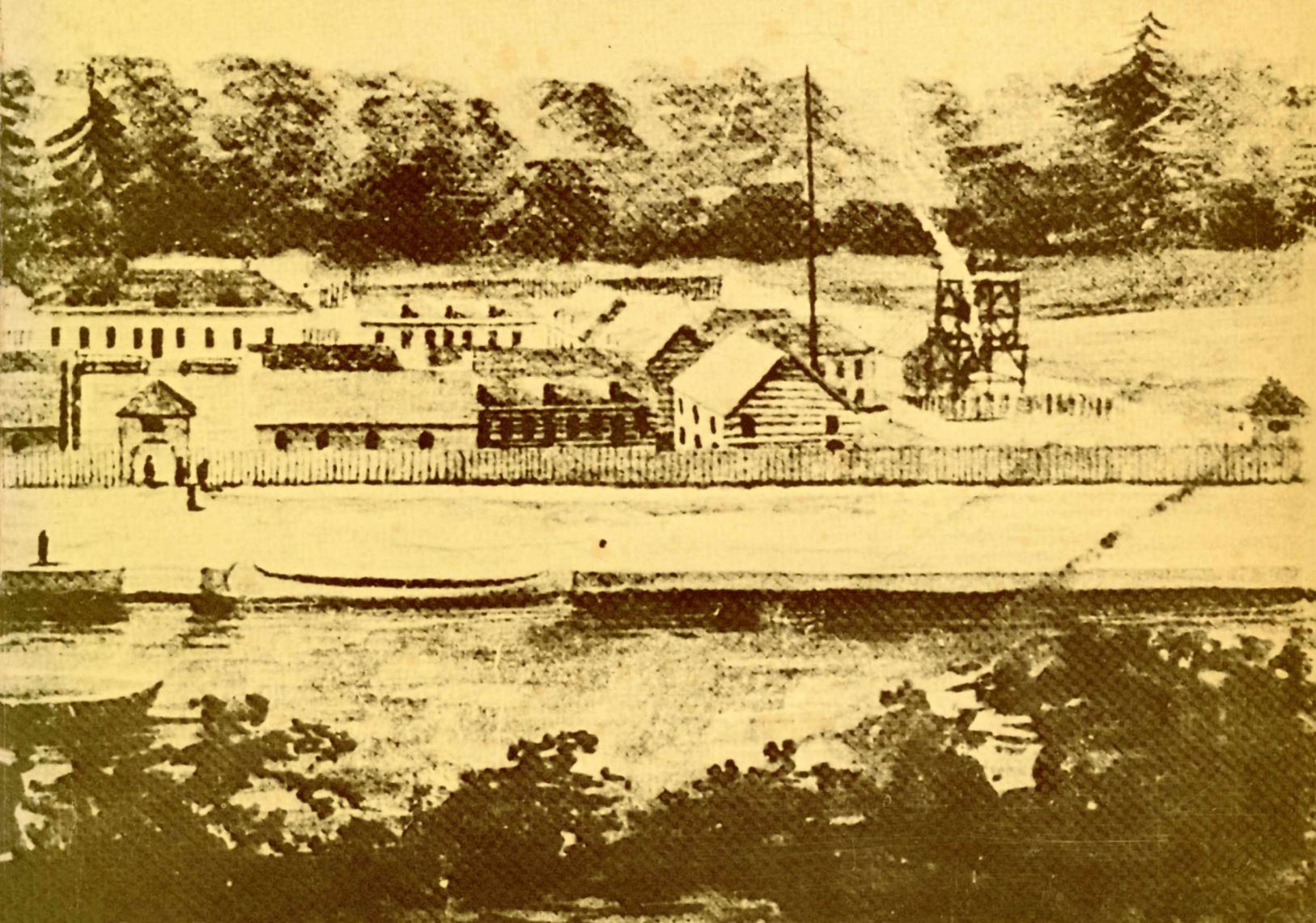


FORT WILLIAM

LIVING AND WORKING AT THE POST

Susan Campbell



The Fort William Archaeological Project Series

Fort William: In Pursuit of the Past
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Fort William: Living and Working at the Post
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FORT WILLIAM

LIVING AND WORKING AT THE POST

Susan Campbell

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1976

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Foreword

Archaeological work on the site of the North West Company's Fort William depot at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River in Thunder Bay was initiated as part of the preliminary research preceding the Ontario Government's decision to reconstruct the post. Exploratory excavations were conducted in the summers of 1968, 1969 and 1970 by Professor K. C. A. Dawson of Lakehead University.

In the spring of 1971, retiring Premier John Robarts announced the government's plan to reconstruct Fort William at Pointe de Meuron, ten miles upstream from the original site. The archaeological investigation at the mouth of the river then became a full-time project contracted to Lakehead University and carried out in conjunction with the overall reconstruction program.

The Fort William Archaeological Project was directed by Joyce A. Kleinfelder and Marie Taylor, who were assisted by a full-time staff which varied from one to eleven people. The basic staff was augmented by summer crews ranging from two to twelve persons and by fifteen sub-contracted specialists throughout Ontario and Quebec.

