany, he has had a most extraordinary scheme of [illegible] and improvements in short is a very clever fellow in his ways & has a vast deal of "foresight" which he must have picked up from his old proprietor Haldane [John]: I yesterday saw the copy of a most impudent Letter he wrote to Christie [Alexander] last winter. I think you well clear of such a neighbour. – How came you to leave such a Batch of Champagne wt Miles [Robert]? it is laying about the Stores the long Weeks attracting the attention of any lady who passes who naturally asks what the D__l is this? The answer is some of Mr. McTavish's Champagne; I have wished the Champagne in the bottom of the River a Doz. of times over. – Say whether you wish to have George [Thorne] back again or not: he would like to go but the Wife prefers remaining here & that influences him, but if you particularly wish for him he shall be sent although it will be inconvenient to part wt him as he is very useful here – if you do not want him send his things by ship.

[1] There were more than one McKay in the "South" at this time.
[2] This is Edward Moody from Sanday, Orkney Islands. See biographical appendix.
[3] Alexander McTavish (1784–1832). See biographical appendix.

Mrs. Simpson begs to be most kindly remembered to you & Mrs. McTavish – Pray write me at great length freely & confidentially.

Believe me ever
Yours most Sincerely
Geo Simpson

George Simpson, Red River, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 3rd Jany 1831 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 54-56][1]

My Dear Sir

I believe it is my turn now to complain of silence, as by the two opportunities you have had of writing you have only given me about 20 widely penned lines whereas by every opportunity which has been within my reach I have given you volumes: but my Friend, I do not complain, as I well know your kind feelings towards me and have had too much experience of your steady & solid regard to fancy the possibility of its being shaken and I should in like manner trust you know mine towards You to be too firmly rooted in my heart to experience blight or diminution by time or distance. – As regards me rest assured you have not a more steady & sterling Friend either in Rupert's Land or out of it nor one who would go greater lengths to render you a benefit and I trust I am not mistaken in my opinion of your Sentiments towards me when I say that I would calculate more in Your Friendship than that of any man in this Country in any matter of serious moment. – Having disposed of this important point let us have a peep into domestic matters. I am truly delighted to hear that Mrs. McTavish is well and likes Moose; you may if you choose be the happiest fellow on the face of the Earth (myself always excepted) as you have the best wife I ever knew (my own in like manner excepted). I wish from the bottom of my heart we were situated near each other and my wife re-echoes this wish every Day of her life. We have thousands of Society but none that we care much about. Donald [McKenzie] and I are very good Friends but not over thick; his Wife a poor Stupid good creature, but there is nothing in her. The Parson's wife is passable but she is 3 miles distant and we see little of her, and Cockran's Wife has been a "Dolly mop" or some such thing who can pray & cook & look demure and Eat & say a Yes & No. But if our better halves were near each other they would both keep themselves & us alive. I really have serious thoughts of passing next or the following Winter with you at Moose – say how you could accommodate us the following Winter – We are tolerably [fo. 54] well quartered have 4 Rooms and a Kitchen and Leblanc [Pierre] has made them passably habitable. We give a feed occasionally and see the inmates of the Establishment at our Table about once a Week beyond which our festive intercourse does not go. – McMillan [James] does not feel quite comfortable, his mind is constantly wandering about blurmunick near Tyndrum. I feel for him very much; his wife will of course be out by the Ship and if she is the person he represents her she will be an invaluable acquisition to our Society – John Stuart is frequently with us and Cameron [John Dugald] is now here on a visit. – The old man[2] and Donald [Mckenzie] are constantly knocking their heads together about your

[1] The letters found in folios 54 to 114, also exist in typescript in the HBCA.
[2] Chief Factor John Stuart.

Concerns.[1] I have had some sharp words with both on that subject which led to a little coolness with the latter and high words from the former; the object seemed to be Bully you through me to make a fixed Settlement for Life on the old one; but I fancy you are too old in the world to be so served. John [Stuart] is a very good creature at a distance from his Oracle but near him his is his Tool and used as such in many a round about little trick. – The old Lady[2] does not seemed disposed to take another husband but by giving her a little time I have no doubt she will come round. I have sounded Leblanc [Pierre] and two or three others but the bait does not take. Don[d] [McKenzie] and Stuart [John] are vey anxious to make a Xtian of her by sending her to Red River to which I said I had no objections providing they could do £30 p[er] ann[m] covering all charges of Clothing Board &c &c. I mean unless you give directions to the contrary to make that Sum cover your charge for her this Year. She & her Children are quite well and still at Bas de la Riviere. In your communications with Stuart [John] do not use my name further in the business than that I have your instructions regarding the advances to be made to her and should he write you volumes on the subject I think the less you say in reply thereon the better. My old concern[3] & yours are Barrack & Mess Mates they have each two children and the same allowance say £30 will be made to each until disposed of. I am looking for a Husband for my own but cannot fall on one to my mind. – I was grieved to learn by a letter of old Date received lately from Montreal that the poor Emperor[4] is no more, he was a good hearted kind fellow and few of his Friends regret him more than I do. [fo. 54d] I do not recollect if I mentioned to you what we had done about Hughes.[5] – finding that a mere trifle could only be collected for him by subscription I recommended that he should be offered a Clerkship in the Service (without the prospect of promotion) of £100 and think it likely he will avail himself of it; the Committee I think will not object to it. –

While it is fresh in my memory let me draw your attention to the case of the old Cooper who was at Moose & who came to Red River last season, by name I think is Cromer – Johnson a Red haired Orkney man got his Daughter with child & this poor old creature is allowed nothing for the maintenance of the child pray get him to make some provision for it say about £5 p[er] Anm commencing from 1[st] June 1830 and if the fellow has money & retires from the Service let part of it be secured for the maintenance of the child, and if he has no money let this claim be the grounds of detaining him in the country: – let me know what you do in the business.

I am sorry to learn you found things in such bad order at Moose, but really cannot think that such a plain good fellow as Christie [Alexander] is, could have done or intentionally left undone anything to give his successor trouble. The Benevolence was with my permission made over to Ruperts River before Mr. Christie had the least suspicion that he was about to be removed and the Beaver you know was intended for Ungava even before she came off the Stocks and the old Barge to the best of my recollections has only been used in Lightering Hay & timber from the Mill for several years past. – The Buildings I am & was well aware had been allowed to fall into disrepair too long but steps were

[1] These concerns related to McTavish leaving his country wife (Nancy McKenzie) and family.
[2] "Old Lady" here refers to Nancy McKenzie, McTavish's country wife before he abandoned her.
[3] Peggy or Margaret Taylor.
[4] This is Alexander McKenzie (b.c. 1767–1830). His high-handed manner while commanding the NWC in Athabasca from 1804 to 1808 earned him the sobriquet of "Emperor". See biographical appendix.
[5] This is James Hughes Sr. (1772–1853). See biographical appendix.

taken for a gradual improvement being unwilling to burden the Concern wt a high charge on any particular outfit, and for the same reason I am still unwilling to enter into any extensive or expensive alteration or improvements. –

Let me entreat that you be very particular in keeping the Indent within the Sum fixed & that you have of no individual article more than is likely to be brought into immediate consumption. I mention this because I find that we are at York tremendously overburdened wt goods and in some articles more than can be used for [fo. 55] years, indeed so much overstocked are we in some articles that I think there must have been some great errors in copying your Indents or in the original calculations. – and to guard against jealousy let no particular favours in articles which should not regularly appear in indents to be given to individuals and the same allowance of luxuries (that determined on by the Committee) to all.[1] There is no end to the little petty jealousies that are occasioned by such trifles and I have been tormented out of my life about these since you left York. – The article of Stoves has been a great source of grumbling; it appears that you gave one to Alex Stewart while at Gods Lake[2] a few years ago; this encouraged Robertson [Colin] to apply for another and he got one of those intended for Ungava and since then Stoves are applied for from one end of the Country to another. I am very sorry to perceive from your remarks that you and Beioley [Joseph] do not approximate, rest assured he is an honorable correct well meaning little man and that you will find him able & willing to be useful if you but manage him properly; his ideas on many points are rather contracted and he is a rigid aeconomist and a man of strict rule but on the whole I am very much pleased wt his management and think it is worthwhile to lay yourself out to be on good terms with him. – What do you think of our Friend Keith's [George] management? he is most anxious to do well indeed over anxious which occasions a timidity and want of decision which does much harm; he expects opposition next year and will require assistance. I therefore now send him an Apprentice Clerk Hay[3] and McMurray [Thomas] (who has been opposed to You and Friend Black Bungo for these two last years) will proceed direct to Michipicoten from Lac La Pluie at the opening of Navigation for the purpose of being placed at the Pic and if you send him Nourse[4] he will be quite formidable. – McBain [John] is constantly in trouble one year he ascribes the loss of his Trade & the ascendency of his opponents to the want of a few pieces of printed cotton another to the want of guns another to the bad quality of his capots & another the want of 4 men applied for but never to his own mismanagement. Pray meet [fo. 55d] his demands to the letter if you can do so as to shut his mouth. Bethune [Angus] makes much ado about nothing, he writes me volumes about nothing does nothing & I really believe can do nothing. – Our Friend Allan McDonnel you will find the most pleasant man to do business with in your quarter it will be proper to meet his demands in full as he will apply for what he requires only and it is highly important to keep his district in its present good order. – I know Corrigals [Jacob] character well, "he is no great shakes" but will endeavor to do what he is directed which was not the case with his predecessor, the most self sufficient conceited would be wise Wise

[1] [Note in margin] or rather adopted by us here this Season of which I think you had a scale in my last.
[2] This is the Gods/Manito Lake in the Island Lake District.
[3] Little is known of Alexander McKenzie Hay except that he came from Dingwall, Scotland, and that in 1830–1831 he was an Apprentice Clerk at the HBC Experimental Farm. He had been in the HBC service for 1 year. HBCA B.239/g/10.
[4] This is William Nourse (b.ca. 1794–1855). See biographical appendix.

man I have yet fallen in with and the most indolent I believe in the Country – He writes me this Season a half impertinent flippant scrawl which I have difficulty in deciphering, of which I acknowledge rect. although I do not notice the style. He seems to be losing sight of that foresight with which he ascribed himself so marvellously gifted and I almost began to regret having interested myself so much on behalf of so ungrateful a man whose only merit appeared to me when doing him a benefit was your esteem. Pray what are your plans about the Chats Farm I trust you are pleased with what has been done, if you do not come to some fixed plan let me recommend you consulting Siveright [John] about it, he is frequently passing & repassing & will give himself the trouble of looking after it if you ask him. – The man who is settled at the entrance of Riviere au Cuivre should be removed forthwith and Wright warned off if he encroaches or builds on that Stream the Mill Seats in which will become very valuable in the course of a few years. – Sandy Stewart [Alexander] would have given you all our News, he is really a good little fellow & has quite gained my heart by the handsome manner in which he met your wishes. –

10th Jany
Since writing the above I have performed a very important operation by nailing Leblanc [Pierre] for your old concern as you will see by the correspondence of which the annexed is a copy vizt.

George Simpson Esq. R.R.S. 10 Jany 1831
Sir – [fo. 56]

I here by bind and oblige myself to Marry Nancy McKenzie the Woman lately living with John George McTavish Esq. within Three Months from this Date providing she accepts my proposals to that effect, it being undertaken by you on behalf of the said John George McTavish Esq., that I shall receive as a dower with her the sum of Two Hundred Pounds Sterling by Dft on England immediately after the marriage shall be solemnized. – And I further bind and oblige myself to pay to Nancy McKenzie the Sum of Two Hundred Pounds Sterling in damages in the event of the non-fulfillment of this my Engagement. – I am Sir your mo: obedt. Sert.
(Signed) Pierre Leblanc

Mr. Leblanc RRS 10 Jany 31
Sir

In the event of your marrying Nancy McKenzie the Woman lately living with John George McTavish Esq., within Three Months from this Date I do hereby bind and oblige myself on behalf of the said J.G. McTavish Esq. to give you're a Dower with her of Two Hundred Pounds Sterling by Dft on England.

I am Sir Your mo: obed. St.
Geo. Simpson

11th January
This arrangement I communicated to McKenzie [Donald] & Stuart [John] last night without letting them know anything about the money part of it and closed it with Leblanc without their knowing that

the subject was on the carpet; the object was to prevent them saying [any]thing about terms as both seemed determined to have a Thousand Pounds out of you; McKenzie applied to me this morning to know the particulars of the Settlement but in short terms I said I had nothing to do with him therein and would therefore give no information but that he might apply to Leblanc if he chose, in short I am nearly at hot war with both these Worthies about it and they finding I have stolen march upon them are quite enraged. Leblanc is to have a week's leave of absence in the course of a few days to go down to Bas de la Rivière to make love, tis possible I think that Stuart may dissuade her but if he does I shall have a letter & Leblanc in waiting at the bottom of the River for Sandy Stewart [Alexander] who will over tule the objections. McKenzie & Stuart have both behaved exceedingly ill in this business in my opinion, they talk of compulsion and Stuart has read to several people a letter which he says [fo. 56d] he wrote to you but which I feel satisfied he did not choose to forward; this letter I understand was most insulting, he read it to Clarke [John] in passant at Bas de la Riviere & Clarke has blazed the contents at Lac la Pluie & along communication. I do not mean to advise but were I in your situation I would never put pen to paper to either and certainly not allow myself [to] be threatened into terms. If she does not accept Leblancs proposals I shall limit her supplies from the Stores to £20 p[er] Anm until I again hear from you and there I shall leave the subject begging however that you will understand that all I say about these Gentlemen & the plots & counterplots is in perfect confidence. – Indeed I beg that all my recent letters as well as this be committed to the flames after perusal. –

You will be sorry to hear that my poor wife is by no means in good health. Tod [William] is attending upon her and does not know what to make of her case. You may easily believe I am in anything but good spirits in fact I cannot sleep and the consequence is that my old complaint in the head is troublesome again. She writes Mrs. McTavish by this conveyance. – Pray write me frequently fully & confidentially. I wish from the bottom of my heart we were near each other & neither myself nor my wife are quite at home here. – I find McKenzie the strangest fellow on the face of the earth and the most difficult to keep on terms with yet we have a regard for each other I believe at the bottom. – Remember me in the kindest manner to Mrs. McTavish and believe me Ever My Dear Sir

Yours most Sincerely

Geo Simpson

P.S. Pray send me the accts. wt the Trustees of McGillivray or say where things are to be found also the Settlement with the Trustees for Joseph & Simon McGillivray. I left it with you when I went to the Columbia. G.S.

You have been given an [illegible] to Lake Superior about the assortment of the Furs from the Pic & Long Lake, Keith [George] who is very Sensitive thinks it is aimed at him through [h]is Son in Law & does not like it. Pry be gentle with him. G.S. [fo. 57]

You shall have credit for the Pipers Dress. – I find there is not time to copy all the Letters I intended sending you on business. [fo. 57d]

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 8th February 1831 (private)
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fos.58-61]

My Dear Sir

Agreeably to the authority given me in your letter of 19th May 1830 to pay "One Hundred or even Two Hundred Pounds" "to induce some decent man to marry "Nancy McKenzie the Woman who lately lived under your protection, I have paid the latter sum to Pierre Leblanc (to whom she was yesterday married) by my Draft as Your Attorney of this Date at 60 Days sight on the Honble Compy, with an authority to pay the same on my private account in the event of there being no funds at your credit with the Comp as p[er] the enclosed copy of my Dft., and I have taken Leblanc's rect. for the same in duplicate, copy of which is likewise enclosed also Mr. Harper's certificate that the marriage was duly solemnized by him. In the event of your not having funds in the Compy's hands to meet the Dft. the amount can be repaid me at your convenience.

I remain wt. Respect
My Dear Sir
Yours most truly
Geo Simpson [fo. 58]

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 10th April 1831 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 62-65]

My Dear Sir

I have now the pleasure to acknowledge rect. of you highly acceptable "private & confidential" and "private" favor of 10th January. – These, likewise all others from you which are not Business Letters, shall as usual be considered strictly confidential by me, open neither to the Eyes of Ears of any besides myself; and mine, I expect of course will be held equally sacred by you. – With this understanding you shall have from me whatever comes uppermost without reserve, and your correspondence will I trust be of the same frank confidential off hand Character. – Before entering on such preliminaries I ought to have enquired after Mrs. McTavish. I trust I need scarcely say that both Mrs. Simpson and myself feel deeply interested in her, nor add, that we were truly grieved to learn that she was indisposed when you wrote: indeed we think she must have been seriously so, otherwise she would have communicated with my better half, who I assure you was more disappointed when after opening the packet I said there was no Letter to her address, this I am well able to express. – The indisposition, I trust, was none other than might be expected to arise from natural causes, and will be of an end before this can reach you. – Mrs. Simpson has also been a great sufferer this winter, and I hope from the same cause although the symptoms are very unfavorable. She is still seriously indisposed; & for weeks together confined to Bed, she will however take the first good chance she has, to address her Friend. –

I am truly sorry to find that the substance of my communications from York wounded your feelings so deeply. If I had command of time, I should probably have smoothed down and qualified

my report of the abominably malignant aspersions which with my ears were assailed out of delicacy to your feelings; but with the pressure of business on my hands and the absence of your Friendly council and able support to which I have been long accustomed, I could hardly note down in brief what was passing, far less set myself down regularly to the rounding of periods. Suffice it now to say, that all is blown over, and that none even of your bitterest Enemies believes one hundredth part of what was said of you. – I regard to your apprehension that some of these reports might get home and make impression there, I think you need not give yourself any uneasiness on that head, as none would venture to [fo. 62] make reports in that quarter which they might be called upon to prove, and if such reports did reach the Board to whom your character is well known, from any other source than myself, they would gain no credence. – My reports to those Gentlemen are not confined to Public Despatches, and I can with truth declare that I never lost an opportunity either personally or by correspondence of bringing your name, conduct & character before them in the most favourable point of view as they have ever appeared to myself. – In reference to your "remarks in reply to Mr. Stuart's Letter" – That Gentleman was here the other Day, and as I conceived that you meant that he should see them, I handed him that paper unaccompanied by any other except the Bill of parcels of the Crockery and the small sealed parcel marked "Diamond Ring": he read them, and then said "I shall tell no more lies, and if he wishes it, will let him alone until I have an opportunity of serving him again." I then drew out a Rect. for the Ring, and an order for £1.4/. both of which he signed; that former you will receive enclosed. I then begged he would no longer handle your name improperly, which he promised faithfully; on the contrary assured me that if he ever heard any other do so, he would take him up seriously: he then begged, I would put the Dammed packet into my Desk until his departure as he did not wish Mr. McKenzie or his wife to see it, which I did, and delivered it to him on shaking hands at departure. – The remarks in his letter on that subject are highly impertinent and improper, and from the manner in which they are made, I fear you may fancy that the information that the Ring was in Mrs. McTavishs possession came indelicately from me. – I shall therefore state as nearly as my recollections serves, all that passed on the subject. On my arrival at Bas de la Riviere Mr. Stuart [John] having read your letter asked if a Ring accompanied it, I replied in the negative, but conceiving it possible that you might have put it under the charge of Thomas, sent for and questioned him. – A search was made over the paper Box to no purpose, and I then said that you must have forgotten it in the bustle of my departure or that it would probably come out to your address by the Ship. – After remaining with him a couple of hours, I proceeded for Red River, leaving Christie [Alexander] and Thomas[1] with Stuart. When I rejoined Christie at Norway House, he informed me that Stuart made a good deal of noise and questioned him particular about the Ring, saying it was a valuable large Diamond Ring which the N.W. Coy. had presented to him several years ago as a token of their regard & gratitude for valuable Services rendered that concern on the other side the Mountains. [fo. 62d] Upon Christie's mentioning this, I for the first time recollected that when Mrs. McTavish was collecting her Jewelry & some watches &c which were under your charge for the purpose of being taken ashore privately at New York to save the Duties, she exhibited a large Ring remarking something about the gaiety of us Fur Traders. At the moment I thought it was some

[1] This is likely Thomas Simpson (1808–1840), George Simpson's secretary and confidential Clerk. See biographical appendix.

heirloom of your Family, and never thought of it again until Christie spoke to me at Norway House when it occurred to me it might be Stuarts, and in order to shut his mouth, mentioned the circumstances under which I saw it, assuring him it was safe, and that it would be sent him by the Winter Express which seemed to satisfy him. But from your "Remarks" I now see, that he must have made you a present of it, and as he appears sorry for the intemperate & highly improper manner in which he wrote you, I am in hopes he will make the necessary apologies & entreat permission to fulfill his original intentions. – With regard to the Cloth, I understand it was for Geordy [George Thorne] & shall pay him accordingly. – The story about the China is exceedingly Malicious. Agreeably to your instructions I directed George [Thorne] to include all your loose things which Madame [Nancey McKenzie] did not require in order to be sold along with the Books, they were accordingly collected & Lotted and on the Day of Sale Stuart called on me to say that she had taken a fancy to the Crockery, but supposing it was a Dinner Service which I understood you had bought of Matthey [Jacques], my reply was, that she could have no use for it, and that if taken inland it would be smashed on the portages; to this Stuart assented and it was accordingly sold with the other things, but until you sent me Stuart's Letter, I neither knew by whom it was bought nor that she had got it back. – With regard to the last of the "remarks" both Stuart and Mckenzie [Donald] lay much stress on the obligations you are under to the former, and the Brothers of the latter for "keeping you in the Country after you had deserted your charge of Carlton" these obligations I have laughed to scorn knowing more about that affair than either of them. – Since I last wrote you, I have had warm words and consequent coolness with both these Gentlemen about the Lady; there were numerous plans, plots & schemes for your extinction, in fact "You ceased to exist already" or in other words: your doom was fixed, between them. I however told Stuart of your excellence as a shot, spoke of your unerring hair trigger, of the risk he himself would run, the double risk his Friend would run from his size, the vulnerable materials of which they were both made, and feeling touched on the melancholy condition in which the Swiss & fry[1] also Mary[2] would be in if [fo. 63] they lost their Lords & Masters in such a silly Knight Errant adventure: this seemed to have some effect, a compromise was proposed, McKenzie insisted on your giving a Year of your time for the 17 she had given you of hers, but Stuart was more moderate, he would insist on no more than a Hundred Pounds for every child she had brought to the World. – To their great mortification however, I settled the matter with Leblanc [Pierre] without consulting either, which produced a further coolness wt McKenzie which is likely to continue; told McKenzie in answer to some questions that I was acting as your agent & Friend in the business & would not condescend to say one word more therein to him, and informed Stuart that if either he or his Friend should influence the Woman to reject the offer I would provide Leblanc with another Widow,[3] & would advise you to leave the piece on their hands. – They saw that all their plots & plans had fallen to the ground, made no further opposition. Leblanc went to Bas de la Riviere, posed the question, « Quiaime » [qui aime] was the unhesitating answer, she accompanied him forthwith Bag & Baggage,

[1] In 1825, Donald McKenzie married Adelgonde Humbert Droz, the 18-year-old daughter of Swiss settlers, who had been taking care of his children. This couple would eventually have thirteen of their own children. See biographical appendix.
[2] Mary was the country wife McKenzie had turned off on settling at Red River in 1823.
[3] [Note in the margin] "That widow is now Madame Hogue." This was Simpson's country wife, Margaret (Peggy) Taylor who married Amable Hogue.

was Baptized & formally disposed of one fine cool morning at 6 a.m. in the Catholic Church. – Leblanc got drunk with Grout.[1] Madame Leblanc had the honour of Drinking tea with, and doubtless benefited by the enlightened conversation of her Aunt, and the happy couple received the congratulations of their Friends the following Day. They occupy a small house about 50 or 100 yards from us, and seem very loving & comfortable. The Children are fine healthy little creatures, the eldest very like you about the upper part of the Face; they are provisioned at "Trade Charges" and will of course be clothed at your expense which is all they will now cost you. I am thus particular about these matters (which have cost me a good deal of vexation & trouble although they are now satisfactorily closed) as I think they will be interesting to you. – Both McKenzie & Stuart behaved exceedingly ill in the business throughout, but I do not blame the latter, he is a weak silly old Man who allows himself be made a complete tool of by his designing Friend who has lost ground in my estimation and whose Society & Serpentine ways I am heartily tired. – The hints, the half Sentences, the what he could say, remarks, with a view to raise my suspicions against you, and throw doubts on your good feelings towards me, were endless while we continued on anything like familiar terms, and were plied with so much industry caution & earnestness as to be seen through. – I shall now take a look at your "private & confidential" letter. – The Stories about Women, chastising Madame and Jollifying are all blown over, give yourself no uneasiness about them, those whose good opinions you care anything about, know your character & habits too well to allow them [to] make any impression and those [fo. 63d] of whose opinions you are careless, know that many of those stories have emanated from themselves. – I shall speak to Don^{d} Ross about the Clock & see at York if you have been charged with the Twine, if you have, it will be sold on your account; if not, it will remain where it is (in the Mess Room). It was very proper the Compy should pay the charge for repairs. Twas Miles [Robert] that drew my attention to it, likewise to the liquor cases, which I mentioned to you, not for the purpose of finding fault wt or reflecting on your management but with the view of obtaining information (which is perfectly satisfactory) so as to be enabled to speak thereon if again brought on the Carpet. – In regard to Moody's [Edward] application, the particulars of which (as I have no copy of my letter) I do not recollect – I neither meant to joke nor to "hint", I gave it [to] you I suppose literally before it was 5 minutes old, and certainly never could have thought of playing with your feelings; and I trust you know me too much to suppose for one moment that in reporting such things literally as they come to me, my opinion of you was influenced by them, or that I give the least credence to any thing that could be said affecting your Name, character or honor as a man or as a Gentleman; if you do, you do me injustice, as my sole object was, and is, to let you know what is said of you confidentially as I should expect you would do by me if similarly circumstanced, and if you fancy I have not stood up for you, and advocated your cause with my utmost ability, you do me wrong. – The cause of my begging that no alteration should be made in the Scale of wages and allowances is, that I found our Resolves of Council on those points were lost sight of throughout the Country and on enquiring into the cause the answer generally was that such and such were the Wages and Allowances at York which of course shut my mouth as you were not at hand to explain matters. – And the cause of my writing so fully & particularly both to yourself and the Compy on the subject of Provisions to Families in the South, was that for two or

[1] This reference does not make immediate sense, but "Grout" was a popular fur-trade dish made by boiling oatmeal until it was thick and then sweetening it with molasses.

three past years there has been much said upon it in the South, that you took it up in Council in the same light, and I have reason to believe it has been mentioned by a wise fault finding Gentleman of our acquaintance at Home. – I shall deliver your message to George [Thorne], he is much attached to you and would gladly have joined you at Moose if his wife had been disposed to accompany him. – The cause of my enquiry about the Spy Glass was that Leblanc [Pierre] told me both it & my gun were seen there after your departure, the latter I found after much search about the Office, but the other being missing I suspected some one at the Factory had made free wt it: do me the favour to consider it your own, it was not a gift [fo. 64] to me although the names of two old Friends are upon it. I am most happy that the Farm has again fallen into your hands, if you do not return to your native Country it will become a comfortable house for you, and if you do return, it will sell to advantage. I do not recollect that I said any thing about Title Deeds. The Deed from the Sheriffs office I gave you in 1829 and some old papers connected therewith I likewise gave you, or they are left at La Chine; they were put up in a Tin Case and lay in a cupboard or small closet off my Bed Room with other papers so that you can apply to Keith [James] for them in case I forget it. – I have applied to the Trustees for a copy of Joseph & Simon McGillivrays discharge, it is curious where the original can have got to, the McGillivrays say they have it not, and I have examined every paper in my possession to no purpose, tis possible it may still be at La Chine, I thought it had been left with you. – Your namesake I dare say made the most of what he heard about my Columbia adventures as he does of most other things that he knows little about; they cost me some shame and upwards of £60 in money, the latter I grudge most confoundedly & shall endeavor to forget the former. He is a poor self centered ill natured fellow who has the happy talent (and I believe it is the only talent he possesses) of making himself more enemies than friends. – Having now replied to and noticed the different points touched on in your communication I shall endeavor to fill up my paper with such chit chat as may occur to me. – I am most heartedly tired of Red River and rather of its good inhabitants, and should be delighted to join you at Moose next Fall, indeed my better half is constantly entreating me to take her there, so that she may enjoy the society of her Friend to whom she is most warmly attached. – Here she has formed no intimacies, McKenzie's wife is a silly ignorant thing, whose common place wise saws with which we are constantly persecuted, are worse than a blister: Mrs. Jones is a good unmeaning woman whom we merely see for half an hour occasionally & Mrs. Cockrane whose assumed Puritanism but ill conceals the vixen, shines only when talking of elbow Grease & the scouring of pots & pans. – When Mrs. Simpson was sufficiently well to see visitors we had a party occasionally but that was seldom. MacMillan [James] has been very solitary & uncomfortable all winter, the distressing state in which he left his wife preys upon his spirits. – Finlayson [Duncan] is of a solitary turn of mind and fags at his shop accounts 16 hours out of the 24. – The Dr. (Tod) has been with us since New Year, there is nothing for him to do at Brandon House while George Setter[1] is there, & Mrs. Simpson has stood in need of his constant attendance. – Hamlyn [Richard] is a superficial silly fellow in whom we have little confidence and Bunn[2] [John] is like the prophet who was not respected in his own Country. – Kennedy [Alexander] is flirting with [fo. 64d] the parson's maid, and if he could get rid of the old hag would become a Settler; but she sticks like a leech & he talks of being off in Spring. – The other Blues have

[1] George Setter (b.c. 1788–1868). See biographical appendix.
[2] John Bunn (b.c. 1800–1861). See biographical appendix.

not changed for the better. – Ballenden[1] & Thomas Simpson[2] are here, the latter came from York about a month ago. If Finlayson [Duncan] goes to the Columbia either one or other of those young men will succeed him here. McKenzie [Donald] talks of taking his wife & children to Switzerland for the benefit of Education in the course of a year or two, if he does, he may bid farewell to Red River, he is not at all fit for the charge being the most indolent useless man I ever knew, the fact is, I never knew McKenzie's habits of body or mind until this past Winter, had I been acquainted wt them sufficiently early, he never would have been a Govr. How would you like to come here? I told you at Michipicoten how McKenzie stood, while the proprietorship continues in the hands of the Selkirk Family, the allowance he enjoys will probably be continued, but if it reverts to the Company which is not unlikely it will cease of course. His appointment did not arise you are aware either from favor or affection, but from the accidental circumstance of his having been here at the time – if it had depended on me I trust you are well aware that the Loaves & fishes would not have passed yourself. If you wish to come and that I can bring it about, it shall be done. Let me hear from you on this point. – We are building at the Rapids, which the biggest & best situation in the river, the materials Stone & lime, & if the plan I have begun be followed up it will be a respectable & comfortable Establishment; I do not expect to occupy it, as it will not be habitable until the Fall of 1833. – Leblanc conducts the work & the McKenzie River men & recruits of last Fall are the Labourers. I must pass another Winter here & probably two if you cannot make Room for me at Moose, but if you can, I should like to join you in the Fall of 1832. – You are very sparing of your chit chat, not one word about your own Menage, nor the people who are about you, nor do you say anything about business beyond what the official Letter to myself & the Factors & Traders conveys: it would have been satisfactory to know your opinions on things in general, and what you think of the management of your Neighbours. You do not even say that you saw Allan McDonell at Faries [Hugh], in short you do not seem to have been in a communicative humour when you wrote which could not have arisen from the pressure of Business. – The Dr.[3] is just come in to bleed my wife who is very unwell, I shall therefore for the present stop Short. Pray remember me in the kindest manner to Mrs. McTavish and say that I have scarcely recovered the effects of the bruises I got on board the Wm. Byrnes yet. –

Adieu and Believe me Ever
My Dear Sir
Yours most sincerely Geo Simpson [fo. 65]

[1] This is likely John Ballenden (b.*c.* 1810–1856). See biographical appendix.
[2] Thomas Simpson (1808–1840) was born in Scotland in 1808, and was the brother of Aemilius and Alexander Simpson, and the cousin of George Simpson. See biographical appendix.
[3] William Todd (1784–1851).

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 20th May 1831 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 66-66d]

My Dear Sir

I wrote you volumes last month which are still in my Desk, they will be forwarded herewith by Atkinson[1] who goes to Albany with the intention of resuming his Indian mode of life. – There is nothing new since my last on this question; the Spring is most backward, northerly winds Month after Month and little or no appearance of Vegetation, Lake Winnipeg is as solid as in the Depth of Winter and McMillan [James] says that he is ploughing through Ice instead of Soil. – We yesterday had advices from Robertson [Colin] and he himself is to be here about the 1st of June; his returns are very low and he appears to be altogether out of condition, talks of old Age infirmity & retirement and I really think tis likely he will withdraw either this or the next season. He is a poor unfortunate man and I really feel for him although he never evinced any good feeling towards me: – Madame[2] is to pass the Summer wt Bruce,[3] he does not seem anxious to bring her into notice. – We are very anxious about Mrs. McTavish [fo. 66] but I trust she has long ere recovered her Wonted health and spirits. Mrs. Simpson still continues a great invalid, the greater part of her time in Bed and her symptoms by no means favourable. Tod [William] is in constant attendance and I think I must keep him during the summer as Hamlyn [Richard] goes off wt the first crafts, if our calculations be right she will be in the Straw about the middle of September, which is a most awkward time for me as I can scarcely get back from York so early. I ought to have taken a lesson out of Dennet the Taylors Book. – I should like to pass the Winter of 1832 or 1833 wt you, can you make room for us. My better half is constantly on the subject. We are both heartily tired of our Red River quarters and Society, I hope Mrs. McMillan[4] will prove a valuable acquisition to the latter. – Our Friend Alexr Stewart I suppose will bring in the Express as tis probable that Clarke [John] will retire or get an appointment about the mouth of the St. Lawrence. I expect to hear from you fully by that conveyance both publicly & privately. All your communications have been more brief formal & reserved since we last Saw each other than usual or than I could have wished or expected. – From York I shall have this pleasure again in the course of the Summer and at greater length. Pray remember me in the kindest manner to Mrs. McTavish. Mrs. Simpson has already written her and now again desires her Warmest regards to you both.

Believe me Ever
My Dear Sir
Yours very sincerely
Geo Simpson [fo. 66d]

P.S. Atkinson (the Bearer) [George] wishes to plant a few Potatoes at Albany & rear a few pigs & cows, I do not think it would be good policy to allow him [to] settle at the Establishment as he is [a]

[1] This is George Atkinson III (or Junior). See biographical appendix.
[2] This is Theresa Chalifoux, the wife of Colin Robertson.
[3] This is likely Charles Gaspard Bruce (b.c. 1781–1854). Bruce had been an Interpreter for Selkirk and the Colony, and was living on a lot close to Fort Douglas on the east side of Red River. See biographical appendix.
[4] James McMillan had married Eleanor McKinley in Scotland in 1830. She did not accompany James back to Rupert's Land as she was too ill to travel. She would arrive a year later in 1831.

knowing troublesome fellow, but if he chose to cultivate a little way up the River or to the Northward or Southward along [the] shore there could be no harm in it; pray ask Mr. Corrigal [Jacob] to let him have a few seed potatoes and a little assistance if he be disposed to settle. But if he gives trouble by talking to the Indians of oppression &c &c let him have a fright, he even had the impudence to ask if we would allow the same price to him for Beaver at Albany that we allow Nolin and others in this quarter; my answer was, not one farthing on a hundred Porks beyond the regular Indian Tariff at Albany; that we looked upon him as an Indian and as such would be treated by us there.
G.S. [fo. 67]

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 8th June 1831 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 68-69d]

My Dear Sir

I was made happy yesterday by the agreeable accounts which your highly valued private letter gave of Mrs. McTavish, your good self and all that concerns you. Accept & convey to Mrs. McTavish the warmest congratulations of my better half and Self on the late addition to your household, we sincerely trust that both Mother & child continue to do well and hope in due course to show that we also have not been idle although you have got the start of us. My poor wife you'll be sorry to learn is very ill indeed, almost entirely confined to her Bedroom and although not in an immediate dangerous state much worse than Women generally are while in such situations. Under such circumstances it really breaks my heart to part with her and she poor Dear girl is if possible [fo. 68] more distressed at the separation than myself. I shall Tomorrow bring and leave Tod [William] with her, my stay shall not be so long as usual at York, indeed I have almost made up my mind to start from there by the 1st of Augt so as to be here by the 15 or 18. – McMillan's [James] wife coming out by the ship with a little girl, he has beaten us both. The views from England are of a most alarming nature. I fear things in that quarter are in a bad way even although our respected Friend Mr. Ellice [Edward] lends a hand at the helm of State. – Our Friends Stuart [John] and Geordy [George Thorne] made a sad blunder between them about the packet and I fear it will throw your accounts back. – In your private letter you favor Gladman's [George Jr.] application to go home, but pray [why] did you not do so at the proper time? He spoke to you last fall on the subject, but by the Winter Express you do not mention his name; You must have been well aware that I would not have given him leave of absence not knowing whether you could have done without him or not. Had I done so you would have had much more cause of complaint that in regard to Nourse [William]. – I must not however go into matters of [fo. 68d] business now. – I have not finally determined whether I shall go to Moose in Fall or next year, or hold a council at Fort William or Michipicoten about the 1st of June, but shall make up my mind upon it before I next write. – Our Friend Clarke [John] has had his trip to England for nothing, the committee treated him with the contempt he deserved and he is in high dungeon – when he reached Canada a letter from me was put into his hand which perfectly amazed him & drove him stark mad – he is go to [illegible] at Mingan – I transcribe an extract of one of his letters to the committee which will make you laugh. "To the joint efforts of Mr. Robertson [Colin] & myself are the HB Coy in a great measure indebted for the splendour & importance of their rank & standing in the Great

Commercial World." Well done John! Pray say to Mrs. McTavish with my spouse's kindest regards that she was delighted by rect of her letter and intelligence it contained; and that she will have the pleasure of replying to it when she is able to sit up. She has been closely confined to Bed for several Days past. Do me the favour likewise to present to her my warmest wishes – wt a kiss to little Miss – accept the former both from the good Wife & myself & believe me ever with sincere regard

Yours most truly
Geo Simpson [fo. 69]

Many thanks for the good measure of your last private communication. I wish you had been equally bountiful in the Winter when we had a superabundance of spare time in hand as I shall not be able to do much under the head of private correspondence until the cold weather sets in again.
G.S. [fo. 69d]

George Simpson, York Factory, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 7th July 1831 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2. fos. 70-71d]

My Dear Sir

I have scarcely a moment at command for private correspondence but cannot allow Mr. Stewart [Alexander] to take his departure without returning you my warmest thanks for your very kind letter of 23rd March which reached me at Red River by which I am delighted to learn that Mrs. McTavish and the Young Lady were well. Pray offer to Mrs. McTavish & receive yourself my most hearty & ardent congratulations & let Young Miss have half a score kisses from me. – Both yourself & Mrs. McTavish I am sure will be grieved to learn that I left my poor better half in (I am afraid) a dangerous state at Red River. Dr. Tod is in constant attendance upon her and I am more miserable about her than words can tell; if any evil should happen I shall be the most wretched Man in existence as my whole heart & Soul are bound up in her. I mean to be off from this place in about 3 weeks time. You can therefore easily conceive how full my hands & head are, also how much I stand in need of & how much I miss your able support & kind & Friendly council and assistance.

You will be equally surprised & pleased to see Stewart [Alexander] he goes to Albany and an excellent & valuable neighbour you will find him. – He will tell you all our News and every thing worth relating from this quarter. –

I have much satisfaction in being able to assure you that there has not been a breathing to your prejudice this Season. Miles [Robert] doe not even venture to speak, Robertson [Colin] is disarmed and Old John [Stuart] lets you alone as you desired – indeed when your name comes upon the carpet in my presence he now invariable emits out something intended as a complement. To Captn McKenzie [Donald] I showed the Bill of Parcels for the China as also to Robertson and some others and the Captn tells me that it was by Stewarts directions that he purchased & sent in the Cups & Saucers without any reasons being asked by him – in fact the old man (John) is quite ashamed of himself and seems to feel that he has been made a tool of by his designing Friend whose passion will

operate more against himself than you. – There us a Rod in Pickle[1] for him which he little dreams of, & which will make him smart before he is much older. –

I have written you officially and shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you at Fort William about the 1st of June not later if you can help it as I require all my time to get back here to Council. We shall then have an opportunity of talking over a thousand things which cannot be so well handled on paper. By the accompanying copy of a Letter to Keith [James] on the Cash matter of some of the Friends for whom I have been acting you will see what has been said in regard to your investments and if you approve of it you can confirm that same by a letter to Keith when an opportunity offers.

Stewart [Alexander] will tell you how I handled McIntosh about certain a transaction. He is a sly little body and I should not like to trust much to his liberality in _____. –

I would send you a copy of our minutes of Council but really have not a spare hand to make it out. – Our Indent for next Shipment will be under £15,000, – Our returns are very [fo. 69d] moderate this Season perhaps about ¼ to ⅓ less in value & fully ⅓ less in bulk. – Our councilling went off very smoothly and upon the whole I think we are all better Friends than usual this of course arises from Lord Johns [Clarke] absence. He was a most troublesome fellow and will continue to be so to the end of the Chapter. – Keith is sick of him already. I saw a letter from Clark to a friend of his in this Country in which he says "Mr. Keith is an impertinent fellow" he had better not say so to Keith himself or "by George" he will get into a mess. – Robertson [Colin] is quite an altered man for the fun of the thing I shall send you a note I received from him the other Day if I can lay my hands upon it. –

The Clock is as you said your property but has been assumed by the Compy for the use of the Mess Room deducting the amnt of repairs from the original cost with which you are credited.

The Horses I have sold to Lewes [John Lee] for £10 does it belong to you or to Rowand [John]?

I directed Finlayson [Duncan] to get your account credited with the amount of Colin Frasers Tartans when they reached me at Red River but he does not recollect what it was to a fraction and your letter in which it was mentioned has been left at Red River so that you cannot be paid until next year. – This is my fault as well as Finlayson's and you must divide the blame between us. –

You will be glad to learn that Finlayson is a C.F. [Chief Factor] – The Lieut.,[2] Work [John], & Tod [William] are C.T.s [Chief Traders]. You ask me how it happens that Faries [Hugh] knows who votes & who does not vote for him – to which I can only say that he does <u>not</u> get it from me; he must either be inspired or the voting & non voters must tell him themselves, all I have to say on the subject is, that neither he nor any other on the Face of the Earth having it from me or from my Documents unless they pick my Locks.

On official matters I shall say nothing at present being much occupied – Nor do I mean to revive the subject of heavy Indents, Spy Glasses, Thermometers, Sofas, Stoves &c &c on which you are disposed to kick. – We never did kick when near each other and the Dls [Devil] in it [fo. 71] if we begin to kick now when we are so far distant from each other. – no no my valued Friend, it must

[1] The old phrase "rod in pickle" means having a punishment, penalty, or scolding kept ready to use later. People used to soak birch rods in salt brine or vinegar (pickle) to keep them hard and tough for beating or whipping.
[2] This is Æmilius Simpson (1792–1831). See biographical appendix.

never come to that. I have been very much amused wt your statement of Beioley's [Joseph] case – the body must be out of his senses; Mrs. McTavish seems to have managed the Boat scene with admirable address. I did not know he was so jealous, he must have taken me for a very Joseph last time I was at Moose as when shaking hands wt his Brown Jug previous to departure he turns round to the Lady wt the most profound gravity & says "You may Salute the Govr my Love" – it was no sooner said than done and I wished her and her "Smoky Chimneys" as old Nick. – Geordy [George Thorne] seems still sore about the rub you gave him he is is the most sensitive creature on the Face of the Earth. Pray use the Polishing instead of the Scrubbing brush with him. – I did not apply for Nourse [William] until I thought you was quite independent of his Services. Gladman [George] Good [Richard] & the Dr. with the apprentice Clerk coming out I considered & still consider a sufficient staff. – I do not like to meddle with New Brunswick until we meet in Canada. –

On the subject of your Farm at the Chats I can offer no opinion or advice at present – keep it by all means it will be a fortune to who ever inherits it and is the best bargain that ever was made in Canada – on all those matters we shall be better able to compare notes when we see each other. – I threw out a hint to you about R.R. I should like to know what you think of it. – You can write in Winter which will afford me an opportunity of communication via the States so as to have an Answer from England by the Ship next Autumn – I do not say anything about a Change until I know your sentiments thereon. – If we are all alive and well we shall either Winter wt you at Moose or you wt us at R.R. in 1833 – I do not think I am fit for the double Journey in 1832 – and it would be too late in the Season to take Mrs. Simpson after going from here in the Fall as by losing so much time in the early part of the Season going to Fort William it will be necessary to remain here late. – Take care that Christies [Alexander] Family get out & have a passage in Spring. – Pray write in Winter so that the Packets may be exchanged as last Year: – I shall write you from Red River about the latter end of August. Pray remember me in the kindest manner to Mrs. McTavish, A thousand Kisses to little Miss & believe ever

My Dear Sir
Yours most sincerely
Geo Simpson

[Note in Margin] Dr. Hendry [William] will be an excellent match for Mary. I shall keep it clear. Pray attend particularly to my <u>private</u> & <u>confidential</u> note.