The 1971 and 1972 excavation objectives were determined by the reconstruction program: find whether remains still existed of particular North West Company buildings c.1816-17 which were about to be reconstructed; if so, ascertain all possible dimensions and structural details. Had the site been occupied for a

relatively short period of time, then left undisturbed until the present day, the task would have been a straightforward one. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

To begin with, the north half of the North West Company site lay beneath a residential area and the south half was used by the Canadian Pacific Railway as a cleaning yard. This severely limited the area accessible for excavation. Secondly, as information about the site began to accumulate, it became clear that the mouth of the Kaministiquia River and the site of Fort William had seen repeated human use during prehistoric times and continual change since the turn of the 19th century. The archaeologists were confronted with traces of all the users of the site, and the picture that emerged from the excavations was exceedingly complex and confusing. The documentary and pictorial record of the site contained crucial gaps and conflicts, and provided no instant answers to the overwhelming number of archaeological questions. With very rare exceptions, it was virtually impossible to designate, with any degree of certainty, a feature in the ground as belonging to the precise period of reconstruction.

Consequently, the original excavation objectives were abandoned in 1973 and the last field season was spent attempting to answer some of the archaeological questions by means of more detailed excavation of features found in previous years. Although this approach by no means resolved all the problems, it did produce a more comprehensible body of archaeological information.

In the spring of 1974, the Project embarked on the final stage of its program: the preparation of a series of four publications based on the data gathered since 1971 and addressed to the general reader. The ensuing departure from the standard approach to archaeological reporting was based on the following considerations:

- ... those directly responsible for, and those overseeing, the reconstruction of Fort William had been kept informed of the archaeological findings throughout the course of the Project;*
- ... the volume of the data in general, and the fragmented nature of the archaeological data in particular, did not warrant extensive quantitative description; in addition, at the conclusion of the Project, the data will be made available to other researchers through the Ministry of Culture and Recreation;*

- ... the logical conclusion of research is to reach beyond the tangible remains of the past – features in the ground, artifacts, documents and pictures – and attempt to grasp something of the human context, the living, dynamic whole, which they represent;
- ... neither research nor an interest in it is the prerogative of archaeologists and historians – it is part of everyone's cultural heritage.

The interpretation and understanding of the archaeological and/or historical data set forth in this publication is basically that of the author modified by a critical review of the manuscript by all members of the Project employed at the time of editing. In all cases, the aim was to present the interpretation which best accommodated all the known information available at the time.

References, Style and Terminology

All historical references and pictures have been reproduced with the written permission of the repositories or individuals concerned, and may not be further reproduced without their permission.

In quotations, the spelling and punctuation of the original document has been presented and authors' interpretive insertions kept to an absolute minimum. In the text, earlier spellings of words such as 'Kaministiquia' and 'Pointe de Meuron' have been used instead of present day anglicized versions in order to retain a flavour of the times.

Although Ojibwa peoples occupied the area around Lake Superior in the time of the North West Company, it is known that representatives of other cultural groups also came to Fort William at one time or another. Unless it is known which group is being referred to, the term 'Indian' has been used to denote those of indigenous North American cultural background in order to be consistent with the historical quotations and in order to avoid the confusion that sometimes arises with use of the word 'native' and to avoid the unfamiliarity of such terms as 'Amerindian'.

The term 'half-breed' is often used in the documents to refer to those of mixed North American and European background. However, the term has come to have so many derogatory connotations that the word 'Métis' has been used in the text instead.

The abbreviations 'NWC', 'HBC' and 'CPR' have been used throughout the publications when referring to the North West Company, Hudson's Bay Company and Canadian Pacific Railway. This has been done for the sake of brevity and we trust the companies concerned will not be offended.

About the Author

Susan Campbell was the Project's Associate i/c Research from 1972 to 1975. She was responsible for conducting research and for cataloguing the documentary data retrieved by herself and by the researchers employed on a temporary basis from 1971 to 1974. In this volume she speaks of the foremost aspect of the documents reviewed in the course of research: people and their everyday lives – particularly those people who are never encountered in standard history books, but whose lives and activities nonetheless are the foundation upon which the larger, officially remembered events of history are enacted.

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I would also like to thank all the people at the Fort William Archaeological Project whose comments and suggestions on my drafts have been incorporated into this final report. Joyce Kleinfelder and A. M. Taylor in particular have been instrumental over the last three years in deepening my understanding and appreciation of the past, and it is largely to their credit if I have achieved any degree of success in this report.

I am indebted to Professor Elizabeth Arthur, of Lakehead University, whose encouragement and advice have been a great help on many occasions.

A special note of thanks is due Bobby Couch, who typed her way unflinchingly through the maze of my successive drafts.

S. Campbell

INTRODUCTION

The Fort William Archaeological Project began preliminary historical research during the 1971 field season and instituted a full-time research program, conducted by the author, in the spring of 1972. The general aim of the historical research was to find documentary and pictorial data that would both supplement and assist in the interpretation of the archaeological findings. Since excavation aims centred on physical structures, the first priority for historical research was information that referred specifically to structures that had stood on the site from 1800 to the present. The second priority was data that referred to any activity that would have left tell-tale signs in the ground. The third priority was *any* other information related to people and their activities on the Fort William site. All three priorities involved keeping an eye open for comparative information from other sites in the area that had been occupied during the same time period.

The documentary and pictorial evidence available on the fur trade in general and Fort William in particular is housed in various archives and museums in Canada, the United States and Europe. Canadian repositories in themselves provide vast quantities of material on Fort William. Although collections in Winnipeg, Thunder Bay and Toronto were examined, most of the research time was spent in the Public Archives of Canada, where a microfilm copy of the Hudson's Bay Company records is housed. From this mammoth collection, only those items of direct concern to us were chosen: all of the Fort William Journals and some journals from nearby posts, the Fort William and Lake Superior District Reports, the HBC Minutes of Council, some account books and miscellaneous papers from the North West Company.

Additional information came from the various individuals' papers comprising the Fur Trade Collection and from the Selkirk Papers, in which thousands of pages of inventories and depositions relevant to Fort William in the NWC period can be found.

The Nature of Historical Data

The material from these collections forms the basis of the present volume and requires some explanation for the reader to appreciate what is involved in doing historical research and in preparing a publication of this nature. Historical researchers rely on documents, written and pictorial, which are merely fragments of the past, in order to interpret what that past was like. One never knows how many fragments still exist. It is not possible, therefore, to assess how representative a sample the fragments at hand are of those that exist or of the whole that once existed. It will become clear from this exercise that any interpretation of the past is to some degree tentative. In the case of Fort William, this is an extremely important point, since there is much less information on the North West Company period from 1801 to 1821 than on the Hudson's Bay Company period, ending in the early 1880s. Company records, in the form of Post journals, reports and correspondence, enable us to piece together a more complete picture for the latter period than for the NWC years.

It is equally important to bear in mind what sort of records have been kept through time, since they are the sole basis from which the researcher works. First of all, only those who could write recorded anything. Any information, therefore, about labourers and Indian people must come second-hand, via someone who could write. Secondly, different types of records provide us with varied sorts of information. Inventories listing goods, and sometimes prices, indicate what items were used in the trade. Account books reveal what goods the men at different levels – partners, clerks and *engagés* – bought for their use in the interior. The number of people and the work they did comes out in Post journals, along with how the trade was handled. Minutes of council meetings reveal how Company policy developed over the years. All of these different aspects emerge from the wide array of documents available.

The person who made the record, as well as where and when, also has to be taken into consideration. A distinction must be made between the disinterested observer and the participant with vested interests, for accounts of an event will vary according to the person's involvement in it. Furthermore, it is necessary to know when an account was written

in relation to the event, for the possibility of distortion is far greater in something written several years after the fact than in an on-the-spot description.

Apart from assessing the validity of individual documents, the researcher must also deal with contradictions within one or between two pieces of evidence. To make conclusions without taking this into account, as well as the possibility of not having examined all the relevant documents, would be an extremely hazardous operation.

The research process, bearing all these points in mind, is an involved task requiring strict scrutiny of the material examined and constant searching for new leads. Not all information on Fort William is filed as such in the various archives visited. Often a great deal of time is needed to glean a bit of information from a collection which the researcher feels could relate to Fort William. There is always the chance too that the search will prove fruitless: it is impossible to predict the results or to guarantee success.

Additional Limitations

Besides the Reconstruction objectives and the difficulties inherent in the research process, two additional limitations of our research program were time and staff. Completing in three years a project which could have taken ten obviously means that many possible avenues of research were not explored. The fact that the historical research was primarily carried out by one full-time person who also processed all the data further limited the amount of material that was accumulated. This was somewhat mitigated by the fact that the Public Archives of Canada remains open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The physical endurance of the researcher thus became the governing factor as to the amount of material brought back. Despite marathon efforts, however, a person can only stand so many hours of peering into a microfilm machine before lines begin to blur, things stop making sense and the quiet of the reading room is interrupted by outbursts of giggling at events in the journals.

Because of these limitations, as well as those inherent in the documents themselves – for example, the complete absence of journals from Fort William during the NWC period and gaps of several years when apparently no journals were submitted from Fort William in the HBC period – there are areas where our research tells us very little. This does not mean that it is impossible to gain insights into Fort William,

the place, and the people who lived there. It *does* mean that in order to attain this end, scrupulous attention must be paid to every document scouring it for every possible bit of information and weaving those bits together into a coherent whole.