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to J.B. McTavish, Moose Factory, 15th August 1831 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos 73-74d]

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure from York by Mr. Alexr Stewart who I have no doubt is near Moose by this time. The business was despatched wt unusual rapidity this Season, indeed I fagged Night & Day and became so unwell in consequence that not only Hamlyn [Richard] but myself and the Gentlemen who were there became alarmed about me. On the 19th Ulto however I finished & took my departure for this place where I arrived on the 2nd Inst and found Mrs. Simpson in nearly the same state as I left her wt the exception of increased bulk; she has had a most trying time of it and I fear her confinement will bear very heavily on her delicate frame; Often, very often indeed, does she regret the distance at which she is separated from her kind friend Mrs. McTavish, with whom she would feel happy & at home, but wt the good Dames of this Settlement she has no more intimacy than with her own Servants. I need scarcely say that both she & myself were delighted to learn that Mrs. McTavish had got so well over her confinement and that Young Miss promises so well, pray offer to Mrs. McTavish & accept yourself our warmest congratulations on the occasion. – If my better half be able to get out of Bed tomorrow she means to write Mrs. McTavish. – Things went off very smoothly this Season at York. Robertson [Colin] was on his best behavior and John Stuart was more moderate than usual, the other Gentlemen after the old Fashion. We made large reductions on Men & goods and it was high time as things were getting in a very extravagant state. The Indent of the present year for next year's Shipment is under £15,000. – I did not hear of a disrespectful remark having been made about you the whole season and I really believe that McKenzie [Donald] & Stuart [John] are ashamed of themselves – particularly the latter, the former is of such and unforgiving vindictive turn of mind that his hostility knows no bounds. – I believe I mentioned the Row I had wt McIntosh about the N.W. Debt purchased from Cameron, he is a sly deceitful body whom I should not like to trust in any way. – Robertson [Colin] brought his bit of Brown wt him to the Settlement this Spring in hopes that she would pic up a few English manners before visiting the civilized World; but it would not do – I told him distinctly that the thing was impossible which mortified him exceedingly. She passed the Summer at Bruces [Charles Gaspard] and had an opportunity of calling at the Parsons, usually on visits to 2 of His children who are boarded there. Robertson came here a few Days ago to fetch them, to took up his [fo. 73] quarters altogether at Bruces and only called here twice – he takes his departure I understand tomorrow mortified & chagrined beyond description. – He has begged a passage from me as far as Fort William in Spring which I have partly promised him. I am in hopes he will change his plans before that time. He is without exception the most trifling, frivolous man I ever saw. – Do you not think Clark [John Clarke] has been well served at last? I have had the Rod in pickle for him these 2 years past, his appointment to Mingan will be the ruin & Damnation of the fellow; Stewart [Alexander] can tell you many curious stories about him – he is to write a Book and to hand all his Enemies up with myself at the head of them: he may write & be D__nd for me. – McMillan [James] is gone down for his wife who is expected out by the Ship; she is a new woman by his account but I shall be able to tell you all about her when we meet. – Mrs. Simpson has no idea as yet that I am going to Fort William in Spring otherwise I am sure she would insist on accompanying me & beg that Mrs.

McTavish might accompany you. – when we meet we must concoct measures for their being enabled to pass a Winter or two together. – Hendry [William] remains here for this winter at all events, he is a changeable queer kind of fellow and I imagine thinks he has gone a little to far in his overtures to Mary through you. The fact is, I suspect he has a Sheeps eye towards the Parsons Maid but of this I have no certainty as yet. I shall not however permit any bargain being closed there, until you distinctly say you have no claim on him. McKenzie [Donald] is very attentive to him, and I have a notion that he has an eye upon him for his Red Haired Daughter. The Dr. [Hendry] shall not get out of my hands until he clears scores with you. – Little Hughes[1] is here as playful as a Boy and happy beyond measure; He is delighted with Red River and goes up to re-establish the Post of Qu'Appelle with the view of drawing the Assiniboine from McKenzie & Laidlow who are established in the Missouri. McLoughlin [John] is quite a changed man since the death of Dease [John Warren]; you are aware that he had a very serious quarrel with the poor man immediately previous to his decease which tis said was the cause of his undertaking the Journey from Vancouver to Colvile at such an unfavourable Season. The Dr. [McLoughlin] remains at Vancouver until the Spring of 1833 and comes out wt the intention of going to Canada & Europe; he has laboured exceedingly hard since he crossed the Mountains & requires a holiday. – Ogden [Peter Skene] was to have started in April to Establish Nass, it will be a dangerous Service but if we seat ourselves firmly there it will give a black eye to the American Monopoly on the Coast and at the same time interfere with the Russians who seem very anxious to keep on good terms with us. – [fo. 73d] Joseph McGillivray has retired this season, the Compy would not purchase his Share and I am at a loss what the fellow will do if he does not Die on a Dung hill. – Simon [McGillivray] has made an application to recross the Mountains next Season which has been refused and we have passed a resolution that no Gentleman can serve in that quarter a shorter period than 5 years unless compelled by ill health to come out. – I should not at all be surprised that he follows the example of his Brother; these young Gentlemen are really determined to be singular. That silly young man Barnston [George] has retired and taken his Chinook beauty (Mathews Daughter)[2] with him, he has written me (who I believe has been one of his best Friends) a half impertinent Letter to which I have just replied by giving him a few truths. This poor young man has his peculiarities but I believe is a very good hearted honourable fellow, & I have instructed Keith (James) and Connolly (William) to re-engage him at his old Saly. for the Kings Posts[3] if he be at a loss to find employment in Canada. – I believe I mentioned the appointments this Season to you. There will be two promotions next year and I am in great hopes that Nicol Finlayson & Hargraves [James] will be the Men: – The latter is without exception the most steady, regular & finished man of business on our list of Clerks and indeed there are very few like him on any list. – Miles [Robert] has been pulled down a peg or

[1] Simpson here is commenting ironically on the 59-year-old James Hughes (1772–1853) who had retired from the fur trade after the Union in 1821. Hard times, however, had forced him to re-engage in 1830, at the level of Clerk. He would retire again in 1833. See biographical appendix.

[2] In 1829, Barnston had married (by the custom of the country) Ellen Matthews (also spelled Mathews), the daughter of fur trader William W. Matthews and a Chinook woman named Ki-la-ko-tah (daughter of Chief Coboway).

[3] The King's Posts was a name applied during the French regime to fur trade and fishing posts in the King's Domain (Domaine du Roy), the vast territory north of the St Lawrence River to the Hudson Bay watershed. The land was owned by the king but leased to a private company. Following the conquest of New France, the North West Company rented and managed the King's Posts network starting around the turn of the 19th century (leasing it from 1802 until 1821). After the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, the new HBC took over this lease, and officially leased it again in 1842.

two, and is not near so great a man as he was last year when I had occasion to haul him over the coals very unceremoniously and that, in presence of his Friend John Stuart and all the Clerks in the office. – How come you to bring such a tremendous account against Christie [Alexander] for provisioning his Family? he is not on the same footing as Clerks & Servants. I have given him Credit in Book for £20 or £21 – the credit of Provisions extracted from the amt. of Provisions extracted from the detailed account. – I am perfectly amazed at the folly of Beioley [Joseph] in attempting to thrust his informal Squaw upon the acquaintance of Mrs. McTavish and understand that the other Ladies at Moose are violent and indignant at being kept at such a distance, likewise their Husbands. The young Gladmans (George and Joseph) particularly I understand are open mouthed about it especially the fellow at Brunswick.[1] The greater distance at which they are kept the better. The only two that ever ventured within a Doz yards of Mrs. Simpson were Dorics wife who took her measure for Indian shoes and Madame Leblanc whom the Doctor got in to draw her breasts when very ill. They do not even venture within Gun shot of me now – I have seen the time when they were not so shy. – Pray how do you find your English Servants answer? I have had a good deal of trouble wt mine. – Our Cook is first rate at her trade, but the Musquitoes, heat & cold have soured her desperately; she is constantly drawing odious comparisons between her present situation & that which she held [fo. 74] for 10 years at Grove House and for 4 years wt Lady Lansdowne but I gave her such a Damning & Bitching last Winter that the very look of me now throws her into a fever; She is however surprisingly attached to my better half. Her Husband Angus is likewise a finished Servant but washed his throat occasionally until I gave him such pounding as made his Bones ache for a month which has cured him. Mary is the best tempered attached creature you ever saw & is quite a treasure to her Mistress and on the whole we have a very snug & comfortable menage. – I think I sent you a copy of my Letter to Keith [James] on money matters. If you do not approve what has been done in your affairs pray give him instructions. – I am quite at a loss what to say about money matters in England in these alarming times but we shall be better able to compare notes thereon after the rest of the Spring Despatches when we meet at Fort William. – I have told James Keith we shall be glad to see him there if he can get away for a month by the Express Canoe & return via the Lakes. Allan McDonell has likewise had an Invitation. – Can you send a Keg of Wine and a few other Luxuries across? We shall not require much as 5 days will I imagine be all we can spare there. – Pray handle our Friend Geordy [George Thorne] tenderly he is the most nervous sensitive creature I know and if you have occasion to give him a Rub let it be under a private head. – I should like to give Bethune [Angus] a start but scarcely know where to send him, he is too trifling & troublesome to be near at hand and so useless & inactive as to be unfit for a distant charge – but if I took McBean[2] from Lake Huron I should not know where to place him; these fellows can do no good but can give much trouble by attending Council & we cannot depend on them if not immediately under our Eye. Rest assured that it is not through indulgence they are kept in their present sinecures. The greatest evil in our present constitution is the great number of Factors we have, many of the Gentlemen who hold that situation would be useful men if Traders but at the top of the ladder they are Drones & Drag upon the concern. Ten Factors in my opinion are

[1] This was Joseph Gladman (1796–1876). See biographical appendix.
[2] John McBean/McBain was Chief Factor at Lake Huron. See biographical appendix.

quite sufficient for the whole business. – Small[1] comes out next year with the intention of going on Furlough and I think he will retire – he is in good circumstances and is desirous of joining a Brother of his at New Brunswick. – Tis true that some of our other Patriarchs should make themselves scarce but many of them I suspect will hang on till the close of the Lease. – Pray what do you think of the Dr. and apprentice clerk that are come out this year? I cannot spare Thomas [Simpson], he is very useful to me and has charge of the Red River Shop this Season assisted by Ballendyne [John Ballenden]. I saw Leblanc [Pierre] yesterday & asked if he had any comment for you.[2] He begged his respects & says that all is well with him. Pray offer my most sincere kind wishes to Mrs. McTavish & accept the same yourself & believe me

Ever my Dearest
Yours most truly
Geo Simpson [fo. 74d]

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 3rd Jany 1832 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 75-82]

My Dear Sir

I can with truth say that I never was so delightfully surprised as by the sight of your most welcome and inestimable Communication of the 29th Septemr which made both myself and my better half absolutely cut capers for joy as the two preceding months were occupied in lamentations for the supposed loss of one of my Dearest Friends, whom we were led to believe was safely lodged in Abram's Bosom. – The tidings which lead to this melancholy conclusion came from George Keith about the beginning of November and the report was brought by McKay[3] the retired Guide was likewise in such a desponding tone that not even a shadow of hope seemed to remain: you may therefore easily conceive what our feelings were, [fo. 75] when your well known superscription presented itself and with what breathless eagerness the Seal was broken to ascertain the Date as by the 1st August we was led to believe that your Writing Days in the World were likely to be at an end. – Give me leave now to congratulate you on your return to Life and to assure you that I never knew the full value of the Treasure I possessed in your Friendship until I believed that it was lost to me forever. – Your attack was really a serious one, Tod [William] says that the complaint is exceedingly dangerous if not taken skilfully at an early stage; and I imagine you owe your life under Providence in a great measure to the kind and unremitting attention of your amiable companion; I trust in God you are not likely to have another such Warning in a hurry again. – Accept my Dear fellow of my warmest thanks for the very kind manner in which you express yourself towards me; we have [fo. 75d] long I believe stood in each others regard and it is quite impossible that either of us can change so much as to occasion any alteration in the relation we bear to each other. – The happy change that has taken place in our conditions instead of Weakening the tie by which we are bound to each other must on the

[1] This likely Patrick Small Jr. (1789–1846). See biographical appendix.
[2] Leblanc had married John George McTavish's country wife for £200.
[3] This may be James McKay (1797–1887). See biographical appendix.

contrary give it strength & firmness, as I believe our excellent Wives are as sincerely attached to each other as their Lords & Masters ever were. And now that our Wives are on the Carpet, have we not much cause of thankfulness for and self congratulation on the selection we have made? I know you will agree with me that we have and that had we searched the World over we could not by possibility have been more fortunate than we are. – From what I have seen and heard of your invaluable spouse your happiness must be complete as for every good, useful [fo. 76] and endearing quality, she can only be equalled by my own who had she been "made to order" could not have suited me better. – Now my good Friend, we are in a great measure indebted to each other for all this happiness, our mutual Friendship having been one of the "Primitive" causes thereof and that cause alone, if none others existed, ought of itself to form an indissoluble bond of union between us. – We are rejoiced to have such good accounts of Mrs. McTavish and your Dear little girl; my poor Wife had the most narrow escape imaginable; during the whole 9 months previous to her confinement she was in extreme ill health and so much reduced & weakened that at the crisis, she was more Dead than alive; her recovery was exceedingly slow, 6 weeks in Bed and she is still very thin and by no means strong. Our little boy was for a time ailing and delicate, but is now picking [fo. 76d] up and promises well. Often, very often indeed, during his poor Mothers illness did she in tears lament the distance she was separated from her kind friend Mr. McTavish whose sisterly care and attention she had before experienced. She was indeed badly off in regard to a female Friend, Mary being the only one near her who could come under that denomination and had I not been a good Nurse myself nay a perfect Molly, & Tod [William] unremitting in his attentions, she must have slipped through our fingers. I need not however run on further about her as she is about to address Mrs. McTavish herself by this conveyance, indeed I had no intention of mentioning her name at all when I entered on this rigmarole along, which if you ascribe to excess of uxoriousness, you will I dare say be nearly right as I believe no man was more fond of a woman than I am of her. – I am happy to find that you got on so smoothly wt your great men of the South last year and have no doubt it will continue so. – Allan MdDonell, who is really a good fellow seems to have been out of condition for a length of time and [fo. 77] expressed a desire of spending a Winter in Canada if he did not get better to which I gave my consent knowing that Frazer [Thomas Fraser] was equal to the Management of the Post and indeed of the District between the Fall and Spring; I therefore suppose he is now below and think tis likely he will come up by the Northern Brigade and meet us at Fort William. It would be well for him to part wt Poulman who I have long thought was troublesome to him and it would be wisdom in him to look out for a more respectable yoke fellow. – Young McKenzie, the Bearer of your Packet is a smart Lad and has a great deal of our later poor Friend the Emperor[1] about him; he seems anxious to leave the Country and I do not object to it, tis therefore probable that he will be the Bearer of this Packet, but on that subject I have not yet spoken to him. – Tis quite impossible that Faries [Hugh] can know anything about the Votes, unless he has bribed some body to pick my locks; tis probable some of his Friends may have written him that they gave him votes and it is not probable that those who did not give him theirs would have said so; therefore he can know nothing [fo. 77d] or rather all his knowledge must amount to conjecture as no man breathing even saw the Voting Lists or knew the contents from me, not even you yourself

[1] Alexander McKenzie (1767–1830). See biographical appendix.

who have been on more confidential terms wt me than any other and certainly not my Sect[y] who never has access to my very private papers. – I am perfectly amazed to learn that Beioley [Joseph] is such a vain silly body; I always took him for a man of decimals and thought him a little contracted in his ideas but that the creature could ape the exquisite or be capable of making himself and his bit of circulating copper so ridiculous is really astonishing. He is unquestionably a perfect model of oeconomy & good management in his district and clever in some respect – a man of strict integrity & veracity likewise – do not therefore for goodness sake disgrace him so far as to put his name on the same sheet of papers wt our late acquaintance. I am very happy however to learn that you keep on smooth terms wt him: – and if snappish or irritable on the Voyage for God sake bear with him it will only be for a few Days or Weeks; You are now differently circumstanced to what you was at York. Rows & bickerings were then [a] good pass time but such pass times like many others we ought to lay aside now that we are become Grave Family Men. – Poor Stewart's [Alexander] case distresses me greatly, he was a most excellent good hearted honourable man; my principle object in sending him to [fo. 78] Albany was that you should have an agreeable and attached Friend near you: I hope he has remained at Moose; he mentions Mrs. McTavish's kindness and attention in the most grateful terms. – Should his Health be greatly improved which I can scarcely hope pray do not allow him [to] attempt the Voyage across – if he wishes for a Rotation or Leave of Absence he can have it. – I fully intended having written Corrigal [Jacob] in the Summer and thought I had done so until rect of your Letter – I am much pleased with his correspondence and management and have apologized for my seeming neglect which can only be accounted for by the pressure of business and the anxiety of mind under which I laboured last Summer; in fact I was almost distracted the whole time I was away from my poor Wife. – I am happy to find that you are satisfied with what I said to Keith [James] about your Canadian Investments. All that is necessary to be said to Mr. Sect[y] Smith about the Money advanced for the Chats Farm & Madame Leblancs Tocher[1] is to direct that the amt. be placed to my credit with the Compy. – That Gentleman has never said a word to me about the Letter of credit p[er] £1000 I gave you at Liverpool but as it was not made use of it may be as well that you direct him to return [fo. 78d] it for forms sake. Clarke [John] carried his follies to such a pitch that it became necessary to allow him [to] go to the D___l his own way and a visit to Canada I saw was the most effectual; he will have cause to repent it – such a fellow must Die in a Dunghill. – Robertson [Colin] is the most inconsistent Man I ever knew; he was last summer anxious to go [to] Canada & England next season & leave his wife here & send her Home the following year to some Clergyman for the benefit of Education. He is now to get a Clergyman out as Family Chaplain – a Clergyman's Daughter as Governess and his head is crammed wt 50 other plans equally ridiculous. He keeps snarling at me and I sometimes let fly a growl back but on the whole we are smooth but never can be good friends as I made a determined stand in respect to non intercourse in the Family way. – I managed the matter connected wt my private & confidential note of last Spring very well. – In reference to my "hint about R.R." it can keep cold until we meet. My view on the subject is unaltered, but all will depend on the advices I may receive in Spring from England & your own inclination. – La Chine when open shall be at your service as far as my influence goes. Tis likely Keith may meet us at Fort William & then I shall know his plans which may influence

[1] A dowry or a marriage portion given to a groom. Simpson had £200 of McTavish's money paid to Leblanc so that he would marry Nancy McKenzie.

your movements but it will not be necessary to take any steps towards moving before 1833 in regard to either plan. – I hope you do not calculate on [fo. 79] our Council being deferred to the 1st of August. Were we to Council at Norway House it would be quite impossible to get through the business at York in your & my absence and were I to go to York and then to Fort William how could I get through my voluminous correspondence? as old Snody used to say "it would be utterly impossible" I shall therefore be at Fort William God willing about the close of May but shall take care not to drag you so far again as if I do hold anther Council for the Southern Deptmt after the ensuing it will be at Moose. The Horse I believe has been already credited to Rowand at £10 but we shall get it recredited either to you or Lewes after I see you and the Cow & Goats shall likewise be credited although I never knew their history before. –

You must have either spoken of or written to G. Keith very sharply; he is exceedingly sore; I think tis likely some ill natured person has been carrying something to his private ear or manufactured remarks for you. You need say nothing on the subject till we meet when I shall manage to make all smooth. – I am glad to find that you approve of the later promotions. Connolly [William] I believe has taken a dislike to the Lieut. [Simpson] who is as good and likeable fellow as ever breathed, honorable, above board and to the point. He may be a disciplinarian but it [fo. 79d] was very necessary among the Vagabonds he had to deal with. – The drunken wretched creature Sinclair[1] could offer him no support, he was therefore under the necessity of doing all the dirty work of Cuffing and thunking himself and had not the Dr. [John McLoughlin] supported him he could not have done his duty: from the other Commissioned Gentlemen who were there I believe he had very little support: my information on these matters is all from Dr. as I make a point of never touching on any matter connected wt the business or Country in any private communications to the Lieut. and all official matter passes through the Drs. hands who has always spoken in high terms of the Lieut. to me: – I never heard of the scrapes &c &c to which you allude but from what I know of the Lieut. & have heard of him when we were School fellows I have (laying all other claims & feelings aside) a very great respect for his character & high opinion of his worth. – I handed your letter & its enclosure to Mr. John Stuart the other Day and have since then had two or three very long and animated conversations upon it. I told him finally that I could only be the means of communication from him to you on the terms you presented which I highly approved and that the most full and ample apology was due and would only be received. – I shall not send Maggie to school now not incur any unnecessary Expense in Leblanc's concerns until [fo. 80] we have fully compared notes. They are all well but no increase. – You seem to manage your domestic arrangements admirably – ours are as mentioned last year. Hendry [William] seems determined on going Home, I have urged him strongly in the expediency of the alliance spoken off [of], but he appears to be disgusted wt the country. McK [Donald McKenzie] has taken one of his extraordinary grudges against him and makes his Life a burden to him. – We do not see Mrs. McMillan [Eleanor McKinley] often as she is 4 miles off she is a very excellent Woman I dare say & makes our Friend McM [James McMillan] happy; they have an immense Child as like the father as two pease and the most extraordinary Nurse or Maid you ever saw – a perfect Tymdrum or Beulomaid. In Short our Friend has done things altogether on a large scale without one particle of

[1] Thomas Sinclair (b. 1791). See biographical appendix.

Bluism in the Menage: – I told him you were much hurried & wrote nobody but myself & did not address him for fear of giving others offence. – McBain [John McBain/McBean] & Bethune [Angus] I find are at Loggerheads; this is extraordinary, they were sworn Friends and if they knew what was said by each other some strange secrets I dare say would be out. – Dugald Cameron[1] is enraged against McBain [John] for harsh treatment to his Son the Missionary last year: McBain as usual complains of his outfit particularly of the quality of his cloth: if I knew where to place him & whom to put in his stead I would give him a hoist and do not [fo. 80d] remove Bethune [Angus] as he could be more troublesome any where else than at St. Marys. – Cameron [John Dugald], Stuart [John], Hughes [James] & the Dr. [McLoughlin] are here at present, the first makes himself very agreeable, the second very much the reverse, Hughes is really a good creature and the Dr. gets corpulent on the high living of Red River. We mean to give a grand Blow out on this Day Week when we intend making a Christian of the youngster George Geddes Simpson.[2] Cards are out for 32. They will consume all our good things: – by the by we got the most infernal vixen of a Cook the World ever produced; she is as mild as a Lamb to the good Wife but I am afraid to venture near the Kitchen: I tried a dish of Billingsgate[3] with her once, but she beat me hollow, and makes the whole Fort ring with her Red Roy – Never was a Devil so peppered mustard & Vinegared. Her Husband is a good Servant when sober but I am obliged to keep him in fear & trembling. We are quite apart from the Mess of which we have a member now and then by Invitation: We never see our Friend Donald [McKenzie] except on Formal occasions. Our visitors feed wt us & we see a good deal of Cameron [John Dugald], Hughes [James], & the Dr. [McLoughlin] in the course of the day but the other is constantly counselling with his Friend: they talk of visiting Switzerland together and mean to [fo. 81] retire for good & all to the South of France – some of these odd Days they must however in the meantime be separated as while together they keep themselves and others in hot Water. There is little love lost between them and McMillan [James] who is the same good fellow he used to be. – Jones [Rev. D.T.] is the only sociable man in the place and a very agreeable fellow he is but he led a Dogs life of it until I lent him my support; the Friends nearly drove him to madness by the most iniquitous system of hostility that ever was pursued. But enough on these matters. I could fill volumes with the details of the most vindictive & malicious intrigue that ever entered the mind here – In short I am sick and tired of Red River and would be off tomorrow if I currently could: – indeed I am becoming quite disgusted wt the country and only remain in it because I am not yet prepared to be off. – I have filled up an official sheet to you amounting to nothing because I have nothing to say now that we are to see each other so soon. – With regard to the corrected Indents we must notice it in Council. – Have you heard that the Peigans are gone to the Americans at the Mouth of the Yellow Stone River? Jemmy Jock[4] took them and it is [fo. 81d] supposed that in so doing he was influenced by his Father[5] who is the Dirtious old Sneak ever was in Ruperts Land. Rowand remains inland during the Summer for the purpose of going in search of them; they owe to us a clear Revenue of about £3000 p[er] Anm but I am in hopes they will be brought back. – Nothing

[1] John Dugald Cameron (b.c. 1777–1857). See biographical appendix.
[2] Simpson's new son.
[3] "A dish of Billingsgate" is a British slang phrase meaning a serving of foul, coarse, or abusive language.
[4] James Bird Jr. See biographical appendix.
[5] James Bird Sr. See biographical appendix.

curious in the way of business. – The American as at Pembina are forcing us to give nearly as much for furs as they will fetch in England. Pray what sort of thing in your Doctor Mrs. McT [McTavish] makes an extraordinary creature of him and my wife has been asking me a thousand questions about the "Burnt Umber" Gentleman since she heard from Moose. – It is 12 O'clock P.M. and I am nearly blind. God bless you, mention me in the kindest manner to Mrs. McTavish as my wife if she were awake would beg to be mentioned to you and with unalterable regard

Believe me Ever
My Dear Sir
Yours most Sin.
Geo Simpson

P.S. You do not mention young Anderson who was recommended to me by Mr. Colvile & Mr. Webster. Pray show him such attention as may not excite jealousy and let him be kept close at the Desk, in the Stores and Trading Room. I have heard nothing of your Nephew, nor of Craig whom you mentioned. I suppose they declined coming out. G.S. [fo. 82]

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 1st May 1832 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 83-84d]

My Dear Sir

I am sure your kind warm heart and that of your amiable Lady will sympathize with us in our present affliction which is greater than I have the power to describe. It pleased the Almighty to take to himself our Darling our beloved Boy on the 22nd Ulto; he was ailing a little for some time previous but we had no apprehension of danger and on the morning of the Day my poor Wife went to Church it being Easter Sunday, leaving the Child tolerably well; at her particular request I remained at Home to have an eye over him as it was Death to her when we were both absent, but she had scarcely got seated on her Saddle when he was seized wt violent retching on my knee, soon after he became convulsed and breathed his last as she was in the act of crossing the threshold after pouring forth her prayers for him at the Lord's Table. This awful visitation has quite distracted us and broken our Hearts; the mournful duty of consigning his Earthly remains to the Grave devolved on me on the 25th; The violent transports of grief have given way to fixed & deep melancholy and I much fear it will be long very long ere my poor wife will recover from the Shock which has already made sad ravages of her Health & spirits. This poor Child was the Idol of our Hearts, we doted upon him, we lived but for him, he was the constant subject of our thoughts & conversation and without one moments preparation he was torn from us. I am sure, I am very sure, My Dear Friend you will pity, you will commiserate wt us from the very bottom of your kind & feeling Heart.

My intention previous to this dreadful calamity was to have started for Fort William on the 10th Inst to have returned by this place for the purpose of taking my Wife & child to York and have come back here in the Fall. But leaving her now under existing circumstances might affect her reason and endanger her Life, I cannot therefore think of it; Her frame is delicate, her constitution is much broken by her 9 month illness during pregnancy and confinement and probably unskillful treatment;

she has no Society, no Friend, no Relative here by myself, she cannot move wt me on my different Journeys and I cannot leave her in the hands of Strangers and some of them very unfeeling. I have therefore determined on running no more risks but on taking her Home this Fall via Canada and as I do not possess the means necessary for comfortable retirement I shall hold on in the Service for 2 or 3 years longer if my health admits and after consigning her to the care of her Family come out next Spring. – My present intention therefore is to hold a Council at Norway House about the 20th proxo. to close my correspondence there, to start wt her from thence about the end of July, if possible to cross over from Michipicoten to [fo. 83] Moose, from thence to proceed via Timiskaming to Montreal, thence via New York to England. – I am very anxious to see you but fear that by going round by Moose the Season will be far advanced before we can get to La Chine which would throw us on the Winter before we could get to New York as I have at least a months work on hand in Canada; but if we can at all manage it we shall see you – My poor wife will be quite wretched if she be deprived the melancholy happiness of pouring out her afflictions to the only Dear Friend she has seen since parting from her own Family. – Have the goodness to write me fully, freely and confidentially on all things in case I do not see you. I wish I knew how to be Serviceable to you; if you was within reach and wished to fill the situation of Govr of Assiniboia I should install you in office instantly as the present occupant is totally unfit for it. But I am not clear that it would be in your interest altho it might be pleasing to your feelings as altho McKenzie spends no money you would be compelled to spend a good deal, my own expenses during these two past years I scarcely know how the money has slipped though my fingers. – I am very doubtful that the £200 extra will be continued exceeding another Year as the impression on my own mind is that the Compy will assume the whole in which case a Factor will probably be the resident Govr without any emolument beyond his bare interest in the Fur Trade. – Write me fully on this head giving me your Sentiments unreservedly thereon. Say likewise if I can do anything for you either in England or Canada. – I have addressed my Official Despatches to the "Gentlemen Chief Factors & Chief Traders" instead of yourself individually being uncertain whether you will be there and have not named you as President of Council as you will be so in right of Seniority if on the spot. – Have the goodness to follow up the outline I have given of my views if possible and let me know from Fort William in confidence how things go on and if our great men have grumbled because I show none of the Man of feeling than of business on the present occasion. – I have no doubt that some of them will be Sincere, but I am very indifferent as to what some of them either say or think. I am quite sick of the Country and disgusted with the meanness and duplicity of some of its great men who are a disgrace to the concern. Have the goodness to forward the Northern Packet and if you have any thing on the Southern which you may think it would be expedient to suppress do so with tact & your usual good management. – Let me entreat that you keep temper and do not allow yourself be drawn into altercations wt any of those who may be there; you can gain neither honor nor glory by quarreling wt them but can twist them round your finger by setting about it properly. – I hope Keith will not do down as I should be sorry to see the other in such an important charge yet he is the only one I can lay hands on at Present and a very poor make shift he is. – The Sault will do better wt a Clerk than a Commissioned Officer. – I have an object in view on which I may require your kind [fo. 83d] assistance. I would have consulted you on it long ago had we an opportunity of communicating personally, but it is too long a story to go on paper. I wrote to the Committee upon

it last year and do not know as yet what they will say upon it but if they meet my wishes (which entirely refer to myself) I calculate on your support. If I do not see you I shall write you thereon from Lake Superior. – Have the goodness to send the Express Canoe on with all speed if this reaches you before its arrival. – It was usual wt me to be collected in business but it is not so now. I am quite bewitched my mind a perfect chaos. – I am surrounded by difficulties over which I cannot extricate myself and my Heart is quite broken. – I wish to heaven we were near you and your kind hearted wife you would be valuable comforters indeed. My beloved wife does not know I am writing you nor does she know that there is an Express Starting. – Farewell Believe me ever

Yours ever Sincerely
Geo Simpson

Is it likely there will be any one at Michipicoten that can guide us down to Moose?

P.S. I observe a charge agt. the Experimental Farm from Lake Superior for Sheep, is not this irregular? Live Stock were not valued on Inventory and the Sheep I believe were the property of Lord Selkirk. GS [fo. 84]

Red River 19th May 32
Since writing the forgoing your valued Letter Dated in Feby reached me and I had determined on going to Fort William but the Ice prevents my getting out of the River and I am not sufficiently well to attempt the Walk to Bas de la Riviere – I am again hesitating as to whether I shall go to England to Canada or return here in Fall and cannot determine until after rect of my despatches by the Express Canoe. – I have been staying on here (Encamped) since the 14th. Mrs. Simpson is wt me, she was to have gone to Fort William in hopes that a change of scene might be serviceable to her and I this morning determined on sending her back to the Forks and proceeding alone but the report I have got from the Lake within the last 2 hours has quite unhinged all my plans. – Pray tell Mrs. McTavish that she recd her kind letter but is not in a fit state to write as yet. She intended having written from Fort William. Tell our Friend Stewart [Alexander] that I cannot spare a moment to write to him but have provided for his Leave of Absence in my public Dispatch.
G.S. [fo.84d]

George Simpson, York Factory, to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, 19th July 1832 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 85-87]

My Dear Sir

Your very kind & soothing Letter of 8th June filled my heart with gratitude & my eyes with Tears: I wish to God my Dear Fellow that I had it in my power to show how much I value your Friendship and how high you stand in my regard. – I am grieved to the Soul to learn that you have been so unwell and fear that your Voyage to Fort William has aggravated your complaint; indeed I shall be miserable about you until I learn that you got back in safety. – My poor Dear Wife is here and still in very low spirits, indeed her Health is far from good and our late calamity has shaken her whole

frame & depressed her so much that at times I am alarmed about her. – I was so very unwell the Evening previous to the departure of the people wt my packet for Red River that I could not look at the papers after Miles [Robert] had copied them bar Sign the Despatches which will account for some inaccuracies I have since discovered on looking over the original Drafts. – Since then I have been ailing more or less and my nerves are so much affected that when overpressed wt business I can with difficulty put pen to paper – in fact I feel that my best Days are gone and that it is drawing near the time when I must withdraw from this harassing Service. – I had at one time made up my mind to go home this year but the gloomy state of things in England frightened me, and tis probable I shall remain until Summer 1834 if I hold out so long. – Since I last wrote you I find myself a poorer man than I was two years ago, having in the past 12 Months got a wipe to the tune of nearly £4000. This you can keep to yourself, as I do not choose to have my misfortunes busted all over the Country & this will in some degree account for my taking a 2 years Lease of the Country of which I am sick and tired. – I shall write the Committee about your Nephews and have no doubt they will be out next year. – Your Brothers address will be forwarded to Sect[y] Smith[1] and I imagine they will be [fo. 85] ordered up to London or to Orkney to join the Ships; one to the South the other to the North. The youngster that goes South you had better keep for a year at Moose for the purpose of Drilling, and the other I shall either have here under the care of Christie [Alexander] or bring him on to Red River as you may desire. – In order to make room for the one that goes to Moose it may be as well to forward Anderson[2] to Red River wt Letters in the course of the Winter. –

Keith [James] has written you respecting Money matters in Canada. Duncan Cameron[3] has paid £100 of his Loan, the other £200 are perfectly safe on the Glencoes Farm. Your interest in the purchase of Camerons Debt had better lay over, it will at all events yield you good interest for your money & the principal is safe. – I think I wrote you last year about Stewart & McIntoshs shares, the latter behaved so ill I frightened him into a re transfer of it into my hands, and Stewart made his share over likewise; I am half disposed to pay those Gentlemen off forthwith. –

The Mortgages held by you, myself, Stewart & R. McKenzie on McCord & Beaubiens p[er] £1500 & £450 have been called in, and the latter paid, and our shares thereof placed to our credits respectively. The Mortgages were taken in my own name to save notarial expenses and the expenses of 3 or 4 different Law Suits instead of one in case of difficulty in receiving the money. Tis probable that McCord's is also paid up by this time, but if not, I have authorized Mr. Keith to take it entirely on my account and to pay up the others; I had first written him to take it on yours, as I considered it good, but on looking at the list of balances transmitted me this year I find there is only £293/10/9 at your credit in the Comp hands, but you can have a share of it if it falls into my hands. – The different money of yours I have requested Keith to re-invest for you in real Securities on Mortgage for a term of 3 to 5 years unless he receives counter orders from you in the course of the Season and as there will be a further sum put to your credit wt the Compy this year I beg to recommend your transmitting to Mr. Keith a Dft on the Compy in his favour at 36 Days Sight for 6 or £800 to be invested in like manner in Canada as I consider England at present in a most dangerous state. – The value of Landed

[1] William Smith (b.ca. 1789–1843), Secretary of the HBC. See biographical appendix
[2] James Anderson "A" (1812–1867). See biographical Index.
[3] Duncan Cameron (b.*c.* 1764–1848). See biographical appendix.

property has risen ⅓ in Canada within the past 12 Months, and must continue to rise, as the panic in England has occasioned an immense influx of money to Canada & the States and an immense Emigration: 60,000 last year & 80,000 this year, many of these people in easy circumstances. – I am truly delighted that Chats Farm has reverted to you, [fo. 85d] it will be an admirable stand by for yourself & Family. The Country is settling fast up to the Riviere Cruise, Steam Boats will ply next year to the Chats & probably to the head of the Chats Lake. Indeed, I consider that property at this moment worth upwards of £2000 and it will increase in value every successive year. – I think our Establishment of the Lake of 2 Mountains will be removed there this Fall in which case Cameron will be the fittest man to look after the Farm for you. – I am quite at a loss what to say in advice in regard to [the] Governorship of the Colony, McKenzie [Donald] who is a perfect Drone and the most useless mischievous Drone on the Face of the Earth, still enjoys his £200 p[er] anm from Lord Selkirk, while I am doing the work & he plotting, intriguing, planning mischief and endeavouring to undo all I am doing. He goes to the States wt his Family next year and if he never returns it will be no loss to the Colony however he never will be allowed to return, and had he not been going next year, & that I had no opening for him elsewhere he would assuredly have been made to march this year. – Lord Selkirk is anxious to make the Colony over to the Compy, & the Compy are anxious to get it again into their hands, but they cannot agree as to terms, it will however I think fall very soon into the Compys hands, and if so, the Chief Factor in charge will have the Commission of Gov^{r} without any emolument; were it otherwise I should certainly endeavour to secure it for you, but without a Saly it would involve you in expense; McKenzie [Donald] does not wt his large Family spend £50 a Year, but you would spend £300. – I shall not call you extravagant, because I know you do not like to be so called, but from what I have seen of you, I know you could not resist the calls that would Daily be made on your Private purse at Red River. You would have your children at Schools, you would have expensive wardrobes, you would be a subscriber to all public works, institutions, charities, Schools of Industry &c &c; You would feed & clothe the hungry & the naked; your kind heart would bleed for every poor old Voyageur that told you a pitiful tale; you would entertain at your private cost, and there would be increasing demands on your generosity: these are my reasons for saying that you would lose money by the charge – but if you really wish to have it I shall endeavor to arrange it so, by begging the Compy to send me a blank Commission to be fitted up as I might find expedient. Christie [Alexander] would be the next best man in the Country for that charge and after him McLoughlin [John]; but I consider yourself beyond all measure of doubt the fittest in Ruperts Land. Write me again fully on this subject. – I am delighted to find that you have made [fo. 86] up your mind to save money. You are the happiest man on the face of the earth in regard to a Wife (myself always excepted) and have a growing Family and it is your duty as a Husband as a Father as a man of Honor and as a good man to provide for & to guard against poverty. I do not know whether you have ever let your amiable & excellent wife have a peep into your affairs & circumstances, if not, let me advise that it be done frankly & unreservedly, and I am satisfied it will be to your interest. – but enough of these matters & if I have said too much forgive me pray. – . – I cannot however drop Family matters without congratulating you on the late addition to your nursery, and begging you that you will convey to Mrs. McTavish my warmest & kindest wishes that every blessing may attend herself & sweet babes. Often very often indeed, do we talk of you all, and I really believe that if we were near you, we should be well & happy. We are quite

disgusted wt our Neighbors at Fort Garry. I have told my poor wife that I am writing. She is very unwell today, but will write Tomorrow to her very Dear Friend. – She is quite proud of the complement paid her in naming Little Miss Frances. I do not know whether Hendry [William] goes Home this year or not, he is still at the Colony, & must remain there until we find that Bunn [John] returns as there is no other medical man there. I have endeavored to bring him [Hendry] to the Scratch about Mary 100 & 100 times over – but he is very Sly & I suspect will not bite unless there be a tocher £500 or so;[1] he is the most selfish fellow I ever saw. I do not know if he is mad or not, but at times think he is. – John Stuart is off to McKenzie River to relieve Smith [Edward] who goes out. – Bas de la Riviere is attached to Lac La Pluie under Cameron [John Dugald]. McIntosh [William] is off to Peace River to relieve Colin Campbell[2] who goes out next year, and little Tom Isbister is Chief of Cumberland attached to English River. – Brandon Ho. or rather a new post at Portage La Prairie instead of Brandon, is attached to the Experimental Farm under McMillan [James], also a shop at the Forks wt a clerk & man and Tod [William] takes charge of Qu'Appelle (Fort Ellice) Fort Pelly on a reduced scale, & Swan River & Manitobah outposts. Robertson [Colin] goes Home & leaves Madam at Red River wt Bruce [Charles Gaspard]. Heron [Francis] goes back to Columbia accompanied by Cowie.[3] The Minutes of Council will tell you all the rest. – You will be sorry to learn that the poor Lieut. [Simpson] is dead from inflammation of the Liver at Nass. The Coasting Trade looks well, 3000 Beaver last year. Columbia shows £12,000 profit this year New Caledonia £4000 loss. The Trade is much as usual in other Districts – a good deal of Starvation throughout the Country & an immense loss of life among the natives – 50 Souls perished at Hay River & many in McKenzie's River & New Caledonia. – You managed admirably in regard to the Hanna Bay Murders;[4] & will strike terror from one end of the Country to the other. Poor B[5] has been a shade too cautious I am sorry to find. – He has given me a very guarded report [fo. 86d] of the whole operation. – Dumont has been paid £1.10/ agreeably to your instructions and I have taken supplies out of the Shop for the Children to the amt of £8.5.3, which will be near about the outside of their demands for the year. – They were quite well and Madame Leblanc[6] begins to show the effects of Matrimony. – We are establishing an Academy at Red River and Young Ladies Seminary, the former under the care of Mr. Jones [David T.] wt an assistant in orders to come from England next year, & the latter under that of Mrs. Jones with an accomplished Governess from England as an Assistant. – A copy of the Letters that have passed on the subject will be transmitted by Mr. Christie [Alexander] – Pray give publicity to it and endeavor to send Scholars; they can have passage by the Canoes from Canada. –

Barnston [George] I find has gone to the South – this poor young man I imagine is mad, he wrote to the Company last winter complaining bitterly against me and the Council, and has written to

[1] On 27 July 1832, William Hendry wrote to McTavish saying that there was no longer any possibility of his marrying McTavish's daughter Mary. HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 88-88d.
[2] Colin Campbell (b.*c.* 1787–1853). See biographical appendix.
[3] Robert Cowie (b.*c.* 1795–1859). See biographical appendix.
[4] In January 1832, a group of about six Cree, led by Quappeuay, attacked the HBC outpost at Hannah Bay killing the Postmaster, William Corrigal, his wife and eight other persons. A punitive expedition, led by James Anderson, was sent from Moose Factory. This expedition apprehended and summarily executed the Indians who had committed the murders.
[5] This is Chief Factor Joseph Beioley, who was in charge of the Ruperts River District at the time. See biographical appendix.
[6] This was John George McTavish's former country wife, who had been married to Pierre Leblanc.

myself the most abusive letter I ever received. Poor unfortunate Joseph I imagine has been poisoning the mans mind, & telling him a parcel of Lies. I believe I was the only Man in the Country besides yourself who ever felt any interest in him. – It may be well to send him to Martins Falls or some where on the Albany River to keep him off the Communication otherwise he will be getting himself into difficulties with people passing & repassing. – I sincerely hope & trust that your invaluable companion is perfectly recovered. Take care of her my Dear fellow as you would the apple of your Eye, she deserves it all at your hands. That you may both with you Dear Young Folks enjoy every blessing this world can offer is the earnest prayer of both myself and beloved wife who unites with me in kindest regards to all your Fire side & Believe me Ever My Dear Friend

Yours Sincerely & affectionately

George Simpson

Write me fully, frankly & confidentially on all manner of things by early in Winter. – I do not write officially having nothing particular to say at present – We shall have no Council in the South next year. Our Indent this year will not amount to £10,000. It has just occurred to me that your complaint may render it necessary for you to go to England or Canada for medical advice. I trust not but in case of Accident I shall direct this letter to be returned if you are absent. G.S.