An Operating Framework

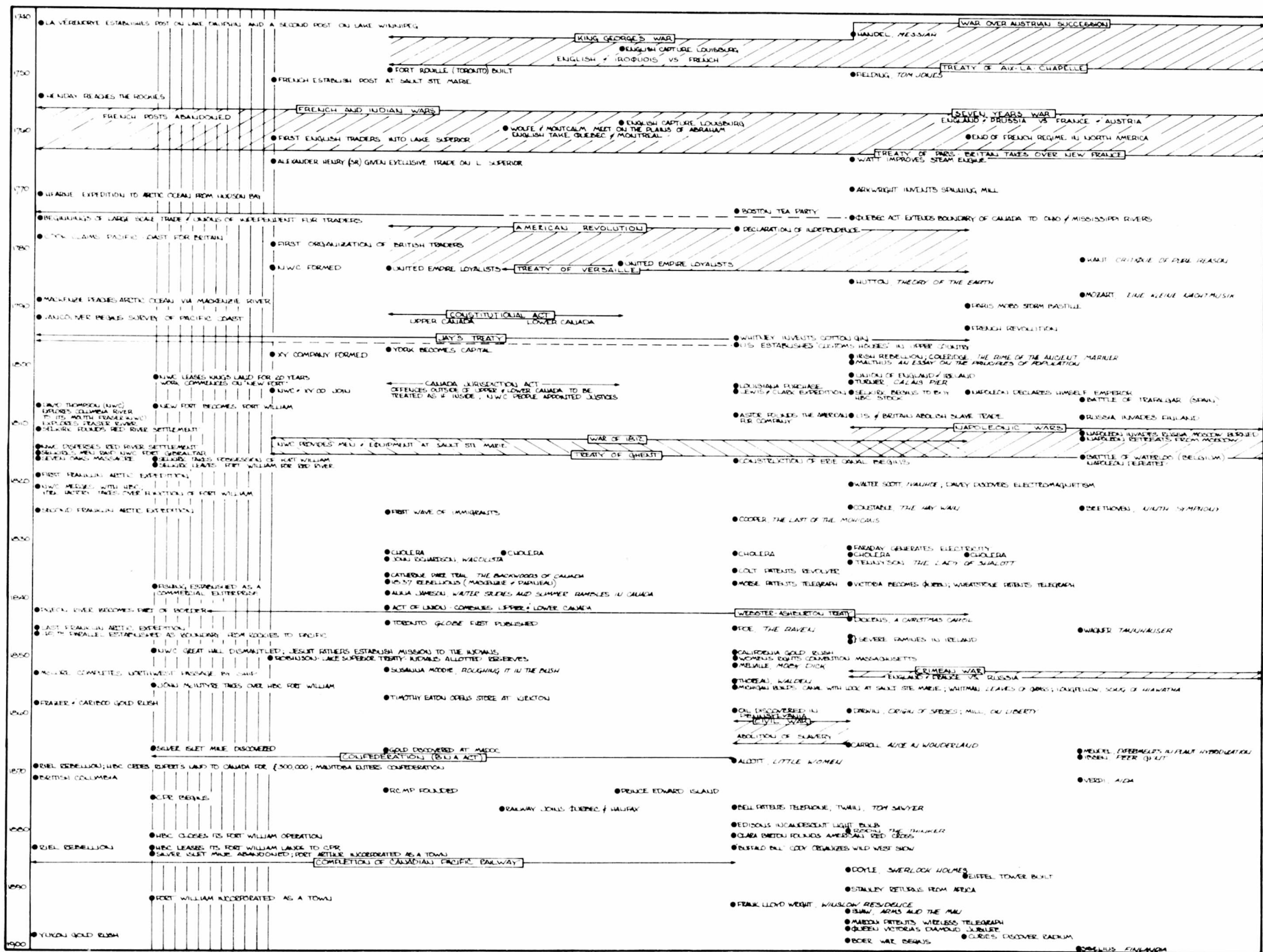
The task becomes much less formidable when we establish a framework within which we can operate. *People* form the basis of this framework. The world is made up of individuals who exist within the context of a natural environment. This environment imposes certain conditions, such as weather, over which people have no control, but it also supplies them with basic resources, such as fuel, which they need to survive. People and their material goods form a human environment, which is just as essential for survival as the natural environment. These basic concepts, which perhaps seem simplistic, are too often ignored by historians but provide a meaningful frame of reference which applies equally to the people at Fort William then and to ourselves today.

The object of this publication is to grasp the particular version of this framework as it existed at Fort William during the fur trade period and to come to some understanding of what it was like to live and work at the Post. The documentary and pictorial data gathered by the Project consists largely of information pertaining to material culture: buildings and material goods used on the site. In spite of this obvious bias, however, people and their activities also emerge from the data strongly enough that a basic picture of life on the site becomes evident.

Certain fundamental living patterns, dictated by the Canadian Shield, its climate and resources – some of which still apply in rural and bush communities in the area – and by the objectives of the fur trade, remained unchanged throughout the NWC and HBC periods. These patterns were modified only in the latter part of the 19th century, as technological change gathered momentum in Europe. The most detailed and comprehensive picture of daily and seasonal patterns of living at Fort William comes from the HBC Fort William Journals, a daily record of events kept by the person in charge of the Post. Unfortunately, similar records are not available for the NWC years; however, on the basis of what is known about the two occupations of the site and what is known from similar records kept by NWC people at other sites, we may assume that in many ways life at Fort William changed very little between the NWC and HBC periods, especially during the early years of the latter.

The reader's general impression of this text will depend on his or her own experience, background and values, which will be reflected in whether he or she feels life at the Fort was exciting, challenging, routine, or boring. It is impossible to read the journals carefully and not come away with questions. There is a great deal of information on what survival at the Post entailed, but very little about the attitudes and non-work aspect of living at Fort William. How did these people whose activities are being described feel about their way of life? What kind of social life presented itself? Were families living at Fort William? Were there many children? How did they spend their time? This is the type of information which must be gleaned from chance remarks scattered throughout masses of material. It is also the type of information which allows us to savour, not a static object called Fort William, but the very alive individuals - all with distinct personalities - who made that place their home. In this volume, we have directed our gaze at these individuals and their day to day living, in an attempt to answer, at least some of these questions. This, to us, is the essence of Fort William the fur trade establishment.