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, Dec. 2nd 1832 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 94-97]

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure of addressing you from York under a private cover in the course of the summer but having kept no copy of my letter I shall probably be occupying your attention & my own time with useless repetition which wt your usual indulgence you will be kind enough to excuse. –

The reports brought by Cowie [Robert] and from Geo Keith of your Health have made me quite unhappy of late. I have seen you very frequently in my Dreams and I am really getting most anxious about you. We must have Letters from Lake Superior soon. God grant they convey favourable accounts of you your warm amiable warm hearted better half and your Dear Young folks. – While at York I was very unwell, likewise my poor Wife, she is still complaining but I can thank God recruiting although by no means in tip top condition: She poor Dear Soul, has never been quite the thing since her confinement, the loss of her beloved child has quite broken her spirits; her Health has greatly fallen off since that melancholy event and if she does not recruit before Ship time I think I shall take her Home. My own opinion is that she sustained some serious injury through mismanagement of her confinement which tis probable she may never recover. Matrimony brings much happiness wt it and no man ever felt more satisfied wt the choice he made than I have done but never did I know what anxiety was until I became a Husband and no Husband ever suffered more from anxiety than has been my lot for the last 12 months. If I do take her home next Fall, it will be with the intention of returning alone the following Spring Wintering in the Country and then going back in 1835 probably for good. I shall certainly never bring her to this country again. – She will have the pleasure of addressing Mrs. McTavish by this conveyance. I shall therefore drop domestic affairs for the present.

You would have learnt by Hanwell[1] that we have been favoured wt a visit by Mr. Berens Son[2] to Mr. Berens the Director.[3] This Gentleman is about 28 to 30 years of age, has been brought up to business in Holland & Hambro and is about to establish himself in the Mercantile line in London and will probably be elected to a Seat of the Board of Directors on his return from this Country. He has for the two past years been at Home looking out for an eligible opening to start in business but the times are so bad that he wisely pauses until he sees how things will turn out and having nothing particular to occupy his attention it was considered advisable that he [fo. 94] should pass a Winter in the Country in order to pick up information in regard to the business so as to be qualified to render effective Service at the Board when he takes his Seat. – He is now with us here and a valuable acquisition he makes to our Society. From hence he will proceed to Norway House in Spring and thence to Canada via the Sault & Lakes, go on to New York thence to New Orleans and thence home in November. – We have had alarming reports of late (through Aiken[4] the American Fur Coys Trader at Fond du Lac) of Cholera in Canada where tis said to have been very destructive; the loss of life in Montreal is estimated at 1500 Souls but the only Name of respectability that has yet reached us is Henry McKenzie.[5] – Lord grant it may not visit We Rupert Landers although the chances are rather against us as I understand it has found its way up to Michilimackinac – The loss of life in England has not been great considering the population. None of our Friends have fallen victim to it and I sincerely hope that your & Mrs. McTavishs Friends have been equally fortunate. – You will be surprised to learn that Don[d] McKenzie has at length found his way to the Civilized World; he has for several years past been threatening to go in order to place his means in safety and look out for a retreat for himself & Family; he consulted me from time to time on his affairs and as he made up his mind to cast anchor in the States I last Summer after receiving such dismal reports from England wrote him from Norway House recommending his going down in Fall – making his purchase of property, securing his means & fixing his residence in the course of this winter and next year taking his Family down; but from his indecision in business I think tis probable he will come back after having done nothing; and that he will endeavor to hold on until the end of the Lease;[6] if he does it will be exceedingly unfair as he is without exception the most helpless, the most useless & the most mischievous man in Ruperts Land. You are aware that he holds the Commission of the Gov of Assiniboia, this I do not like to take from him or rather I do not like to appoint him to any other place while he holds this Commission without the previous consent of the Gov & Committee. I have strongly recommended that he be not allowed to resume his charge here and have privately pointed you out as the most eligible Man in this Country

[1] This is Henry Hanwell Jr. (d.*c.* 1833–1834). He was the master of the HBC ship the *Prince of Wales* making yearly trips to the Hudson Bay and stopping at Moose Factory. On account of ice conditions, the ship was unable to return from the 1833 voyage to Moose Factory. Hanwell died some time before the ship embarked for England. HBCA Biographical Sheet. E.E. Rich, ed., *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee 1825–38* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1941), 345.
[2] This is Henry Hulse Berens (1804–1883). See biographical appendix.
[3] This is Joseph Berens Jr. (b.*c.* 1774–1853). See biographical appendix.
[4] William Alexander Aiken (1785–1851). See biographical appendix.
[5] Henry McKenzie (b.*c.* 1781–1832) had been a partner of the NWC. See biographical appendix.
[6] Here Simpson is referring to the 1811 agreement that the Hudson's Bay Company's would grant of 116,000 square miles, called the District of Assiniboia, to Lord Selkirk, to establish the Red River Settlement, an agricultural settlement for displaced Scottish and Irish crofters. By 1832, there was talk that this grant would revert to the HBC and, indeed, in 1836, the HBC re-acquired administration rights from the Selkirk family.

for the Situation. I have also named 3 other Gentlemen who would be equal to the charge although there are certain objections to them so that I am in hopes I shall [fo. 94d] be authorised to invite you to the Government of Assiniboia, but on the subject of extra emolument I said nothing and can therefore say nothing, yet if the settlement continues in the hands of the Earl of Selkirk I have no doubt that the £200 which McKenzie had from his Lordship will be continued. For the present & indeed ever since I became a resident here or rather ever since McKenzie came here I have done the whole important business, in fact he never was fit for any business requiring the exercise of judgement, he nevertheless retained his extra sal[ar]y until the Day of his departure; I wish to goodness you had been at hand to have slipped into it at once or that I could now invite you hither; the situation is productive of nothing but labour & trouble to me. Pray say what you think of it. If you be lame & unable to move about it will not suit you. – The Gov of Assiniboia should be fit to ride 40 miles in a Day every Week i.e. up to the Forks & back again and to stir about among the Settlers not to seat himself on the end of Gun & bask in the Sun retelling Stale jokes from morning till night as the late Gov did. – Robertson [Colin] has gone to England – the object of his Journey is to ask the Gov & Committees consent to retire & retain his full interest in the Concern until the end of the Lease. – I told him that that would likewise require the consent of a majority of the Chief Factors & Chief Traders which quite amazed him (so much does he know of the Deed Poll) but he thinks he is so popular in the Country that he will have no difficulty – but it is not the first time that we differed in opinion. – Poor John Stuart was quite amazed when he found himself transferred to McKenzies River – he is the most extraordinary non descript I ever knew. Your affair[1] brought him & McKenzie into close intimacy and led to the Coolness between them & me which has now widened to a regular breach. – Cameron [John Dugald] is now one of my principal supporters and a very good well meaning steady man I find him who looks at things cooly and dispassionately and does not allow himself to be led away by party feeling or prejudice. Christie [Alexander] I likewise find a regular good Standby and when Rowand [John] is down he backs and supports me through thick & thin but I am nevertheless much at a loss for wholesome advice at times and miss you more than words can tell. – I do not know what our Friend Geo Keith is going to do whether to retire or return. Poor A[lexander] Stewart I imagine must retire [fo. 95] indeed I think he ought if his Health does not come round. – McLoughlin [John] I think will be out this Season and probably go down to Canada on rotation, he has had a long lease of the Columbia, has wrought exceedingly hard and has had a most anxious time of it. – Ogden [Peter Skene] likewise comes across and I imagine will come in for the next vacant Chief Factorship. Edward Smith seems quite uncertain what he will do; he is very comfortable in regard to means and if he wishes to enjoy the fruits of civilized life he has not much time to spare. – Pray tell me what you think of the management of McBain [John] & Bethune [Angus] & what they talk of doing. I have handled McBain rather sharply in my public Letter which I do not wish to be exhibited publicly at Moose. – What have you done wt Barnston [George]; I really believe he is mad or rather that he was so when he penned the Letters to the Committee & myself last year & his last Spring. – Some mischievous person must have taken a vast deal of pains to deceive him in regard to me because I really believe I was the only one in the Country who felt any interest in him except yourself. I am

[1] This the affair described earlier in these letters and refers to John George McTavish leaving his country wife Nancy "Matooskie" McKenzie) and marrying the Scottish Catherine Aitken Turner in 1830.

satisfied that he believes me to have been his Enemy as he is too correct a man to bring charges against every one which he did not feel to be founded on fact. None of those he brought against me had one particle of truth in them. – He lays much stress on being sent to the Columbia at £75. Robertson [Colin] said last year in Council that you were much enraged about it at the time and that he had a perfect recollection of your complaining to him of the injustice of the case. – I however recollect that it was you who named the Sal[ar]y to me and gave as your reason for saying 75 instead of £100 that you did not consider him fit for the charge of a Post – so much for Robertson's facts – Madame Leblanc[1] was delivered of a little girl about a fortnight ago. – Mother and Child doing well – Your little girls are quite well and fine romping girls they are. – I take special care to keep them within bounds as regards expense. Leblanc frequently asks what you mean to do with them and talks of sending them to School at least two of them. – I say no – they are to remain where they are until he receives formal notice. – Hendry[William] went down to York wt the intention of going Home but had liberty to return if he chose. He did return but seems bent on going next year. – He seems averse to the alliance proposed by himself at Moose, this I think arises from the stories he heard from McKenzie [Donald] of your want of influence & want of means &c &c. He is a speculative [fo. 95d] unsteady man at best who never can do any good and I think by no means a desirable Son in Law. You must endeavor to get the Young Lady off your hands where you are. The young Gents of the present Day do not bite in that way. – Jones [David T.] is about to establish a respectable School here for Boys & Girls. He and an assistant from England a Young Clergyman who comes out next year [to] take the management of the Boys & Mrs. Jones wt a regularly bred English Governess who likewise comes out next year [to] take charge of the Girls – the two Schools quite distinct. Board & Education &c £20 p. Anm. – Pray give publicity and encourage the sending of children of any ages; they will be well taken care of. The Lady is to teach Music, Drawing &c &c. Jones gives £100 p. Anm. to the Master & Governess each. – An awkward affair however took place at the School last year. R. McKenzie Junr's[2] eldest Daughter[3] who you saw at Michipicoten on her way from Canada in 1830 notwithstanding all their vigilance absolutely committed a rape upon a little Indian Boy of 13. It appears she was broken in on her Voyage from Canada – She was a poor half idiot thing & has since then got married to a son of old Spences brother[4] to Wm. the Indn who was at York. – This affair had nearly broke the Hearts of Jones & his Wife – do not say much about it lest it may injure the School & if anything be said about it Smooth it over the best way you can. Mrs. McMillan[5] is on the eve of Confinement. I hope to be able to say "pretty well considering" in a P.S. –

I am very anxious about Rowand [John], he went last summer in search of the Peigans whom Jemmy Jock (Bird) escorted to the American establisht. at the Forks of the Yellow Stone River; it was a Service of much danger and had he got back in safety at the time expected (beginning of Septem[r]) I

[1] This is Nancy "Matooskie" McKenzie, McTavish's former country wife who Simpson had married off to Pierre Leblanc.
[2] This is Roderick McKenzie Jr. (b.*c.* 1791–1830). See biographical appendix.
[3] Annabella McKenzie, born in 1818.
[4] This marriage, between Annabella McKenzie and John Clarke Spence, took place on September 11, 1832, in the Red River Settlement. HBCA E.4/1b.
[5] This is the wife of James McMillan (see biographical appendix). He married her in Scotland in 1830. Her name was Eleanor McKinley.

ought to have heard from [him] long ago. – You would have heard of Connolly's[1] Marriage – he was one of those who considered it a most unnatural proceeding "to desert the mother of his Children" and marry another; this is all very fine, very sentimental and very hard hearted 3000 miles from the civilized world but is lost sight of even by Friend Connolly when a proper opportunity offers. – I should not be surprised that our valued Friend at La Chine will follow his example. – Pray send me some of Allan McDonell's news he must have brought an extraordinary budget from Canada but had a sore hand when he wrote and could give me nothing interesting: I should like to see him respectably settled as he is really a good fellow unless much changed. – [fo. 96] I note your remarks about our Friend at Ruperts River[2] and am really sorry that you and he do not approximate a little more. – He seems to have been over cautious in the affairs of Hannah Bay which you managed to admiration. Let me know what you think ought to be done in Swanston's[3] case. I do not think it would be well to give him an annuity as you seemed to suggest from Fort William – a gratuity of £50 I think would be better. – On money matters I wrote you from York and can say little further on that subject until we hear what is wrong in the Civilized world. – Sect^{y} Smith[4] returned my letter of credit p. £1000 by the Ship of last fall. – In the event of my going Home next Season it may be well that you give me a Letter authorizing me to act in your affairs likewise a Power of Attorney as you having acted in your own affairs by drawing on the Compy & been in communication wt Keith on cash matter have cancelled the Power I formerly held. If I act in your concerns I shall be more cautious than I have lately been in my own. – I am anxious to bring our transaction wt Cameron to a close and shall be glad to have your formal authority to close it as I may consider expedient or rather I think it may be as well that you write me such a letter as Stewart & McIntosh gave me of which I shall hand you a copy. – I think it would be well for you to have the bulk of your means safely secured in Canada as that Country will in all probability be your future Home. In England I really do not consider money safe at least in Government securities: I do not know what your politics are but from the bottom of my Heart I should like to see the D __nd Whigs kicked out of office; if they remain much longer at the head of affairs they will assuredly bring us all to ruin. – If I do not go Home next year and that you give me power to draw I shall instruct Gale to invest some of your Money in the best Mortgage he can find – not exceeding 600 to £800 in any one Security to guard as much as possible against danger by dividing the risk. – You do not require Young Anderson [James] it may therefore be well to send him to this quarter. What sort of Lad is he? Your Young Friends I think will be out in the Fall – at least I made a request to that effect to Mr. Pelly [John]. – Pray write me fully on Southern Deptmt affairs – say what you think next years indent will amount to and give me any information you may consider likely to be useful or interesting it would be well that you brought the Indent of this Year to a fair Standard outfit for the Southern Deptmt as it now stands in order that we may know [fo. 96d] precisely what it ought to be in the event of your withdrawing and your place at Moose being filled by another. I am likewise anxious that you should bring the Establisht of Clerks & men at Moose to what it ought to be in order

[1] On May 16, 1832, Hudson's Bay Company Chief Factor William Connolly married his second cousin, Julia Woolrich, in a Catholic ceremony in Lower Canada. This marriage became famous in Canadian legal history because Connolly repudiated his nearly 30-year customary marriage to his Cree wife, Suzanne Pas-de-Nom (Miyo Nipiy), to enter into it.
[2] This is Chief Factor Joseph Beioley (1785–1859). See biographical appendix.
[3] John Swanston (b.*c.*1800–1876). See biographical appendix.
[4] William Smith was the HBC secretary in London. See biographical appendix.

that I may be enabled to regulate that of your Successor. – How does Gladman[1] come on? He appears to me to be rather a self conceited Man. The Dr. complains bitterly that his Books and Baggage &c were not forwarded from Moose agreeable to your promise. When you write which I hope will be on rect. of this pray give me a long screed and tell me all bout your amiable and excellent Wife and Darling young folks. I feel as much interested in them as if they were part & parcel of my own Family. Would to God that my poor Wife had been near Yours, if she had I really think her case would now be very different from what it is, she talks of, thinks of, & feels toward her as if she were a Sister, but here she is sorely in want of a Friend. – I myself am become so melancholy & low spirited that I scarcely know what enjoyment is, in fact I am from Years end to Years end in the blues and feel that my Health & strength are falling off rapidly. I am most anxious to get away from the Country of which I am sick and tired but my means do not enable me to shake off the Harness. – Do me the favour to present my kindest and best regards to Mrs. McTavish a thousand kisses to your little folks and believe me Ever,

My Dear Sir
Your Sincere Friend
Geo Simpson

P.S. The Letter of Sale in Camerons affairs I thought was the most simple mode of enabling me to close that transaction. I shall do by you therein as for myself. Pray did you see a little fellow belonging to me at Michipicoten – if you did have the goodness to tell me candidly what you think & what you heard of him. Whether sound in mind & body or not &c &c – let McMurray have any little supplies he may require for him to my account. G.S. [fo. 97]

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 4th May 1833 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 100-101d]

My Dear Sir

I was exceedingly anxious about you until your highly esteemed & welcome Letters of 2nd Feby came to hand, as the reports from our Lake Superior Friends respecting your health were most alarming. – You say little about it in your last Letter, and appear in tolerably good spirits. I therefore indulge the fond hope that you are well & hearty; God grant it may be so, and that you have many many busy & happy years before you. – You are silent about your most excellent & kind hearted help mate and your Darling young folks and I have been afraid to speak to my poor wife respecting them as when reading Mrs. McTavish's Letter I observed she was bathed in tears; the least allusion in reference to our late misfortune overpowers & overwhelms her wt sorrow, in short I am grieved to say that our House has been a scene of sorrow & sickness for nearly 18 Months past, & I myself am more broken hearted & depressed than I am well able to describe. – You will both I am sure be grieved to learn that my beloved Wife is in a very dangerous state of health arising from a complaint contracted at the birth of our poor child which is assuming a more serious character every succeeding Day &

[1] George Gladman Jr. (1800–1863). See biographical appendix.

confining her frequently to Bed for Weeks together; It baffles the skill of our medical man and renders it absolutely necessary that more skilful advice should be obtained as early as possible. I have therefore determined on going Home this Season and on sending her on to Canada before me to start from hence about the 1st June under the care of Dr. [William] Hendry (who retires from the Service) accompanied by Mary[1] & with a crew of 6 or 7 men while I myself proceed to Norway House in order to hold a Council there about the 20th from whence I shall start alone about the 15th July so that I shall pass Michipicoten early in August. The object in sending her ahead, is that she may be enabled to travel leisurely and have a few weeks rest in Canada before entering on the Sea Voyage and about a Months earlier advise than she would have by waiting my time, and she has been falling off so much of late that I am very apprehensive she would be unable to undertake the voyage at all if her complaint continues to gain ground for a few weeks longer as it has done of late. – My stay in Canada will not exceed two or three weeks, if she be in a fit state to attempt the Voyage to England where I expect to arrive before the Bay Ships. – My own health is by no means good & my Nerves are quite shaken; I have great confidence in the efficacy of Sea Bathing in my own case, and if I do not recruit in the course of [fo. 100] next Winter I am half disposed to apply for a years leave of absence (for my circumstances do not enable me to retire) and to return in the Spring of 1835 via Canada wt the intention of running a couple of years longer in the Country, but certainly not to bringing my wife along wt me if she ever gets over her present illness of which I lament to say I am exceedingly doubtful. – I am quite at a loss to know what the Compy will say about the Government of the Settlement; I scarcely think it possible that they will allow McKenzie [Donald] play the fool & Tyrant again, and have not the least idea [if] they will send a Govr from England; my belief however is, that I shall be authorized to offer it to you, but in that case the difficulty will be to bring you here, and there is another doubt on my mind which is, whether you would like to leave your present comfortable quarters or not besides the doubt that it would be to your interest to come here even wt the £200 additional sal[ar]ry allowed by the Earl of Selkirk. – In the event of my being authorized to place you here I shall get McMillan [James] to keep things together the best way he can until you can come either in the Fall or early next year, and if I find you are unwilling to leave Moose I shall arrange it so that Christie [Alexander] comes here, as I consider him the next fittest person in the Country for the charge, but that I imagine would be a sad punishment to him as he would be under the necessity of separating from his Family to whom he is devoted. – Were you to come, I think it would be well to place Beoiley [Joseph] at Moose which I scarcely think he would like as he seems attached to Ruperts River. But it is useless to occupy either your time or my own wt conjectures at present. I shall therefore say no more on the subject until I hear from the Hudsons Bay House. If you wish me to do anything for you in Canada write me particularly to Michipicoten immediately after rect. of this, and command my best services in England by the Ship; in the event of your wishing me to meddle with your cash matters, it will be necessary to forward a Power of Attorney or a Letter to the Govr & Committee authorizing them to honor my dfts in your Account and a Letter of instructions to myself saying [what] I am to do. – I should like accordingly to go round by Moose to confer wt you in person, but you may readily believe I shall be anxious to join all that is Dearest to me in this life as early as possible under

[1] Mary was the English cook and servant to Simpson's wife.

existing circumstances. – You seemed to be surprised where I picked up that there was only £293.10.9 at your credit on the 1st June 1831. In reply I can only say that it was from a paper handed me under a private cover by the Compy as usual headed "Sketch of Officers Balances wt the H.B. Coy 29 Feby 1832" in which you are credited wt that amount: – But in a paper headed "List of Officers Returns 31st May 1832" received by the Ship after I wrote to you, you stand Credited wt £1323.1.2. – I wish to goodness it had been as many thousands but I fear it will be a long time before either you or I reach the fifth part of a plum.[1] I believe I wrote you that I had got a pinch in money matters of late. I shall endeavor to be more cautious in future – by the bye you have overpaid me in interest on the Dft I gave Alexr Stewart as you have given me 5 p[er] Cent which is more than the current value of money, whereas I never calculated on recovering any Interest at [fo. 100d] all and you have made the interest up from 10th July whereas it was only due from the Date on which the Bill was paid; but as a sell off against that the Coy will allow no interest on the amt transferred until after the 1st June Prox: there will however be a small balance due to you which I shall adjust in England as although I allow Hundreds & Sometimes thousands slip through my fingers, I am very particular about odd pounds, shillings & pence or in other words am like many great Men penny wise & pound foolish. – You are by no means communicative wt me either on public business or private chit chat. I did expect a more full detail than your letter addressed to the Gov. Chief Factors & Chief Traders of 25th Jany contained, and imagine you might have found things to say to me which you might not feel disposed to enter upon to those Gentlemen with whom you have coupled me; I shall however forward the duplicate to Mr. Pruden and the other Gentlemen for whom it was intended as well as myself. – But laying joke aside, you seem to forget that I feel very particular interest either in your own concerns or the concerns of the business. Pray my good Friend unburthen and let me have a volume next time otherwise I will begin to think you are becoming more shy & reserved than usual which wt me I scarcely think would be fair. Our Friend Sandy [Alexander] Stewart seems to have parted wt his Wisdom Teeth;[2] I never heard of such an extraordinary proposal in the whole course of my existence; for Gods sake do not sacrifice the Girl unless he settles in due form any Guineas he is and ever will be possessed of upon her and let the money be drawn & placed in the hands of Trustees for her benefit or in your hands as her natural Guardian; unless something of the kind be done you may rest assured that his Friends in Scotland & elsewhere will upset every will he may make either in her or your favor on the ground of insanity or undue influence. If he settles all he has got upon her, let him have her by all means, and let him draw a Bill for all he is worth and write a strong formal letter to some friend of yours in whom you have implicit confidence directing him to hold invest or apply it for her benefit subject to your future instructions, and at the same time you had better write a letter to the same Friend saying how

[1] "Plum" here is figurative: since the late 18th century, it has meant something desirable or valuable. Saying something is not worth even one-fifth of that already small, figurative unit emphasizes just how little value it has.

[2] "Parted with his Wisdom Teeth" in this context is a metaphor for foolishness. As Glyndwr Williams notes, Stewart's last months with the Company saw an episode involving Mary, the young daughter of J.G. McTavish. Glyndwr Williams (ed.) *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 170, note 4. This episode is explained in more detail by Allan McDonell in a 1836 letter to James Hargrave. "Mr. McTavish lives at the Chats say on his Estate at the same time doing the Companys business there, he is not in the best health but much better than when at Moose Factory. Mary his Daughter is married to George Ross, & will you believe that old Sandy Stewart fell in love with her previous to her marriage with Ross, but alas he failed time had furrowed his cheek too much for a Girl of fifteen." Allan McDonell, Norway House, to James Hargrave, 19th June 1836, HBCA B.239/c/2, fo. 80.

you wish it to be disposed of. – The Girl is well clear of Hendry [William] who is a changeable whimsical fellow who can never do well would treat her ill & must die on a Dunghill through his own unsteadiness. Poor Robertson [Colin] has brought his Pigs to a bad market,[1] he is mad I verily believe, as although confined to a Sick Room and unable to render himself the least assistance he speaks as largely as ever, he then ordered his Family down to Canada and the whole host of his miserable Relations from Scotland to settle around him on his Wonderfully improved & immensely valuable property. – I have not heard one word of D[onald] McKenzie since he passed the Sault; he has not even dropped a line to his wife since he left her: I should not be surprised if he were to abandon his Family altogether, if he could. He is the coldest & most unfeeling man I ever knew. – James Keith and Clark [John] are furiously engaged in [a] Paper War. Clark will get himself into a mess – he deserves no pity or compassion. Hughes [James Sr.] has got the appointment – held by Col. McKay in the Indian Department, and I think he will be the bearer of this on his way to Canada to enter upon his office. – McBain [John] goes down this Season for the benefit of medical advice being in ill health on an exchange of Rotation wt some of our __ Gentlemen and I shall have to send one to [fo. 101] relieve him but I am quite uncertain as yet who will be the happy Man. – If Geo. Keith returns via Lake Superior I have asked him to resume the charge of the District as Bethune [Angus] will pass the ensuing Winter at his old quarters. – I think I sent you a prospectus of the School last Summer, but do not say one word about it, pray endeavour to get some Scholars and let them be forwarded to Michipicoten. – Jones [David] as incurred an expense of about £500 already in preparing for their reception. – Allan McDonell wrote me last year that he had something very particular to say but that he would not enter upon it having a Sore hand, it appeared to me to allude to some remarks about myself either in Council or the Country. I wish he had been a little more communicative. – Has he said anything to you about it? – I am quite ignorant of D[onald] McKenzie's plans, he talked at one time of retiring in 1835 but I strongly suspect he will see the Lease out. I am quite at a loss where to send or what to do with him as he is even still more useless than Robertson [Colin] and has the talent of being a thousand times more mischievous with all the inclination to be so. I have consented to Gladman's [George Jr.] going Home and would have done so last year had you recommended it, but you did not even mention his name. – Swanstons [John] severe accident I heard of in the Shop the other Day from some of the people from the South, likewise the death of one of Beioley's men on his way to Moose wt the Packet; in fact all the Moose News reaches me when it is no longer news to any other person in the Settlement. – Leblanc's Family[2] are quite well. They all have your Stamp which is saying volumes for their appearance without flattery. I am truly sorry that you and Beioley [Joseph] are not more friendly than you appear to be – He has his peculiarities & some of them are by no means agreeable but he is nevertheless a very interested clever correct little man. Let every man speak of the feed as he finds it. – I think however he has done exceedingly wrong in countenancing the wretch you mention. Christie [Alexander] came here on a visit to us about a month ago and most opportune has it been otherwise I should not have been able to hold my Council at Norway House this Season: – He has no intention of becoming a Red River man. – Charles I think will retire in 1835.

[1] To bring one's pigs to a bad market is an old British idiomatic expression meaning to fail in an undertaking, or find oneself in an unsuccessful or awkward position.
[2] Louis Leblanc married J.G. McTavish's country wife, so Simpson is here speaking of McTavish's children.

– The Death of Alex[r] McTavish shocked me more than words can tell although he was the bitterest Enemy I ever had in the Country & most unaccountably so as instead of ever doing him an injury I verily believe I was more serviceable to him than any other man in Ruperts Land – And the Hostility of Barnston [George] I can only ascribe to a loss of reason because I really think no one in Ruperts Land felt half the interest in him that I did except yourself. – Keith has re-engaged him at my request because I was apprehensive he would Starve in Canada become desperate & commit suicide. – Pray why did you not send Anderson [James] to the North when he became a supernumerary at Moose? the other Districts in the South were overstocked wt Clerks. McBain [John] I have not seen, he was stationed at Lac la Pluie by ____. If my poor Wife be able to sit up before the Packet starts she will no doubt write to Mrs. McTavish to whom please offer my kindest & best regards. Let me entreat that you shake off reserve & be wt me. Command me unhesitatingly, rest assured that it will ever be the pride & pleasure of my heart to show how anxious I am to serve you, how highly you stand in my regard and how Sincerely I am my Dear Sir,

Your faithful & affectionate Friend
Geo Simpson

Look at P.S. in the envelope [fo. 101d]

[The envelope shows up on fo. 109]
P.S. I don't know Colin Campbells plans but I could not think of asking him to leave his Family in Red River; They are numerous and would cost him about £150 p[er] an[nu]m in this place; moreover he is too young a man to be allowed to remain on the Shores of the Bay. Alex. R[oderick] McLeod comes out this Season as he says for the benefit of medical advice but I suspect wt the view of being allowed to winter in the neighbourhood of the Factory; I think it will be necessary to send him to Canada which he will not like. – Pray give notice that passage will be allowed free of expenses to any children for Red River School: I am very anxious that this Establisht should succeed & beg you will [give] it your best support. – Be particular to me on your views & instructions on money matters if you wish me to act for you on that subject. Do not lose sight of my hints or suggestions in regard to Alexr Stewart's proposition to Mary.
G.S.

George Simpson, Michipicoten, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 29 June 1833 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 105-108]

My Dear Sir

When I last had the pleasure I little expected to have had occasion to address you so soon afterwards from this place; the cause I am sure will distress you being my own indisposition which commenced about 20[th] May by a sudden attack of determination of blood to the Head approaching apoplexy while conversing wt Mr. Berens[1] & Mr. Christie [Alexander] opposite to the Door of our

[1] Henry Hulse Berens. See biographical appendix.

House at Red River immediate recourse was had to Leeches Cupping & Medicine which removed the pressure on the Brain but I became so weak & nervous afterwards that I could not walk about without assistance nor attend to business: it was therefore determined that instead of going to Norway House as I intended we should hold a Council at Red River at which Cameron [John Dugald], Christie [Alexander] & McMillan [James] and afterwards McKenzie [Donald] were present and I am now so far on my way to England accompanied by my poor Wife who is likewise in very bad [fo. 105] Health. Mary[1] & Dr. Hendry [William] are with us. – My own Health has improved materially since I came on the Voyage, but as yet I am quite unequal to attend to the business closely and it costs me pain & difficulty even to scratch off this unintelligible scrawl which must be brief because the pulsation in my head at this moment is quite insupportable. – Relief from fatigues and anxieties of business is absolutely necessary to my recovery and by care and attention I hope to get round; if my health be perfectly restored next Spring I shall come out alone for a year or two, if not I shall apply for a Years leave of absence and at the expiration thereof either come out & retire altogether as the sate of my Health may render necessary. – I last year submitted to the Board or rather to two Directors privately that McKenzie [Donald] was no longer a fit man for Red River and recommended that his appointment to the Governorship of Assiniboia should be annulled which has been done. I at the same time pointed out that you, Christie [Alexander] and McLoughlin [John] were the three fittest Gentlemen in the Country for that office,[fo. 105d] but that the circumstance of Christie having an Indian Family in a certain degree disqualified him that McLoughlin's temper was not sufficiently even for such a charge saying at the same time all I thought of your qualifications and I fully anticipated that I should be provided wt a commission for you but it appears that alarming reports of the state of your Health reached them last Fall and from the symptoms which have been communicated to them they conceive your complaint as Dropsy.[2] They have therefore sent no such Commission nor have they considered it necessary to direct that any one shall be appointed for the current year from the supposition that I myself should pass the ensuing Winter at Red River. – By the minutes of Council herewith sent you will observe that Christie [Alexander] has been instructed to come up in Fall and pass the Winter there, leaving Miles [Robert] & Hargrave [James] at York: – this is the best arrangement I could make under existing circumstances. – Christie is more anxious to be relieved from the charge as it separates him from his Family. – I have now to beg [fo. 106] that you write me directly by the Ship whether you would like to have the opportunity or not; it is not I can tell you from experience an enviable one nor a sinecure if the holder thereof does his duty, but laborious, harassing & vexatious in the extreme and the additional £200 does not cover the additional expense at least it would not to you. – I shall now drop this subject. Indeed I am quite giddy & feel that I cannot go on must therefore touch on two or three other points briefly before closing. – I send you two blank Powers of Attorney which you can fill up and if you say by Letter what you wish me to do for you it shall be done. – I shall look into your affairs in Canada and write you from thence before crossing the Atlantic. – Alex^{r} Stewart has retired and I suppose his proposition has fallen to the ground. – Would

[1] The servant of Frances Simpson.

[2] A historical term describing the abnormal buildup of fluid in the body's tissues or cavities (such as the legs, ankles, or abdomen), and sometime indicative of congestive heart failure, chronic kidney disease, liver cirrhosis, and venous insufficiency. The modern term for this malady is edema.

it not be well to get Nourse [William] to part with the loose article he has and to take Mary legally off your hands? – He now goes across to fill the office [fo. 106d] of accountant in Gladman's [George Jr.] absence but if not required let him be transferred to Ruperts River as Mr. Beioley [Joseph] will require either him [or] some other to assist in forming the new Establishments required on the Ungava inland communication – Both your Nephews have come out one to the North the other to the South, Hargrave will look after the former and be well disposed off as you may wish. – Pray send me some Bark Rogans[1] of various shapes & sizes, the Moose Lades are famous for that discipline of work. – Tis a pity you sent Home that strangely worded Journal of either McKenzie or Anderson[2] relative to the punishment inflicted on the Hannah Bay Indians. There is one pargh [paragraph] in it which has annoyed some of the Directors very much, that which says that as the Indian would not walk he was Shot. – Your decision and activity in the business is approved but "the officer in charge" found much fault wt. Swanston [John] is exceedingly poor. Pray renew his Engagement for 3 years at £60 p[er] anm which will be £10 advance on [fo. 107] last contract. There will be 4 Vacant Traderships to fill up this Season. Pray send the Nomination of Eight Clerks for those Vacancies recorded in the usual way and I think it would be well to name 4 from each Deptm[t]. – I have for the South put down the names of Corcoran[3] Geo Gladman & Hardisty,[4] the last I do not know but from the reports that have reached me of him for many years past I have a high opinion of him. N[icol] Finlayson and Hargrave [James] are the two new Traders. Let the nominations be under Seal addressed to the board. – We arrived here yesterday in compy wt Mr. Berens [Henry Hulse] & Hughes [James] who go round by the Lakes. – My poor wife is quite weary and laying down. I fear she is in dangerous way. She is not equal to the fatigue of sitting up to write her kind hearted Friend Mrs. McTavish whom wt Your Dear Yong Folks we are delighted to learn are well. We fervently pray that your Health may soon be perfectly re-established and unite in warmest regards to your fire side. Farewell my Dear Friend & believe me ever yours affectionately
Geo Simpson

I cannot go on being quite unwell. G.S. [fo. 107d]

If Nourse [William] be not required at Moose let him be sent on to Ruperts River. G.S. [fo. 108]

George Simpson to J.G. McTavish, Moose Factory, July 1st 1833 (private).
[HBCA B.135/c/2, fo. 110

My Dear Sir

Have a goodness to prepare and forward to me under a private cover such a Scheme of allowances of Tea, Sugar &c &c to Commissioned Gentlemen Clerks & Postmasters, Interpreters &

[1] Rogans are bark baskets. They are made from birch bark that has been tied together with spruce roots. They were used by women collecting berries in the forest and for storing food.
[2] The punitive expedition was led by James Anderson (18121–1867). See biographical appendix.
[3] Thomas Corcoran (b.*c.* 1794–1865). See biographical appendix.
[4] Richard Hardisty (b.*c.* 1792–1865). See biographical appendix.

Guides for Winter consumption likewise for the Voyage as you may consider necessary & proper as I find there is so much difference of opinion on this subject in this Country that it will be better to have it selected & fixed by the Board than by the Council or Gentlemen in charge of Depots.

Yours mo Sicly
Geo Simpson

Pray what are the allowances 1st July 1833 now issued by your Depot.

P.S. I find there is a Daughter of mine married or about to be married to a Dond McTavish Writer Inverness – do you happen to know if he is any Relative of the late Alex or D. McTavish? [fo. 110]

George Simpson, London, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 21st October 1833 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 113-114]

My Dear Sir

It was determined this Day that a Packet should be sent off to Capn Back tomorrow intimating the arrival of Capn Ross in England[1] by a Davis Strait man having lost his Ship and been unsuccessful in the object of his Mission so that I have very little time to devote to private correspondence although many letters to write & this will satisfactorily account for the brevity of the Scrawl – but I shall have the pleasure of addressing you at greater length after the arrival of the Ships in a few weeks hence. By a letter lately received from Allan McDonell I am truly grieved to learn that you were in bad Health & Spirits when he left you at Moose – but he himself is evidently labouring under the same ailments to a lamentable degree. I am in hopes that he represents your case much worse than it really is and I earnestly pray that your own report by the Ship will be of a more cheering character; – and that it will convey the delightful intelligence of the perfect Health of Mrs. McTavish and your Dear Young folks. – You will be glad to learn that my own health is recruiting gradually but slowly & that my wife is much improved. I shall nevertheless be anxious about her until after her confinement in [fo. 113] January, she is at best but a delicate subject and suffers a martyrdom at that Crisis. –

We arrived in England at Portsmouth on the 27th August and since then I have given little or no attention to business having attended to the restoration of my Health and nothing else. All our Directors are out of Town except the Governor[2] & Mr. Harrison[3] and will be absent until the latter

[1] Rear-Admiral Sir John Ross (1777–1856) was a British naval officer and explorer who headed a number of Arctic explorations trying to find the North West Passage. On his second expedition (1829–1833) he became ice-bound for four winters on the Boothia Peninsula. Hearing rumors that he was missing, Captain George Back (1796–1878) organized an overland expedition in 1833 to find him. Back traveled via Montreal and Lake Winnipeg to the HBC's Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake, near the east end of Great Slave Lake. After receiving news *en route* that John Ross had already safely returned to England (rescued in 1833 by a whaling ship), Back continued his mission, descending the Thlew-ee-choh River (later named the Back River) to map the Arctic coast.

[2] This was Sir John Henry Pelly (1777–1852) an English businessman. During most of his career, he was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), serving as Governor of the HBC from 1822 to 1852. He also served as Governor of the Bank of England. See biographical appendix.

[3] Benjamin Harrison (1771–1856) was an English hospital administrator and merchant, and he served as the Deputy Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) from 1835 to 1839. Before his tenure as deputy governor, he was a

end of this month when business begins. – Many people say we are on the eve of a National Bankruptcy and other well-informed people think we are as safe & sound as at any time within the past 20 years. It is clear however that our Revenue is falling off amazingly, that the Government is weak and timid, that the Mob dictates the Laws and that we are by no means prepared for War which many think is likely to break out between France & England on the one side & the northern powers on the other so that upon the whole the aspect of affairs is gloomy. – The Stock nevertheless keeps up, Consols[1] now at 88 ⅞ when I arrived and are now at 86 ½ which is high: – I have not as yet meddled with your money matters but if you send me a power of attorney by the Ship I shall endeavor to get good investments made for you in Canada where I think property is more safe at present than in England. – I spent a few days lately in Chillingham [fo. 113d] where I found our old Friend Leith [James] in tolerable Health altho looking miserably thin. We lived together when I was there and he was in very high spirits. His means are approaching about £1000 p[er] Anm without touching on his Capital and he enjoys himself quite like a Gentleman. – Haldane [John] is in the North "cheek by jowl" with the top Sawyers of the Land.[2] Pray render any assistance in your power to Allan McDonell to put down the opposition & meet Beioley's [Joseph] demands as far as your means admit as I am anxious he should extend the trade of his District. –

If my Health continues to improve I shall probably go out to Canada in April to visit the Kings Posts & look about that Deptmt; and return in August or Sept[r] so as to pass another Winter in England before revisiting the Interior the following Season. But my poor wife can never venture across the Atlantic again. – She is laid up wt a bad cold to Day otherwise would address her estimable Friend Mr. McTavish to whom pray offer our united kindest regards – accept the same yourself, Kiss the Children for us a thousand times & believe me ever

My Dear Sir

Yours most sincerely

Geo Simpson [fo. 114]

George Simpson, London, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, Jany 10th 1834 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 115-118]

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure of addressing you under a private cover in the Month of October; since then we have had an anxious time of it in consequence of the non-arrival of the Ships and until very lately I was exceedingly uneasy about yourself as Allan McDonells Report of you in August last was most deplorable: but a Letter from James Keith has removed a good deal of that uneasiness as it says

longtime member of the HBC London committee having joined it in 1809. He was highly influential in driving the company's early educational and missionary efforts in western Canada.

[1] Consols (short for Consolidated Annuities) served as the cornerstone of the British financial system in the 1830s, and were the ultimate safe-haven asset for investors. Originally created in 1751 to consolidate the national debt, these unique securities were perpetual government bonds.

[2] These two expressions indicate the Haldane was in close, intimate proximity to prominent, influential, and successful people in the country.

he had received a communication from you written evidently in good spirits (as late as Sept last) in which you say nothing about your Health. – The enquiries about you from several of the Directors since my arrival in England have been very particular manifesting the kindest and best feelings and much lively interest in all that regards you. – It appears that the reports of last year respecting you were very alarming and from the manner in which some of the Directors spoke of you I feel satisfied that if your state of Health be really such as to render it advisable for you to get nearer the Civilized World they will readily fall in with any measure that can have for its end your comfort and welfare. – It has therefore lately occurred to me that if you wish to be released from the drudgery and anxiety of a Depot & extended business Establishment it might be brought about that you could seat yourself down on your Farm at the Chats and go on gradually with the improvements of that valuable property while you held the full interests of your Factorship taking the Formal superintendence of the Grand River but without burdening yourself with any of the Duties thereof. – There your Family could be reared and Educated cheaply while Mrs. McTavish & Yourself could enjoy the comforts of civilized Society in a moderate degree as the Country is becoming closely settled all about you; A Steam Vessel plies regularly to your Door, there is a Church within 3 or 4 miles of it in short it is a beautiful retreat and growing rapidly in value. – This subject has occupied a good deal of my consideration of late; turn it over in your mind and let me know what you think of it by the enclosed conveyance to La Chine and if favorable I [fo. 115] shall feel my way in it as early as possible.

It is not intended that I shall return to the interior in Spring, indeed my Health is not yet sufficiently re-established to venture upon an other lengthy campaign; but if I go on mending I propose returning to the Northern Department alone in the Spring of 1835 and passing 2 more Winters there as a considerable part of my means is locked up and what it disposable is not sufficient for retirement in any tolerable degree of comfort even with the best Management. –

Next Spring I go to Canada so as to arrive at La Chine about the 25th of April, then take a Survey of the Posts below Quebec and other Establis^ts^ in the Montreal Deptm^t^ and if time afterwards admits I am anxious to go round by the Lakes p[er] Steam to the Sault and if a Canoe can be got there to proceed to Michipicoten, cross over to Moose so as to spend a week with you then return via Terres conveyance to Canada so as to get Home in October. – This I think is practicable do not therefore be surprised if you see me about the latter end of August – but if not, and that I am spared to go into the Country Spring 1835 I have it in view to proceed by Moose and thence across to Michipicoten instead of going by the Matawa & Lake Huron as usual. –

In regard to your money matters I have deferred meddling with them until I hear from you – had the Ships come Home as usual I should have had that pleasure long ago, but I have no doubt your communicating with me at length by the first overland Express and if duly authorized to act for you I shall be happy to do so as if for myself. – Gale[1] strongly advises the purchase of some land between the Lower and Long Point belonging to Hart Logan which he says will soon be valuable and in demand for building Lots. It is a large thing & will cost nearly £10,000. He is willing to take a share of the speculation for himself and advises me to invest a few thousand in it for myself & Friends, I

[1] Samuel Gale Jr. (1783–1865) was a lawyer, judge, and financial advisor in Montreal. He was the son of a Loyalist who joined the Quebec bar in 1807. At an earlier point he was Lord Selkirk's lawyer and he travelled west to advise Lord Selkirk in 1817. As such, he was a friend to the HBC at this later period.

have an inclination to go to the extent of £1500 to 2000 on my own account and if I do so and that I feel authorized to act for you I shall probably [fo. 115d] go the length of £100 to 150 on your account if I find after the arrival of the Packet that you do not wish to place your spare funds otherwise. –

Tis now high time I should say something about our excellent Wives. – Yours I surely hope is well and doing well and that your young folks are going on thrivingly to your Hearts content. Often very often indeed do I & my poor Wife talk about you all. Had we been tolerably well last winter tis probable that we would have been passing the present winter together at Moose as I had fully made up my mind to visit you for a Season before leaving the Country: Both you & Mrs. McTavish I am sure will be rejoiced to learn that Frances's Health is much improved, she has been under the hands of the most celebrated Ladies Dr. in England (Dr. Blundell)[1] and since her arrival in Town at £3.3/ p[er] visit which I do not grudge as he has I verily believe saved her life. She is now I have the happiness to say past danger and there is every prospect that she will in due time recover her usual Health – on the 30th Ult[o] she was delivered of a little girl and both mother & child thank God doing well. She is still of course confined to bed which I trust will satisfactorily account to Mrs. McTavish for her silence, but will write her by the next opportunity. The present Packet is dispatched on my request. I am much alarmed about our Friends at Ungava[2] as the impression on my mind is that the *Beaver*[3] did not get there last fall in which case they must be badly off. – Pray render them every assistance in your power and if the *Beaver* be with you send her off fully laden with anything you may think likely to be necessary or useful to them as there is no certainty of our getting a chartered vessel to go to Ungava at that Season owing to the dangerous character of the Navigation and I am very doubtful that the Moravians[4] will consent to their vessel going in there. – Since the Despatch was written it has occurred to me that as we have no Indent from Finlayson[5] it would be advisable that you should desire him to send you a requisition by the return of the Express so that you may make up any deficiency in the supplies that will be sent from hence under the Ungava mark which must [fo. 116] be all guess work as I can form but a very inaccurate estimate of their demands. – One of the reasons altho not noticed in the

[1] Dr. James Blundell (1790–1878) was one of the most prominent, wealthy, and influential obstetricians (then called "mad-midwives" or practitioners of midwifery) and physiologists in London. He was highly celebrated for his work in women's health, lecturing at Guy's Hospital, and publishing foundational texts on the diseases of women. He was the first English obstetrician to perform a successful transfusion of human blood to a patient for treatment of a hemorrhage.

[2] The HBC expanded its trading operation into the Ungava Peninsula (northern Quebec) formally in 1830, under the direction of George Simpson. To execute Simpson's directive, HBC trader Nicol Finlayson led an overland expedition from Moose Factory using routes mapped by earlier explorers. In 1830, he constructed Fort Chimo (modern-day Kuujjuaq) on the eastern bank of the Koksoak River, making it the primary hub for the HBC's Ungava District.

[3] The Sloop *Beaver* played a critical, lifesaving role in the precarious early history of Fort Chimo. During the post's brutal initial operating years (1830–1843), the *Beaver* served as the primary maritime lifeline connecting the isolated Ungava Bay outpost to the broader logistics network of the HBC. The problems the *Beaver* encountered supplying Fort Chimo, underscored how incredibly dangerous and unreliable a single small sailing ship was in Ungava Bay's tidal environments and moving pack ice. The ongoing difficulty of navigating vessels like the *Beaver* into the Koksoak River ultimately convinced HBC leadership that Fort Chimo was a financial drain, directly influencing the decision to abandon the post entirely in 1843 before its later revival with heavy steamships.

[4] In 1811, Moravian missionaries led an expedition from Labrador to Ungava Bay, reaching the Koksoak River, but no permanent mission station was built due to Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) opposition. Instead of Ungava, the Moravians chose to expand further north along the Labrador coast, opening a mission station at Hebron in 1830.

[5] This was Nicol Finlayson (1794–1877) who first established Fort Chimo in the Ungava District. See biographical appendix.

Despatch for taking off 12 1/12 p[er] Cent on the Woolens for the Northern & Southern Frontiers is the apprehension that with the quantity of Provisions that will be required to take the Ships Home from Moose and the very large demands from York for the bulky goods one Vessel of moderate burden for would not be sufficient for each place. An other reason is the prodigiously high price of Woolens this season and at third is the Scarcity of Money in the absence of returns without going out of the ordinary course to raise it which the Board very properly are unwilling to do – Under these circumstances I recommend that this deduction should be made and I hope it will not be attended with any difficulty or inconvenience.

I wish to goodness you had given me some idea that the Ship was likely to be detained as had you done so a very profitable speculation might have been made in Tea here. – Someone in Montreal learnt it by private letters from the Bay by the same Packet that brought your Duplicate Indents and made an excellent use of the information of purchasing a huge quantity of Teas in the London Market through the Gillespy House which will yield them a profit of between 40 & 50 p[er] Cent. – Keith [James] made a blunder in delaying the Duplicate packets so long at La Chine; they did not get to hand here until the 1st Inst.: Had the York Packet been forwarded when it came to hand we might have shipped a considerable quantity of goods for the Columbia by the Eagle which was detained here for that object from September until December when it was considered unsafe to detain her longer on account of the unfavourable Season at which she would double Cape Horn. That detention has exposed her to all the bad Weather we have had in the Channel for the past 6 or 7 weeks and she is still at Torbay[1] weather bound. – I have no letters from the Interior and my departure from thence owing to the non-arrival of the Bay Ships so that I am quite ignorant of all that has been done in the distant parts of the Country since the Dates of the Letters of the Winter Express last year. – Christie [Alexander] wrote me a few lines from York under date 27th July giving a very brief outline of some of the leading points but [fo. 116d] of the State of the Country & business I am lamentably uninformed. – From Keith [James] I hear almost weekly, I would give you Montreal News were it not the fear of encroaching on his privilege of which he will no doubt avail himself – Robertson [Colin] has wasted all his little money on Brick & Mortar on his Ginger bread place of Gibraltar and is preparing to go back to the Interior as the Board cannot and are not disposed to meet his Modest request of allowing him [to] retain his full interest in the business while he takes up his residence in Montreal until the close of the Concern. – I am quite at a loss what to say or to recommend in regard to this poor helpless unfortunate Man. – Clarke had had a D_ _l of a shake by his upset last summer. He made a proposition to sell his interest to the Board for £3000 & to be allowed to retire on the same footing as James Sutherland,[2] but neither of his propositions was accepted and it is at present quite uncertain what he will do; my own opinion is that if he insists on returning to the Service he should be sent to some out of the way place where he can give no more trouble. – Donald McKenzie

[1] Torbay is a natural bay located on the south-east coast of Devon, England, which faces east into the English Channel.
[2] James Sutherland (b.*c.* 1777–1844) came from the Orkney Islands and joined the HBC in 1797, and by 1821 was a chief factor. He retired from the HBC in 1827 due to poor health, and as part of his retirement, Sutherland received a large land grant from the HBC on the west side of the Red River near St. Andrew's Rapids. The HBC also allowed Sutherland to bring his Indigenous country-wife, Jane Flett, and their nine children with him to the Red River Settlement. His wealth and property gave him a position of prestige at the settlement and his dwelling was known as Strawberry Point. He was a Justice of the Peace at Red River, and was appointed a Councillor of Assiniboia in 1839. He died in 1844.

is at a place called Mayville near the Shores of Lake Erie and I rather think he will not return to the Service. He asked my interest to get him an other years leave of absence, my reply was that if his request was accompanied by a notice of retirement it was not unlikely that they would grant it and gave my reasons for so saying in such uncertain terms that Donald has taken it into his head to be very much offended so much so as to be productive of a regular split between us. A notice & request were accordingly made but in such a very obscure terms as to puzzle even cross the lawyers we however understand that he does not return which is good riddance: he is without exception the most sly malicious man I ever knew; his persecution of me has never varied since the difficulty and coolness we had about Madame Leblanc. I think I wrote you that Alex^{r} Stewart had applied for another years leave of absence which we did not feel justified in granting him – I therefore think his return [is] coming with the current outfit: – He has taken up his residence at Boucherville & I understand is working under the contract and influence of Larocque who is situated in the same Village. His negotiating for Mary[1] I suppose has fallen to the ground. – Poor Mary [fo. 117] is well free of both her suitors – Hendry [William] was a low selfish fellow who mainly looked to a little money out of you, he is a sour tempered capricious half Drunken fellow who would have made her miserable, I do not know what he is doing having only seen him once since our arrival in England. By the bye your Doctor Anderson[2] has made a long representation to the Board in which my Letter to him is introduced stating the [illegible] laudable objects he had in view in first noticing the young Lady & afterwards in marrying her. – He talks of the hostility & ill will he has experienced in the Country but whether his remarks are intended to apply to you or myself or to others I know & care not; it is evident that he is anxious to remain in the Country but I mean to recommend that he be not indulged but that another Surgeon be sent to take his place. –

Allan McDonell very foolishly & inconsiderately sent his formal resignation under Date 20th Aug^{t}: I laid it before the Board who accepted it and Cameron [Angus] has in consequence been ordered to succeed him at Timiskaming & McMillan [James] to succeed Cameron at the Lake [Lake of Two Mountains]. After all these arrangements are completed Allan now writes that he wishes to hold on a year longer and be allowed to withdraw his resignation. The Board felt that this is trifling with business and although they have at my request allowed him [to] extend his time from the close of Outfit 1833/ to the close of Outfit 1834 they do not feel they can in justice to the others allow him [to] withdraw his resignation particularly so as the reason he says for withdrawing is his inability to do justice to his charge. – I have the greatest regard for Allan and am truly sorry that he acted so inconsiderately in this matter which may be of serious consequence to his future views & plans of Life as I rather think he is not flush. – With regard to the HB board Mr. Pelly [Sir John Henry] is in Nancy but expected home

[1] The daughter of J.G. McTavish

[2] This is William Anderson who came from Dorchester, England, and entered the service of the of the HBC in 1831. He was appointed surgeon at Moose Factory in 1832, but retired almost immediately in 1833. This retirement was brought on by his falling in love with Mr. Goods daughter of Moose Factory. When told he could not marry her until after his contract expired, unless he asked Simpson to cancel his agreement, brought on the crisis and approbation of Simpson. This ultimatum, and marriage, brought on his retirement and return to England. His return to England was delayed, as this letter indicates. See biographical appendix.

Daily. Old Mr. Berens [Joseph] has retired in favour of his Son [Henry Hulse Berens] and Mr. Drew[1] has come in for the vacancy occasioned by the Death of Mr. Pitt.[2] Mr. Drew has been a large Ship assurer and practical Mercantile Capt[n] is an Elder Brother of the Trinty [?] and will be most useful in looking after and managing our Shipping Depart[mt] in which he is quite at Home. – Mr. Ellice [Edward] never comes near [fo. 117d] the House [Hudson Bay House], neither does Mr. Halket [John] so that the business is principally conducted by Mr. Pelly [John Henry], Mr. Garry [Nicholas] & Mr. Colvile [Andrew Wedderburn] heretofore. – The last sales were at 250 before the Ships of the Season were given up, prices may now be quoted at 245 altho no sales are effective and if forced might come down to 240. Government Securities continue high Consols have been from 86 to 90 since my arrival in England, they are so high because the Capitalists do not know what to do with their money, but if Hostilities break out they will be double 20 to 30 p[er] Cent forthwith and many people think that is not improbable as Russians seem to be assuming an offensive posture towards France & England. The Dutch & Belgians are still at each other. Miguel & Pedro[3] [are] most anxious to have an opportunity of cutting each others Throats: Pedro however tis supposed will keep possession of the Field. Civil War is raging in Spain but John Bull[4] does not seem to notice them. – England is tolerably quiet and the Whigs still in power, but we are anything but in a prosperous state. – Your Friend Ellice [Edward] is Sec[y] of War and in high repute. I have not seen him, he never by any accident comes into the City now and I have nothing to trouble him with. – I wish I had taken Perrys[5] advice last time I was in London & purchased Canada Land Comp[ys] Stock it has risen amazingly but now stationary and I think is likely to go back again. I saw that poor man lately, he is in tolerable Feather being Sec[ty] to that Comp[y] but is quite unhappy about his poor Wife who is on her Death Bed. – Simon McGillivray[6] is still in Mexico and making himself useful but not on good terms wt his Board at Home at least I heard some one say so; he will ever be too good a man to play 2[nd] Fiddle. – Galt[7] has got a paralytic

[1] This is Richard Drew, prominent British shipowner and under writer, who in 1828 chartered his Bark, the *Ganymede*, to the HBC to send trade goods to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and the Columbia and to bring back beaver and sea otter pelts. See biographical appendix.

[2] This is Thomas Pitt, a prominent London merchant, who was a member the HBC London Committee from 1810 to 1832.

[3] References to "Miguel and Pedro" in the 1830s related to the bitter and bloody ideological division of the Portuguese Civil War (1828–1834), also know as the "War of the Two Brothers". Mentioning these names together during this decade was shorthand for the fierce global struggle between absolutist autocracy and liberal constitutionalism. Dom Pedro (The Liberal) was the eldest brother, Emperor Pedro I of Brazil and King Pedro IV of Portugal, who fought to establish a progressive, constitutional monarchy. He abdicated his Brazilian throne in 1831 specifically to travel to Europe and fight for his daughter's right to the Portuguese crown. He had the backing of Britain and France. Dom Miguel (The Absolutist) was the younger brother, who was supposed to act as regent but instead launched a coup in 1828, dissolved parliament, declared himself absolute king, and ruthlessly persecuted liberals. He had the backing of the conservative European powers and Catholic traditionalists.

[4] "John Bull" is a national personification of England.

[5] This might refer to Thomas Walter Perry (1780–1868) who was a notable London publisher and compiler who played a critical role in the 1830s business landscape by documenting the city's financial distress. In 1826, Thomas Walter Perry founded a highly specialized financial journal that became a staple for London merchants, traders, and legal professionals: *Perry's Bankrupt and Insolvent Gazette*.

[6] Simon McGillivray (b.*c.* 1785–1840). See biographical appendix. Though his association in the fur trade ended in 1830, his career continued to prosper and in 1829 he was chosen by the United Mexican Mining Association of London to go to Mexico to help reorganise the administration of the company's silver mines.

[7] This is John Galt (1779–1839), a Scottish novelist and entrepreneur. He was the first superintendent of the Canada Company (1826–1829), which formed to populate a part of Upper Canada in the first half of the nineteenth century.

affliction and is not likely to live. – I have not heard from your Brother since my arrival in England and am glad to learn he was well. – My able Girl[1] who was in Scotland is married to a namesake of yours at Inverness. – Lutt is still alive & kicking. I saw him at Cheltenham about 2 months ago and he looked nearly as well as I was [when I] saw him. Of Haldane [John] I have heard nothing – William is out of Feather in Devonshire. Dr. Holmes is making a fortune and your Friend Dr. Swain is anxious to got out to practice in the Colony. – All under the Roof (at least the grown up part of them) join in Fondest regards [to] Mrs. Mctavish Young Young Folks & your good Self & believe me ever My Dear Sir.

Yours most Sincerely
Geo Simpson

[Marginal Note] Nicol Finlayson writes to me under Date 10th December that he is in bad Health if so would it not be well to send Nourse or someone else to relieve him if Erlandson be not considered equal to the charge – pray consult wt Mr. Beioley [Joseph] on this and do them as you may consider advisable and let the Express that takes your Packet to Ungava bring back an Indent so that you may know precisely what is required to be forwarded by the Chartered Vessel & Beaver when the Ice breaks up. G.S. [fo. 118d]

George Simpson, London, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 22nd Jany 1834 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2. fos. 119-120]

My Dear Sir

It has just been determined at the Board that a few lines shall be tacked to the Duplicate of the Letter written you on the 10th Inst. intimating to you what is intended to be done in regard to the Shipping this Season. – Pray let every means be adopted to send sufficient provisions to take the Ship Home without waiting for a dependency or supplies from England as in the first place tis possible that the Ship from England may not arrive at all and in the next tis probable that in order to lower the Expense of a Chartered Vessel the Dryade or Ganymeade expected from the Columbia in April will be sent out & return in time to take her turn to the Columbia in the Fall [fo. 119] and in the event of either of those vessels being sent out, she will not be able to stow more than the outfit of goods and not our Cask of Provisions extra. – pray therefore let provisions of any kind be collected for the Prince of Wales even should it be necessary to fill the Cask at Eastmain & all the other Bayside settlements. – Salt Geese is good enough fare for the Season either afloat or on shore in times of scurvy they must take what they can get. – Duncan has not arrived yet with the Packet – Your public letter to Mr. Secy Smith [William] & private letter to myself have however come to hand. By the latter I am delighted to find that your health is improving. God grant it may continue mending to perfect restoration & the good Wife & bairns I am required to find an [two illegible words]. The Day after wt rect. of your letter I wrote your Brother [fo. 119d] in order to relieve his anxiety about you and his Boys. – I wrote you when the original was forwarded at considerable length giving you all my news. The good Wife is still

[1] This is Maria Louisa Simpson (1815–1891), who married Donald McTavish (1815–1849) in Scotland in 1833.

going on well likewise the little girl – but still confined to bed – I hope to see you in the course of the Month of August at Moose if my Health continues mending.

In great haste believe me ever
My Dear Sir
Yours most Sincerely
Geo Simpson [fo. 120]

George Simpson, Michipicoten, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, May 28, 1834 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos 121-122]

My Dear Sir

I found an immense packet containing letters from all points of the Country waiting for me here; I have not time to go through them but merely to pick out a few of the leading points of information they carry for the information of the Committee, so that I have not a moment for private correspondence yet cannot allow Clouston[1] to go away without saying a few parting words to you and your kind [illegible] & most excellent better half to whom pray offer my warmest regards. – Write me by the earliest opportunity saying if on more mature deliberation you wish to go to Canada next year and if you do I shall endeavor to secure either Beioley [Joseph] or McLoughlin [John] as your successor; on this subject I require early information as it will be necessary for me to apprize the Board of the Change. – Bethune [Angus] & Keith [George] have assented to the alteration and so has Fairies [Hugh] so that now I have no [fo. 121] doubt of securing a majority this Season without crossing the Mountains and in that case I shall meet you in Canada next Season. – Let me know Beioleys [Joseph] and Corrigals [Jacob] packets as early as possible and be good enough to forward Finlaysons [Nicol] packet as early as convenient. –

We arrived here yesterday (our 9th Day from play) at 3 P.M. which is not amiss for invalids with weak crews. – The news from the north is upon the whole favorable as regards Trade although provisions are scarce. – McBain [John] & Bethune [Angus] are preparing for the South and I mean to be off as soon as the Dr. copies some papers for England – Do not keep that whelp Anderson [William] if you can prevail on Rae[2] to remain on any terms – Tell Allan McDonell [fo. 121d] that my man has taken some of his & [illegible] plate away by mistake which is returned under the charge of Clouston [William] – tell him I have not time to Write. – The good things with which Mrs. McTavish provided us were enjoyed amazingly and smoothed the Wrinkles in McBains [John] chops by the time he got to Michipicoten. – Mr. Smith [Edward] joins me in kindest regards to the good Wife & yourself & he [illegible]

Ever sincerely yours
Geo Simpson

[1] This is likely William Clouston (1794–1866). See biographical appendix.
[2] This is John Rae (1813–1893) surgeon at Moose. See biographical appendix.

Do not forget the Roggans one box to be addressed J.H. Pelly from Mr. Simpson, 73 Tower Street.

Note the [illegible] address to pay Mrs. [illegible] for my Shoes & the person who washed my things. G.S.

George Simpson, York Factory, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 9th August 1834 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 129-130]

My Dear Sir

I was very agreeably surprised the other Day by the appearance of your packet as I did not expect it before the 1st of Septemr and have now the pleasure of acknowledging receipt of your kind & much valued favour of 2nd July by which I am nevertheless grieved & distressed to the soul that no amendment takes place in your sprain or general Health. – I think you are right in determining to search out for better advice than can be obtained in the Country & trust in God you may be restored to perfect Health by the change. – I am not at all satisfied wt Beioley [Joseph], he has been saying off and on about visiting England this year, for a length of time; and now after every arrangement was made for his accommodation, he upon some trifling pretext defers it until next year when it will be exceedingly inconvenient, so that I cannot calculate on his Services at Moose, and am therefore driven to the necessity of sending Miles [Robert] to relieve you; and on Beioley's [Joseph] return in 1836 he will be sent to Moose & Miles to Ruperts River. – Miles has been very unwell but is now recruiting, at least I judge so from his appetite, and he goes home for the benefit of his Health; There is no one else who understands Depot business disposable and altho he is not exactly the man I should like to see at Moose, it does not appear to me that we can make a better arrangement for one year. Bethune [Angus] could undo every thing you have been doing, and George Keith would not have courage to undertake such a charge from an apprehension that he might stick in it. Miles will therefore come out by Canada, and I have instructed Keith to forward him and Gladman [George Jr.] in the Spring to Timiskaming by a canoe to be set up with Provisions, and from thence they will accompany the Brigade, so that you need not send across to Michipicoten in the Spring for the packet as usual – I remain to hold a Council at Red River early in June, and then to proceed direct [fo. 129] for Canada via the Sault and Lakes, and hope to reach La Chine about the 15th of July when I shall expect the pleasure of meeting you and when we shall have an opportunity of laying our plans for your future convenience and accommodation in which you may calculate on my best support and assistance and toward which I feel satisfied the Gov & Committee will readily give their consent & approbation. – I have arranged wt Keith [James] that a Vessel be at Quebec about the 20 or 25th July to take me round by the Kings Posts and to Mingan, from thence, it is probable I may cut across to New York & then take a passage for England. Perhaps we may be able so to arrange our plans so as to meet again & travel together after parting at La Chine, but an arrangement would to me be delightful. I do not recollect that any thing was determined on in regard to your elder children &c &c whether they are to accompany you or to be left behind, until you had settled your future plans; if any of them be left

behind let me recommend their being placed wt Gladman [Joseph] & his old mother[1] and that you prepare a Memorandum of the stores you would wish them to have say Tea, Sugar, Butter [illegible three words] which Miles [Robert] would provide them with, and I would take even that it be charged to General Expenses in like manner as Cloustons [William] account was credited wt it; the young folks would cost you a deal of money if taken down to Canada before you are situated. These are matters however on which I do not venture to advise, they have just occurred to my mind & the foregoing remarks are merely thrown out by way of hints or suggestions for your consideration. I have spoken to Christie [Alexander] & Hargrave [James] about the small amount due to you for Colin Fraser's clothes, the amt. has through some accident been left at Red River and they do not recollect the exact Sum but it shall be placed at your credit on the Red River Accounts of the current year as a set off for supplies to Leblanc's [Pierre] charge. That body & the Old Lady[2] are continually smiling at each other; she is absolutely jealous & harasses the poor D__l out of his life, he would be glad to get rid of the young folks here that I told him was impossible, that they are not fed or maintained at his cost and I have given him a hint that if he insists on parting wt them, he will be at liberty to turn scales which opportunity rewarded him to his charge. – Several of our great men go Home this Season on Furlough, Kittson [William] to Canada, Finlayson [Duncan] [fo. 129d] is off to England via Canada, & Miles [Robert], Arch[ibald] McDonald & John Tod go by the Ship, likewise John Stuart if he comes out in time. That wretched creature has been in trouble during the whole of last Winter owing to an intrigue between Mary & Annance[3] which has led to a most extraordinary correspondence and brought forth some of the most disgusting activities I ever saw on paper – Poor Mary I think was perfectly excusable; Stuart charges Annance with Rape with Robbery of the Diamond Ring & with attempt to Murder; by the bye he had nearly strangled the old Man in self defence another in defence of his "precious stones" as the old Gentleman made an attempt to cut him which Mary resisted like a heroine, and Annance brings counter charges against Stuart of attempts at "Cutting & maiming" under Lord Ellenboroughs Act,[4] Murder, Robbery & Assault wt intent to commit a Rape upon Mary; in short it is the most disgusting laughable & ridiculous expose I ever heard of. – By the Bye Young McBain[5] has circulated some strange stories about Beioley [Joseph] and McKays wife and Daughter;[6] I cannot believe there is any truth in them, if there be the little man is much more f[illegible] in that line than I gave him credit for. Pray did you ever hear any thing of it. – The new arrangements in regard to our constitution[7] have occasioned a little grumbling among some of those who think they are likely to be

[1] Joseph Gladman's mother was Mary Gladman (Moore/Moar) (1774–1858), an Indigenous woman born at Moose Factory. Her husband, George Gladman Senior, was a prominent HBC Chief Factor who had died in 1821.

[2] "Old Lady" here refers to Nancy McKenzie, McTavish's former country wife before she was married off to Pierre Leblanc.

[3] This intrigue relates to Francois Annance (see biographical appendix) who in 1833 became involved with John Stuart's wife, Mary Taylor. Annance would retire to Montreal in 1834. The intrigue/affair is more clearly explained in Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670–1870 (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980). 168.

[4] Lord Ellenborough's Act (officially the Malicious Shooting or Stabbing Act 1803) is a British statute passed on June 24, 1803, that marked the first statutory prohibition of abortion and expanded penalties for violent offenses.

[5] William McBain/McBean (b.*c.* 1807–1892). See biographical appendix.

[6] Joseph Beioley was married to Isabella McKay, daughter of John McKay of Albany River.

[7] The constitution of HBC servants binding them to the company was the "Deed Poll". In 1834, the HBC Deed Poll was updated re-structuring the internal management, profit-sharing, and operational rules for trading across Rupert's Land and North America.

warned off, but the assent of the majority has been obtained; indeed Colin Robertson is the only man who has as yet his veto upon it. – You will see by the Minutes of Council that we have been very Liberal to the Dr. [McLoughlin]; he has had a very trying and harassing time of it and the frequent attacks of fever he has had have broken up his constitution; he does not come out until 1837: Finlayson [Duncan] came across quite unexpectedly to us this Season having obtained an exchange of the Drs Rotation of Furlough & gave him on account of the Death of a Brother, he will return in Spring & be sent back to the Columbia. – I have had a busy busy Season of it and, have held out better than I calculated on; my correspondence however is far in arrears, and I shall have to keep grinding on double times until the departure of the Ship. – Clouston [William] starts for Red River (accompanied by John Charles who takes his Rotation there) on the 13th; Hargrave [James] remains in charge here for the Winter with Ballenden [John] & Joseph Charles[1] in the Countg House. Your Nephew[2] in the Store and Rendall[3] in the Indian Shop, [illegible] where of the people &c. I think I mentioned to you that a brother of my Wife[4] comes out to Moose this Season as an apprentice; he appears to me a Stupid awkward lad – pray keep an eye upon him and make him useful to himself & his Employer if there be anything in him; Let me know your opinion of him. – Be pleased to offer my kindest wishes to Mrs. McTavish. God bless you my Dear Fellow & [illegible]

Ever your sincere Friend

Geo Simpson [fo. 130]

George Simpson, Red River, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 18th December 1834 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fo. 133]

My Dear Sir

Herewith I beg to hand you packets containing Indentures, Powers of Attorney (connected wt the arrangements for the New Concern)[5] for the different Commissioned Gentlemen in your quarter, that for Mr. Beioley [Joseph] you will be pleased to forward without any remark, but shall feel obliged by your getting Messrs Corrigal [Jacob], Cameron [John Dugald], Fairies [Hugh], Hardisty [Richard] & Severight [John] to execute theirs and that you will take them on to Canada for me. –

[illegible] My Dear Sir

Yours [illegible]

Geo Simpson

[1] Joseph Charles was the nephew of Chief Factor John Charles. He died in 1836. See biographical appendix.
[2] This is William MacTavish (1815–1870), a clerk at York Factory at the time. See biographical appendix.
[3] John Rendall/Randall (1801–1877), was postmaster at York Factory at the time. See biographical appendix.
[4] This is John Wedderburn Simpson (b.*c.* 1817–1865). See biographical appendix.
[5] This relates to the new Deed Poll of 1834.

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 22 December 1834 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fos. 137-140]

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure of addressing you this morning under an official cover and now take up my pen to acknowledge rect. of your most welcome & highly prized favors of 11th July & 20th Septemr. – By them I am deeply concerned to observe that your Health does not improve and I highly approve of your determination to look out for more skillful advice in the civilized world than can be obtained in this Country. – The great and only cause of your present indisposition appears to me to be the unfortunate Sprain you got some years ago which prevents your taking foot exercise and is one of the principle causes of your having grown so stout & unwieldly; your constitution is still sound and good and if you could but get your game leg in order again I think that all would be well wt you, and I trust in God that Dr. Mott or some other eminent man whom you will have an opportunity of consulting next Summer will set you all to rights. – I am truly delighted to learn that your most excellent better half continues in high Health & Spirits, being very [illegible] may she continue so; the most fortunate hour of your life was that on which you united yourself to that fair Lady of whom I would say much did I not know that she is your private Secty and might suppose I was for once in my life attempting to be complementary. Your several little chicabidas I am rejoiced to find are likewise well. – We were at Dinner when Swanston [John] popped in his ugly mug at the Door much unexpectedly; on such occasions we generally anticipate the worst. I trembled from head to foot and did not get over my [fo. 137] alarm for the first 24 hours, but thanks to God there was no cause and that there is every prospect of your having many good years before you. – My own Health is tolerably good except a slight cold that at present affects my Lungs owing to my Bed Room being exceedingly cold (5 below zero about a fortnight ago), but I am become so exceedingly nervous that any thing out of the ordinary course throws me into a flurry.

On recommendation you will observe that I have altered the destination of Miles [Robert] whom I observed at York was become so insufferably self sufficient & important as to be quite unfit for an extended charge and so fond of Eating Drinking Smoking & conviviality that an Outpost would be a very unfit place for him; If I mistake not he will soon become a confirmed Drunkard and if his Services had not been absolutely required in the South owing to Beioley's [Joseph] frivolous indecision & trifling about his Rotation last year I should have walked him off to McKenzies River. I much fear our Friend George Keith will not like the change, if so I shall be exceedingly sorry, but the general interests cannot always be more subservient to fancy & inclination. – But what do you think Friend Colin [Fraser] will say to his appointment? He will make war right and left; he has long been ambitious for an elevated appointment which he has at length got on the very height of land and he will now have no cause of jealousy in regard to seriousness as his Namesake the Interpreter will do all the duty for him.[1] – To my surprise Alexander [Simpson][2] has been removed from the Montreal Deptmt and I

[1] Colin Fraser was appointed postmaster at Jasper House at this time, though classified as an "Interpreter." HBCA B.239/k/2, fo. 45d; B.239/G/15.

[2] Alexander Simpson (b. 1811) was born in Dingwall, Scotland, and was the brother of Thomas and Aemilius Simpson, and the cousin of George Simpson.

suppose is now at Moose, he and Keith [James] have not drawn very well together for some years past; he has in some degree [fo. 137d] been to blame in not consulting Mr. Keiths humours[?] but I must confess it is not always an easy matter to do so as is manifest from the number of changes that have taken place in the Montreal Deptm^{t} since I left it: It was all very well to remove him from the Establish^{t} but he should not have been removed from the Deptm^{t} as he was the only man fit for the situation he filled and if any accident should happen to Keith in that he absented himself for a time & Severight [John] would find the management of the La Chine Establish^{t} a very awkward charge without Alex^{r} [Simpson] in Council. There does not appear to be any Solid grounds for his removal, from what I know of his character I believe him an honourable correct & very clever young man. Keith [James] seems to think he looked tenderly on one of the maid servants. I do not believe it, but even suppose he did so I think it would have been better to have parted wt the damsel than with the most efficient man at the Establish^{t} unless the old Gentleman himself had a Sheeps Eye toward her as handsome Maid Servants will excite the admiration of old as well as young Gentlemen. – As Alex^{r} [Simpson] happens to be at Moose I think it may be wise to put him into Gladman's [Joseph] situation as Gladman's health rendering it advisable that he should be retired of the close bagging duties[1] to which he has been accustomed and to which he ascribes his late indisposition. – Anderson [James] who is wt G. Keith I find will do better in charge of a small Post than as a second, he is therefore to be removed and as you expressed a wish last Spring that Dugald[2] should be removed from Moose next Summer I have put him down for Michipicoten. His Brother[3] is a fine strapping fellow and will improve much under Hargrave [James]; I understand he has a good deal of dry humour and has already more of the chit chat scandal & anecdote of the Country than any man in it. – I ordered a Gun for him last year in England, it was not landed from the Ship when I left York and I am doubtful that was on board & think it has been sent to Moose by [fo. 138] mistake through some blunder at H.B. House where it was left by Parker the Gun Smith; pray enquire about it & if at Moose let it be sent on to York. – John Simpson[4] appeared a dull & very ordinary looking lad when I saw him, but am glad to find you speak favourably of him, pray give a few lines to his Father saying what you think of him frankly; I was very unwilling that he should come out because he did not appear to me of much promise, but his Father has a very large Family and these times it is no easy matter to find situations for Youths. –

I am quite delighted at the prospect of seeing you & Mrs. McTavish in Canada next Summer and am anxious that we should have an opportunity of spending some time together. The winter I trust will purify the atmosphere and carry off the Cholera which I find has been committing dreadful ravages again. – You are right in leaving some of your young folks with [illegible] or some others who will take charge of them as the expense of travelling with so many followers would be ruinous. –

I sent you by Wilson [Andrew] who was going to Severn packets containing Deed Polls, Indentures, Powers of Attorney &c connected wt the new concern and now found Duplicates of the

[1] "Close bagging" duties included the preparation of pelts/furs for long distance transport (making up pieces – that is the final step of preparing pieces for overseas transport.
[2] This was Dugald McTavish (1817–1871), the nephew of John George McTavish and the brother of William McTavish and Letitia Hargrave. See biographical appendix.
[3] William McTavish. See biographical appendix.
[4] John Wedderburn Simpson. He was the son of George Simpson's father-in-law. See biographical appendix.

Indentures & Powers for yourself, Boeiley [Joseph], Corrigal [Jacob] & Finlayson. Pray get them executed and returned to me or Michipicoten. I likewise send packets for Cameron, Hardisty [Richard] & Fairies [Hugh] which I beg the favor of you getting executed and bringing them on to me at La Chine and as I do not pass by the Grand River I send one for Severight [John] which you will oblige me by getting executed in like measure. – I wish they had not meddled wt the Deed Poll until my return to England. –

I was quite impressed to see George Moore & his family[1] here on my arrival at York, I remembered Emma very particularly as to the cause, but the only way she would account for it was Mrs. McTavish's [illegible] jealousy as she had never done anything improper since I passed there in 1829. Eh! What do you think of that? – I was glad you [fo. 138d] got rid of that whelp Anderson [William] and his Twins and that Rae [John] remained wt you. I understand he is a fine promising sturdy fellow.

We have had a great deal of Sickness here, Whooping Cough, Bowel Complaints &c &c which have carried off a number of young & old among whom are Bird's old Wife[2] & 3 Grandchildren. – Rich[d] Grant[3] has lost his Wife at Fort de Prairies.[4] – Rowands [John] Eldest daughter is married to Harriott[5] and I have made a match between a Daughter of Allan McDonells and one young Livingstone[6] with whom she will be very comfortable. Another Livingstone is to be married in Spring to a daughter of C.F. Rodk McKenzie,[7] the Dowry for these ladies are £200 each. Leblanc [Pierre] the Wife and your young folks are quite well and living at the New Fort;[8] we are this Season at the old Establish[t9] being more in the heart of the Settlement. Madame Leblanc presented her head wt a Son & Heir about a month ago & both doing well. – Jone's [Rev. David T.] School goes on well. He has 45 Boys & Girls and they are improving rapidly; the Establish[t] is an honour and credit to the Country & brings in a great deal of money to this Settlement, but the poor parson will make nothing by it. They have a clever unaccompanied Woman as Governess,[10] and McCallum[11] is a very learned fellow,

[1] This was George Moore Jr. (b.*c.* 1796–1871) who was married by custom of the country to Emma Good. See biographical appendix.
[2] This is Elizabeth Montour Bird (1789–1834), the wife of James Bird Sr. (1773–1856). She was buried in St. John's Cemetery, Red River Settlement on 1 November 1834. HBCA E.4/1b.
[3] Richard Grant (b.*c.* 1794-1862). His wife was Marie Breland, the step daughter of John Rowand. See biographical appendix for Richard Grant.
[4] Another name for Edmonton House.
[5] John Edward Harriott (1797-1866). See biographical appendix. After Harriott's first wife, Elizabeth Pruden, died he married Anne (Nancy) Rowand, the daughter of John Rowand. The couple was legally married in 1838 after two children had already been born.
[6] On 18 December 1834 Sophia McDonell married John Livingstone in Red River. HBCA E.4/1b.
[7] No record has been found of this marriage.
[8] This is Lower Fort Garry which was in the process of being built. Begun in 1830, it was only entirely completed in 1846. Leblanc was one of the carpenters.
[9] Upper Fort Garry
[10] This was Mary Lowman, who arrived in the fall of 1833. She retired from her position in 1835 to marry Chief Factor James Bird Sr.
[11] This was John Macallum (1806–1849), a Scottish-born educator, cleric, and prominent figure in the early Red River Settlement. He immigrated to the Red River Settlement in September 1833 at the age of 27, after he was hired by the Reverend David Jones at a salary of £100 per year to teach the "sons of Gentlemen belonging to the Fur Trade." In 1838, he officially succeeded Reverend Jones as Headmaster, and bought the school for £350, operating it as a private venture.

an excellent Tutor and altogether a man admirably adapted for his duty but too good a man in every point of view to remain long here. – Christie [Alexander] is very popular[1] but talks of going Home next year, if he does so I am quite puzzled about a manager for the Settlement which is now become a most troublesome & difficult charge. – The Boats of the Petty Traders 5 Craft were set fast at White Fall & in the Knee Lake; they are beginning to haul on ice. – I have heard nothing as yet from the North and nothing at York. – Stuart [John] returned from Portage La Loche, I imagine he was afraid [fo. 139] to come further but think he will go Home next Season. McIntosh[2] has been very ill or pretends so, [illegible] many people say he is wrong in the head. – I am glad you approve of what has been done for McLoughlin [John), but I scarcely think he will settle in the Willamette. Finlayson [Duncan] returns to the Columbia next year & the Dr. I think will be out in 1837. – I have been giving much consideration to your circumstances & condition altogether but cannot fix upon any thing until we meet, your views & wishes shall be met whatever they may be as far as my influence goes either at Home or in the Country & I am happy to say there is a general feeling throughout the Country highly favourable to you. – I am breaking up so fast that I think there is little chance of my retiring to the Country; many people say there is a good deal of fancy in my ailments and I am not clear but there is a little, yet fancy or no fancy I am anything but well and feel that I am going down hill fast; it is nevertheless strange that all my ailments vanish as soon as I seat myself in a Canoe.

You and Mrs. McTavish I am sure will be glad to learn that Mrs. Simpson was mending up to the 1st of July when she wrote and that the Young Girl was doing well. I miss the Wife amazingly this Season and shall not feel disposed to part wt her in a hurry when we get back together again.

I scarcely think I can hear from you by Ice in reply to this but hope to have Letters by the Spring Canoes & again at Michipicoten and I firmly pray you may be enabled to report favorably of your good self, Mrs. McTavish & Young Folks. Pray mention me in the kindest manner to Mrs. McTavish, love to the children & with Sincere regard believe Ever

My Dear Sir
Yours most truly
Geo Simpson [fo. 139d]

P.S. When talking of the La Chine Maid Servant & Mrs. Moore it quite escaped me that Mrs. McTavish sometimes reads your private letters: this one of course is not intended for her eyes. G.S.

The long story I have written about Depot extravagances, private orders [illegible] &c is in consequence of your remarks at Moose. You promised me some Memorandum on those subjects, G.S.

In February 1836, he married Elizabeth Charles who had been one of his students. Macallum died in the Red River Settlement on October 3, 1849, at the age of 43. Allan Levine, "Macallum," *DCB Online.*

[1] In 1833, Alexander Christie had been appointed Governor of Assiniboia on the resignation of Donald McKenzie. See biographical appendix.

[2] This is probably William McIntosh. See biographical appendix.

N.B. Should you find in Spring that Keith [James] recalls Alexander [Simpson] from Moose, that George Gladman [two illegible words] and that Colin Robertson does not return to the Country, it will not in that case be necessary to disturb Joseph Gladman at New Brunswick & Anderson [William] will be sent to the Northern Department his place to be filled by Dugald [McTavish]. But if on the contrary Alexander [Simpson] should remain at Moose, George Gladman be sent to the Northern Department & that Robertson [Colin] may return to the Country, it will in that case be necessary to send Joseph Gladman to Moose & Anderson [William] to the Northern Deptm^{t}, but should Robertson [Colin] not return to the Country Anderson [William] is to go to New Brunswick. These arrangements I have circulated to George Keith. – The Circular about allowances & c is rendered necessary by the dissipation that took place at York over Summer. – Your little girl Maggie[1] is growing up rapidly, I mean to ask Rowand[?] to take her under his charge & look out a Husband for her soon as Leblanc's wife cannot look after her & if not watched & soon provided for will in due time be gone astray. – I wish you had not sent Swanston [John] wt the Express, he is lame & cannot make sufficient speed back. I therefore sent my packet on by Special Express & he will start on his return leisurely in about a fortnight hence – Gentlemen messengers are the worst possible. G.S. [fo. 140]

George Simpson, Red River Settlement, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 12th January 1835 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, 141-142d]

My Dear Sir

I had the pleasure of addressing you so fully a few weeks ago that little remains for me now to say beyond tendering to Mrs. McTavish & yourself the complements of the Season while I earnestly pray that you may both enjoy many many happy years. –

By your much valued Letters of 6th & 9th October I am deeply concerned to learn that Mrs. McTavish's Health was not so good as it had been, and that no material improvement has taken place in your own since the Date of your former communication; you both require a change of scene and climate what with a moderate quantum of medical advice I fondly hope will restore you to your wanted good condition. – I require a change likewise being harassed to Death by the affairs of this cursed Settlement which are becoming more troublesome & complicated every succeeding Week and unless Courts of Law and a Military [fo. 140] force be soon established it will be impossible to maintain tranquility for any length of time. – The Brules are becoming clamorous about their rights & privileges as Natives of the Soil and it required all our most skillful management to maintain the peace of the Colony during the Holidays while Rum was in circulation. – I am sorry you allowed Alexander

[1] This was Margaret McTavish and she grew up better than Simpson had feared. She was born sometime before 1823 (baptized in 1823) at York Factory. She was the daughter of John George McTavish and Nancy McKenzie. When J.G. McTavish abandoned her mother in 1830 to marry a Scottish woman, she went to live with her mother and father-in-law (Louis Leblanc) in Red River. In 1838, the family moved to Fort Vancouver. There she met Courtney Meade Walker (1812–1887). He had come west to work at the Methodist mission to the Flathead Indians in 1834. After his contract ended, Courtney went to work for John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver. The couple wed around 1840, and after the wedding they settled in the Willamette Valley (land claim in Yamhill County) in present-day Oregon. Courtney and Margaret had numerous children, and she died in 1870.