	C A N A D A					USA	E U R O P E			
	NORTHERN AND WESTERN LANDS	MOUTH OF KAMISTIGUIA RIVER	UPPER GREAT LAKES	LOWER GREAT LAKES	ST LAWRENCE RIVER	MARITIMES	ATLANTIC SEABOARD WESTWARD	ENGLAND	FRANCE	REMAINDER OF EUROPE
1492	● 1492 REYNOLDS (ENGLAND) REACHES FOR NORTHWEST PASSAGE				● 1497-98: CAROT (RALEIGH) EXPLORES ATLANTIC COAST FROM LANCASTER TO CAROLINAS		● 1492 COLUMBUS (SPAIN) REACHES WEST INDIES			
1534					● 1534-35 CARTIER (FRANCE) SAILS DOWN ST LAWRENCE		● 1500 ST AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA FOUNDED BY SPANISH			
1585							● 1585 ENGLISH SETTLERS LEFT ON ROANOKE ISLAND VIRGINIA			
1590							● 1590 ROANOKE SETTLEMENT DISAPPEARS			
1600						● PORT ROYAL, N.S. FOUNDED		● UNION OF SCOTLAND & ENGLAND		
1607	● JACKSON (ENGLAND) REACHES HUDSON RAY				● QUÉBEC FOUNDED BY CHAMPLAIN		● ENGLISH SETTLE JAMESTOWN, VIRGINIA			● TELESCOPES MANUFACTURED IN HOLLAND
1609	● MAYER (ENGLAND) REACHES FOR NORTHWEST PASSAGE				● CHAMPLAIN JOINS HURON TO ATTACK IROQUOIS SOUTH OF LAKE ONTARIO		● DUTCH BUILD PORT AT MANHATTAN } ENGAGE IN FUR TRADE WITH IROQUOIS (MAINLY WEAPONS)			● REMAINS: THE RACKING OF THE CROSS
1610							● DUTCH BUILD PORT AT ALBANY			
1612							● SHAKESPEARE DIES			
1620							● PILGRIMS LAND AT PLYMOUTH, MASS.			
1624							● ENGLISH SETTLE BOSTON	● STANIS DADO DIES		
1628								● FORMATION OF COMPANY OF NEW FRANCE		
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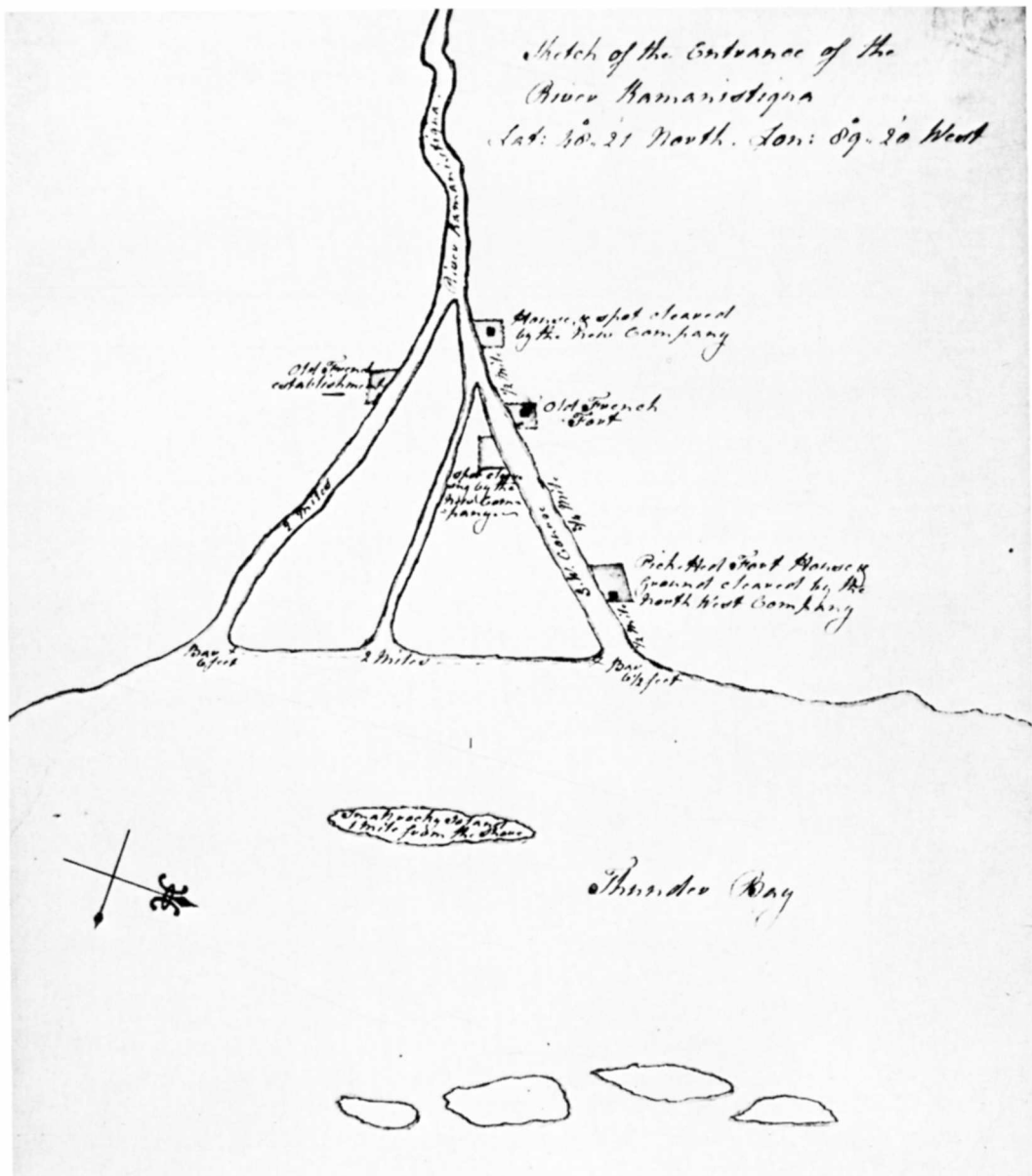
THE CLIMATE OF THE TIMES