[Simpson] to come on and that you put the concern to the expense & inconvenience of forwarding an Express with his Letters as there was nothing so urgent in his case as to render either a Special Express or his own presence necessary. – If Keith [James] & Alexander [Simpson] could not agree it would have been well enough to remove him from La Chine, but it was quite unnecessary to have removed him from the Deptm[t] and it would have been much better that he had not been removed. – There are (no doubt) faults on both sides and as there can be no question that Alexander [Simpson] was in some respects blamable it is but fair that he should suffer, therefore by way of a cooler he is permitted to walk back again to Moose there to remain in the capacity of accountant if Gladman [George Jr.] does not return, on the contrary to be sent back to Montreal next Summer if Gladman resumes his office of Accountant at Moose. – Swanston's [John] [fo. 141d] visit has likewise been inconvenient as we are under the necessity of providing him with Men & Dogs and of sending Provisions all the way to Lac la Pluie to meet the demands of other necessary Expresses as the two last parties have consumed all that was in Store there: the visits of McKenzie & McBain [John] were equally inconvenient in short we are quite amazed wt half Gentlemen visitors. – For the information of your Successor I shall write you a few official lines begging that no more Gentleman Letter carriers be forwarded. – You must endeavour to cheer up Mrs. McTavishs spirits in regard to Cholera which I trust will be cleared out of Canada by the severity of the Winter: it seldom continues in the same place beyond one Season and if you find there are any cases remaining you can pass on without delay to a more healthy quarter. – Is it possible that Allan [McDonell] has at length determined on fastening on Miss Cock Eye McGillis? Notwithstanding the eye she will make an excellent Wife and she will be fortunate in getting McDonell who is really a good fellow.[1] – J.D. Cameron [John Dugald] has been here for a month past, he is a happy fellow nothing seems to concern [fo. 142] him and an excellent well meaning man he is. – Louis[2] will be here in March, Ross [Donald] in about a fortnight hence and the Dr. [McLoughlin] is Daily expected and in May we shall have a large assemblage of Commissioned Gentlemen for the purpose of Counselling. – I should be glad to meet your Nephew Dugald's[3] wish to be removed to the Northern Department if it could conveniently be done but do not see that the arrangm[ts] already pointed out in my Letter p[er] last Express can wt propriety be departed from which is the cause of Alexander's [Simpson] being sent back; he must therefore this year at all events remain in the Southern Departm[t]: We shall talk more about him when we meet. – Pray remember me most kindly to Mrs. McTavish and with sincere regards believe me Ever

My Dear Sir
Yours most truly
Geo Simpson [fo. 142d]

[1] She and McDonell did not marry. However, when Allan McDonell passed away, his will left a formal bequest designated for Miss Mary McGillis of Williamstown. HBCA "McDonell, Allan," Biographical Sheet.
[2] Simpson likely means John Lee Lewes/Lewis (1791–1872). See biographical appendix.
[3] Dugald McTavish. See biographical appendix.

George Simpson, Michipicoten, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 2 July 1835 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fo. 148]

My Dear Sir

I do not expect this will find you at Moose. Indeed I am in hopes it will not as I shall be much disappointed if I do not meet you at La Chine in about a fortnight hence. – From the Sault I proceeded down the Grand River for La Chine taking your advice to keep out of the way of Fever & Ague & such like ailments about Detroit & the Lakes. About the 20th July I shall leave Quebec for Mingan & hope to be back about the latter end of Augt. – I shall then be glad to take a trip wt you to Niagra or elsewhere. – I am truly grieved to learn that Mrs. McTavish is ailing – a trip will do her good and it will be of benefit to you. – God bless you both & believe me ever

Your very Sincere Friend

Geo Simpson

I embark in an hour hence. G.S. [fo. 148]

George Simpson, La Chine, to John George McTavish, Moose Factory, 20th July 1835 (private) [HBCA B.135/c/2, fo. 150]

My Dear Sir

I fully expected to have had the pleasure of finding you & Mrs. McTavish here on my arrival from the interior and sincerely hope your detention has not arisen from indisposition in any other cause than occupation wt business. The weather here has of late been very oppressive. I fear Mrs. McTavish & the Children will be sadly annoyed by Muskeetos, sand flies &c: Cameron[1] & myself were tormented unmercifully the few last days of our Voyage. – I could find no conveyance from the Sault via the Lakes and after the kind hint you gave me I had no anxiety to risk myself in the [illegible] fever & aguish Country. – I start tomorrow for the Lower Posts and will be absent about a month. – Pray arrange your plans so that I may see you on my return; I shall not leave here for England before the 10th September. With Kindest regards to Mrs. McTavish & most most sincere good wishes that my blessing may attend you all between [illegible]

My Dear Sir Yours every most truly

Geo Simpson [fo. 150]

[1] This is likely John Dugald Cameron. See biographical appendix.

AIKEN, WILLIAM ALEXANDER (1785–1851) was born in Scotland and came to Canada with his family around 1815. He joined the fur trade shortly after arriving and by the 1830s was in charge of the American Fur Company's Fond du Lac Department in northern Minnesota. In 1838 he was discharged for mismanagement, and he subsequently turned to farming. He died in 1851.

ALLEZ, MARY (1805–1838) was the daughter of John Allez and Mary Macdonell/McDonald, a surveyor who had immigrated to the RRS in 1822 from Guernsey, in the Channel Islands. She was the niece of Alexander MacDonell, Selkirk's Administrator at the Red River Settlement until the end of 1822, and was hired as schoolmistress in the Red River Settlement. In 1824, however, she married Grant Forrest (1800–1878) and the couple left the RRS in 1825.

ANDERSON, JAMES (1812–1867) was born in Calcutta, India, to Robert Anderson of the East India Company. He entered the service of the HBC in 1831 as an apprentice clerk at Moose Factory, and was promoted to clerk in 1832. In 1834 he was posted to Michipicoten, in the Lake Superior District (1834–1835). He worked at various other posts on the Great Lakes from 1835 to 1847, and in 1847 was made chief trader at Lake Nipigon. In 1850 he was chief trader at Fort Chipewyan in the Athabasca, and in 1851 at Fort Simpson in the MacKenzie River District (1851–1856). In 1856 he was made chief factor, and is probably best known for his joint command of the Arctic Expedition of 1855, which found relics of the Franklin Expedition. He was ill and on furlough from 1857 to 1859, and in 1859 was transferred to Mingan where he remained until 1864 when he retired. He died in 1867. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 201.

ANDERSON, WILLIAM came from Dorchester, England, and entered the service of the of the HBC in 1831. He was appointed surgeon at Moose Factory in 1832, but retired almost immediately in 1833. He was, J.G. McTavish informed James Hargraves in 1833, "a little fellow who came in '31 and getting desperately in Love with Mr. Goods daughter of this place, swore he must marry her, when told he could not get permission until his first contract had expired, he wrote Gov^{r} Simpson on the subject who replied that if he was really determined to marry, he must first ask me to cancel his agreement & then he might, upon taking his passage to England & the wife along with him, all which ceremony he went through he is a precious useless puppy & I would wish him any where rather than here." His return to England, however, was delayed for a time. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 201.

ANNANCE, FRANCOIS NOEL (b.*c.* 1789) was a "half-breed of the Abinaki Tribe near Quebec," and had joined the NWC in 1820. The HBC retained him after the merger and he spent most of his career west of the Rocky Mountains. He worked as an interpreter at Thompson's River from 1821 to 1825, although he was part of the party led by James McMillan that explored the lower Fraser River in 1824. In 1825, he became a clerk, and was part of the party that established Fort Langley in 1827. In the meantime, he was in charge at Okanagan (1825-26). According to George Simpson, he was "well Educated & has been a Schoolmaster. Is firm with Indians, speaks several of their Languages, walks

well, is a good Shot and qualified to lead the Life of an Indian whose disposition he possesses in a great degree. Is not worthy of belief even upon Oath and altogether a bad character altho a useful man." In 1833 he was posted to Fort Simpson in the Mackenzie River District but retired the next year after a dispute with John Stuart, Chief Factor at Fort Simpson. The dispute centered on John Stuart's young wife, Mary Taylor, who became involved with Annance. Later she claimed she had been raped by Annance and blackmailed by him. Both Annance and Stuart came off badly in this dispute and Simpson wrote to Annance that he could retire or be dismissed on the expiration of his contract in 1835. HBCA D.4/20, fo. 13d; HBCA Biographical Sheet. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 426. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 200. Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur-Trade Society (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980), 168.

ATKINSON, GEORGE III (JUNIOR) was the son of George Atkinson II, or "Sneppy" (1777–1830). Sneppy, was himself the elder son of a George Atkinson, the Chief of Eastmain Factory, and Nucushin, an Indian. George Atkinson III went to school in England, and was employed by the HBC in the Southern Department (Albany, Osnaburgh House . . .) as a Clerk from 1813 to 1822. In 1828 he accompanied his father and family to the Red River Settlement, and after his father died, he left the settlement in 1831 for Albany with the intention of "resuming his Indian way of life." K.G. Davies, ed., *Northern Quebec and Labrador Journals and Correspondence, 1819–35* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1963), 341. Glyndwr William, "Atkinson, George (Sneppie)," *DCB Online.*

BALLENDEN, JOHN (b.*c.*1810–1856) was born around 1810 in Stromness, Orkney Islands, and joined the HBC in 1829 as an apprentice clerk. He served first at York Factory (1829–1830), then in the Lower Red River District (RRS) (1830–1832), and then the counting House at York Factory (1832–1836). He was promoted to clerk in 1834, and in 1836 he was sent to Fort Garry as accountant (1836–1840). He married Sarah McLeod in 1836. In 1840 he was sent to Sault Ste. Marie and the Lake Huron District and was promoted to chief trader in 1844. In 1848, he was made chief factor and sent back to Red River. In 1850 he was allowed a leave of absence on account of ill-health, and on his return, he was appointed to Fort Vancouver (1851–1853). He was again on furlough during the 1853–1854 outfit, and in 1854 was again appointed to be in charge of the Red River Settlement. His ill health, however, prevented him from carrying out all his duties and in 1855 he was again granted a furlough. He retired in 1856, and died in December of the same year. HBCA B.239/g/9-16; Biographical Sheet. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 426-27.

BARNSTON, GEORGE (b.*c.* 1800–1883) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, around 1800 and joined the NWC in 1820. The HBC retained him after the merger and designated him as a clerk in the York Factory District. Well educated as a surveyor and army engineer, he came through Edmonton in September 1826 as part of Æmilius Simpson's surveying expedition. In 1827 he would go on to be part of the party that established Fort Langley, before going on to Fort Vancouver. In 1831, although

he was then in charge of Fort Nez Percés, he had a sharp dispute with Simpson over his rate of advancement, and this caused him to resign. He was convinced, by George Simpson, to return to the HBC in 1832 Thereafter, he would have a long and distinguished career in the HBC in eastern North America, rising to chief trader in 1840 and chief factor in 1847. He retired to Montreal in 1863. He also devoted much of his time to the study of insects, and published several scientific articles during his career in the HBC. His mixed-blood son, James (1831–1858), became a scientist. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 427; Jennifer S.H. Brown and Sylvia M. Van Kirk, "Barnston, George," *DCB Online.*

BEIOLEY, JOSEPH (1785–1859) was born in Essex in 1785, and entered the service of the HBC in 1800. He served first as an apprentice at Albany, and then as a clerk and accountant, first at Albany, and then at Brandon House. In 1815 he became district master at Moose Factory where he remained until the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821. At that point he was appointed chief factor and from 1822 to 1835 he supervised the Rupert's River District. From 1835 to 1837 he was on furlough in Europe, and thereafter served in the Mingan and Moose Factory districts. He retired in 1843, and died in 1859. In 1832, George Simpson considered him "a steady well conducted little man whose word can be depended on; . . . in short I consider him one of the most valuable members of the Fur Trade." HBCA Biographical Sheet; Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 177-78.

BELL, JOHN (1799–1868) was born in 1799 on the Island of Mull, Scotland. He joined the NWC in 1818 as an apprentice clerk and at the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was stationed in the Winnipeg River District. In 1824 he was promoted to clerk at Red River but by the end of the year he was in the Mckenzie River District. He stayed there as a clerk until 1841. He was the chief clerk of Fort Good Hope (1825–1826), and for the remainder of the 1820s and 1830s managed a series of posts in the Mackenzie and assisted in Arctic exploration. In 1839 he explored the Peel River to its junction with the McKenzie River. In 1840 he built Fort McPherson (Peels River Post) and in 1841 he was promoted to chief trader. He remained in charge of Fort McPherson until 1845. In 1846 he took furlough in Canada because of his ill health. When he returned in 1847, he was attached to the Admiralty Expedition searching for Franklin (1847–1849). In 1849, he took charge of the McKenzie River District, but from 1850 to 1852 was put in charge of Oxford House and Cumberland House districts. From 1852 to 1856 he supervised the Athabasca District from Fort Chipewyan, but falling ill he went on furlough in Canada from 1856 to 1858. He spent his final years in the HBC (1858–1860) in the Saint-Maurice District near Quebec City. He resigned in 1860 due to ill health, and settled at Saugeen where he farmed. He died there on 24 June 1868. He had married Nancy Dease in the early years of his residence in the McKenzie District, and he was survived by his wife, two sons and five daughters. Joan Craig, "Bell, John," *DCB Online.* HBCA B239/g/4-41.

BERENS, HENRY HULSE (1804–1883) was born in Kevington, Kent, England, the son of Joseph Berens Jr. and Charlotte Benyon. He became a member of the HBC London Committee in 1833, and

became deputy governor in 1856. He served as Governor of the HBC from 1858 to 1863. He also served as a director of the Bank of England from 1849 to 1880. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

BERENS, JOSEPH JR. (b.*c.* 1774–1853) was the son of a long-time stockholder of the HBC, Joseph Berens Sr. He was elected a member of the HBC Committee in 1801, and became deputy governor thereof in 1807, and governor in 1812. He served as such until 1822, and remained a member of the committee until 1833. He died at Kevington, Kent, England, on January 11, 1853, at the age of seventy-nine years of age. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

BETHUNE, ANGUS (1783–1858) was born at Carlton Island in Lake Ontario in 1783. He joined the NWC and by 1806 was a clerk at Lake Winnipeg. He was transferred to the Columbia in 1813, and in 1814 was made a partner of the NWC. He was at Fort William in the summer of 1817 and again in 1820. He spent the winter of 1820–1821 in London negotiating with the HBC. After the Union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was made a Chief Factor in charge of Moose Factory (1821–1822), and Albany Factory and District (1822–1824). After this he was transferred to Sault Ste Marie and Michipicoten (1824–1836), ending his career at Lac Cloche on Lake Huron (1837–1839). He retired in 1841 and died in Toronto in 1858. HBCA Biographical Sheet. W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 420.

BIRD, JAMES JR. (JIMMY JOCK) (b.*c.* 1798–1892) was the third son of James Bird Sr., former chief factor at Edmonton House, and a Cree woman. He engaged with the company as an apprentice trader in 1807. By 1814 he was an assistant trader and, in 1815–1816, he was a clerk at Qu'Appelle, where he was held captive briefly by a party of NWC traders who had seized the post. From 1818 to 1821, he was classified as an interpreter. The Edmonton House journals of that period suggest that Bird was increasingly likely to spend extended periods living with aboriginal bands. For example, he lived most of the winter of 1818–1819 with a band north of Edmonton. At the end of that season, Francis Heron wrote of him that he "acts in the double capacity of trader, and Cree Indian interpreter, and in both capacities discharges his duty to my satisfaction." During 1819–1820 and 1820–1821, he was put in temporary charge of outposts near Edmonton. With the merger of the HBC and NWC, he became a freeman. It seems that during the early 1820s he lived a life quite typical of a freeman. He apparently associated with other freemen and Cree bands. Then his life took an unusual turn as he increasingly associated with Plains bands. In fact, he appears to have married a Peigan woman (later baptized as Sarah) by 1825. In the summer of 1825, Bird was travelling with a band of Peigan and Bloods, when they encountered Peter Skene Ogden and the HBC's Snake Country Expedition. In 1827, Governor George Simpson noted that Bird (like his contemporary, Hugh Munro), had "became so much attached to the roaming life of Plain Indians, that for these last few years they have withdrawn themselves from the Establishments assumed the Indian costume, accompanied them in all their war and hunting excursions and by their bravery and activity have obtained great influence with the Piegan Tribes." In the 1830s, he would be instrumental in establishing peaceful trade between the Peigan and the American Fur Company. He was subsequently an interpreter at the "Blackfeet Treaty" in Montana in 1855, and Treaty No. 7 at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877. He died in 1892 on the Blackfeet Reservation

in Montana. HBCA Biographical Sheet; B.239/d/138; B.60/a/24; D.4/14. David Smyth, "Bird, James (Jimmy Jock)," *DCB Online*. Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens (eds.) *Edmonton House Journals, Correspondence & Reports 1806–1821* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 2012), 74-6, 370, 373, 379, 400, 447.

BIRD, JAMES SR. (b.*c.* 1773–1856) was born in Acton, Middlesex, England, in 1773. He entered the service of the HBC in1788 as a writer at York Factory. He continued in this role until 1792 when he was transferred to Cumberland House, and in 1793 became a trader at the South Branch House. From that date until 1803 he was a trader in charge of the South Branch House, Carlton House, and Edmonton House. In 1803 he succeeded William Tomison as the inland chief of the HBC, stationed at Edmonton House (he had been acting chief since 1799). Thereafter, Bird spent most of his career as inland chief and chief of the Saskatchewan District. With the killing of Robert Semple at Seven Oaks in 1816, Bird was named Acting Governor of Rupert's Land, a position he held until 1818. Thereafter he moved back to the Saskatchewan District and became a chief factor in 1820. From 1820 to 1824 he was chief in charge of the Red River District. He retired in 1824, and settled in the Red River Settlement where he became one of the "worthies". Over his career, he established a number of "country marriages" in his various postings. Of the wives we know about, one was a swampy Cree woman named Oo-menahhomish, referred to as Mary. When he moved to Edmonton House, he married a woman known as Elisabeth (probably Elizabeth Montour, 1789–1834), and after Elizabeth died, he married Mary Kelly Lowman in 1835. He died in the Red River Settlement in 1856. John E. Foster, "Bird, James," *DCB Online*. Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens (eds.), *Edmonton House Journals, Correspondence & Reports 1806–1821* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 2012), 13-80.

BIRNIE, JAMES (b.*c.* 1799–1864) was born in Scotland, and entered the service of the NWC in 1818. After the coalition he served the HBC in the Columbia and New Caledonia districts until he retired in 1846. He died in 1864. Simpson thought him suitable for the Columbia, but did not have a high opinion of him. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 202.

BOURKE, JOHN PALMER (1791–1851) was born in Ireland, in 1791, and engaged with the HBC in 1812. He sailed from Sligo, Ireland, aboard the *Robert Taylor* in that year, along with the first group of Selkirk settlers. He remained at York Factory during the winter and went to the settlement at Red River in 1813, where he acted as storekeeper for the colony. Following the dispersion of the Colony in June of 1815, Bourke moved temporarily to Jack River. He returned with Colin Robertson in the fall of the same year. He, along with Colin Robertson and a group of men, took possession of Fort Gibralter on March 17, 1816. On June 19, 1816, he started out with Governor Semple to confront the Metis at Seven Oaks but was sent back for the cannon. On returning he saw Semple's party under attack and made his retreat. Forced to abandon the colony, he and the other settlers fled to Lake Winnipeg. Bourke, however, was captured by the NWC, under Archibald McLeod, at Netley Creek. He was taken to Montreal to stand trial in 1818, for the destruction of Fort Gibralter, but was acquitted. George Simpson had a poor opinion of him noting that he was without talent as a clerk or

trader, had a quarrelsome and irritable temper, and was disliked by men and Indians. In 1822 he noted that Bourke would be discharged next season, but he continued to serve as a clerk for the HBC at various Red River posts thereafter. In 1824, his employment with the HBC ended but he was transferred to the service of Robert Pelly, the new governor of Red River, a post he held until 1826. He was married to Nancy Campbell, and he settled at Red River in that year. In 1835 he purchased the HBC experimental farm at St. James, and in 1845 he as put in charge of the new HBC post at Pembina. He died in 1851 and was buried in the St. James Cemetery along with his wife. http://www.lordselkirk.ca/project/john-palmer-bourke-4177/. HBCA Biographical Sheet; B.239/f/12; B.239/g/1-3. J.M. Bumsted, ed., *Dictionary of Manitoba Biography* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 30-31.

BROWN, WILLIAM (b.*c.* 1790–1827) was born at Kilmaurs, Ayrshire, Scotland, and joined the HBC in 1811. He served in the Churchill district and at Deer Lake before returning to Europe for two years in 1815. He returned to the HBC in 1817, serving at Halkett House, Williams House, Big Point House, and Fort Dauphin in the Manitoba District until 1819. He then served in the Athabasca District until the union of the companies in 1821. At that time, he was appointed chief trader in the New Caledonia District serving at Fort St. James and Fort Babine. He jointly ran the district with William Connolly. By 1826 his health was deteriorating and he was granted a furlough. He returned to Britain and died there in March of 1827. Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793–1858* (Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice University of British Columbia, Okanagan Kelowna, British Columbia, 2010), 232-232.

BRUCE, CHARLES GASPARD (b.*c.* 1781–1854) was born around Red Lake to Guillaume Bruce (Brousse) and an Ojibwa woman. He married Marguerite Lanoue at Lake of Two Mountains in 1803, and in 1816 was hired by Lord Selkirk to travel with Miles McDonell as a Saulteaux interpreter to help re-establish the Selkirk Colony at Red River. He would act as an Interpreter for McDonell and Selkirk with various Ojibway bands, help keep the peace between the Ojibwa and Sioux, and was an interpreter at the Selkirk Treaty at Red River in 1817. By 1823 he was considered as the Red River Colony Interpreter, and Governor Bulger granted him a lot of land near Fort Douglas on the east side of Red River. In 1824 he was placed on Lot 833 by the colony surveyor, William Kempt. For a time he lived in Pembina, but from 1829 to 1835 he is listed in the Red River Settlement censuses. In 1829 he was listed as 50 years of age, Native, a married Catholic, with a wife and 8 children. After 1835, he moved to the United States. In 1840 he was listed in the St. Croix County (Wisconsin Territory) Census, and in 1850 was listed in the Washington County (Minnesota Territory) census. He was then listed as 70 years of age and his wife Marguerite as 60 years of age. He was buried in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1854. Quebec Church Records, Druin Collection. Deposition of C.G. Bruce sworn at Fort William 23 August 1816. *Statement Respecting the Earl of Selkirk's Settlement upon the Red River* (London: John Murray, 1817), xlvii-xlix. Journal of Miles McDonell 1816–1817, LAC, Selkirk Papers, Vol. 64, pp. 17,130-17,235. Archer Martin, *The Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1898), 62-63. HBCA, Red River Settlement Censuses, E.5/3-8. United States Censuses, 1840 & 1850.

BUNN, JOHN (b.*c.* 1800–1861) was born in Rupert's Land around 1800 and sent to school in Edinburgh. He also attended medical school at the University of Edinburgh. In 1819, though his medical studies were not completed, he returned to Moose Factory as a Surgeon. He served for a time at Michipicoten, Sault Ste. Marie, and New Brunswick House before returning to Moose Factory (1820–1824). In 1824 he retired to the Red River Settlement and opened a private medical practice. In 1831–1832 he attended the University of Edinburgh to get licensed by the Royal College of Surgeons. He then returned to the Red River Settlement to practice medicine. He served as a member of the Council of Assiniboia after 1835, Magistrate of the Lower District (1837–1849), Coroner of Assiniboia (1849–1861), Sheriff of the Jail (1856–1861), and Recorder of Rupert's Land (1858–1861). He died in 1861. HBCA Biographical Sheet. H.C. Klassen, "Bunn, John," *DCB Online*.

BUNN, THOMAS (1764–1853) was born in London and entered the HBC service in 1797 as a writer. He served in the HBC continuously until 1822. From 1814 to 1819 he was employed as an accountant and storekeeper at York Factory, and as an accountant at Rock Depot (1819–1822). He did not, however, impress the new governor of the Company, George Simpson, and retired to the Red River Settlement in 1822. He died there in 1853. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 446.

CADOTTE, JOSEPH was an interpreter in the employ of the NWC in 1816, and was in the party that murdered Owen Keveny. He was at Fort Douglas in 1817 when it was captured by Selkirk's forces. He was eventually indicted for the murder of Keveny, but was never brought to trial. He would later work for the American Fur Company. Bruce M. White, "Cadotte, Joseph," *DCB Online*.

CADOTTE, LAURENT (1786–1874) was the son of Laurent Cadotte Sr. and a Cree woman named Suzanne. He began working for the NWC in 1811 as a Steersman at Île-à-la-Crosse. After the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he worked in the Columbia District (1822–1826). From 1826 to 1833 he worked as a Guide on the Portage La Loche Brigade. He then retired to Red River and was listed as a "freeman" in the censuses of the settlement until 1835. From 1836 to 1838 he worked as a Guide on the Athabasca Brigade. He then again retired to the Red River Settlement where he died in 1874. He married Betsy Williams.

CAMERON, ANGUS (b.*c.* 1785–1876) was born in Kirkmichael, Scotland, and joined the NWC in 1801. From his post at Fort Timiskaming, he became a formidable opponent of the HBC. After the merger of the two companies in 1821, Cameron was appointed chief trader in the new concern. From 1822 to 1834 he was posted at Timiskaming and Lake of Two Mountains. In 1834 he moved from Lake of Two Mountains to Timiskaming (1834–1843), and in 1839 was appointed chief factor. He was granted a leave of absence from 1843 to 1845, after which he retired to Firhall, Nairn, Scotland. He died in 1876. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 189.

CAMERON, DUNCAN (b.*c.* 1764-1848) was born in Scotland and emigrated as a child to New York. He and his parents came to Canada during the American Revolution in 1784. Duncan joined the NWC in 1784 and was elected a partner in 1800. From 1807 to 1811 he was stationed at Lake Winnipeg, and from 1811 to 1814 at Rainy Lake. In 1814 he was put in charge of the Red River District headquartered at Fort Gibralter. He was in the forefront of destroying the Selkirk Colony in 1815. In 1816 he was taken prisoner by the HBC at Fort Gibralter and sent to England for trial. He was never tried, however, and was released. In 1820 he returned to Canada and took legal action against Robertson "for false imprisonment . . . [and] for damages to an enormous amount." He retired from the fur trade and settled in Glengarry County in the Williamstown area. There he married Margaret McLeod and had one daughter and three sons. He would represent Glengarry in the Upper Canadian House of Assembly from 1825 to 1828. He died at Williamstown in 1848. W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1934), 429-30. Jennifer S.H. Brown, "Cameron, Duncan," *DCB Online.*

CAMERON, JOHN DUGALD (b.*c.* 1777–1857) was born in Canada about 1777, and joined the NWC in the 1790s. He was made partner in 1813 and operated in the Winnipeg District, at Green Lake, and the Columbia District in the years prior to 1821. After the Union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was made chief factor and put in charge of the Columbia from 1821 to 1824. He was then transferred to Lac La Pluie (1824–1838), and in 1836 also put in charge of the Lake Superior District. From 1839 to 1844 he was in charge of the Lake Huron District and was headquartered at La Cloche. After a two-year furlough, he retired in 1846. He died in 1857 at Grafton, Ontario. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 173.

CAMPBELL, COLIN (b.*c.* 1787-1853) was born in Canada (between Ottawa and Montreal) about 1787 and joined the NWC in 1804. He served as a clerk in English River (1806–1808) and Dunvegan (1812–1813). In 1820–1821 he was on the Peace River. After the merger of the NWC and HBC he was appointed clerk at Fort Chipewyan (1821–1826) and Fort Vermilion (1826–1828). In 1828 he was promoted to chief trader and spent the next 19 years in the Athabasca District (Forts Dunvegan, Vermilion, and Chipewyan). He was granted a furlough in 1833 (which he took in Red River) and again in 1847. In 1848 he became the chief trader in charge of Matawagamingue in the Kenogamissee District (east of Lake Superior) (1848–1852), and in 1853 he retired to Red River. He died there the same year. HBCA Biographical Sheet. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 432. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 196.

CHARLES, JOHN (b.c. 1784–?) was born at St. Margaret's, Westminster, London. He joined the HBC in 1799, serving as an apprentice at Churchill. He would spend most of the first half of his career in the Churchill/Nelson River District, and in 1820 was chief trader wintering at Indian Lake, in the Churchill District. At the union of the NWC and HBC he was promoted to chief factor. From 1822

to 1824 he was in charge of the Nelson River District, and in 1825 he took a furlough to England. Thereafter, he served as chief factor at Île-à-la-Crosse (1826–1830), Fort Chipewyan (1830–1834), Oxford House (1835–1836), and from 1836 to 1838 he commanded York Factory. He also served at Fort Frances (1838–1839), and Fort Chipewyan (1839–1840). From 1840 to 1843 he was on furlough, living in the River Settlement, and in 1843 he retired there. HBCA Biographical Sheet; B.239/d/210 & 216a.

CHARLES, JOSEPH (d. 1836) was the nephew of Chief Factor John Charles, and joined the HBC in 1828. He was appointed clerk at Red River in 1832 and was then stationed at York Factory. He died of a strange disorder prevalent at York Factory from 1833 to 1836, which was known as the "York Factory Complaint." He died on 27 May 1836. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 233.

CHRISTIE, ALEXANDER (1792–1872) was born in Scotland in 1792 and joined the HBC in 1809, and from then until the coalition of the NWC and HBC in 1821 he was stationed at Moose Factory or Rupert House. At the time of the union in 1821, he was listed as a chief factor. In 1824, he was granted a year's furlough and from 1826 to 1830, he was put in charge of Moose Factory. In these years he built a reputation as one of the most valuable chief factors in the service. In 1830 he was transferred to York Factory, and in 1833 took over the governorship of Assiniboia on the resignation of Donald McKenzie. In 1835 he formally married Anne Thomas, the daughter of Thomas Thomas. While he was in charge at Red River, Christie supervised the building of Lower Fort Garry, and began construction of a new Upper Fort Garry at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Between 1839 and 1844 he was in England on furlough and at Moose Factory. He served a second term as Governor of Assiniboia from 1844 until 1848. Following a three-year furlough, Christie retired in 1853. He died in 1872. Hartwell Bowsfield, "Christie, Alexander," *DCB Online*. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 180-81.

CLARKE, JOHN (1781–1852) was born in Montreal. He entered the service of the NWC in 1804 and from then until 1810 was stationed in the Athabasca Department. He left the NWC at that point and joined the HBC in 1814 to spearhead the HBC efforts to gain a foothold in the Athabasca District. In 1815 he established Fort Wedderburn, immediately opposite Fort Chipewyan, but given the determined opposition of the NWC, the winter turned into a disaster. Sixteen of his men starved to death and the rest of his men were forced to sign an agreement not to compete with the NWC to save themselves from starvation. Clarke led a second expedition to the Athabasca in 1816, only to be arrested by Archibald Norman McLeod of the NWC in April of 1817. He was released later that year and served on the Peace River (1818–1819) and at Île-à-la-Crosse the following year. By 1820, however, Lord Selkirk, James Bird, and Colin Robertson decided that Clarke was too vain and extravagant to front the Athabasca efforts. Clarke became chief factor in the HBC after the merger of 1821, and he was given a year furlough, after which he took charge of Fort Garry in the Red River Settlement. Clarke's overbearing assertion of company's authority in the Red River colony earned him the deep dislike of both Governor Andrew H. Bulger and the settlers. His actions in Red River were

criticized by the HBC London committee in 1823, with the result that Clarke was removed. He then took charge of the post at Lesser Slave Lake (1824–1826), and thereafter went to Fort Pelly to manage the Swan River District until 1830. From 1831 to 1833, Clarke served at Mingan, Lower Canada, where he soon came into conflict with James Keith, his superior in charge of the Montreal Department. A furlough from 1833 to 1835 was followed by retirement to Montreal where he died in 1852. See Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens (eds.) *Edmonton House Journals, Correspondence & Reports 1806–1821* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 2012), 465-66. Jennifer S.H. Brown, "Clarke, John," *DCB Online.*

CLOUSTON, JAMES (b.*c.* 1788) was born in Stenness, Orkney Islands, around 1788 and joined the HBC in 1808. From 1808 to 1811 he was a school teacher at Eastmain, and from 1812 until 1820 was the district master at Moose Factory. At the time of the merger of the NWC and HBC, he became a chief trader and was stationed in the Moose and Rupert's River districts until 1827. In that year he resigned and sailed back to the Orkneys. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

CLOUSTON, ROBERT (1793–1850) was born in Orphir, Orkney Islands, and joined the HBC in 1812 serving as a blacksmith at York Factory. In 1813 he was transferred to Brandon House where he worked as a blacksmith from 1813 to 1816. Thereafter, he served at Swan River (1816–1817), Fort Hibernia (1817–1818), Fort Wedderburn (1818–1822), and Fort Chipewyan 1822–1828). In 1821 George Simpson noted that Clouston had been promoted to clerk but that he was deficient in education, spoiled by opposition, and had forgotten his station. He believed he should be relieved of the rank of clerk the next season but wasn't. In 1828 it was noted that he would become a colonist at Red River, and the 1829 the Red River Census lists him as a married 36-year-old. In 1828 he had married Nancy Sutherland (1804–1848) in the RRS, and they had seven children. He died at Red River in 1850. HBCA B.22/d/4; B.39/d/4a-5; B.239/d/159-216a; B.239/f/12; B.239/g/1-8; E./3.

CLOUSTON, WILLIAM (1794–1866) was born in the Orkney Islands and began working for the HBC as a labourer in 1812. He served inland from Albany Factory until 1818, and was then transferred to Lac la Pluie where he served as an assistant trader. After the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he continued to serve in the same district as post master and was at Bas de la Riviere in 1833. He was then transferred to the Southern Department and was in charge of several posts on Lake Superior and Lake Huron including Pic and Michipicoten. He retired in 1843. He had married Elizabeth Cameron in 1827, and died in Canada West in 1866. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 431.

COLVILE, ANDREW WEDDERBURN ((1779–1856) was born n England in 1779, and became a West India sugar merchant. He was the brother-in-law of Lord Selkirk, and was associated with Selkirk in the Hudson's Bay Company and the Red River Settlement. He became a member of the HBC London Committee in 1810, and hired George Simpson for the HBC. He became a Selkirk trustee in 1820, and played a major role in the amalgamation of the HBC and NWC 1821. He succeeded Nicholas Garry as deputy governor of the HBC in 1835 and remained in that position until 1852. He died in

1856. J.M. Bumsted, *Dictionary of Manitoba Biography* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 54.

CONNELLY, WILLIAM (1787–1848) was born at Lachine in 1787 and joined the NWC about 1801, as a clerk in the northwest. He became a wintering partner in 1818, and from then until 1821 he was in charge of Cumberland House. At the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he became a chief trader in the Lesser Slave Lake District, and in 1824 was transferred to New Caledonia and was made chief factor in 1825, in charge of the district. He returned east in 1831, taking his common law wife Suzanne and their six children with him. They had been married since about 1803 according to the custom of the country. From 1832 to 1841, he was in charge of the King's Posts along the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Then on 16 May 1832, after repudiating Suzanne, he married his second cousin, Julia Woolrich. He retired in 1843 after a two years' furlough, and died in Montreal in 1848. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 182. Bruce Peel, "Connelly, William," *DCB Online.*

COOK, WILLIAM HEMMINGS (b.*c.* 1766–1846) was born at St. Andrews, Holborn, London, England, and joined the HBC in 1786. He worked first as a writer at York Factory, and then worked inland for the next fifteen years. He became master at Chatham House, serving there from 1791 to 1794, then in charge of Nelson River posts from 1797 to 1809, and then returned to York Factory where he was chief in charge from 1809 to 1815. He would return to Red River in the spring of 1819 and settle in the Colony. He retired briefly to Oxford Lake, but returned to the Colony in 1816. In 1818–19 he was in charge of the Swan River District, retiring in April of 1819. He settled at Red River and had several Native wives and eight children. By 1821 Cook was established in the Red River Settlement on a grant of 500 acres. He was appointed a councillor to the Governor of Assiniboia in 1822 and attended six meetings. In 1839 he was again appointed to the Council of Assiniboia. Cook died in 1846. HBCA *BS*. Irene Spry, "Cook, William Hemmings," *DCB Online.*

CORCORAN, THOMAS (b.*c.* 1794–1865) was born in Ireland and entered the service of the HBC in 1818. He served as a clerk in the Moose/Albany districts from 1818 until the 1830s. From 1830 to 1833, he was a clerk in charge of Martins Falls. From 1834 until 1841 he served as clerk in the Rupert's River District. In the latter year (1841) he became chief trader. In 1842 he took a leave of absence for reasons of poor health and went to Montreal. From 1843 until 1855 he served as chief trader in charge of the Albany District. He took another furlough in 1855, and retired to Montreal in 1856. He died in Montreal in 1865. He was married to Charlotte Sutherland, the daughter of John Sutherland and widow of Donald McPherson. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

CORRIGAL, JACOB (1772–1844) came from the Orkney Islands and joined the HBC in 1790 as a labourer at Albany Factory. By 1794 he had become a master at various posts inland from Albany. In 1814, he became district master at Albany, and in 1821 was promoted to chief trader resident at Albany Factory and Martin's Falls. Thereafter he served as chief trader at Moose Factory (1825–26), Eastmain (1826–27), and Waswanipi (Rupert's River) from 1827–30. From 1830 to 1840, he was the chief trader

in charge of Albany Factory. He retired to Cobourg, Upper Canada in 1840. He died there in 1844. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

COWIE, ROBERT (b.*c.* 1795–1859) was born in Scotland around 1795, and joined the NWC around 1811. He was a clerk and accountant at Fort William in 1816 when he was captured by Lord Selkirk, and, after the merger in 1821, he joined the HBC. He worked in Lachine from 1822 to 1829, and in the latter year he became a chief trader. From 1830 to 1832 was at Portneuf, in the Montreal Department, handling the considerable opposition in the region. Although Geroge Simpson liked his abilities, he worried about his "habits of dissipation" and thus transferred him west of the mountains in 1832 (Fort Vancouver). He travelled to Honolulu (1836–1837) and took a furlough to England in the latter year. He was then posted to Moose Factory. He had another two-year furlough in 1844, and retired in 1846. He died in 1859 at Lerwick, Shetland Islands, Scotland. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 198. Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793–1858* (Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice University of British Columbia, Okanagan Kelowna, British Columbia, 2010), 295.

CUMMING, CUTHBERT (1787–1870) came from Banffshire, Scotland. He was a clerk for the NWC in the Fort Dauphin Department in 1806, and from 1812–20. After the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he became a clerk in the new company at Alexandria in the Swan River District. In 1827 he became a chief trader, and thereafter worked in the Montreal Department, Mingan, Lake Superior, and again at Swan River. He retired to Colborne, Ontario in 1844. He died there in 1870. HBCA *BS*; B. 213/d/11; B.239/f/13; F.4/32. W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *Documents Relative to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 435.

DEASE, JOHN WARREN (1793–1830), a brother of Peter Warren Dease, was born in Niagara, Upper Cananda in 1783. After joining the NWC he was put in charge of the post at Lac la Pluie from 1814 to 1821. At the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he became a chief trader and was posted to various posts in New Caledonia and the Columbia districts. By 1829 he was very ill (he wrote his will at Fort Colvile on February 22, 1829), and had to travel to Fort Vancouver to see Chief Factor John McLoughlin. On his way back to Fort Colvile, he died at The Dalles on January 14, 1830. He was buried at Fort Vancouver. Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793–1858* (Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice University of British Columbia, Okanagan Kelowna, British Columbia, 2010), 317-18.

DEASE, PETER WARREN (1788–1863) was born in Mackinac and joined the XY Company in 1801, eventually joining the NWC in 1804. He served in the Athabasca and Mackenzie districts until the union with the HBC in 1821. He was then made chief trader and sent to the Athabasca District until 1823. He would eventually accompany Franklin's Arctic Expeditions (1824–1827), and in 1828 was promoted to chief factor as a reward for his aid to the Franklin expedition. In 1830 he was appointed to Fraser Lake in New Caledonia and in 1831 Dease assumed sole charge of the New Caledonia

District. Hew as then transferred to Fort St James on Stuart Lake. In 1836 he commanded the HBC Arctic Exploring Expedition, and he retired in 1840. He died in 1863 at Côte Sainte-Catherine, near Montreal, Canada East. William R. Sampson, *DCB Online*.

DELARONDE, LOUIS DENIS (b.*c.* 1800–1868) came from St. Ann's, Lower Canada, and joined the NWC in 1818 as an apprentice clerk. When the NWC and HBC merged in 1821, he was appointed a clerk at Osnaburgh House. It was recommended that he retire in 1827, but this was contradicted by Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy who tasked Delaronde to establish a new outpost from Osnaburgh House. He would serve as a postmaster and clerk at a series of posts in the Albany and Lake Superior districts between 1827 and 1866. He retired on pension in 1866 and died at Sault Ste. Marie in 1868. HBCA Biographical Sheet; Minutes of Council of the Southern Department, 1821 to 1866 (B.135/k/1).

DOUGLAS, JAMES (1803–1877) was born in 1803 in British Guiana and educated in Scotland. He joined the NWC in 1819, and served at Fort William and Île-à-la-Crosse. After the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was hired in the new HBC as a clerk at Île-à-la-Crosse. In 1825, he was transferred to the Peace River and wintered at McLeod's Lake. The next summer he was moved to the New Caledonia District at Fort St. James. In 1826, he was chosen to open an overland brigade route from Fort Alexandria on the upper Fraser to Fort Okanagan. He spent the winter of 1827–1828 at Fort St. James and during this time married Amelia Connolly by the custom of the country. Much disliked by the Indians of New Caledonia, his superior, William Connolly, recommended Douglas be transferred to Fort Vancouver, and in 1830 Douglas left Stuart Lake to become an accountant under Chief Factor McLoughlin. Thereafter his promotion was rapid. He became chief trader in 1834, chief factor in 1839, and in 1840 succeeded McLoughlin as the main company official on the Pacific coast. He was appointed Governor of Vancouver Island in 1851 and British Columbia in 1858. He retired in 1864 and died in Victoria, British Columbia in 1877. Margaret Ormsby, "Douglas, Sir James," *DCB Online*. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 204.

DREW, RICHARD was a prominent British shipowner, and under writer, who in 1828 chartered his Bark, the *Ganymede*, to the HBC to send trade goods to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and the Columbia and bring back beaver and sea otter pelts. After completion of this journey, the HBC bought the *Ganymede* from Drew for £2,700 in 1830. With the death of Thomas Pitt in 1832, he was brought into the London Committee of the HBC to manage the company's maritime and marine matters. He regularly chartered, bought, and directed supply vessels for the HBC. He was also active in the London maritime community serving as an elected underwriter on the Committee of Lloyd's Register.

ELLICE, EDWARD (1783–1863) was an English merchant and politician, and a member of the HBC London Committee. He as born in London on 27 September 1783, and became a partner in the firm of *Phyn, Ellices and Inglis*, which had become interested in the XY Company in Canada. He was sent to Canada in 1803, and in 1804 became a party to the union of the XYC and NWC. He then became a

partner in the North West Company. In 1820–21, he was, with the brothers William and Simon McGillivray, active in bringing about the union of the NWC and the HBC. Following his instrumental role in orchestrating the 1821 merger and a subsequent corporate reorganization in 1824, he formally joined the HBC London Committee. He went on to serve as a dominant figure within the company for decades, eventually rising to the position of deputy governor. He remained active in the affairs of the new HBC until he died in 1863, and was deputy-governor until then. He also had significant and long-term business interests in a number of West Indian sugar and slave plantations. James M. Colthart, "Ellice, Edward," *DCB Online*.

ERMATINGER, EDWARD (1797–1876) was born in Elba, Italy, but had strong family ties to Montreal and the North American fur trade. His Swiss grandfather, Lawrence Ermatinger (1736–1789), arrived in Montreal in 1762, and figured prominently as a merchant in the Montreal fur trade. One of Lawrence's sons, Charles Oakes Ermatinger (1776–1833), was a fur trader (with experience in the North Saskatchewan River region for the NWC) and a Montreal merchant as well. Another one of his sons, Frederick William, also became prominent in Montreal. Although born abroad, Edward was educated in England. His father arranged for Edward's, and his brother's (Francis) entry into the HBC's service beginning in 1818. Edward served in the Island Lake District (1818–1822), Upper Red River (1822–23), and York Factory (1823–1825). In 1825, Edward and his brother Francis were both transferred to the Columbia. In 1826, he travelled with the York Factory Express from Vancouver to York Factory. Edward remained with the company until 1828 when he retired. In 1830 he settled in St. Thomas, Upper Canada, where he became a prominent businessman, politician, and author. He died there in 1876. HBCA B.239/f/12; E. E. Rich, ed., *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1939), 211-13; Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 206 –7; M. Momryk, "Lawrence Ermatinger," and Charles Oakes Ermatinger," *DCB Online*; Elinor Senior, "Frederick William Ermatinger," *DCB Online*; L.G. Thomas, "Edward Ermatinger," *DCB Online*.

ERMATINGER, FRANCIS (1798–1858) was born in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1798, and was educated in England. He joined the HBC in 1818 as an apprentice clerk at Trout Lake in the Severn District. Ermatinger would spend seven years in the Severn/Trout Lake orbit (1818–1825), the last year of which he was in charge of Trout Lake. In 1825 he was transferred to the Columbia District at Thompson's River and Kamloops (1825–1829), and it was in this period that he participated in the punitive expedition against the Clallum Indians. In 1829 he was put in charge of the Thompson's River Post and Fort Colvile (1829–1832). In 1832 he became the clerk in charge of the Flat Head post and member of the Snake River Expeditions (1832–1842). In 1842 he was promoted to chief trader and put in charge of the Bona Ventura Expedition. From 1843 to 1853, when he retired, he served at Fort Colvile, York Factory, and Fort William. In 1853 he retired to his farm in St. Thomas, Ontario. In 1842 he had married Catherine Sinclair, the daughter of Chief Factor William Sinclair. He died in 1858 and was buried at St. Thomas. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Lois Halliday McDonald, ed., *Fur Trade Letter of Francis Ermatinger written to his brother Edward during his service with the Hudson's Bay Company 1813–1853* (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1980).

FARIES/FERRIS, HUGH (1779–1852) was born in Montreal and entered the service of the NWC as a clerk in 1804. He was at Lac la Pluie from 1804 to 1806, and at Cumberland in 1812 to 1817. In 1820–1821 he was in New Caledonia. After the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he became chief trader and was posted to the Athabasca District until 1826, when he was granted a one-year furlough. When he returned in 1827, he was posted to the Southern Department in charge of the Kenogamissi District. He was there in 1832 when George Simpson noted in his Character Book, that Faries was a "well conducted steady man, who is liked by Indians is respected by his people and has gone through a great deal of drudgery in the country. . . . but his temper is exceedingly irritable, and he is everlastingly grumbling snarling & repining." He was appointed chief factor in 1838, retired in 1849, and died in Sorel, Quebec, Canada in 1852. HBCA A.34/2; B.239/g/1-6; B.135/k/1. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 189.

FEISTEL, ANTHONY (Antoine) was a native of Coblentz, Germany. He entered the service of the HBC in 1819 as a clerk at Oxford House. The following year he transferred to Edmonton House where he stayed until 1822. In the 1821–1822 season he kept the post journal under the direction of Chief Factor James Sutherland. In 1822–1823 he was attached to the Bow River Expedition and the following year was transferred to the Swan River District. He was attached to Fort Pelly when it was established at the Elbow of the Assiniboine and kept the post journal there in the season of 1824–1825. He retired from the fur trade in 1825 and moved to New York where he stayed until at least 1828. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31 (*London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 438.

FINLAYSON, DUNCAN (1795–1862) joined the HBC as a writer in the Swan River District in 1815. In 1820 he was transferred to the Peace River and he quickly caught the positive attention of his superiors. By 1820–1821 he earned £100 per year as Colin Robertson's replacement as head of the Peace River District. He was a clerk at Edmonton House from 1821 to 1824, and during the 1822–1823 season, HBC personnel records described him as "A respectable young man well Educated and a good Clerk & Trader, looks for promotion through merit." Finlayson's stature in the HBC continued to rise after he left Edmonton House in 1824, though he nearly died of a self-inflicted, though accidental, gunshot wound while serving at Fort Vermillion on the Peace River (1824–1825), and for which he would have to return to England to receive medical treatment. In 1826 he was posted to Fort Garry as a clerk, and was promoted to chief trader there in 1828. He stayed in Red River until 1831 when he was promoted to chief factor. In 1831 he was transferred to the Columbia (1831–37). He went on furlough in 1834, and again from 1837 to 1839. In 1839 he was appointed Governor of Assiniboia, an appointment he held until 1844. He became a brother-in-law to Governor Simpson in 1838 when he married Isobel Graham Simpson (her younger sister Frances had married George Simpson). In 1844, he was made an agent for the HBC in Montreal, and he retired from the fur trade in 1859. Thereafter, he was elected a member of the HBC's London Committee. He died on July 25, 1862, in London, England. HBCA Biographical Sheet; B.239/f/11; B.239/f/12. Gerald Friesen,

"Finlayson, Duncan," *DCB Online*. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 437-8.

FINLAYSON, NICOL (1794–1877) was born in Ross-shire, Scotland in 1794, and entered the service of the HBC in 1815 as clerk at Albany. He would continue to serve as a clerk at various inland posts (including Osnaburgh) from Albany until 1828. From 1828 to 1831, he served as a clerk on the North East Expedition, and in 1830 was chosen by George Simpson to establish a post at Fort Chimo in order to exploit the Ungava trade. He became chief trader in 1833, and remained in charge of the Ungava District until 1836. From 1836 to 1838 he was on an extended furlough, and in 1839 was transferred to York Factory. From 1840 to 1844 he served as chief trader in charge of the Lac la Pluie District. After another furlough (1844–1845), he was appointed chief factor and put in charge of the Lac la Pluie District (1845–1848), Saskatchewan District (1848–1849), Swan River District (1849–1850), and English River District (1850–1852). In 1852 he had a furlough and in 1853 he took his last assignment at Cumberland House. He then went on leave in 1854, retiring to Scotland in 1855. Finlayson had four sons and a daughter by an unidentified "native woman," and two sons and a daughter who survived childhood by Elizabeth, a daughter of Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy, to whom he was married by Governor Simpson at Moose Factory on 10 August 1829. He died at Nairn, Scotland, in 1877. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Alice M. Johnson, "Finlayson, Nicol," *DCB Online*. K.G. Davies, ed., *Northern Quebec and Labrador Journals and Correspondence 1819–35* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1963), 367-378.

FISHER, ALEXANDER (1783–1847) was born about 1783 in Upper Canada and joined the NWC as a clerk in 1820. He was posted to Lake of Two Mountains, and when the NWC merged with the HBC in 1821, he entered the new concern as a clerk in charge of the HBC post at the Lake of Two Mountains. In 1823 he was promoted to chief trader, and from 1823 to 1829 was put in charge of the Montreal Department. He was then transferred to the New Caledonia Department at Fort Alexandria where he worked from 1829 to 1839. In 1841 he was posted to Fort Good Hope in the McKenzie River District and he retired in 1845. He died in Montreal in 1847. George Simpson, in 1832, wrote that Fisher was a thoughtless, superficial, and lying creature who could not be trusted with any business requiring management. He was considered so much addicted to liquor that Simpson found it necessary to remove him from Montreal to New Caledonia. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 191-92.

FLETT, GEORGE (1775–1850) came from Firth, Scotland, and entered the service of the HBC in 1796. He worked inland from York Factory for his whole career, first as a Boatman and then as assistant trader and clerk, mostly at Moose Lake. He retired to the Red River Settlement in 1823. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

FLETT, WILLIAM (b.*c.* 1762–1823) was born at Firth, Orkney Islands, and jointed the HBC in 1782 as a labourer at York Factory. Captured by the French in that year, he was removed to France. Upon returning to York Factory in 1783, he worked as a labourer and steersman inland from York until

1810. He assisted Peter Fidler at Buckingham House and Greenwich House (Lac la Biche), and Henry Hallet at Island House. In 1810, he was made master of Acton House (1810–1812) and later at Little White Earth House. From 1813 to 1820 he was employed at Edmonton House as a canoe builder and temporary master. From 1820 to 1822 he was put in charge of Acton House/Rocky Mountain House, and in 1822–23 acted as the assistant master of Edmonton House. He retired in 1823, and when he left Edmonton House for the last time on 8 May 1823, to retire to the Red River Settlement, he had served the company for over forty years. He enjoyed only a very short retirement. He died at the Red River Colony in November of the same year. Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens, eds., *Edmonton House Journals 1806–1821* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 2012), 468-9; HBCA B.60/d/9-12.

FORREST, CHARLES (d. 1851) was the sone of Henry Essex Forrest (1763–1834) of Montreal and the brother of Grant Forrest. He joined the HBC in 1825 as a middleman at Island Lake (1825–1828). He was then posted to the McKenzie River District as a clerk/interpreter (1828–1835). In 1835 he retired temporarily to the Red River Settlement, but in 1836 was appointed postmaster at Lac la Pluie (1836–38). In 1838 he was transferred to the Columbia as a postmaster (1838–40), and from 1840 to 1847 he was put in charge of the Cowlitz Farm. In 1847 he was put in charge of Fort George. From 1848 to 1851, when he was already ill, he served as clerk first at Fort Vancouver and then at Fort Nisqually. He died on 23 November 1851. HBCA Biographical Sheet. E.E. Rich, ed., *The Letters of John McLoughlin From Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, Second Series, 1839–44* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1943), 489-90.

FORREST, GRANT (1800–1878) was the son of Henry Essex Forrest (1763–1834) of Montreal (via Ireland, West Indies, and New York), and was born in 1800. His connection to the Red River Settlement was through his father who was the Canadian secretary to Lord Selkirk. In 1818, Grant Forrest travelled from Drummond Island to resupply Point Meuron, and he then continued to the Red River Settlement carrying warrants for the arrests of NWC agents. He returned to Montreal, and in July 1820 travelled to the Red River Settlement bringing with him a supply of goods he hoped to barter to the colonists, though he was warned not to barter them for furs. In 1821 he escorted Colonel Dickson to Prairie du Chen, and in 1824 was back in the Red River Settlement acting as an accountant at Fort Douglas. In 1824 he married Mary Allez (1805–1838), the daughter of John Allez and Mary Macdonell/McDonald, a surveyor who had immigrated to the RRS in 1822 from Guernsey, in the Channel Islands. She was the niece of Alexander MacDonell, Selkirk's Administrator at the Red River Settlement until the end of 1822, and was engaged as schoolmistress at the Red River Settlement. The couple left the RRS in 1825, and in 1827 Grant was a clerk for the HBC at Lake of Two Mountains. In 1849, he was book keeper/accountant in the firm of Price & Company of Quebec. He died at Chicoutimi in 1878. Ashworth P. Burke, ed., *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Colonial Gentry Vol. II* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1895), 746-47. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 438. HBCA B.223/c/1, fo. 349; B.134/g/6.

FRASER, COLIN (1807–1867) was born in Sutherlandshire, Scotland, in 1807 and joined the HBC in 1827. After a brief stint at York Factory, he served as the piper to George Simpson on his trip from York Factory to Fort Vancouver (1828–1829). By 1831 he was in the Saskatchewan District employed as an interpreter (1831–1833). In 1835 he was appointed Post Master of Jasper House at £40 per annum. He would stay as Jasper House until 1850 when he became Post Master at Fort Assiniboine (1850–1853). Thereafter he would serve at Edmonton House (1853–1854), Lesser Slave Lake (1854–1861), finishing his career as clerk at Lac Ste Anne (1861–1867). He married Nancy Beaudry, the daughter of Joseph Beaudry and Lisette Chastelain in 1831. Fraser died in 1867. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

FRASER, THOMAS (1777–1849) came from Inverness, Scotland, joining the NWC in 1801 as a clerk. When the NWC and HBC merged in 1821, Fraser was kept on as a clerk at Timiskaming (1821–1823). In 1823 he moved to the Abitibi Post in the Moose Factory District as the clerk in charge staying there until 1836. In 1836 he was promoted to chief trader while remaining in the Abitibi/Timiskaming orbit. He worked there until his death in 1849. Simpson considered him as a steady, well-conducted man, but did not believe he had any prospect of advancement. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 207-08.

GARRY, NICHOLAS (1782–1856) was a member of the London Committee of the HBC, and was appointed temporary president of the Northern Department on March 28, 1821, to do what was necessary to implement the merger agreement. He met with the NWC at Fort William to implement the merger, but to decide on the postings in the Northern Department, he traveled to Norway House to decide these. In the fall of 1821 he returned to England, and in 1822 Garry became deputy governor of the HBC. His role in the company from this date is obscure, but he was still deputy governor in July 1835 when, declared of unsound mind, he was relieved of his functions. He died on December 7, 1856, in Claygate, Surrey, England, never having recovered his sanity. John McFarland, "Garry, Nicholas," *DCB Online.*

GLADMAN, GEORGE JR. (b.*c.* 1800–1863) was born about 1800 at New Brunswick House to George Gladman and Mary, a Native woman. He joined the HBC in 1814, and from 1815 to 1820 was clerk at Eastmain. Then from 1820 to 1834 he was the clerk and storekeeper at Moose Factory. After a leave of absence for medical advice in 1834–1835, he was transferred to the Northern Department. In 1836 he was promoted to chief trader serving at York Factory, Oxford House, and Norway House (1836–1841). In 1841 he went on furlough, and from 1842 to 1845 served as chief trader at Oxford House. After another furlough in 1845–1846, he retired to Port Hope, Ontario. He rejoined the HBC briefly from 1849–1853 as chief trader at Tadoussac, and then again retired to Port Hope. In 1857–1858, he was chosen leader of the Canadian Exploring Expedition to Red River with Dawson and Hind. He died in 1863. HBCA Biographical Sheet. W.L. Morton, "Gladman, George," *DCB Online.*

GLADMAN, JOSEPH (1796–1876) was born at Moose Factory and was the brother of George Gladman Jr. He entered the service of the HBC in 1814 after an education in Britain. He began his career as a

clerk at Moose Factory, and would remain a clerk until 1847: New Brunswick (1822–1835); Moose Factory (1835–1836); and various posts in the Rupert's River District (1836–1847). He was a chief trader at Rupert House from 1847 to 1864, when he became a chief factor. He served from 1864 to 1867 at Rupert House and Moose Factory. He retired after a year's furlough in 1868. He died in 1876 and was buried at Port Hope, Ontario. He was married to Margaret Auld (1800–1857) and Mary Moore thereafter. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 209.

GOOD, RICHARD (1780–1850) was born in London and joined the HBC in 1796 as a writer at Moose Factory. He spent his entire career in the Moose District at various posts: Moose, Kenogamisee, Frederick House, Abitibi, and Matawagaminigue. From 1818 to 1839, he was clerk at Moose Factory, and after a brief interlude at Martins Falls. He retired in 1843, and died at Middlesex, England in 1850. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 209.

GRANT, CUTHBERT (1794/96–1854) was born at the NWC post Fort Treblant to Cuthbert Grant Sr. and Margaret Utinawasis. He joined the NWC in 1810 and by 1812 was a clerk in the Upper Red River Department. By 1814 he was enlisted by the NWC to gather together a group of Metis in the northwest to destroy the Selkirk Colony. As "Captain General" of the Metis, he took a prominent role in the destruction of the colony, and was one of the "Chiefs" of the Metis who signed the decree dispersing the Selkirk Colony in June of 1815. In 1816 he led a group of about sixty Metis who killed a group of HBC men and colonists at Frog Plain, leading to the second dispersal of the Selkirk colony. In 1817 he was arrested and would later travel to Canada for trial, but as soon as he was admitted to bail, he escaped to the interior. He was engaged by the HBC in 1823, but retired a year later and founded the settlement of White Horse Plain/St. François Xavier in the Red River Settlement. In that year, 1824, the HBC appointed him "Warden of the Plains" for £200 per year to prevent illicit trading in the district. In addition to this role, he became a Justice of the Peace and Councillor of Assiniboia. He died at White Horse Plain in 1854. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 440. M.A. McLoed and W.L. Morton, *Cuthbert Grant of Grantown* (Toronto, 1963). George Woodcock, "Grant, Cuthbert," *DCB Online.*

GRANT, RICHARD (1793–1862). Richard Grant was born in Montreal, the son of William Grant (1743–1810), a prominent fur trade merchant, and Marguerite Farfard *dit* Laframboise (1769–1845). He joined the NWC in about 1814, and was stationed at the NWC's Rocky Mountain House as a clerk. At the time of the merger, he was described as "An active steady man and good Clerk and Trader also extremely useful as a Shopkeeper." He was again posted to Rocky Mountain House, with an increase in salary from £90 to £100 per annum. In 1822 he was clerk (and writer of the official post journal) at Edmonton House. From 1823 to 1827 he was a clerk at York Factory, and in 1827–1828 was a clerk stationed at Oxford House. He then took charge of Fort Assiniboine (1828–1829, 1830–1832), and from 1832 to 1834 was a clerk at Edmonton House. In 1835–1836, he was stationed at Lesser

Slave Lake, and became chief trader in that year. The next year he took a furlough due to the death of his wife, Marie Breland, the step daughter of John Rowand, and daughter of Louise Umfreville and Pierre Breland, taking his children back to Montreal. Thereafter he worked at posts inland from York Factory from 1837 to 1840, and in 1841 was transferred to the Columbia District. From 1842 to 1844 he was in charge of the Snake Expedition, based out of Fort Hall, where he stayed until he took a leave of absence due to ill health in 1851. He retired in 1853, and settled Hellgate, Idaho, where he died in 1862. See HBCA Biographical Sheet; B.239/f/12-13; R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 442. Gerhard J. Ens, *Son of the Fur Trade*: *The Memoirs of Johnny Grant* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008), 375-8; Joanne Burgess, "Grant, William," *DCB Online.*

GUN/GUNN, BENJAMIN (1791–1847) was born in Kildonan/Kildermain, Sutherland, Scotland, and joined the HBC in 1813. He was the son of Donald Alexander Gunn (1729–1828) who also arrived in the Hudson Bay in 1813. He worked as a labourer at Swan River (1813–1815), a middleman at Fort Hibernia (1815–1817) where he was considered "a very good Servant", at Brandon House (1817–1819), and as a 2nd trader/interpreter at Lac la Loche (1819–1822). He spent his last winter in the HBC (1822) at Norway House. He went free to the Red River Settlement in 1822, and as late as 1825 he had an account at Upper Fort Garry. He moved to Elgin County, Canada in 1826 to join family who had moved there earlier. He died there in 1847. HBCA Biographical Sheet; B.63/f/1; B.89/d/5a&5b; B.154/d/11; B.235/d/18; B.239/165-216a; B.239/g/2.

GUNN, DONALD (1797–1878) came from Halkirk, Caithness, Scotland, entering HBC service in 1813. He served first as a labourer at York Factory, but quickly became an assistant trader at Trout Lake (1816–1820), Winisk River (1820–1821), and Severn Factory (1821–1822). In 1822 he went free to the Red River Settlement, settling at "Little Britain" in the Parish of St. Andrew's. He was a leader of the English-speaking settlers at Red River and a critic of the HBC. Though a Presbyterian, he taught for 18 years in the CMS 9Anglican) parish school in St. Andrew's. Gunn was a delegate to the 1870 Convention of Forty, and was later appointed to the Legislative Council of Manitoba (1871–1876). He died in St. Andrew's in 1878. L.G. Thomas, "Gunn, Donald," *DCB Online.*

HALCRO, JOSHUA (1786–1825) was baptized in Orphir, Orkney, on 8 August 1787. He entered the service of the XY Company in about 1801, and after its union with the NWC, in 1804, he was posted to Fort Dauphin as a clerk. He was in charge of the NWC post at Partridge Crop from 1808 to 1811. He subsequently returned to the Orkney Islands where he was engaged by the HBC in 1816. Thereafter he served at Fort Hibernia (1816–1817), Fort Dauphin (1817–1818), and in Peace River/Fort Colvile (1818–1819). He worked at Île-à-la-Crosse from 1820–1822, after which he was sent to the Swan River District to take over Fort Dauphin from Peter Fidler. He became ill at Dauphin and spent 1823–1824 at Red River trying to recover. In 1824 he was granted a 12-month leave to seek medical help in England. He died there on January 7, 1825. W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 220. E.E. Rich, ed., *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society,

1939), 215. Harry W. Duckworth, ed., *Friends, Foes and Furs: George Nelson's Lake Winnipeg Journals, 1804–1822* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), 405-06.

HALDANE, JOHN (b.*c.* 1775–1857) was a native of Scotland and joined the XY Company about 1798. He was one of the six wintering partners who became a partner in the NWC in 1804. In 1802 he was at Lake Athabasca in competition with Peter Fidler of the HBC, and after joining the NWC he was put in charge of the Monontaqué, west of Lake Nipigon. In 1812 he was at Pic and in 1813 at Athabasca. In 1814 he was in the Saskatchewan. After the Union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was placed in charge of the Columbia District. George Simpson, however, did not get along with Haldane, and in 1823 he was transferred to the Lake Superior District where he remained until his retirement in 1827. He retired to Scotland, and died in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1857. Elizabeth Arthur, "Haldane, John," *DCB Online*. W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *Documents related to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 453.

HALKETT, JOHN (1768–1852) was a member if the HBC London Committee from 1811 to 1824 and again from 1829 to 1848. In 1815, he married Lady Katherin Douglas, who was the youngest sister of Lord Selkirk, and was later appointed a trustee under Selkirk's will. Between 1815 and 1820, Halkett vigorously defended the Selkirk project in Red River writing and printing a number of pamphlets and sending private letters to the Colonial Secretary defending Selkirk's actions in North America. In 1821, as executor of Selkirk's estate, he travelled to North America, and in 1822 he travelled with Andrew Bulger (the new Governor of Assiniboia) to Red River to assure the colonists that the estate would honour Selkirk's promises to them. He also presided over a temporary council of the Northern Department at York Factory in August of 1822. He returned to England in the Autumn of 1822. During his tenure on the London Committee, Halkett was regarded as the conscience of the board regarding settlement and issues regarding Indigenous peoples. During the crucial decade of the 1820s, he consistently checked the power of overseas Governor George Simpson to ensure the civic rights and financial sustainability of the Red River settlers. He died in 1852. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 441. Shirlee Ann Smith, "Halkett (Wedderburn), John," *DCB Online*.

HAMLYN, RICHARD JULIAN came from Plymouth, England, and was engaged by the HBC in 1824 as a surgeon for the Red River Settlement. He served there until 1827 when he was supposed to return to England. Simpson, however, thought he would be useful to the company and engaged him as a clerk and surgeon for York Factory (1827–28). In July 1828, with his services at York Factory no longer needed, he accompanied George Simpson on his trip to Fort Vancouver as clerk and surgeon. Hamlyn remained at Fort Vancouver from 1828 to 1830, and then returned to the Red River Settlement, serving there until 1832 when he returned to England. E.E. Rich, ed., *Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1947), 250-52.

HARDISTY, RICHARD (b.*c.* 1792–1865) was born in London, England, and joined the HBC in 1817. He served as a clerk from that time until the mid 1830s in the Rupert's River District. In 1834, he was appointed chief trader at Timiskaming. From 1837 to 1848 he was the chief trader in charge of the Kenogamissee District, and from 1848 to 1852 he was the chief trader in charge of the Esquimaux Bay District. He finished his career in the HBC as chief trader in charge of Albany District (1857–1860). He retired in 1861, and died at Montreal in 1865. He was married to Margaret Sutherland, and was the father of Richard Charles Hardisty (1831–1889), fur trader and Canadian Senator. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 211-212. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

HARGRAVES, JAMES (1798–1865) was born in Hawick, Scotland, and joined the NWC in 1820. After the union of the NWC and the HBC in 1821, Hargrave was sent to York Factory as a clerk under John George McTavish, the chief factor there at the time. In 1823, he was sent to the Lower Red River District where he spent four winters though he travelled with the brigades to York every summer. In 1827 he was stationed permanently at York Factory as a clerk. He became a chief trader in 1833 when he assumed the management of York Factory. In 1844, he was finally promoted to chief factor and he stayed at York Factory until 1851, when he was transferred to Sault Ste. Marie. His wife, Letitia Hargrave, and child, died there in 1854, and in 1859, he retired to Brockville, Ontario. Sylvia Van Kirk, "Hargrave, James," *DCB Online.*

HARKNESS, ANDRE/ANDREW (b.*c.* 1796–1869) was born in Lower Canada in about 1796, and served in the War of 1812. He entered the service of the NWC in 1816 at Fort William. After the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he joined the new concern. He served first at Lake Huron (1821–1823) and then at York Factory, first as a store man (1823–1829) and then as a shop porter (1829–1837). From 1838 to 1853, he served as an interpreter and store man at Norway House. In 1854 he went free to the Red River Settlement, settling in St. Boniface. He first married Marguerite, a Cree woman, and then Sarah Stevenson. This last marriage was solemnized at Norway House in 1838. He died in 1869 and was buried in St. Boniface.

HARRIOTT, JOHN EDWARD (1797-1866) was born in London, England, in 1797. He joined the HBC in 1809 as an apprentice when he was only twelve years old, probably in the care of his uncle, John Peter Pruden. After spending the first winter at York Factory, Harriott was stationed in the Saskatchewan District from 1811 to 1821. The years between 1813 and 1821 were spent at Fort Carlton, where his uncle was in charge. He was promoted to clerk during the 1816-1817 season. In 1822, with thirteen years of experience but still only twenty-five years old, Harriott was chosen to accompany the Bow River expedition. At the conclusion of the expedition, Harriot was assigned again to Carlton until 1826. It was probably while at Carlton that Harriott began a relationship with his cousin, Elizabeth Pruden. Harriott was placed in charge of Fort Assiniboine from 1826 to 1828, before spending four years in the Columbia District. He was promoted to chief trader in 1829. Almost certainly because of his laudable service and his experience on Bow River Expedition, he was given the challenging assignment of directing Piegan Post during its brief existence (1832–1834), before

being put in charge of the re-established Rocky Mountain House until 1842. During the Harriott, began a relationship with Anne (Nancy) Rowand, the daughter of John Rowand (his first wife Elizabeth Pruden had died). The couple was legally married in 1838, after two children had already been born. He was in charge of Edmonton for a year (1841-1842) before going back to Rocky Mountain House where he stayed until 1846, after which he took a year's leave. After he was promoted to chief factor in 1846, he was given charge of Edmonton again for a year. Then he was in charge at Rocky Mountain House again from 1849 to 1853. In the meantime, on 8 July 1850, Harriott's wife died, leaving him with six children. Thereafter, Harriott went on a two-year furlough, and in 1853 married Frances Bunn, the sister of Dr. John Bunn of Red River. Facing the threat of a formal investigation into his "unfortunate habits of intemperance," Harriott agreed to retire in 1855. He died in Montreal on 7 February 1866. His estate was sufficient to leave substantial sums to his four siblings, his widow, and his younger children. Lewis G. Thomas, "Harriott, John Edward," *DCB Online.* E.E. Rich, ed., *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1939), 216-17; Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 197. HBCA D.4/2, Simpson to J.P. Pruden, 24 July 1823 (fo. 61-61d); D.5/12, Harriott to Simpson, 24 July 1844 (fos. 77-77d); B.239/f/12; B.60/d/21; D.5/27, Rowand to Simpson, 8 January 1850; A.12/6, 24 June 1853, fos. 404-404d.

HENDERSON, JOHN came from England in 1822, at the same time as the surveyor William Kempt, under the impression that he would be enabled to turn his services to useful purposes in the Red River Settlement as a Sealer in connection with Mr. Kempt. He found, however, no mode of employing himself and consequently entered into the service of Selkirk's executors in the capacity of an accountant. In 1822–1823, he served as clerk and keeper of registers under Governor Bulger going a long way in bringing the business of the Colony into a good order. In the month of August 1823, he travelled to York Factory with the intention of returning to England, but found his services in demand and renewed his engagement for another year as a clerk (1823–24). He returned to England in the fall of 1824. LAC, Selkirk Papers. George Simpson to Andrew Colvile, August 10, 1824, C8, Vol. 26, pp.8342-8343. John Henderson to Andrew Colville, June 29, 1825, C8, Vol. 27, pp.8396-8399.

HENDRY, WILLIAM joined the HBC as surgeon and clerk in 1826. After two years at Moose Factory, he joined the North East Expedition to the mouth of the Koksoak River (1828–1829) to determine the best location for a post to exploit the Ungava trade. He returned to Moose Factory until 1831, when he moved to Red River. He stayed there until 1833, and treated both George Simpson and his wife Frances who were ill at the time. Simpson was unimpressed with his medical abilities, as is noted in this correspondence. He returned to England in 1833, and after practicing medicine in Hull, served briefly as a medical officer on an HBC ship in 1841. He then retired once more to Hull. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 212. K.G. Davies, ed., *Northern Quebec and Labrador Journals and Correspondence 1819–35* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1963), 378-383.

HERON, FRANCIS (1794–1840) came from Donegal, Ireland, and joined the HBC in 1812. After only three years at York Factory, he was appointed master at Cumberland House in 1815. He was then put in charge of Edmonton House from 1817 to 1821. From 1821 to 1823, he was part of the Bow River Expedition, and from 1824 to 1828 he was a clerk at Fort Garry. Shortly after, he would be promoted to chief trader, and be stationed at Brandon House. A year later he was transferred to the Columbia District where he spent the rest of his career. He would never rise above the position of chief trader, primarily because George Simpson had become opposed to him. He married Isabelle Chalifoux at Red River in 1835, prior to taking a furlough to England. He fell ill in England and consequently never returned to Rupert's Land. He retired in 1839 and died on April 10, 1840. Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens, eds., *Edmonton House Journals, Correspondence & Reports 1806–1821* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta 2012), 470-71.

HUGHES, JAMES SR. (1772–1853). No man influenced the history of Fort Augustus and Fort Edmonton between 1795 and 1821 as profoundly as did James Hughes. Hughes apparently spent almost his entire fur trading career in the NWC's Fort des Prairies Department, and may have been stationed at Fort Augustus almost continuously from its establishment in 1795 to 1820. He was born in Montreal in 1772, son of a prominent military man, Captain James Hughes. He joined the NWC about 1791 and quickly rose to prominence in that company becoming a wintering partner between 1799 and 1802. In June 1801, he accompanied David Thompson on Thompson's first (unsuccessful) attempt to cross the Rocky Mountains. Given his reputation for bravery, it is not surprising that he and John McDonald of Garth were given charge of the NWC's post at Chesterfield House (at the confluence of the Red Deer and South Saskatchewan Rivers) in 1804–05, after which that location was abandoned as too dangerous. Hughes was first put in charge at Fort Augustus no later than the fall of 1806, and in the fall of 1811 James Bird described him as "the principal Proprietor of the NWC°" on the Saskatchewan River. He remained in charge there until May 1820 at which time he was replaced by J. McBean and John Rowand. Nothwithstanding Bird's frequently disparaging remarks about Hughes, Hughes apparently "stood high in the estimation of his colleagues for talent as an Indian Trader, and in that of his friends and acquaintances for his correct & honourable conduct." He retired after the merger with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 and settled in Canada. Hughes reappears in the HBC records in 1830 when, being in "indigent circumstances and destitute situation," the HBC hired him as a clerk at a salary of £100, "but without claim to or hopes of promotion on account of his advanced time of life." He retired again in 1833. Thereafter he became a major in the Indian Department (then a branch of the military). He died on 13 July 1853, when the horse on which he was riding became startled and ran in front of a Grand Trunk Railway train. Hughes may have had more than one wife during his time in the fur trade. The fact that he was a brother-in-law to a freeman named Musqua (Black Bear in Cree) suggests that he had a mixed-blood wife. Hughes was among the relatively few NWC wintering partners who took his Native wife (Nan-Touche Corbeau) with him to Canada when he retired. Even more unusual was the fact that he did so "without remarrying her according to the form practiced in Canada." Upon her husband's death, his widow received £500 in damages from the Grand Trunk Railway. Hughes had several children. Guy Hughes, a Native-born clerk (who worked for the NWC from 1814 to 1821 and the HBC from 1821 until his death in 1824)

was probably his son. Other children certainly included James, also known as Mustatiss, Charlotte (who married Pierre Vandalle), and Nancy, who married Patrick Small, Jr. Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens, eds., *Edmonton House Journals, Correspondence & Reports 1806–1821* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 2012), 473-474.

ISBISTER, TOM (b.*c.*1793–1836) was born in Harray, Orkney Islands, and entered HBC service in 1812. He began his fur trading career as a labourer in the Winnipeg District eventually becoming the assistant trader at Cumberland House in 1817. In 1823 he became a clerk at Cumberland House becoming its postmaster in 1829. He remained there until 1832, when he moved to Island Lake (1832–1834) and then to Nelson River where he was postmaster (1834–1836). He was killed by a bull at Nelson River on Septem6er 6,1836. He married Mary Kennedy on 12 August 1821 at Norway House. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

JONES, DAVID THOMAS (b.*c.* 1796–1844) was a minister of the Church Missionary Society, and he replaced John West in Red River when the latter returned to England in 1823. He was born in Wales around 1796, and studied at Lampeter Seminary becoming a missionary candidate for the Church Missionary Society. He was ordained a deacon in December 1822, and a priest in April 1823. He left for Red River, as John West's replacement, shortly after being ordained a priest. Being a low churchman, he got on well with the Red River settlers, and was instrumental in building a new church at Image Plain in 1824–1825. This church/parish became known as Middle Church (St. Paul's). He returned briefly to England in 1828–1829 to marry, and when he returned, he established a boarding school at St. Johns (Upper Church), which later became known as the Red River Academy. He returned home in 1838, after his wife died, and he subsequently served as Professor of Welsh at St. David's College in Wales. He died in 1844.

KEITH, GEORGE (1785–1859) joined the NWC between 1799 and 1805, at which time he was a clerk in the Athabasca. He became a partner of the NWC in 1813, and from then until the union of the companies, he was in charge of the Athabasca Department. He was made a chief factor when the NWC merged with the HBC in 1821, and from 1821 to 1826 he was in charge of the English River District at Île-à-la-Crosse. After a year's leave of absence, he was appointed to be in charge of the Lake Superior District at Michipicoten (1828–1832). After another year's furlough, he again took charge of the Lake Superior District until 1835. He was then transferred to Moose Factory where he remained for three years (1835–1838). He then moved back to Michipicoten in 1839 where he remained until 1843. He then got two years furlough until he retired in 1845. He died in Aberdeen, Scotland on 22 January 1859. (E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 443.

KEITH, JAMES (1782–1851), the brother of George Keith, was born in Scotland in 1782. He came to Canada as an apprentice clerk in 1799 for the XY Company. He was first sent to Grand Portage in 1800, and the following year found him in the English River Department. After the merger with the NWC in 1804, he stayed in the northwest at various posts. In 1813, Keith was sent to Fort George in

the Columbia River Department. In 1814 he travelled east to Fort William, and became a partner there. From 1816 to 1821 he was put in charge of the Pacific Coast. After the 1821 merger with the HBC, Keith became a chief factor. He was then given charge of the Severn District and in 1823 was transferred to the Athabasca District. He had the confidence of George Simpson, and in 1826 was posted to Montreal as the superintendent of the Montreal Department until his retirement (1827–1843). He returned to Scotland in 1843, and his retirement became effective in 1845. In 1845 he married his second cousin Susan Angus. They lived in Aberdeen until is death in 1851. Philip Goldring, "Keith, James," *DCB Online*.

KEMPT, WILLIAM was a surveyor from Scotland who came to Rupert's Land in 1822. He had signed a contract with the executors of the Selkirk Estate for three years to survey the Red River Settlement. For this he was to be paid £100 per year. He took up this work in 1822 and laid out lots on the Image Plain. In 1823 he drew up the plan of a village on the Assiniboine River, and he left an index of a plan of the Red River Settlement dated 1824. When Governor Bulger left the colony in August 1823, Kempt was assigned to take over until the arrival of Governor Pelly. In the interim he had also been given possession of Selkirk's Hayfield Farm, which he was allowed to farm at his own expense. By 1823, he was disgusted with the Settlement and wished to return home. In 1824, however, the HBC hired Kempt to map an improved water route between York Factory and the Red River Settlement. He returned to Scotland shortly after 1824. LAC Selkirk Papers, M-8, vols. 25 & 26, pp. 7907-8310.

KENNEDY, ALEXANDER (b.*c.* 1781–1832) was born about 1781 and came from South Ronaldsay, Orkney Islands. He joined the HBC in 1798 and served at York Factory as a writer until he was made master at Cumberland House in 1804. He then served as master at Moose Lake (1806–1807), Drunken Lake (1807–1808), Fort Hibernia (1808–1811), Brandon House (1811–1812), and Red Deer River (1812–1813), before returning to Cumberland House (1813–1819). In 1819 he returned to England, but in 1820 he again became master of Norway House. In 1821 he was promoted to chief factor of Cumberland House, and in the fall of 1822, he took charge of Spokane House in the Columbia District. From 1823 to 1825, he was chief factor at Fort George, and in 1825 he again returned to England for a year. He served briefly as chief factor at Albany (1826–29) before he retired, with his family, to the Red River Settlement in 1830. In 1831 returned to England, and died of typhus there in 1832. He had several country wives and ten children. HBCA Biographical Sheet. E.E. Rich, ed., *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1939), 224-25.

KIPLING, THOMAS "PISK" (b.*c.* 1792) was born at Albany House. He worked inland from Albany and was at Brandon House by 1808. He stayed thee until 1812. From 1813 to 1815 he was a labourer at the HBC post at Portage La Prairie, and in 1815 he was stationed in the Manitoba District where he stayed until 1817, as a runner and interpreter. In 1817 he was temporarily in charge of Brandon House, and in 1818 he was and interpreter at the Forks. From 1819 to 1822 he was an interpreter at Île-à-la-Crosse, and from 1822 to 1825 he wintered in the Lower Red River District. In 1825 he left the HBC to settle at Red River, but he rejoined the HBC in 1828, and was transferred to the Columbia

Department where he worked until 1860. He was put in charge of Cape Disappointment in the Oregon from 1852–1855, and thereafter was paid as a labourer. He lived with his family (he had married Marguerite Plouffe Villebrun) at Cape Disappointment and took a 640-acre claim adjoining Peter Skene Ogden in 1846. HBCA *BS*; B.22/d/1-5; B.63/f/1; B.239/d/165-216a; B.239/g/1-32.

KIRKNESS, JAMES (b.*c.* 1774–1843) was born about 1774. He came from Harray, Orkney Islands, and entered HBC service in 1797. He served inland from York Factory as labourer (1797–1802), assistant writer (1802–1805), and trader (1805–1811). From 1811 to 1814 he was writer and trader in the Winnipeg District, from 1814 to 1816 a clerk and trader in the York Factory District, and from 1816 to 1822 he served as a district master in the York District. He retired to Orkney in 1823. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

KITTSON, WILLIAM (1792–1841) was the adopted son of George Kittson of Lower Canada, and joined the NWC in 1819 after fighting in the War of 1812. He served his entire career in the Columbia Department, and after the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he joined the HBC as a clerk at Kootenay House (1821–1824). From 1824 to 1825 he as on the Snake River Expedition, and from 1826 to 1829 in charge of Kootenay House (also 1831–1834). He was at the Flathead Post from 1829 to 1831, and Fort Nisqually from 1831 to 1840. He died at Fort Vancouver on 25 December 1841. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

LAROCQUE, JOSEPH FELIX entered the service of the NWC at the age of 14, sometime before 1800. He was a clerk at English River in 1804. At the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he entered the service of the new concern as chief trader and was appointed to the English River District. In 1822 he was transferred to Rocky Mountain House on the North Saskatchewan. In 1825 he was transferred to the Montreal Department. He retired in 1831, and died in 1866. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 445.

LEBLANC, PIERRE (1782–1838) was a craftsman and carpenter. He was born in Montreal and joined the NWC in 1810. After the union of the companies in 1821, he continued on with the HBC. Arriving in the Red River Settlement in 1820, he proved to be a useful carpenter. He renovated a house in Upper Fort Garry for Governor Simpson and his new wife Frances, and he would remain in the Settlement to help build Lower Fort Garry. He was also the man who, at Governor Simpson's urging, agreed to marry Nancy McKenzie in 1831. She had been "turned off" by John George McTavish to marry a woman from Scotland. In return, he was paid £200 by McTavish. In 1838, having relocated to Fort Vancouver to help renovations there, he and three of his children drowned when their canoe capsized at the Dalles on the Columbia River. See later correspondence in these files. Sylvia Van Kirk, "McKenzie, Nancy (McTavish; Le Blanc)," *DCB Online.*

LEITH, JAMES (1777–1838) was born in Glenkindle, Scotland, in 1777. He joined the XY Company in 1798, and eventually became a wintering partner of the NWC when it merged with the XY Company

in 1804. From 1804 to 1815, he was mostly occupied at posts east of Fort William. Thereafter, however, he spent one winter at Red River (1811–1812), two at Rainy Lake (1815–1817) and one in the Athabasca/Peace River District (1820–1821). He was one of the least belligerent partners in the NWC as it pertained to the HBC. At the merger with the HBC in 1821, he became a chief factor and was appointed to the Athabasca District. In the following year he went to Cumberland House where he remained until 1829. Here his main duty was to assist transport to other districts. He was granted a furlough in 1829, at which time he sailed to London. He officially retired in 1831. He died in 1838 in Torquay, England. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 446. Philip Goldring, "Leith, James," *DCB Online*.

LESLIE, HUGH came from Inverness, Scotland. He was 29 years old in 1822, and had been in the HBC service for 10 years. In 1819 he was the district master at Deer Lake and after the union of the companies was posted to Churchill as a clerk. In his last year (1824–25) he was listed as a clerk at Churchill and was 32 years of age. He returned home in 1825. HBCA B.239/d/210; B.239/g/1-5.

LESPERANCE (BONAMI), ALEXIS (b. 1796) was born in 1796 at Yamaska, Quebec, and married Marguerite Guernon at Red River in 1825. L'Esperance began his career with the HBC as a voyageur in 1815, and in 1826 signed a three-year contract as a Guide at Norway House for the boats plying the rivers between York Factory and Red River. In 1828 he was hired as a Guide for George Simpson on his trip to the west coast. By 1831 he was a Steersman on the Portage La Loche Brigade and in 1833 he became the Guide of the brigade on the retirement of Laurent Cadotte. He continued in this capacity until 1866, when he retired to his farm in the Red River Settlement. Carol M. Judd, "Bonami (Bonamis), dit Lespérance (L'Espérance), Alexis," *DCB Online*.

LEWIS (LOUIS) (LEWES), JOHN LEE (1791–1872) was born in Southwark, London, and joined the HBC in 1807 as a writer stationed at Churchill. In 1814 he was promoted to interpreter serving at Île-à-la-Crosse, Slave Lake and Lesser Slave Lake. At the union of the NWC and HBC he was promoted to chief trader and sent to the Columbia (1821–1823). Thereafter, he served as chief trader in the Cumberland District (1823–1826), Moose Factory (1826–1829), and in 1829 he was promoted to chief factor. From 1829 to 1836 he was posted to the Cumberland and Island Lake districts, and from 1836 to his retirement in 1853, was put in charge of various districts from Ungava, Saskatchewan, McKenzie River and New Caledonia. He retired to the Red River Settlement in 1853, and died there, at St. Andrew's, in 1872. HBCA Biographical Sheet; Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 185.