As the chart illustrates, people and places exist within the context of a time continuum, from which no one individual or event can be dissociated. Ongoing processes within and between individuals, groups and nations begin, overlap and end. The task of examining any one segment of the continuum involves culling the essential bits of information from the nonessential and attempting to present a reasonably accurate picture of that segment. Fort William is one such tiny dot in the universal whole, and it is the existence of this community, which dates back almost three hundred years, that this chapter attempts to trace. Much information has been omitted in favor of what was considered to be essential to an overall understanding of Fort William. The chart is intended as an aid in contrasting events occurring simultaneously at Fort William, on the rest of the continent and in Europe. It is intended to assist the reader in placing Fort William in a wider spatial, temporal and cultural context; in no way is it meant to be a comprehensive overview of world events. Only by maintaining this perspective can one realize fully the links and disparities between groups of people through time.

Early French Traders

Very soon after the French arrived in Canada in the 16th century, the fur trade became an integral part of their reason for remaining. During the French regime, exploration westward was undertaken in an

effort to promote commerce in, and justify the existence of, New France. After the founding of the HBC in 1670, competition developed between French traders and the British company. The former first built at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River during the early 1700s when La Vérendrye, to meet the HBC's challenge, established a chain of posts between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg, eventually extending it to the Saskatchewan River. This exploration and establishment of inland



1 Sketch of the Entrance of the River Kaministiquia, R. H. Bruyeres, 1802 (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

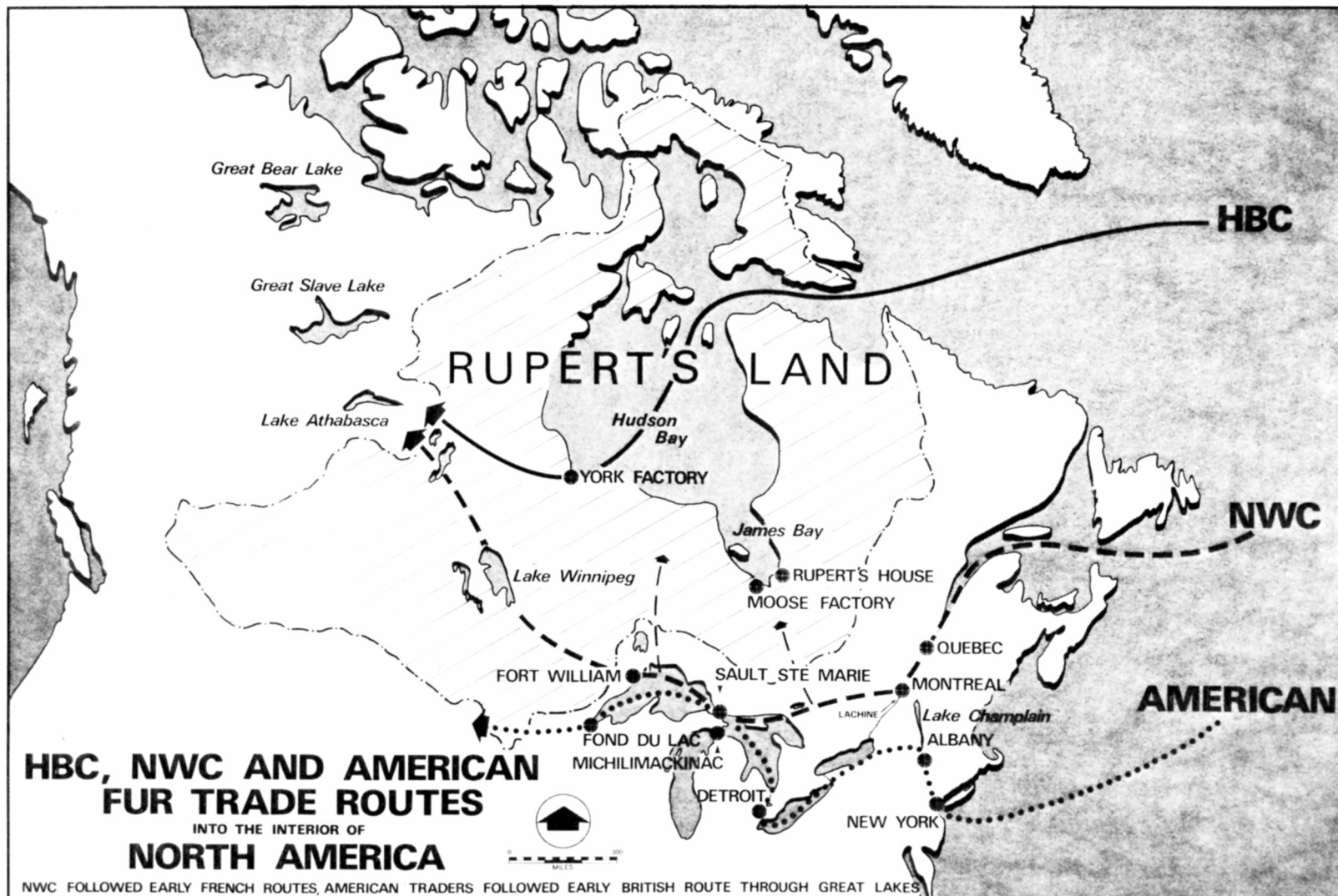
posts was conducted in an atmosphere of tension with the French court, since the fur trade drained greatly needed manpower from the colony and required vast sums of money to maintain its smooth operation. The French government, worried about how the trade was affecting settlement, frowned on traders' attempts to extend farther and farther inland and granted licenses to trade only on a temporary basis.