LOGAN, ROBERT (b.*c.* 1773–1866) was probably born in Jamaica to a West Indian planter and moved to Montreal in the 1780s. He joined the NWC in 1801 and served at Sault Ste. Marie until 1814. In that year he was recruited by Colin Robertson to outfit his Athabasca Campaign, and accompanied Robertson west. In 1815 he wintered at Île-à-la-Crosse and from 1816 to 1818 was put in charge of establishing Rock Depot at Swampy Lake. In 1818 he was the master in charge of Lac La Pluie, and

in 1819 was appointed Sheriff of Assiniboia at the Red River Settlement. In 1825 he purchased Fort Douglas and the Windmill at Point Douglas from the Selkirk Estate, and became a settler and businessman. From 1825 to 1839 he was a Councillor of Assiniboia. He died in the Red River Settlement in 1866. HBCA Biographical Sheet. J.E. Rea, "Logan, Robert," *DCB Online*.

MANSON, DONALD (1796–1880) was born at Thurso, Caithness, Scotland, in 1796 and was hired by the HBC in 1817, when he was stationed at Rock Depot. The next year was spent as a clerk to Oxford House (1818–1819), and from 1819 to 1822 he served as a Clerk at Île-à-la-Crosse. From 1822 to 1824 he served on the Bow River Expedition, and in 1824 he was Samuel Black's second-in-command on his expedition along the Finlay River. He was then transferred to the Columbia District. In 1832, Manson explored the Nass River, and the next year established Fort McLoughlin and remained in charge there until 1838. He was appointed chief trader in 1837. He took furlough from 1839 to 1841, and in the following years served as chief trader at Bona Venture (1841–1842), Thompson River (1842–1843), Alexandria (1843–1844), Stuart's Lake (1844–1845), Fort Simpson (1845–1846), and then Tompson's River and Stuart's Lake again (1846–1857). His failure to reach the position of Chief Factor was explained by George Simpson as being due to his "irritability of temper". He took his last furlough in 1857, and retired thereafter. He moved to Champoeg, Oregon, and died there in 1880. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 221. Kenneth L. Holmes, "Manson, Donald," *DCB Online*.

MATTHEY, JACQUES FREDERICK (1777–1850) was born at Neuchatel, Switzerland, and joined the Regiment De Meuron in 1797, becoming lieutenant in 1801. He served at the Battle of Plattsburgh in 1814, and in 1816 was hired by Lord Selkirk to lead a band of soldiers to Red River and act protectors of the settlement. He arrived in the RRS with Lord Selkirk in 1817, but was required to leave by Colonel Coltman that year. He returned to the Settlement in 1818, and remained there as a military commander. He soon alienated both the de Meuron settlers and George Simpson and left for England in 1824.

MCBAIN/MCBEAN, JOHN (b.*c.* 1778–1854) was born about 1778, and was a clerk and interpreter in the service of the North West Company (NWC) at Fond du Lac in 1804. He became a partner of the NWC at Fort William in 1816. After the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was made a chief factor and put in charge of the Lake Huron District. Despite Simpson's protests, he remained at La Cloche, Lake Huron, until he retired in 1837. After retirement, he settled at Berthier, Lower Canada. He died there in 1854. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 181.

MCBAIN/MCBEAN, WILLIAM (b.*c.* 1807–1892) was the son of Chief Factor John McBain and Madelaine Cloutier, a Chippewa Indian. After receiving a rudimentary education in Montreal, he joined the HBC as an interpreter in the Rupert's River District in 1828. He became a postmaster there in 1833, and in 1834 he was transferred to New Caledonia as postmaster of the Babine and Chilcotin posts. He became a clerk in 1841, and he spent the rest of his career in New Caledonia and the

Columbia districts in that position. He retired to Frenchtown in the Columbia in 1851. He died in the Walla Walla area on 19 April 1892. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 230. Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793–1858* (Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice University of British Columbia, Okanagan Kelowna, British Columbia, 2010), 635.

MCDERMOT/MCDERMONT, ANDREW (1790–1881) was born at Roscommon, Ireland, in 1790, and was recruited by Lord Selkirk and the HBC in 1812. From 1812 to 1824 he served as a writer, clerk and trader for the HBC. From 1812 to 1816, he was a writer/trader/clerk in the East Winnipeg District at Pigeon River and Berens River. He was in the Manitoba District at Fort Dauphin and Big Point from 1816 to 1821. After serving at Thieving River, Netley Creek, and Pembina (1821–1824), he retired to the Red River Settlement where he opened his own store and engaged in the fur trade with a special license from the HBC. He was a leading supporter of the free trade movement in the 1840s, and a member of the Council of Assiniboia. He died at Winnipeg in 1881. HBCA Biographical Sheet. J.M. Bumsted, ed., *Dictionary of Manitoba Biography* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 151-152.

MCDONALD, ARCHIBALD (1790–1853) was employed by Lord Selkirk to recruit colonists in Scotland in 1812. He arrived in the RRS in 1813. He was appointed to the Council of Assiniboia to aid the colony's governor, Miles Macdonell, and, during the winter of 1814–15, he served as one of Macdonell's principal lieutenants. When the colonists were forced out of the settlement in June of 1815, McDonald proceeded with them to Jack River House. While the settlers would return to the settlement in the fall of 1815, McDonald returned to England, via York Factory, and prepared a written account of the events that led to the abandonment of the RRS. This account was published in London in 1816. Later that year he joined Selkirk in Montreal, and led a group of disbanded De Meuron soldiers who aided in the capture Fort William. McDonald then returned to Montreal and sailed for England in the fall. In 1818, he returned to the Red River Settlement to assist in the administration of the colony. In 1820, he joined the Hudson's Bay Company as a clerk and was posted to Île-à-la-Crosse. In 1821 he was transferred to the Columbia Department. McDonald was promoted chief trader in January 1828, and put in charge of Fort Langley. In 1834 he went on furlough, and from 1835 to 1844 he was in charge of Fort Colvile. From 1844 to 1848 he again went on leave/furlough for reasons of health, and in 1848 he retired to Quebec. He died in 1853. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Jean Murray Cole, "McDonald, Archibald," *DCB Online*. E.E. Rich, ed., *Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1947), 253-58.

MCDONALD, JOHN (LE BORGNE) (1770–1828) was born in Scotland and immigrated with his family to Canada in 1786. By 1798 he had become a wintering partner of the XY Company, and by 1802 was stationed in the Red River region. He became a wintering partner of the NWC in 1804, after its merger with the XYC, and was in charge of the Fort Dauphin Department from 1808 to 1810. Thereafter, he managed the Swan River Department. In 1816 he was arrested by Lord Selkirk for the events that

transpired at Red River in 1815 and 1816. He stood trial in Upper Canada in 1818, but was acquitted. At the time of the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821, McDonald was made a chief factor and given charge of the Upper Red River District. From 1823 to 1827 he was in charge of the Winnipeg River District, with headquarters at Bas de la Rivière (Fort Alexander). He was given a year's furlough in 1827, and died on 8th February 1828. He was known as McDonald le Borgne or "one-eyed McDonald". E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 449. Jennifer S.H. Brown, "McDonald, John," *DCB Online.*

McDonell, Allan (1776–1859) was born in Scotland and joined the fur-trading company of Forsyth, Richardson and Company as an apprentice clerk in 1799. He came to the northwest for the XYC, and when the XYC merged with the NWC in 1804, he served as a clerk in the new company at Fort Dauphin. During the years of conflict between the NWC and HBC, he remained in the Fort Dauphin and Red River departments becoming a NWC partner in 1816. He was one of the NWC partners at Brandon House when the Metis sacked the HBC post in 1816. With the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821, McDonell was made a chief trader and placed in charge of the Swan River District. He stayed there until 1826 when he was transferred to the Timiskaming District. He became chief factor there in 1828. He retired in 1843. Elaine Allan Mitchell, "McDonell, Allan," *DCB Online.*

McDonell/Macdonell, Alexander (b.*c.* 1774) was one of Selkirk's Agents in charge of the Red River Settlement. He was born in Inverness, Scotland. In 1813 he volunteered his services to Lord Selkirk who engaged him in 1814 to recruit colonists for the Red River Settlement. In 1815 he accompanied them to Red River in the company of the new governor, Robert Semple. In September of 1815, Semple appointed him as second in command to Colin Robertson, who was then in charge of the Red River Settlement. After Robertson left the Red River Colony in June 1816, Macdonell was appointed as second in command to Robert Semple. When Semple was killed at Seven Oaks on June 19, 1816, Macdonell took charge of the colony which was then dispersed. Macdonell re-established the colony in March of 1817 and guided it for the next few years. In 1819 he returned to Scotland to see his family, returning to the Red River Settlement in 1820, where he resumed his post as governor. Selkirk's death and the merger of the HBC and NWC greatly reduced his influence. By 1821, George Simpson had concluded that MacDonell's mismanagement was hurting the colony and making it unattractive to respectable settlers. He was dismissed in March 1822, with Andrew H. Bulger replacing him. MacDonell was, however, retained in the service of Selkirk's executors, and he served as councillor of Assiniboia under both Governor Bulger and his successor, Robert Parker Pelly. Instead of working with the new administration, however, he fomented dissension. By 1824, George Simpson considered him "disaffected" and one of the most dangerous men in the colony. Given his ostracism from the HBC and Simpson, he left the colony in 1828. Edith Burley, "Macdonell, Alexander," *DCB Online.*

McDougall (McDougald), George (b.*c.* 1787–1850) was a Scotch Canadian, and, at the time of the merger of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he had been a Canadian clerk for about six years. He

had initially joined the HBC as a clerk, but in 1815, at the height of the HBC-NWC rivalry, while at Peace River, he deserted the HBC to become a clerk for the NWC. His brother James was already working for the NWC at the time. The NWC then sent him to New Caledonia where the HBC had no operations. That is where he was when the companies merged. A comment on him written at that time stated that he was "addicted to Liquor and will be discharged next season." In fact, he was retained and he continued to serve the HBC in New Caledonia. After the merger, he was assigned to Fort Alexandria for all or most of the time between 1821 and 1829, before serving at Fort Chilcotin. After serving for one year at Great Slave Lake (1830–1831 or 1831–1832), he was transferred to Lesser Slave Lake until his retirement in 1849, except for the 1846–1847 season during which time he was in charge at Rocky Mountain House. He was never promoted above the level of clerk, and died in 1850. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 450; HBCA B.239/f/12, 17, 19.

MCGILLIS, ANGUS (1774–1842) was born in New York in 1774, and came to Canada with his parents after the American Revolution. He worked for the NWC in the Manitoba District, at Fort Dauphin, and later at Swan River. In 1821, after the union of the NWC and HBC, he continued working for the HBC at Swan River for one year before he retired to St. Francois Xavier in the Red River Settlement. In 1821–1822, George Simpson noted that he was an excellent trader, that he had been in the trade for 25 years, and that he had amassed £2000. He also noted that he had resigned, but was allowed to spend the winter at the Swan River Fort with his family free of expense. He died in the Red River Settlement in 1842. HBCA B.239/f/13; E.5/1.

MCGILLIVRAY, JOSEPH (1791–1832) was the son of William McGillivray. He had become a partner of the NWC in 1813, and was stationed in the Columbia from 1813 to 1817. After the union of the companies in 1821 he was made a chief trader. He was then posted to Vermillion (1821–1822) and Norway House (1822–1823). In 1823 he was appointed to York Factory, and in 1824 took a year's leave of absence because of his health. In 1825 he was put in charge of Trout Lake (Severn District), and in 1826 was sent to New Caledonia. He was again on furlough in 1828–1829, and in 1829 sent to Fort Good Hope, and Split Lake in 1830. He retired in 1831 and died in Montreal in 1831. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 441.

MCGILLIVRAY, SIMON (b.*c.* 1785–1840) was born in the Scottish Highlands to Donald Roy McGillivray and Anne McTavish. He was sent down to London to work for his uncle's (Simon McTavish) company (McTavish, Fraser & Co.). There he worked to maximize the profits of the NWC by supplying it with trade goods and selling the company's furs in London. He became a partner of the firm in 1805, and in 1811 he was made a partner of the parent company in Montreal (McTavish, McGillivrays & Co.). From London, Simon worked closely with his brother, William McGillivray, in his struggles to overcome Lord Selkirk and the Hudson's Bay Company. By 1820, seeing the imminent collapse of the NWC, Simon took a leading role, along with Edward Ellice, in devising a plan of merging the NWC with the HBC. This merger was completed in 1821, and Simon and his brother

were placed on the Board. In 1825, however, the McGillivray and McTavish firms in London and Montreal went bankrupt. McGillivray was forced to sell many of his assets and his association with the fur trade ended in 1830. His career continued to prosper, however, and in 1829 he was chosen by the United Mexican Mining Association of London to go to Mexico to help reorganise the administration of the company's silver mines. In 1835 he was back in London, becoming a co-owner of the *Morning Chronicle* and *London Advertiser*. He died in 1840. Fernand Ouellet, "McGillivray, Simon," *DCB Online*.

MCGILLIVRAY, SIMON JR. (1791–1840) was born at Île-à-la-Crosse to William McGillivray and Susan Cree. He joined the NWC in 1813 as a clerk. He was stationed in the Columbia for some years and was in the Athabasca when the union of the NWC and HBC took place in 1821. At the time of the union, Simon became a chief trader in the new HBC. He was on furlough in 1821–1822, after which he was appointed to Lac la Pluie (1822–25). From 1825 to 1827 he was in charge of the Severn District, and was then transferred to Fort Resolution where he stayed until 1830. He was then transferred to the Columbia, and from 1831 to 1832 was in charge of Fort Nez Perces. Thereafter, he was sent to New Caledonia until his retirement in 1834. He re-engaged with the HBC in 1836, and was appointed to establish the Esquimaux Bay District where he remained until 1838. He finished his career in charge of Chicoutimi on the Saguenay River in 1839. He died in 1840. HBCA, B.239/g/1-16. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 451.

MCGILLIVRAY, WILLIAM (1764–1825) was born in Scotland in 1764, and was brought to Montreal by his uncle Simon McTavish in 1784 to work for the North West Company. The next year he was posted to the Red River Department as a clerk. In 1786, accompanied by proprietor Patrick Small, he was sent to Île-à-la-Crosse. From 1794 on, he represented the Montreal end of the business at the annual rendezvous at Grand Portage. This location was later supplanted by Fort William, which was named after him. He eventually became the superintendent of the northwestern trade, and when his uncle died in 1804, was made the chief director of the NWC. As such, he presided over the intense, and sometimes violent, competition with the Hudson's Bay Company. When the companies merged in 1821, he became a director of the new company. He died in London in 1825. Fernand Ouellet, "McGillivray, William," *DCB Online*.

MCGILLIVRAY, WILLIAM (1796–1832) was the son of John McGillivray, a former NWC partner, and Simpson called him "a half breed of the Cree Nation". He entered the service of the NWC in 1816, and in 1820–1821 wintered at Fort Vermillion on the Peace River. When the NWC and HBC merged in 1821, McGillivray was appointed clerk in the Athabasca District, where he continued to serve until 1828. He was married to the daughter of Alexander Stewart, the chief factor of Fort Chipewyan. In 1829 he was put in charge of McLeod's Lake, in New Caledonia, where his wife and infant son were drowned in a river close to the post in 1830. McGillivray himself drowned in the Fraser River on 31 January 1832. E.E. Rich, ed., *Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia* (Toronto: The Champlain Society,

1947), 259-60. Glyndwr Williams (ed.) *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 222-23.

MCINTOSH (MACKINTOSH), WILLIAM (1784–1842) was born in 1784 at Grand Rapid and served the NWC at Lesser Slave Lake in 1803. He was made a wintering partner in 1816, and was a prominent figure in the battles between the NWC and HBC in the Athabasca and Peace River districts. At the merger, he joined the HBC as chief trader and was appointed chief factor in 1823. Despite his position in the HBC, he was no favourite of George Simpson who, in 1832, regarded him as "A revengeful cold blooded back hearted Man whom I consider capable of anything that is bad: possessing no abilities beyond such as qualify him to cheat an unfortunate Indian and to be guilty of a mean dirty trick: Suspicious, Cruel & Tyrannical without honour or integrity, in short, I have never been able to discover one good trait in his character." With the HBC he served at Dunvegan (1821–1824), Fort Assiniboine (1824–1825), Nelson House (1825–1829), Cumberland House (1829–1832) and Dunvegan (1831–1834). Thereafter, he went on furlough for health reasons and retired in 1837. He died on 16 February 1842. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 181, 181n; Richard McCarty, "Fort Assiniboine, Alberta, 1823–1914: Fur Trade Post to Settled District," (MA Thesis, University of Alberta, 1976), 267.

MCINTOSH, DONALD (1773–1845) was employed by the NWC by at least 1806 when he was a clerk at Michipicoten. He was in charge there when he was arrested by Lord Selkirk. At the union of the two companies in 1821, he was appointed chief trader and stationed in the Lake Superior District at various posts (Michipicoten, Pic, Lake Nipigon, and Fort William). He remained in this capacity and in this district until 1838 when he went on furlough. He retired in 1840 and settled in Montreal where he died in 1845. HBCA Biographical Sheet. E.E. Rich, ed., *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1939), 232-33.

MCKAY, JAMES (1797–1887) was a York Boat guide in the Saskatchewan District. He was born around 1797 in Farr, Scotland, and entered the HBC in 1815. By 1818 he was posted to Edmonton House as a middleman. By 1821 he had become a steersman, and in 1822–1823 he served as a steersman on the Bow River Expedition. By 1831 he was listed as a steersman and guide in the Saskatchewan District, and he served as guide again in 1832–33, but in 1833 he was transferred to Back's Arctic Expedition. From 1834 to 1836, he served as steersman and guide on General Charges, and from 1836 to 1840 he worked as guide on the Arctic Discovery Expedition. In 1840, he retired to the Red River Colony, and the 1843 Census of settlement he was listed as married with four sons under 16 years of age, 2 sons over 16, and 2 daughters over the age of 15. He had married Marguerite Gladu while he was at Edmonton House and the couple had at least 7 sons and 2 daughters, several of whom were born at Edmonton. These included James McKay (1828–1879), a prominent fur trader and guide for the Palliser Expedition, as well as a politician in Manitoba. He married Marguerite Rowand, the daughter of John Rowand the chief factor of the Saskatchewan District. The other son born at Edmonton House was Angus McKay (1836–1897) who later became an Indian Agent. Late in life, James McKay was a resident of Prince Albert and he died in December of 1887, at the home of Rev. John McKay

(another son) on the Mistawasis Reserve. He was buried there. HBCA Biographical Sheet; E.5/11. *Saskatchewan Times*, December 16, 1887, pp. 1 & 3.

MCKENZIE, ALEXANDER (1794–1828), a native of Inverness, Scotland, was born about 1794 and joined the NWC in 1812 as an apprentice clerk. He was stationed at Fort George, the depot of the Columbia Department. After the coalition of the NWC and HBC in 1821 he became a clerk in the new HBC, posted to Fort George as a surgeon, trader, and clerk. In December 1827, he left Fort Vancouver to deliver dispatches to Fort Langley and on his return, in January 1828, he was murdered, along with four of his engages, by Clallum Indians at Hood Canal. A punitive expedition was sent from Fort Vancouver in the summer of 1828, under the command of Chief Trader Alexander Roderick McLeod. Twenty-two Indians were killed, and their village was burned. HBCA Biographical Sheet. R. Harvery Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 447.

MCKENZIE, ALEXANDER (b.*c.* 1767–1830) [The Emperor] was born in Stornaway, Scotland, and came to British North America sometime in the 1770s. He as the nephew of fur-trader and explorer Alexander McKenzie. He started trading in furs in the environs of Detroit in 1790 with the Montreal firm of Forsyth, Richardson & Company. In 1793 he began trading north of Lake Superior in competition with the NWC, and was one of the first six partners of the XY Company. He was trading on the North Saskatchewan in the later 1790, and became a partner of the NWC when it merged with the XYC. From 1804 to 1808 he was in charge of the Athabasca Department where his high-handed manner earned him the title of "The Emperor". In 1809 he commanded the post at Pic on Lake Superior, and in 1811 he was the NWC Agent at Fort William. When the Red River Settlement came to the forefront of the battle between the HBC and NWC, he was sent to Red River to hasten its destruction, persuading Miles McDonell to surrender in 1815, and destroying the Colony. For this action, McKenzie was arrested by Selkirk at Fort William in August of 1816. He was tried in York/Toronto in October of 1818 and acquitted. After these events McKenzie ceased being an active wintering partner of the NWC, and when the NWC merged with the HBC in 1821, he did not join the new concern. He did remain an agent for McTavish, McGillivray & Company at Montreal. He died in Montreal on 23 July 1830. George Woodcock, "McKenzie, Alexander," *DCB Online.*

MCKENZIE, DONALD (1783–1851) was born near Inverness, Scotland, and immigrated to Canada when he was 17 years of age. In 1801 he became a clerk in the NWC, but by 1809 had second thoughts and in 1810 became one of the original partners of the Pacific Fur Company. He worked in the Columbia District until War broke out in 1812, and in 1813 McKenzie played a significant role in the transfer of Astoria to British hands. McKenzie returned east and in 1814 joined the NWC as partner. He returned to the Columbia in 1814, and for the next five years managed the district for the NWC. On joining the HBC after the merger in 1821, he was appointed chief factor, and was put in charge of the Bow River Expedition (1822–1823). Thereafter, he took charge of the Red River District (1823–33), and he served as Governor of Assiniboia from 1825 to 1833. On settling at Red River, McKenzie "turned off" his former country wife, Mary, and in 1825 married the governess he had hired to look

after his three mixed-blood children. His new wife was Adelgonde Humbert Droz, the 18-year-old daughter of impoverished Swiss settlers, and they would eventually have 13 children. While George Simpson had earlier admired McKenzie's abilities, by 1830 he had revised his opinion of McKenzie writing that McKenzie was selfish and deceitful. With this McKenzie's tenure as Governor was as good as over. In the fall of 1832, he looked for a place to retire in the United States, and in 1833 returned to the Red River Settlement to collect his family. Taking a leave of absence, he relocated to Mayville, New York, and he retired there in 1835. He died in 1851 after being thrown by his horse. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Sylvia Van Kirk, "McKenzie, Donald," *DCB Online*.

MCKENZIE, DONALD JR. (b.*c.* 1787–1865) came from Scotland, and had been in the army. He entered the service of the HBC in 1818 as a clerk at Île-à-la-Crosse (1818–1822). In 1822–1823 he was a clerk on the Bow River Expedition, and in 1823–1824 was stationed in New Caledonia. From 1824 to 1827 he was the clerk in charge of Oxford House, and from 1827 to 1830 in the Swan River District. In 1830–1831 he was sent to Moose Lake in the Cumberland District, and from 1831 to 1836 he was again posted to the New Caledonia. He ended his career as a clerk at various posts in the Lac la Pluie District (1836–1850). He retired in 1850 and died in 1865. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

MCKENZIE, HENRY (b.*c.* 1781–1832) was born in Scotland and came to Canada around 1800. He was a cousin of Sir Alexander McKenzie, and became a clerk in the fur trade at Grand Portage after arriving in Canada. After Alexander McKenzie retired from the fur trade in 1805, and decided to return to England, Henry was put in charge of his cousin's property in Canada. In 1814, Henry purchased shares in McTavish, McGillivrays and Company, and became one its partners. The following year he was put in charge of the NWC's public relations. Conflicts in the NWC after 1817, however, soon marginalized him the company. He died during the cholera outbreak in Montreal on June 28, 1832. Fernand Ouellet, "McKenzie, Henry," *DCB Online*.

MCKENZIE, RODERICK JR. (b.*c.* 1791–1830) was born in Gairloch, Scotland. He entered the service of the HBC in 1811 as a writer in the East Winnipeg District. He was promoted to clerk at Fort Wedderburn (Athabasca) in 1815. He remained a clerk until 1821, when he was promoted to chief trader at Lac la Pluie. He remained a chief trader until his death in 1830, serving at Lac La Pluie (1821–1822), Bas de la Riviere (1822–1823), Churchill and Nelson River (1823–1825) and Portneuf (1825–1830). He married Sally Sutherland in 1823 at Fort Alexander, but they had been together since at least 1818. She died in 1827. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

MCLEOD, ALEXANDER RODERICK (b.*c.* 1782–1840) was born about 1782 and joined the NWC in 1802. He was a clerk at Dunvegan in 1806, and he remained in the Athabasca and Peace River departments until 1821. After the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was made chief trader in the Athabasca District. In 1822–1823 he was headquartered at Fort Simpson and had charge of the posts in the Mckenzie River District. He was appointed to the Columbia District in the summer of 1824. In 1826–1827 he was the leader of a trapping expedition to the Umpqua and Klamath rivers. The expedition returned to Fort Vancouver by March of 1827, and in June he sailed on the Cadboro

for Fraser River where he assisted in the establishment of Fort Langley. In June 1828, with Lieut. Simpson and the Cadboro, he led a punitive expedition to the Hood Canal against the Clallum Indians who in the previous January had murdered Alexander McKenzie and four of the Company's servants. Twenty-two Indians were killed and their village was burned. The Governor and Committee, however, considered that McLeod had mismanaged the expedition, and he was not appointed to the chief factorship he had been in line for. Thereafter, he was sent to explore the Buenaventura River (1828–1829), eventually reaching the Sacramento Valley and the Spanish Mission at Sonoma. While crossing the mountains during December and January (1829–1830) the expedition lost all their horses, put their furs *en cache*, and returned to Fort Vancouver. McLeod was harshly criticized for his management of the expedition and in the summer of 1831 was transferred to the McKenzie River District. From 1833 to 1835 he was attached to the Arctic Land Expedition, and from 1835 to 1837 he was in charge of Great Slave Lake. He was finally appointed chief factor in 1836, and took over the management of the Athabasca District in 1837. He remained at Fort Dunvegan until he took furlough in 1839. He died in 1840. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 448-50.

MCLEOD, JOHN (1788–1849) was born at Stornoway, Scotland, in 1788, and entered the service of the HBC in 1811. He sailed for Red River with Miles Macdonell arriving there in 1812. He was much involved in the fledgling Selkirk Colony, and in the period 1812 to 1814 he helped to establish the Pembina Post (Fort Daer) and the post at Turtle River in North Dakota. He was back in the Selkirk Settlement in the summer of 1815, and helped to take care of HBC matters there after the colonists had been expelled to Jack River. He then helped to re-establish the Selkirk Colony in the fall of 1815. In that year he was transferred to the English River District and was there arrested by the NWC and sent to Montreal in 1817 to stand trial. His case was dismissed, and he returned to Red River in 1818. The next season he was again in the English River District. He had married Charlotte Pruden in 1819 and at the merger was made chief trader. He spent the season of 1821–1822 at Green Lake and in November of 1822 crossed the mountains to the Columbia District. He remained there until 1826 and did not much impress George Simpson with his management of the district. Simpson consequently engineered his removal from there. In the summer of 1826, McLeod took charge of Norway House (1826–1830) and oversaw the substantial rebuilding of this post. Thereafter, he spent most of the rest of his career in the Montreal District and he retired from the HBC in 1848, dying suddenly of Cholera in 1849. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 455-56. Sylvia Van Kirk, "McLeod, John," *DCB Online.*

MCLOUGHLIN, JOHN (1784–1857) was born on 19 October 1784 near Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec. He joined the NWC in 1803 as a physician and apprentice clerk after he had been granted a license to practice medicine. By 1814, he was a partner in the firm, and he worked hard to help orchestrate the merger of the HBC and NWC in 1821. He spent the winter of 1821–1822 ill in Paris, but returned to Lac la Pluie (Rainy Lake) District in 1822, and was appointed chief factor in charge of the district. In 1824, when Governor Simpson reorganized the Columbia District, McLoughlin was assigned there.

The rest of this career (he resigned in 1846) was spent in the Columbia District, which he managed. He came to be known as the "Father of Oregon". He died on 3 September 1857 in Oregon City. W. Kaye Lamb, "McLoughlin, John," *DCB Online*.

MCMILLAN (MACMILLAN), JAMES (b.*c.* 1783–1858) was born in Scotland about 1783, and joined the NWC in about 1804, when he was assigned to the Fort des Prairies District. He was one of the first fur traders to become very familiar with the Rocky Mountains. He accompanied David Thompson on his first trip across the Rockies in 1807, after which he made several trips across the mountains while wintering at Kootenae House (1808–1809) and Saleesh House (1809–1810). In 1810, he was sent to the Columbia to track HBC trader Joseph Howse as Howse reconnoitred the region west of the Rockies. Thereafter, the NWC stationed him in the Columbia District. McMillan was named a chief trader in 1821 when the NWC and HBC merged. He was at Fort Kamloops during the 1822–1823 season before spending a furlough in Canada in 1823–1824. For the next several years he was assigned roles suitable to George Simpson's assessment of him: that he was "fit for any Service requiring physical strength firmness of mind and good Management provided he has no occasion to meddle with Pen & Ink in the use of which he is deficient his Education having been neglected." Given his pioneering role in the Columbia District and his reputation – George Simpson described him as a "Staunch & Manly Friend and Fellow Traveller," – it is not surprising that he was assigned to accompany Simpson during his first visit to Columbia in 1824. That Fall, he reconnoitred the mouth of the Fraser River, gaining information (and misinformation) that would be used when he established Fort Langley in 1827. In 1825, McMillan was put in charge of Fort Assiniboine, but was also instructed to search for a practical route from Jasper House to the upper Fraser River. His efforts would lead to the inauguration of the Yellowhead Pass (Leather Pass) as a route for transporting leather to New Caledonia. He would lead the express party and the New Caledonia party through Fort Assiniboine in the fall of 1826. In 1827, when he established Fort Langley, he did so as a newly appointed chief factor. He was in charge there until 1828 when Governor Simpson arrived from the Peace River. McMillan accompanied Simpson eastward in the spring of 1829, and travelled with him to England and Scotland in 1829–1830. He would marry a Scottish woman there (Eleanor McKinley). On his return he was appointed to establish an experimental farm at Red River, where he was joined by his new wife and child in 1831. He remained there until 1834, when he was transferred to the Lake of Two Mountains in the Montreal Department. He remained there until he was granted furlough in 1837, which was extended by a leave of absence until 1839. He retired on June 1, 1839, and settled with his wife and eight children in Alexandria, near Perth, Scotland. McMillan maintained a correspondence with Governor Simpson who controlled his financial affairs in the Canadas. When McMillan died in 1858, and with his family in some financial difficulties, Simpson arranged for the extension of his company pension. HBCA Biographical Sheet. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 450-51. Gregory Thomas, "McMillan, James" *DCB On line*; Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 1883-84. Richard McCarty, "Fort Assiniboine, Alberta, 1823–1914: Fur Trade Post to Settled District," (MA Thesis, University of Alberta, 1976), 268-69.

McMurray, Thomas (1776–1849) was born in Montreal and entered the service of the XY Company by 1799. In 1803–1804 he oversaw Fort Dauphin for the company. On the union of the XYC and NWC in 1804, he was sent as a clerk to Rainy Lake. In 1816 he became a partner of the NWC and took part in the HBC/NWC struggles at Red River. In 1817, he became a proprietor of the NWC post at Île-à-la-Crosse, and in 1820 he was arrested and sent to Montreal for trial. On the union of the HBC and NWC in 1821, the charges against him were dropped and he became a chief trader for the HBC at Winnipeg River. He also served at Fort Dauphin (1823–1824), Rainy Lake (1824), Lake of the Woods (1825–1831), and Pic on Lake Superior (1831–1841). He retired to Upper Canada in 1843, and died there in 1849. HBCA Biographical Sheet. W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *Documents Relating to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 483. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 456.

McTavish, Alexander (1784–1832) came from Inverness, Scotland, and joined the NWC as a clerk in 1813. He was posted to the Lake Superior District until 1821, and after the merger of the NWC and HBC he became a clerk in the new company. He was posted to the Lake Superior District (Pic & Lake Nipigon) from 1821 to 1828, and Simpson found him respectable and deserving of promotion. Thus in 1828 he was promoted to chief trader and after a furlough took charge of Albany (1829–1830). In 1830, he was moved to Lake Nipigon where he died in 1832. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 196-97.

McTavish, Dugald (1817–1871) was born in Kilchrist House, Argyllshire, Scotland, and was the younger son of Sheriff Dugald Mactavish and Letitia Lockhart. His uncle was Chief Factor John George McTavish, and his elder brother, William Mactavish, eventually rose to become the Governor of Rupert's Land and Assiniboia. Dugald and William both entered the HBC as apprentice clerks on the exact same day: January 2, 1833. Between 1833 and 1845, Dugald served at Moose Factory, Michipicoten, and Lachine before being transferred to the Columbia District. In 1846, he was promoted to chief trader and sent to manage the company's shipping and commercial business in Oahu, Hawaii. In 1851, he was promoted to chief factor and in 1852 took a furlough to England and Scotland. When he returned to the Columbia in 1853, he acted jointly with Peter Skene Ogden (Ogden died in 1854) managing the company's newly created Oregon Department until 1858. Following the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which established the 49th parallel as the border between British and American territory, the HBC suddenly found its extensive southern assets—including Fort Vancouver—located inside the United States. Dugald's primary responsibility was managing the gradual liquidation, protection, and legal defense of HBC property and land claims against encroachment by American settlers. In 1867, he traveled to Washington, D.C., to testify before the British and American Joint Commission, successfully securing a financial settlement for the property claims of the HBC and the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company. This business was finally concluded in 1869. He was then

recalled to Montreal to replace Donald Smith, but on 24 May 1871 he died of heart disease. William R. Sampson, "MacTavish, Dugald," *DCB Online.*

MCTAVISH, JOHN GEORGE (b.*c.* 1778–1847) was born in Dunardary, Argyll, Scotland, and in 1798 he joined the NWC. He worked first in Montreal, and then established a series of trading posts on James Bay after 1803. When the NWC decided to abandon its James Bay enterprise in 1806, McTavish returned to Montreal. He was then assigned to Fort Dunvegan (1808–1809) and Spokane House (1811–1812), and he played an important role in negotiating the purchase of the Pacific Fur Company in 1813. That same year he became a partner of the NWC. In 1816–1817, he was involved in legal disputes with the HBC and was sent to England for trial. On his return in 1820, he was a fellow passenger with George Simpson from Liverpool to New York. After the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, McTavish became a chief factor and managed York Factory, the centre of the HBC's Northern Department. During Simpson's absence in 1824–1825, he acted as Deputy Governor of the Northern Department as he had become a close friend and close ally of Simpson. He was granted furlough in 1829, and he travelled to Great Britain, with Goerge Simpson, to find a wife. He returned with his wife, Catherine Turner, in 1830 and was appointed to Moose Factory where he remained five years (1830–1835). His health declined in the 1830s, and he was given furlough in 1835–1836, after which he took charge of Lake of the Two Mountains District in the Montreal Department until he retired in 1846. He died in Lower Canada in 1847. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 456-57. Sylvia Van Kirk, "McTavish, John George," *DCB Online.*

MCTAVISH, WILLIAM (1815–1870) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, to Dugald McTavish and Letitia Lockhart. He was the nephew of Chief Factor John George McTavish, and the brother to Letitia Hargrave. He entered the service of the HBC in 1834 as an apprentice clerk at Norway House. One year later he was transferred to York Factory serving there as a clerk/accountant until 1844. He was awarded a furlough in England in 1844–1845, and in 1846 was promoted to chief trader at York Factory. From 1847 to 1848 he served as chief trader at Fort Garry, and from 1848 to 1850 he was put in charge of Sault St. Marie and Lake Huron. In 1850 he was back at York Factory, and from 1851 to 1856 he was in charge of the Factory (he had been promoted to chief factor in 1852). He was granted another furlough in 1856–1857, and thereafter was appointed officer in charge of Upper Fort Garry (1857–1864). In 1858 he was also appointed Governor of Assiniboia. Then, when George Simpson died in 1860, he also served as acting Governor of Rupert's Land. He was relieved as acting Governor of Rupert's Land in 1862 when the HBC appointed Alexander Grant Dallas to the position. He took over the position again, however, after Dallas resigned in 1864. Thus, from 1864 to his death in 1870, he served as Governor of Rupert's Land shepherding the HBC though the Riel Rebellion of 1869–1870. He was severely ill by this time and he died at Liverpool on 23 July 1870. He was married to Mary Sarah McDermot (her father was the Red River merchant Andrew McDermot) after coming to the Red River Settlement in 1857. HBCA Biographical Sheet. N. Jaye Goossen, "MacTavish, William," *DCB Online.*

MILES, ROBERT (1795–1870) came from Fairford, Gloucestershire, England. He entered the HBC service in 1818, in Montreal, and served as a clerk in the Athabasca Department at Fort Wedderburn and St. Mary's. After the merger of 1821, he became an accountant at York Factory (1821–1828). In 1828 he was made a chief trader and served in that capacity at York Factory until 1833. In 1833 he took charge of York Factory after the departure of Chief Factor Alexander Christie to Red River. After a furlough of one year, he assumed control of the Rupert's River District (1835–1843), and became chief factor in 1843. From 1843 to 1857 he was in charge of Moose Factory, and La Cloche in the Lake Huron District (1858–1860). He would continue to serve the HBC until 1861, when he retired to Canada. He died in 1870. HBCA Biographical Sheet. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 459.

MOODY, EDWARD (b.*c.* 1797) came from Sanday, Orkney Islands, and entered the service of the HBC in 1816, serving his entire career as a labourer/middleman. He served first at Churchill (1816–1817), then at the Rock Depot (1817–1820). In 1824–25, he wintered in the Athabasca, and from 1828 to 1831 he was at Island Lake. His last years were spent at Nelson River (1834–1837). He went home in 1837. HBCA B.239/d/188-210; B.239/g/1-17.

MOORE, GEORGE JR. (b.*c.* 1796–1871) was born at Moose Factory to George Moore Sr. and was part of a multi-generational family of canoe builders and steersmen there. George Jr. joined the HBC around 1812, working as a steersman and guide in the Moose Factory District until he retired to the Red River Settlement in 1834. Living in Red River, he continued to guide HBC boats until 1851. George Moore and Emma Good had been married according to the custom of the Country since 1816, and were officially married in December 1841. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Gwen Reimer and Jean-Philippe Chartrand, "A Historical Profile of the James Bay Area's Mixed European-Indian or Mixed European-Inuit Community," A Report prepared for the Department of Justice Canada, 2005.

NOLIN, LOUIS was the son of the French fur trader Jean-Baptiste Nolin (1742–1826) who operated in the Sault Ste. Marie region. In 1815, Louis was a clerk in Colin Robertson's expedition to Athabasca, and he was with Robertson when he re-established the Selkirk Colony in 1815–1816. He acted as an interpreter there for Robert Semple and the colony, and he was at the colony when the Battle of Seven Oaks occurred in 1816. He made a disposition about those events to Lord Selkirk at Fort William in August of 1816. In 1817, he went to Montreal and in 1818 he was tried and acquitted with Colin Robertson for their capture of Fort Gibraltar. He returned to the Red River Settlement and operated there, and in the Pembina region, as a private or free trader. E. E. Rich, ed., *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1939), 237-238. Donald Chaput, "Nolin, Jean-Baptiste," *DCB Online.*

NOURSE, WILLIAM (b.*c.* 1794–1855) came from Edinburg, Scotland, and entered the service of the HBC in 1817. He was immediately sent to the Southern Department as a clerk at Albany and its outposts. From 1822 to 1829 he was a clerk in the Lake Superior and Lake Huron districts, and from

1829 to 1831 he was at Moose Factory. Thereafter he was transferred to Michipicoten (1832–1833), Sault Ste. Marie (1834–1840) where he was promoted to chief trader in 1838. In 1841 he took charge of the Esquimaux Bay District, remaining there until 1848. After a furlough, he retired in 1851. He died at Cobourg, Ontario in 1855. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

O'DOGHERTY, WILLIAM ST. GEORGE was an Irish Canadian who entered the service of the HBC in 1819 as a clerk, and was at Red River in 1819–1820. He was posted to Fort Wedderburn in 1820, and to New Caledonia from 1821–1823. He retired to Canada in 1823. He was again employed by the HBC in the Montreal Department in 1827–1828. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 460.

OGDEN, PETER SKENE (1790–1854) was one of the most controversial figures in the fur trade, and he played a particularly violent role in the competition between the HBC and NWC between 1810 and 1818. He was born in Quebec in 1790, part of a very respectable family (his father was a judge and two of his brothers became lawyers), but he took a very different career path. He joined the NWC in 1809 after a brief term with the American Fur Company. His first postings were at Île-à-la-Crosse (1810–1814) where he intimidated and assaulted Peter Fidler, and Green Lake (1814–1818) where he was a constant thorn in the side of the HBC. During these years he was particularly known for his "bully-boy" tactics, and in 1816 was responsible for the violent murder of an Indian because he persisted in trading with the HBC. To put Ogden out of the legal reach of the HBC for this murder, the NWC transferred Ogden to the Columbia Department in 1818, and in 1820 he was made a partner of the Company. At the time of the NWC-HBC merger Ogden was excluded from the new HBC, but on the advice of George Simpson was readmitted in 1823. In 1824 he was put in charge of the Snake River Expeditions in the Columbia Department. Between 1824 and 1830 he led a series of expeditions to explore and trap the Snake River country to discourage inroads by American trappers and traders into the Columbia. In 1834 he was in charge of an expedition to establish a post on the Nass River on the northwest coast. He was appointed chief factor in 1834, and spent the years 1835 to 1844 in the New Caledonia District. Following a furlough in England, Ogden was appointed to the newly formed board of management for the Columbia district in 1845. Even with the territory in American hands after 1846, Ogden continued to operate out of Fort Vancouver until 1854. In poor health, , in ill health, he left Fort Vancouver for Oregon City, where he died on 27 September 1854. Glyndwr Williams, "Ogden, Peter Skene," *DCB Online.*

PEEBLES, JAMES (b.*c.* 1778–1840) came from Flota, Orkney Islands, and entered HBC service in 1801 as a labourer in the Albany District. He would remain in this district for his entire career, mainly as a middleman wintering at various posts such as Wepinaibau, Red Lake, Osnaburgh, and Albany Factory. He retired in 1836 to the Red River Settlement. He was married to a Native woman named Anne and they had at least six children. He died in the Red River Settlement in 1840. HBCA Biographical Sheet; B.135/g/9.

PELLY, ROBERT PARKER (1790–1867) was the cousin of John Henry Pelly, the HBC Governor. He replaced Andrew Bulger as the Governor of Assiniboia (the Red River Settlement) in 1823. He served a fairly uneventful term leaving in 1825. He had been born in England on 10 January 1790, and had served as captain in the East India Company. He died 11 June 1867 in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

PELLY, SIR JOHN HENRY (1877–1852) was an English businessman and HBC Governor of the London Committee. He was the most dominant institutional leader of the HBC in the 19th century, serving as governor for exactly three decades (1822–1852). He wielded immense political and economic power, serving simultaneously as the Governor of the Bank of England and a principal mastermind behind British colonial development. Pelly was also responsible for organizing several exploration parties, including some for Peter Warren Dease and Thomas Simpson which assisted in the discovery of the Northwest Passage. He was also responsible for the 1849 colonization of Vancouver Island. He would develop a business relationship with George Simpson, the North American Governor of the HBC. They were partners in the London firm, Pelly, Simpson & Co., and the Norwegian firm, Pelly & Co.