The resulting uncertainty, coupled with the high cost of transportation from the northwest, would eventually have spelled the French traders' defeat. Events on the European front, however, speeded up their demise. By the Treaty of Paris, ending the Seven Years' War, New France was ceded to Britain in 1763.

The North West Company

Although the colony was now governed by a different mother country, the fur trade continued. By 1767, independent traders, mostly of Scottish origin who had been operating out of Montreal, Albany and New York, began to take the place of their French predecessors in the interior of the continent, and the mouth of the Kaministiquia was again the site of fur trading activities. Initially these traders operated independently of each other but found very quickly that the heavy expenses involved in transporting goods and furs were too great a burden for individuals competing with each other. After several preliminary agreements binding their interests together, the final coalition into the NWC took place in 1784.¹ By this time, Grand Portage, a better stepping-off point to western posts than the Kaministiquia, had become the inland headquarters for the Montreal traders. Thus the Kaministiquia waterway fell into disuse and many forgot entirely that an alternative route west even existed. It would be several years before the NWC, forced by circumstances beyond its control, remembered the old trading location.

The 'rediscovery' of the Kaministiquia route was a result of events not directly related to the fur trade. By the Quebec Act in 1774, the British government had attempted to clarify questions, left uncertain in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, pertaining to how the new colony was to be handled. The two most significant provisions, for the purposes of this study, were that French Canadians would be allowed to practise the Roman Catholic religion and that the southern boundary of what constituted Quebec would be extended south to the Ohio and west to the Mississippi. These two points, along with other regulations enforced by Britain, angered the thirteen colonies to the south, who were eager to expand westward and who felt that to continue the Roman Catholic, French tradition in Quebec



was to return to the situation before 1763. In 1775 they began their struggle for independence from the mother country. The effects of the American Revolution on the fur trade were immediate: interruption of shipping on the Great Lakes, scarcity of trade commodities, and the move to Montreal from Albany and New York by several influential traders who would soon become founding partners of the NWC. The most significant changes came in the aftermath of the peace treaty, signed in 1783. The treaty established American rights to the Ohio and Mississippi territory but it was only in 1794, with the Jay Treaty, that the actual boundary was more precisely defined. Most significant for the NWC – and Fort William – was the likelihood that Grand Portage would lie south of the new border and the company would probably be forced to relocate. The partners decided to play it safe by going ahead with plans for a new headquarters. Ironically, the boundary was not finally settled until the 1840s when the NWC was no longer in existence.



3 and 4 Simon McTavish (left), one of the founders of the North West Company and his nephew William McGillivray, who succeeded him as head of the Company (copies of originals courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

Fort William

The Company took its time finding a new site. In 1798 Roderick McKenzie, a partner, happened upon the old Kaministiquia route, and it was decided that the new headquarters should be built at the mouth of that river.²



5 Falls of the Kamanistaquoih River, H. Warre: Mountain or Kakabeka Falls (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)



6 Loss of the 3d canoe at the Barrier Rapid, George Back: Kaministiquia River (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)



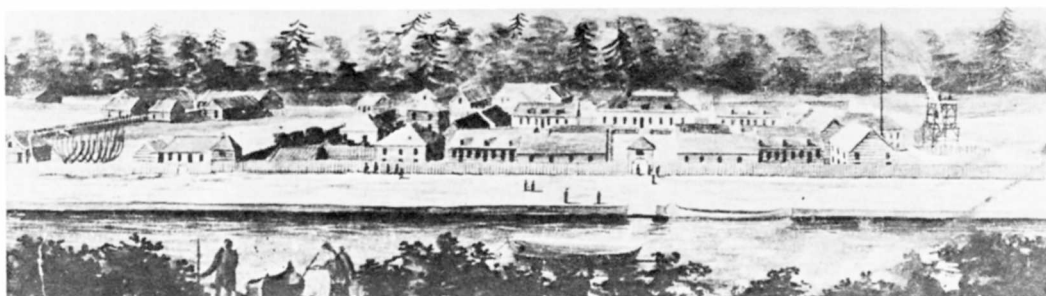
7 Island Portage in the River Kamanatequaya, George Back (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

Construction was likely underway by 1801. An announcement by the American government in 1802 that it would levy duties on all foreign goods on American territory may have spurred the Company to speed up the move, and by 1803 it occupied New Fort, renamed Fort William in 1807.