PRITCHARD, JOHN (1777–1855) was an Englishman who came to Canada in 1800, and entered the fur trade soon after. He served the XY Company until 1804, and after that the Northwest Company until 1814. In that year his supply of pemmican was confiscated by the Governor of Assiniboia and he was labelled as a coward by the NWC. He then quit the NWC and went to Montreal. There he was recruited by Colin Robertson to settle at the Red River Settlement. He arrived in April of 1815. He was at the battle of Seven Oaks and was captured by the Metis. He was held captive by the NWC for several years and taken to Montreal and York where he testified at the trial of Colin Robertson and others in 1818. Thereafter he travelled to London where he lobbied for the protections of the RRS. He returned to the Colony in 1820 and became a leading citizen of the colony, serving on the Council of Assiniboia until 1848, Carol M. Judd, "Pritchard, John," *DCB Online.*

PRUDEN, PETER (1778–1868) was born in Middlesex, England. He joined the HBC in 1791 and spent most of his career in the Saskatchewan District. In 1821 he was made chief trader and put in charge of Carlton House. He was there until 1824 when he went on furlough to England. When he came back in 1825, he was posted to Norway House. In 1826 he returned to Carlton House and remained there until he retired to the Red River Settlement in 1837. He was made chief factor in 1836. He died in Red River 1868. Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens, eds., *Edmonton House Journals, Correspondence & Reports 1806–1821* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 2012), 479.

RAE, WILLIAM GLEN (1808–1845) was born in Orphir, Orkney Islands, joining the HBC in 1827. He served first as a clerk at Lachine, but by 1828 was a clerk at Fort Garry. In 1829 he returned to Britain to seek medical advice, but by 1830 was back at Fort Garry. In 1830 he again went on medical leave to Britain, and in 1831 served as a clerk at Lac La Pluie. In 1832 he was sent to purchase sheep for the Red River Settlement, and in 1833 served as a clerk at Edmonton House. In 1834 he was transferred to the Columbia district serving as a clerk at Fort Colvile, Coutonais Post, Fort Vancouver, and Fort

Stikine. He as sent to the Sandwich Islands in 1841, and was there promoted to chief trader. He then served in California from 1841 to 1845. He would commit suicide at Yerba Buena (San Francisco) in 1845. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

RAE, JOHN (1813–1893) was born in Orphir, Orkney Islands. He was educated in medicine at the University of Edinburgh, and joined the HBC as a ship's surgeon in 1833. He spent his first ten years in the company at Moose Factory. While working there he became known for his stamina, living off the land, and traveling great distances. In 1844 he attracted the attention of George Simpson who was looking for a man to lead an expedition to survey the unexplored northern coastline. After receiving instruction in surveying and exploration, he made four expeditions between 1846 and 1854 trekking, sailing, and canoeing over 10,000 miles and surveying 1,800 miles of Arctic coastline. He proved that Boothia was a peninsula, that King William Land was an island, and discovered the final missing link of the Northwest Passage (later renamed Rae Strait). In 1854 he also discovered the fate of John Franklin's lost 1845 expedition, including their cannibalism. Rae retired from the HBC in 1856 and moved to Upper Canada making his home in Hamilton. He would continue to carry out surveys for the HBC (telegraph line from Britain to Greenland, 1860; southern Rupert's Land, 1861; St. Paul to Vancouver Island, 1865). After these expeditions he settled in London but remained interested in British North America and the Arctic. He has been recognized as an innovator in techniques of survival in the north, and the forerunner of great Arctic explorers Roald Amundson and Vilhjalmur Stefansson. He was married to Jane Alicia Thompson of Ireland in 1860. They had no children. He died on 22 July 1893 in London, and was buried in Kirkwall, Scotland. R.L. Richards, "Rae, John," *DCB Online*.

RENDALL/RANDALL, WILLIAM (1801–1877) came from Stromness, Orkney Islands, and entered HBC service in 1820. He began his career in the company as a boatbuilder at York Factory, and then from 1825 to 1828 he served as a carpenter at Fort Vancouver. From 1828 to 1831 he served as a carpenter at York Factory, and in 1832 he was promoted to postmaster at Severn Factory. he returned to York Factory as postmaster in 1834, serving there until 1839. He travelled back to London after George Simpson found him a position there. From 1839 to 1866 he served as an assistant warehouse keeper in London. He died on 3 May 1877. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

ROBERTSON, COLIN (1783–1842) was born in Perth, Scotland, on 27 July 1783. He entered the service of the NWC as an apprentice clerk around 1803. In 1809 he left the NWC because of slowness in promotion and his difficulty in working with John McDonald of Garth with whom he once fought a duel. In 1810 he wrote a letter to the Governor and Committee of the HBC urging an expansion of their operations into the Athabasca country. He was hired to serve that purpose in 1814. Robertson was at the center of the HBC-NWC conflict beginning in 1815. After he was hired, he went to Montreal, from which place he departed with his Athabasca expedition in May 1815. As he passed Jack River, he found the Selkirk settlers in retreat there. He escorted them back to Red River and re-established the Red River Colony in September 1815. He also served as the colony's acting governor. In March 1816, he attacked the NWC's Fort Gibraltar and arrested Duncan Cameron. In June 1816

he left the colony after a falling out with the new governor, Robert Semple. After being acquitted of charges brought against him by the NWC, Robertson left on an expedition to establish Fort Wedderburn (near the NWC's Fort Chipewyan) in 1818. He was there for only a few weeks before he was arrested on 10 October 1818 by the NWC and detained as a prisoner through the winter. He was being taken out of the country but on 19 June 1819, he escaped at Cumberland House. He then served at Fort St. Mary's on the Peace River during the 1819–1820 season, but was arrested again at Grand Rapid on 2 July 1820. He escaped once more while being taken to Montreal, this time only a few days' journey from Montreal. He then went to New York and sailed for Liverpool. After the merger of the HBC and NWC, Robertson was made a chief factor and put in charge of Norway House. From 1822 to 1823 he was in charge of the Saskatchewan District at Edmonton House. At the time, George Simpson still thought quite highly of him. After his year at Edmonton, Robertson was appointed to Norway House in 1823, and Fort Churchill in 1824. After a year in England to arrange for the schooling of his oldest son, Robertson again found himself shuffled from post to post. In short, his career had peaked with the merger of the HBC and NWC. George Woodcock was right when he wrote that "the very characteristics which made Robertson invaluable as an aggressive leader in the conflict with the Nor'Westers made him seem bombastic and ineffectual in the routine work of the HBC after 1821, when, without rivals, it had no further need for men of dramatic action. Trade was now largely a matter of bargaining and accountancy, and Robertson had no flair for either." In 1831, Robertson had a dramatic conflict with Governor Simpson when he brought his Native-born wife, Theresa Chalifoux, to Red River and tried to introduce her to "society" there. Although Robertson had shown poor judgment on several occasions during his time in the fur trade, the conflict between the two men at this time must explain the vehemence of Simpson's contemptuous assessment of Robertson in 1832, which begins with the following description: "A frothy trifling conceited man, who would starve in any other Country and is perfectly useless here." In 1832 Robertson had a stroke from which he never entirely recovered and for the next five years was on leave. He retired to Montreal officially in 1840 and died on 4 February 1842, a day after he was thrown from his sleigh. He and Theresa had seven children. George Woodcock, "Robertson, Colin," *DCB Online.* E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 461-64. W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *Documents Relative to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 494. Glyndwr Williams (ed.) *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 169-70.

ROBERTSON, JAMES (A) came from Orkney Islands and was born about 1790. He joined the HBC as a labourer in 1808, and by 1819 was a clerk/assistant trader. He served at Jack River, Norway House, and Berens River. Following the union of the companies in 1821, he would serve as a clerk/postmaster at Island Lake until 1830. He retired in 1830. HBCA B.239/d/195-216a; B. 239/g/1-11.

ROSS, DONALD (1797–1852) was born at Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, Scotland, to Roderick Ross and Janet Mackenzie. He joined the HBC in 1816 as a writer, and was posted first to York Factory. In 1817 he was sent to Cumberland House and he stayed as a clerk until 1823. In 1821–1822, George

Simpson noted that he was a very promising steady young man, and a good clerk. In 1824, he returned to York Factory, where he stayed until 1828. In that year, he accompanied George Simpson, as his secretary, to the Columbia District where they wintered at Fort Vancouver. When Ross returned to the Northern Department, he was promoted to chief trader and granted a furlough to Scotland. When he returned to service, he was put in charge of Norway House, where he remained for the rest of his career (1830–1851). He became a chief factor in 1840. In 1850 he was granted a furlough which was extended in 1851, for reasons of ill health. He stayed at Lower Fort Garry until he died in 1852. He had married Mary McBeath in 1820, and they had at least five children. HBCA B.239/d/188-216a; B.239/g/2-39; B.239/f/12. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 198.

ROWAND, JOHN (b.*c.* 1787–1854) was born in Montreal, the son of Dr. John Rowand. In 1803, he joined the NWC as an apprentice clerk, and was posted to the NWC's Fort Augustus, which adjoined the HBC's Edmonton House. His joining the NWC at such a young age prevented him from acquiring much more than a rudimentary education, a disadvantage that – had he not been as effective as he was – certainly would have hindered his prospects for promotion in the HBC after its merger with the NWC. Most of Rowand's life and career was spent either at Fort Augustus/Edmonton or in outposts in the immediate vicinity. Documentary evidence relating to him before 1821 is not abundant. However, he is known to have broken a leg in about 1810 after falling from a horse while hunting buffalo. He was rescued by a mixed-blood woman by the name of Louise Umfreville (Lisette Humphraville), although Rowand appears to have remained "very lame" from that accident. In his later life, he was described as "a powerful, but not very tall man of rough determined aspect." The two were soon married. She apparently brought into the marriage a large herd of horses. If Rowand himself had not already developed a deep love of horses by that time, he certainly did thereafter. By the time he died, he had accumulated a personal herd of at least 200 horses. The evidence suggests that, during the troubles at Red River in 1815 and 1816, Rowand was willing to do much to defend the interests of the NWC against the HBC, although he appears not to have had the opportunity to demonstrate whether or not he was willing to engage in violence. Although he had become a partner in the NWC by 1820, he is not mentioned in the HBC Edmonton House journals until 25 February 1819, probably because he was usually in charge of outposts in the Edmonton area. For example, it is clear that he was clerk at Summer Berry River in 1818–1819, and was in charge at Rocky Mountain House in 1820–1821. Some of the references to him before the merger confirm the impression that he was an aggressive – even ruthless – rival of the HBC. In April of 1819, Heron noted that "I am informed that one of the NW^{t} men traded skins with W^{m} Taylor at SBR, and that one Rowand a Clerk in charge for the NW^{t} put the man in Irons for it, but his men were so enraged at this Outrage that they rose en mass and took the irons off the poor fellow." Disagreements in the 1820–1821 season also suggest that Rowand was an uncompromising competitor. During the year of the merger, he was, as he had been in the previous year, in charge at Rocky Mountain House. It is not possible to know how he responded to the news of the coalition of the NWC and HBC, but it is certainly true that he navigated the transition very successfully. The Deed Poll of 1821 replaced the complex hierarchy in the HBC with two clear ranks of commissioned officers: chief factors (of whom there would be no

more than 25), and chief traders (of whom there would be no more than 28). At the amalgamation, Rowand was appointed to the rank of chief trader and was one of the leaders of the Bow River Expedition in 1822–23. Thereafter, he was appointed head of the Saskatchewan District (1823), a position he retained (except when travelling with George Simpson in 1841–1842, and during a furlough in 1847–1848). He had been promoted to chief factor in 1826. He died suddenly at Fort Pitt in May 1854, on his way out of the country. At the time, he was the last surviving officer who had been appointed to a commission under the Deed Poll of 1821 (the legal instrument which determined the number of commissioned officers of the HBC and their share in the profits of the fur trade after the merger). His body was eventually transported to Montreal where it was interred at the Mount Royal Cemetery. See Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens, eds., *Hudson's Bay Company Edmonton House Journals: Reports from the Saskatchewan District Including the Bow River Expedition, 1821–1826* (Calgary: Historical Society of Albert, 2016), 380-82.

SETTER, GEORGE (b.*c.* 1788–1868) came from Westra, Orkney Islands, and was born about 1788 (52 years old in the 1840 RRS Census). He entered the HBC service at Albany Factory in 1806, and by 1808 was serving inland. In 1809 he was posted in the Red River District, and he would serve most of his career at Brandon House and other Upper Red River posts such as Beaver Creek Fort Hibernia, and Qu'Appelle. In 1815–1816, he was a steersman wintering at Qu'Appelle, and by 1818–1819 he was an assistant trader at Beaver Creek. He became a postmaster in 1827–1828 in the Upper Red River District, a position he held until 1832, when he was appointed postmaster of the HBC Experimental Farm. He retired after the 1837–1838 outfit while serving as a postmaster at Swan River. He retired to the Red River Settlement and appeared in the 1840 Census with a wife and six children. He had married Margaret Setter (1813–1881) at Brandon House in 1826. He died in 1868. HBCA B.3/117-125; B.22/1-12; B.239/d/165-216a; B.239/g/1-17; E.5/10.

SHAW, ANGUS (d. 1832) was born in Scotland, and entered the service of the NWC as a clerk about 1787. He played an important role in establishing the NWC posts on the North Saskatchewan River and became a partner in the NWC in 1792, but gave up his shares in 1808 becoming an agent for the company. Between 1802 and 1814 his activities were centered mostly around the Great Lakes, but by 1814 he was again prominent on the plains and took a leading role in the dispersal of the Selkirk Colony in 1815. He was arrested by the HBC in 1819, but was released. After the union of the two companies in 1821, he continued on as a Montreal Agent of the HBC until his firm (McTavish, McGillivrays, and Co.) failed in 1825. His estate was involved in that firm's failure. He died in 1832 in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Gratien Allaire, "Shaw, Angus," *DCB Online*. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 465-66.

SHAW, WILLIAM was the Metis son of Angus Shaw, and was a clerk in the NWC in 1815. He was one of the "chiefs" of the Metis who organized the Metis and Freemen of the English River District to come to Red River. He along with Cuthbert Grant, Nicholas "Bonhomme" Montour, and Peter "Bostonais" Pangman signed the decree dispersing the Selkirk Settlement in 1815. They were taking

their orders from Duncan Cameron. There is a William Shaw in the employment records of the HBC from 1822 to 1825 at York Factory and Swan River. HBCA B.239/g/1-4.

SIMPSON, Lieut. ÆMILIUS (1792–1831) was born in Dingwall, Scotland, and was a step brother of Thomas and Alexander Simpson. He had a career in the Royal Navy from 1806 to 1816, rising eventually to lieutenant, but the end of the War of 1812 led to about a decade of unemployment. In early 1826 George Simpson, Æmilius's kin, offered him work as hydrographer and surveyor for the HBC. After travelling with Simpson from Liverpool to Montreal via New York, and then to Fort Garry, his first task was to confirm the location of the 49th parallel in the vicinity of Pembina (North Dakota). That same year he would be appointed to the Columbia District. He was apparently also instructed to produce a good survey of the entire new transcontinental route from York Factory to Fort Vancouver. His journal of his journey from York Factory to Fort Vancouver (14 July to 2 November 1826) is an unusually informative one. For several years, Simpson traded along the coast from Sitka (Alaska) to Monterey, Calif., and in the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands. In October 1829, he was appointed superintendent of the marine department of the HBC, occupying what Governor Simpson later called "the most dangerous post in the Service." In August 1830, he selected the site for a fort on the Nass River, a hazardous enterprise which the governor thought "necessary for the Salvation of our interior Trade in the event of our being excluded from the Columbia." Promoted to chief trader and given command of the *Dryad*, Simpson spent the summer of 1831 helping Chief Trader Peter Skene Ogden establish the fort on the Nass. He then went farther north on a "very successful" trading cruise, but illness forced his return to the fort, named after him, and on 2 Sept. 1831 he died of a liver complaint. HBCA B.223/a/3). Dorothy Blakey Smith, "Simpson, Æmilius," *DCB Online*.

SIMPSON, ALEXANDER (b. 1811) was born in Dingwall, Scotland, and was the brother of Thomas and Aemilius Simpson, and the cousin of George Simpson. He joined the HBC in 1827, and was stationed in the Lachine establishment on arrival in Canada. He remained there as a clerk and accountant until 1834 when a conflict with Chief Factor James Keith resulted in his removal to Moose Factory. He attempted to plead his case to George Simpson in Red River, but was sent back on foot and ordered to remain there as an accountant. In 1839, he was transferred to the Columbia and Fort Vancouver with special responsibilities for trade in the Hawaiian Islands. He was appointed chief trader in 1841. After the death of his brother (Thomas) in 1840, he came into conflict with his uncle George Simpson whom he blamed for the accusation that Thomas had committed suicide. He retired from the HBC in 1843, and would write a book, *The life and travels of Thomas Simpson, the Arctic discoverer* … (London, 1845) making his case for the exploits of his brother, and castigating the opinions and actions of Governor Simpson. The date of his death is unknown. Kerry Abel, "Simpson, Alexander," *DCB Online*. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 228.

SIMPSON, JOHN WEDDERBURN (b.*c.* 1817–1865) was born in London to Geddes McKenzie Simpson and Frances. He joined the HBC in 1834 as an apprentice clerk at Moose Factory. In 1836

he was promoted to clerk, in 1852 to chief trader, and in 1861 to chief factor. He served primarily in the Timiskaming District at Timiskaming, Abitibi, Mattawa, and Lake Nipissing. In 1865 he left Fort Timiskaming to seek medical help for a longstanding illness, and drowned when he fell off the wharf at Fort William on 8 April 1865. He was buried at Pembroke, Ontario. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

SIMPSON, GEORGE (b.*c.* 1786–1860) was born in the parish of Lochbroom, Scotland, to George Simpson, out of wedlock. He was raised by members of his father's family, and his uncle Geddes Mackenzie Simpson employed him after 1800 in his sugar brokerage firm in London. Through this employment he came into contact with Andrew Wedderburn, who was also in the firm. Wedderburn, whose sister married Lord Selkirk, became a shareholder in the HBC in 1808, and by 1810 was on the governing board. By these means, George Simpson became linked the HBC. With the increasing violence and hostility between the NWC and HBC in the years before 1821, the London Committee began losing faith in William Williams, the overseas governor of the HBC. On the urging of Wedderburn, who had changed his name to Andrew Colvile in 1814, the London Committee appointed George Simpson as governor-in-chief locum tenons in 1820. With the possibility of merger (NWC/HBC) on the horizon, Simpson's hard-headed business focus seemed the right quality needed in the emerging fur trade. Thus, on March 4, 1820 he sailed for North America, and left Montreal by canoe landing first at Fort William and then taking charge of the HBC's Athabasca campaign. He quickly mastered the problems of the trade, and after the union of the HBC and NWC in 1821, Simpson become governor of the Northern Department and William Williams became the governor of the Southern Department. Besides incorporating business management in Rupert's Land, and developing the trade across the mountains, Simpson also quickly sidelined Williams in the Southern Department, and became governor in chief of both departments by 1826. Simpson would control and guide both the yearly council meetings of the Northern and Southern Departments, tour and administer this vast domain, and organize these activities from his new headquarter at Lachine, Lower Canada (by 1834). As detailed in these letters, Simpson would go back to Britain to find a wife (his cousin Frances Simpson) in 1830, and suffer significant sickness and debility in the first half of the 1830s, to the point that he considered retiring. He did recover, however, making both the HBC, and his own business dealings, very profitable. He became not only a very efficient businessman, but also a politician/diplomat dealing with competing Russian claim in the pacific northwest, and American ambition in the Oregon country. By the 1850s, Simpson also pioneered the shipping of the company's trade goods west by rail instead of the traditional route via the Hudson Bay and York Factory. By the late 1850s, however, Simpson health began to fail and in 1859 he notified the London Committee that he intended to retire. He would die on September 7, 1860 and be buried in Montreal next to his wife Frances. He had been the principal architect of the HBC's growth in the forty years after union of 1821. John S. Galbraith, "Simpson, George," *DCB Online.*

SIMPSON, THOMAS (1808–1840) was born in Scotland in 1808, and was the brother of Aemilius and Alexander Simpson, and the cousin of George Simpson. He joined the HBC in 1828, and from 1829 the mid 1830s, he acted as George Simpson's secretary and confidential clerk during the busy season, and in the capacity of shopman, accountant, and trader at Red River during the winter. In 1836 he was

appointed joint leader, with Peter Warren Dease, of the HBC's Northern Discovery Expedition. He returned to Red River in 1840, and was appointed chief trader. In June of 1840, on his way back to England, he was killed near Turtle River, North Dakota, in suspicious circumstances. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 227-228.

SINCLAIR, THOMAS (b. 1791) was born in the Orkney Islands to Thomas Sinclair and Mary Sclater. He joined the HBC in 1824, and served first as sloop-master at York Factory from 1824 to 1826. In 1826 he was picked by Lieut. Aemilius Simpson to act as mate on the schooner *Cadboro*, and he crossed the continent to the Columbia in a brigade led by Simpson. He a part of the crew of the *Cadboro* during the establishment of both Fort Langley in 1827 and Fort Nass in 1831. In 1831 he applied to return to England but agreed to stay if his wages were increased. During that year, according to George Simpson, Sinclair was usually too intoxicated to offer assistance to Lieut. Simpson. On the death of Simpson, Thomas Sinclair became master of the *Cadboro*, but a year later his crew mutinied and John McLoughlin decided that he should be sent home. He returned to England in February 1834. Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793–1858* (Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice University of British Columbia, Okanagan Kelowna, British Columbia, 2010), 873.

SINCLAIR, WILLIAM JUNIOR (1794–1868) was the son of William Sinclair (Sr.) (c. 1766–1818) and Margaret (Nahoway) a Cree woman. William Senior had been a prominent trader who spent most of his career in the York Factory District, and, as noted in this journal died in 1818. William Junior engaged with the HBC as an apprentice in 1808 when he was only 14 years old, under the tutelage of his father at Oxford House, earning £8 per annum. After serving at Oxford House, York Factory, Winnipeg River, and Norway House, he wintered at Fort Severn in 1816. In 1817–1818, he served as clerk in the Lesser Slave Lake District before taking a furlough in England. Thereafter, he served at Oxford House, Sandy Lake, and Island Lake. During the South Branch expedition in 1821–1822, he accompanied John Edward Harriott on his 850-mile explorations into the Missouri River watershed. Between 1824 and 1831 he served in the Winnipeg River and Rainy Lake districts, and in 1831 he obtained his first independent command at the post of Dalles (in the Winnipeg District). By 1844 he had become chief of the post, and was promoted to chief trader. He then took command of Churchill (1844–1848), and thereafter sent to the Rainy Lake District. He was promoted to chief factor in 1850, and was stationed at Edmonton (1854–1857) as head of the Saskatchewan District. In 1857 he was again at Rainy Lake, and he retired in 1863. He died on 12 October 1868 at Brockville, Ontario. Sinclair had married Mary Wadin McKay (1804–1893), the daughter of Alexander McKay, and former wife of Chief Factor, Donald McKenzie. The couple had four daughters and four sons. Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens, eds., *Edmonton House Journals: Reports from the Saskatchewan District Including the Bow River Expedition 1821–26* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 2016), 383-84. Irene M. Spry, "Sinclair William," *DCB Online*.

SIVERIGHT/SEVERIGHT, JOHN (1779–1856) was born in Drumdelgy, Scotland, and entered the fur trade in 1799 as an apprentice clerk with the Montreal-based Forsyth, Richardson & Company, one of the firms of the XY Company. When the XYC merged with the NWC in 1804, he followed the new firm. In 1815 he was stationed at Portage la Prairie and the HBC considered him party to the NWC conspiracy to destroy the Red River Settlement. He was with Duncan Cameron at Fort Gibraltar when Cameron was taken prisoner by Colin Robertson. He was still in the colony in June 1816 when Governor Semple and about 20 settlers were killed at Seven Oaks. As a result, he was charged as an accessory in the murder of Semple. Though tried at York, he was acquitted and continued to serve the NWC at Sault Ste Marie until the merger of the NWC with the HBC in 1821. At that time, he was taken into the new firm. After a short time at Sault Ste. Marie (1821–1823), he was transferred to the Fort Coulonge District on the upper Ottawa River to combat the trade of the petty traders and lumbermen there. In 1828 he was promoted to chief trader, and in 1843 was placed in charge of the Timiskaming District as well. He was promoted to chief factor in 1846, and after two years' furlough he retired in 1849. He died on 4 September 1856 of a disease of the kidneys, and was buried in Warriston cemetery, Edinburgh. W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *Documents Relative to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 498. Elizabeth Arthur, "Siveright, John," *DCB Online*.

SMALL, PATRICK JR. (b.*c.* 1789–1846) was the son of Patrick Small Senior and a Cree woman, and was probably born at Île-à-la-Crosse. He entered the service of the NWC in 1804, and served his entire NWC career in the Saskatchewan District under James Hughes. According to HBC records, Small earned £135 or £150 per annum by the time of the merger. In 1822, George Simpson characterized him as "A strong active man and excellent Trader, but deficient in Education strongly suspected of being addicted to Liquor." He was retained, but his salary was reduced to £100 per annum, which probably explains why he was "expected to resign next season." Small did not resign, however, and continued to work for the HBC until his death in 1846, even though his salary appears to have been further reduced to £75 per annum by 1826–1827. He worked over those years as a clerk at Dog Rump Creek, Rocky Mountain House, Edmonton House, Carlton House, Fort Pitt, and Piegan Post. John Rowand noted of him in 1825 that he was an active and a good trader but "addicted to liquor when he has the opportunity of indulging therein." By 1839 he was again earning £100 per annum as a clerk. Patrick married Nancy Hughes, the daughter of his superior, James Hughes. He and Nancy had 7 daughters and at least 2 sons born between 1814 and 1835. He died in 1846. HBCA Biographical Sheet; B.60/e/8; B.60/d/12-69; B.239/f/12-19; B.21/d/2.

SMITH, EDWARD (d. 1849) entered the fur trade with the NWC sometime before 1806 when he was a clerk in the Athabasca District. He became a partner of the NWC in 1814, and at the union with the HBC in 1821, he became a chief factor in charge of the Athabasca District. He was at Fort Chipewyan from 1821 to 1823 and subsequently in the Mackenzie River District at Fort Simpson until 1832. He took furlough from 1832–1834, and resumed his duties as chief factor at Fort Chipewyan from 1834 to 1837. He then took another leave of absence (1838–1839), and retired in 1840. He died in 1849. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 175.

SMITH, WILLIAM (b.*c.* 1789–1843) was engaged by the HBC in London in 1813 as a clerk at a salary of £150. In 1817 was appointed assistant secretary to the HBC London Committee upon the retirement of Alexander Lean. He was made secretary in 1818. He then earned £300 per annum and occupied the company's premises at 3, Fenchurch. In 1823, his salary was increased to £500. During his term in office, the position of secretary became of increasing importance to the organization of the HBC. In addition to managing the business of the company, he also managed the business affairs of many of the servants of the company. He died in 1843, leaving his wife Jane, four daughters, and two sons. HBCA Biographical Sheet. E.E. Rich, ed., *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1939), 211-13; Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 242.

SPENCE, JOHN (1772–1856) joined the HBC from Harray, Orkney in 1794, and was first employed as an assistant trader at Churchill. He remained in this capacity at Nelson River until 1802. From 1802 to 1811 he was in charge of Reindeer Lake and Indian Lake, both in the Churchill District. After several trips back to the Orkney Islands, he was again assistant trader at Oxford House (1814–1816), Île-à-la-Crosse (1816–1821), and again at Nelson River (1821–1823). He retired to the Red River Settlement in 1823 and died there in 1856. HBCA Biographical Sheet. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 468.

SPENCER, JOHN (1790–1881) was born in England and joined the HBC in 1806. He spent the first eight years of his employment in the York Factory region. In 1814, he was appointed to the Council of Assiniboia and appointed sheriff to enforce Miles Macdonell's Pemmican Proclamation. As a result of his actions in doing so, he was arrested by the NWC in September of 1814 and sent to Montreal for trail. He was eventually acquitted in 1818, and rejoined the HBC. He became chief trader after the union in 1821, and served at English River from 1822 to 1825. In 1826, he was sent to the Columbia and in 1827 he was on furlough. He retired in 1828, but returned to HBC service in 1835 as a clerk in charge of the Rupert's River post. He would stay in the Rupert's River District until he retired in 1857. HBCA Biographical Sheet. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 9.

STEWART, ALEXANDER (SANDY) (b.*c.* 1780–1840) was born about 1780 and joined the NWC in 1811, serving in the Athabasca District and then in the Columbia where he became a partner of the NWC. At the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was made a chief factor and served at Fort William (1821–1822), Island Lake (1823–1826), and Fort Chipewyan (1826–1830). In 1830 he went on furlough, and in 1831 he was stationed at Albany but was granted leave due to ill health. He retired in 1833 and died in 1840. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

STUART, JOHN (1780–1847) was born in Scotland in 1780 and joined the NWC in 1796. He as sent to the Athabasca Department where he served at various posts until 1805, when he accompanied

Simon Fraser across the Rockies. He re-established Rocky Mountain House and Fort St. James in 1805, and returned to McLeod Lake. In 1809 he was given charge of New Caledonia. In 1813 he left Stuart Lake for the Columbia, searching for a supply route between New Caledonia and the Pacific coast. In October 1813, at Fort Astoria, he was one of the signatories to the bill of sale of the Pacific Fur Company to the NWC. The next year (1814) he became a partner of the NWC and returned to Fort St James. From 1817 until 1820 Stuart seems to have been in charge of Pierre au Calumet and took part in the successful harassment of Hudson's Bay Company men who were trying to gain a toehold in the Athabasca country. By March 1821, he was back at Fort George, directing the establishment of Fort Alexandria (Alexandria, B.C.). After the amalgamation of the NWC and the HBC in 1821, Stuart was made a chief factor and remained in charge of New Caledonia until 1824. By that time, however, he was worn down and asked to be transferred. In 1824, he assumed charge of the Saskatchewan District wintering at Carlton House (1824–1826). He subsequently was transferred to the Winnipeg District (1826–1832), and thereafter to the Mackenzie River District (1832–1835). By this time, he had run afoul of George Simpson who noted in his Character Book of 1832 that Stuart was an exceedingly vain man, a great egotist, extravagant and irregular in business, and considered him dishonest. He also noted that "of late become disgustingly indecent in regard to women." Stuart was granted a furlough in 1835, which was extended for health reasons until 1839, when he left the HBC's service. He retired to Forres, Scotland, and died near there at Springfield House in 1847. Shirlee Anne Smith, "Stuart, John," *DCB Online.*

SWANSTON, JOHN (b.*c.* 1800–1876) was born about 1800, in England, and entered HBC service in 1820 rising steadily in the firm. George Simpson noted in 1832 that he was a steady and active servant and 'Speaks Chippaway, is respected by the People and liked by Indians." At the time (1832) he was stationed in the Lake Superior Department. He was appointed chief trader in 1841, and chief factor in 1854. He retired in 1858. He had married Elizabeth Keith (1809–1865), and he died in 1876 in Montreal. Glyndwr Williams, ed., *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 226-227. Census of Canada, 1871.

TAYLOR, GEORGE JR. (b.*c.* 1798–1844). George was the native-born son of George Taylor, a servant of the HBC (sloopmaster). He joined the HBC in 1819 and served at various times as clerk, sloopmaster, and surveyor at York Factory, Churchill, Severn, Oxford House, and Red River. In 1828 he was appointed as a clerk for the Columbia District, but he never reached the Columbia, falling ill and spending the winter at Jasper House. In January 1829, John Rowand reported "Capt Taylor who remained at Jaspers with Mich^{l} Klyne on account of ill health is once more upon his legs, and I understand greatly recovered." Thereafter he would serve as clerk at Oxford House, York Factory, and Red River. From 1836 to 1838, he would survey and produce a detailed map of the Red River Settlement. He was married to Jane Prince, a native of Albany, and the couple had at least seven children. He died in Red River on 15 November 1844. HBCA Biographical Sheet. "Taylor, George Jr." John Rowand to the Governor C. Factors & C. Traders of the Honb^{le} Hudson Bay Company, dated Edmonton 13th Jan^{y} 1829. HBCA D.4/122. Plan of the Red River Colony. HBCA E.6/14.

THOMAS THOMAS (b.*c.* 1766–1828) was one of the principal settlers in the Red River Settlement. He was born in Wales, and entered HBC service as a Surgeon in 1789. He was master of Severn House from 1796 to 1810, when he became Superintendent of the Southern Department. In 1814 he became Governor of the Northern Department until he was replaced by Robert Semple in 1815. He spent the year of 1815–16 at Jack River House and convinced Colin Robertson to lead those RRS colonists who had been banished by the NWC in 1815 back to the Red River in 1815. He retired to the Red River Settlement in 1819 and was married to Sarah, a native woman. He settled on a 1228-acre lot on the east side of the Red River in what became the Parish of St. Paul's. This was granted him by the HBC (Lot 755 in the Kemp Index, Lot 583 in the HBC Land Register 'B', and Lots 111-119 St. Paul's in the Dominion Land Survey). He was also appointed to the Council of Assiniboia in 1822. The 1827 Census of Red River noted that he was living on Lot 755 (Kempt Index) had a house, barn, and stable, 1 horse, 7 cows, 8 oxen, 7 calves, 5 swine, 3 carts, 1 plough, 1 harrow, 2 canoes, and had 8 acres under cultivation. He died on November 24, 1828. HBCA Biographical Sheet, E.5/1; E.6/11. Bruce Peel, "Thomas, Thomas," *DCB Online*.

THOMAS, CHARLES was born at Moose Factory and joined the HBC as a writer in 1808 in the Moose District. He stayed there as a clerk until he left the service in 1814. He as back at Cumberland House in 1817, as a clerk and trader, and was posted in the Athabasca and Peace River districts from 1818 to 1822. In 1822 he was transferred to the Montreal Department working as a clerk at Lake of Two Mountains and Chats until he retired in 1832. Simpson considered him extravagant, unsteady, and dishonest. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Glyndwr Williams (ed.) *Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), 230.

THORNE, GEORGE (b.*c.* 1809) came from Sorel, Quebec, and was the long-time mess servant/butler in the HBC, serving mostly at York Factory during the time that John George McTavish was there. He is first noted as a servant at Lesser Slave Lake in 1823–1824, but by 1825 is listed as a butler/mess servant at York Factory. In 1833 he is transferred to Red River where he again served as a butler until 1838–1839, when he went free at Red River. The 1838 census of Red River lists him as a 29-year-old settler with a wife and 6 children. HBCA B.239/g/1-18; E.5/9.

TOD, JOHN (1794–1882) was born in Scotland and joined the HBC in 1811 as an assistant clerk as part of Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony initiative. He would work as a writer and clerk at a number of posts in the York and Severn districts until 1823, when he was transferred to New Caledonia across the mountains. In 1832, despondent over his lack of advancement, Tod resigned and headed for York Factory. There he was persuaded to stay, and in 1834, after being promoted to chief trader, he sailed on a year's leave of absence for England. He returned to Red River with a new wife he had married in London, but returned to England again in 1837, when his wife became mentally unstable. Leaving his wife with her parents, he returned to Montreal in 1838, and was posted to the Columbia District. He would serve in the Columbia and New Caledonia districts until 1849 when he was granted a leave of absence for ill health. In 1850 he retired to Victoria, and from 1851 to 1858 he served on the Legislative Council of Vancouver Island. He died of cancer in 1882. He had a complex family life of five

successive wives and ten or more children. HBCA Biographical Sheet. Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793–1858* (Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice University of British Columbia, Okanagan Kelowna, British Columbia, 2010), 929-930.

TODD (TOD), WILLIAM (1784–1851) was born in Ireland and joined the HBC as a surgeon in 1816. He served in that capacity at Cumberland House (1816–1818), the Red River Colony (1818–1819), and Fort Wedderburn (1819–1820) before returning to Britain (1820–1821). During his time at Fort Wedderburn, he was able to give valuable treatment to Chipewyan people then suffering from a whooping cough epidemic. At the time of the merger of the NWC and HBC he was regarded as "clever in his profession steady and attentive, but has no experience as a Trader." On his return to Rupert's Land in 1821, he was engaged for three years at a salary of £150. He served as clerk and surgeon at Pembina (1821–1823), and surgeon at York Factory (1823–1827). He then travelled west to take up an appointment as surgeon at Fort Vancouver, in the Columbia District. His stint in the Columbia District would be short. In May 1829 he would pass through Edmonton again to take up a position as surgeon at Brandon House. In 1830–1831, he would be promoted to chief trader in charge of the Red River District (during which time he would attend George and Frances Simpson during Frances's difficult pregnancy, and George's ill health). He would remain nominally in charge of the Red River District until 1832. In 1832, Simpson wrote that Todd was "considered skilful in his profession and a tolerable Indian Trader, but not regular in business, nor is he an active bustling man, and his ignorance of the French and Indian Languages disqualify him for many situations in the Service and of Counting House and Depot business he is quite ignorant. A Man of fair conduct, perfectly honest, and will not tell a direct lie: not much liked by his colleagues who think little of him altho' he has a very good opinion of his own abilities and is really a shrewd fellow, but wanting in the Manner and address which a man of his Profession might be expected to have. Has a tinge of Radicalism about him, is over fond of a Glass of Grog, and would in the Civilized World be addicted to Pot House conviviality altho' not a Drunkard." From 1832 to 1843 Todd would be in charge of the Swan River District at Fort Pelly. In 1836, however, he was sent to York Factory to deal with a mysterious recurring illness known as "York Factory complaint," which he himself contracted, but which he was credited as permanently eliminating from the fort. In 1837, having returned to Fort Pelly, Todd heard rumors of a terrible disease spreading north from the American Fur Company's Fort Union. Concluding that the disease was probably smallpox, he quickly tried to establish a vaccination program by vaccinating people himself, sending vaccine to various posts, and even teaching aboriginal leaders how to administer the vaccine to their people. Arthur J. Ray concluded that "Todd's quick action saved the lives of countless numbers of Indians inhabiting the Swan River District and the woodlands north of the Saskatchewan River and greatly enhanced his already considerable reputation among the Indians as a man who possessed powerful medicine." After a furlough, he served at Severn (1844–1845) before returning to Fort Pelly (1845–1851), punctuated with another furlough from 1849 to 1851. He died at Red River in 1851. HBCA Biographical Sheet. B.239/f/12. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 471-2. Arthur J. Ray, "William Todd," *DCB Online.*

TOPPING, THOMAS came from London and was about 58 years of age in 1822. In the York Factory accounts of 1819–1820, he was listed as being 55 years old, and that he had been in the HBC service for 16 years. He was categorized as an "assistant". In 1822, he was sent back to England. HBCA B.239/d/210; B239/g/2.

WENTZELL, WILLIAM FERDINAND (1777–1832) was born in Norway and entered the service of the NWC in 1799. He was employed as a clerk in the Athabasca District, and in 1820 he was attached to the first Franklin Expedition. On his return, he joined the HBC at the invitation of George Simpson. He served in the McKenzie River District (1822–1824), and then at Fort Chipewyan until his retirement to Canada in 1825. He briefly re-entered the Company's service in 1827 as a clerk at Mingan in the Montreal Department. In 1829 he finally retired, dying of cholera in 1831. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 472.

WEST, JOHN (1778–1845) was the first Anglican missionary and HBC chaplain in Rupert's Land. He was born in Farnham, Surrey, England, in 1878, and was educated at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford. He was ordained a priest of the Church of England on December 20, 1804, and after spending 15 years in various curacies in England, he was appointed chaplain of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1819. He arrived at the Red River Settlement on October 14, 1820, and quickly established a school in the Parish of St. John. He immediately began ministering to the Metis and Indians of Red River and beyond. He travelled widely across Rupert's Land, but the fur traders became fearful that his evangelization would ultimately harm the fur trade, and he upset the settlers of Red River by opposing marriage "according to the custom of the country," and forcing some Company officers to formalize their relationships with Indigenous women. He went home in 1823, and although he intended to return, he never did. He spent the rest of his life as Rector of Chettle, Dorsetshire in England. He died on December 31, 1845. Richard A. Willie, "West, John," *DCB Online.*

WILLIAMS, WILLIAM (d. 1837) came from Wales and was appointed resident governor of the HBC Territories in 1818. There is little evidence of Williams' early career, but it is suggested that he went to sea at a young age, serving as a ship captain or officer for the East India Company on voyages to India between 1788 and 1799. The HBC hired Williams specifically for his combative personality and courage. At the time, the conflict with the North West Company over fur trapping territories had turned bloody, heavily damaging HBC profits. In 1819 he retaliated against the NWC aggressions by capturing a number of partners and servants of that Company at the Grand Rapid and sent them to England for trial. For this action, the NWC issued a warrant for his arrest, and George Simpson was sent out by the HBC as a backup in case Williams was forcibly removed. Following the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821, the territory was divided into two vast departments. Williams was given leadership of the Southern Department (centered around Moose Factory and James Bay), while his ambitious rival, Sir George Simpson, took control of the Northern Department. After coming into conflict with George Simpson, illustrated in these letters, Williams was recalled to England in 1826.

He died there in 1837. After Williams was transferred to the Southern Department in 1821, he severed his relationship with Sally Fidler (the daughter of Peter Fidler), and brought his wife to the Hudson's Bay. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821, and Report* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 473. Sylvia van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 160.

WILSON, ANDREW (b.*c.* 1787–1835) was a native of Orphir, Orkney Islands, who joined the HBC in 1806 as a nineteen-year-old. During the 1812–1813 outfit, he was employed as a bowsman in the Churchill District, and in 1814–1816 he wintered at Nelson House. He was sent to Michipicoten from 1816 to 1818, and returned to Europe in 1818. He re-entered HBC service in 1820 and wintered at Norway House (1820–1821) and York Factory (1821–1822). In 1829, he was promoted to the rank of postmaster and placed in charge of Split Lake House, where he remained until the end of 1831–1832. He was dismissed in 1833, by John Tod, on the charge of drunkenness, but after hearings in Red River and Norway House, these charges were declared to be unproven and unfounded, and Wilson was reinstated. He drowned crossing Lake Winnipeg in 1835. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land 1821–31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 460-61.

WORK, JOHN (1792–1861) was born in County Donegal, Ireland, and entered HBC service in 1814 as a steward at York Factory. He quickly was promoted to assistant trader and writer at Trout Lake (1815–1821), and clerk in charge of Severn Factory (1818–1822). In 1822 he was in charge of the Island Lake District, and thereafter was transferred to the Columbia where he spent the rest of his career at Spokane House, Fort Colville, and Flathead Post. In 1831 he was made chief trader and put in charge of the Snake Country Expedition. From 1834 to 1846 he was in charge of the coasting trade at Fort Simpson on the Nass River. In 1846 he was made chief factor becoming the district manager at Fort Simpson. In 1860 he became manager of Fort Victoria. He died at Victoria on December 22, 1861. He was married to Josette Legace, a Spokane mixed blood, in 1849. These had 11 children born between 1827 and 1854. HBCA Biographical Sheet.

YALE, JAMES MURRAY (b.*c.* 1798–1871) was born about 1798 in Lachine, Lower Canada, and entered the HBC service at Montreal in 1815. He was employed first as a clerk at Fort Wedderburn, in Athabasca, from 1815 to 1817. In 1817, he was made a prisoner by the NWC at Fort Chipewyan and detained at Great Slave Lake until October 1817. In 1818, he went to the Peace River where he and Joshua Halcro established Colvile House, where they spent the winter of 1818–1819. In 1821 he as transferred west of the Rocky Mountains, where he spent the rest of his career and life. He became a chief trader in 1844, but never advanced beyond this level, even though he was well thought of and trusted by the men with whom he worked. He was put in charge of Fort Langley with the departure of Archibald McDonald in 1833, and he established Fort Yale in 1848. After a furlough in 1859, he retired in 1860, and settled near Victoria. He died there in 1871. W. Kaye Lamb, "Yale, James Murrary," *DCB Online*. E.E. Rich, ed., *Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson,*

1820 and 1821, and Report (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 473-74. Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793–1858* (Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice University of British Columbia, Okanagan Kelowna, British Columbia, 2010), 991.