Although it is generally accepted that the Fort was renamed to honour William McGillivray, the minutes of the partners' meeting state only:

The Wintering Partners having proposed that the name of this place should be changed & that of Fort William substituted in its stead as being more simple and appropriate the Agents gave their assent and the name 'Kamanistiquia' is accordingly discontinued & abolished for ever & that of Fort William is adopted in its place.³

The new name may also have been more "appropriate" because Forts George, Augustus and William existed in Inverness-shire, the birth-place of many of the Nor'westers. By 1807, the NWC had built Fort George (1792) and Fort Augustus (1794) in western Canada.⁴ It is possible, therefore, that the name Fort William was in part derived from the Scottish fort.



8 The North West Company's Fort William depot in 1811 by Lieutenant Irvine (courtesy of Mr. William Stewart Wallace, 1954)

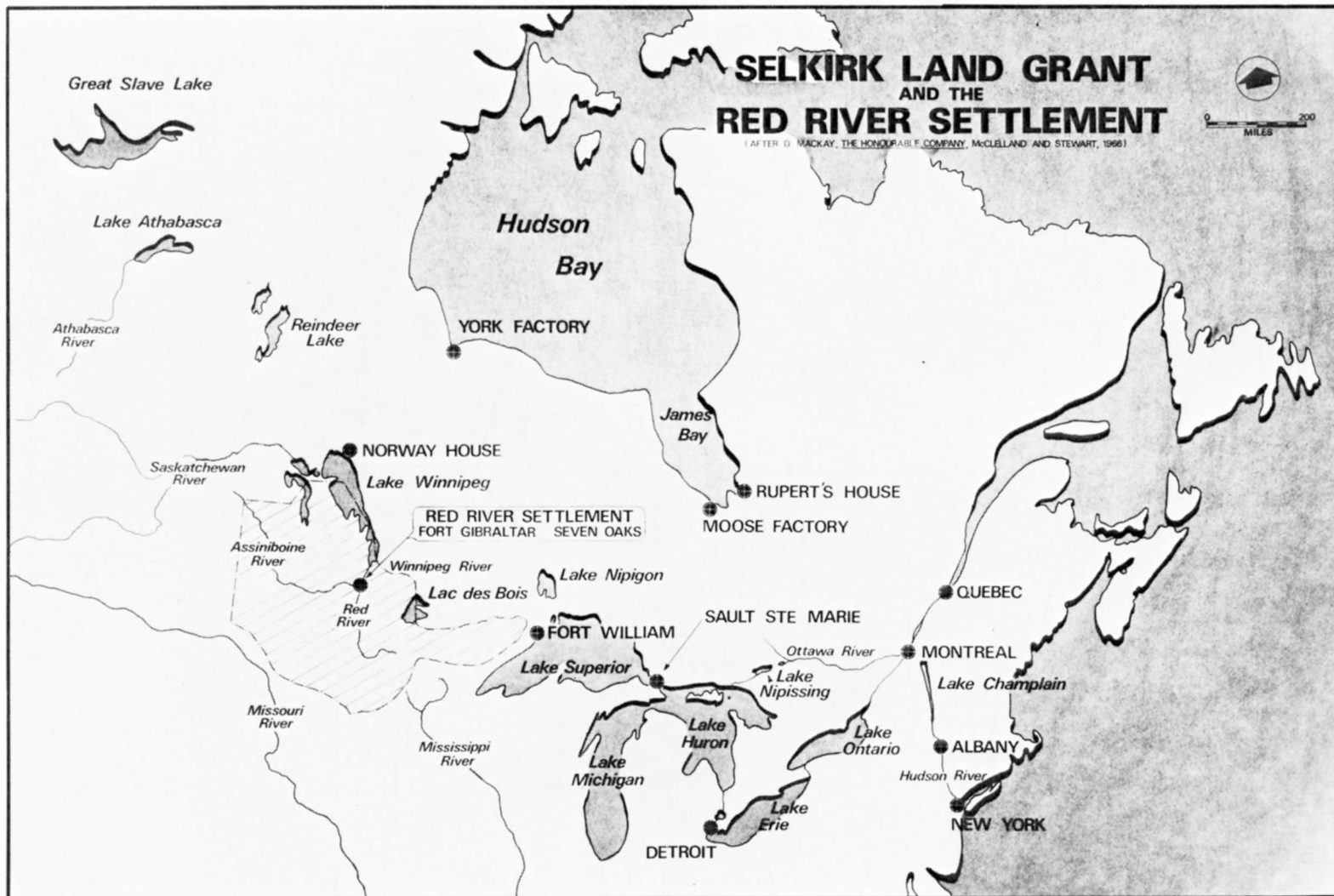
From 1775 on, several events resulted in NWC expansion to the west coast and violent competition with the HBC trading out of Hudson Bay: the closing of the Albany-New York route as a result of the American Revolution; the narrowing of British trade after 1783; and British withdrawal from western posts after 1794. An offshoot of this competition



9 and 10 Alexander Mackenzie (left) and Simon Fraser, NWC partners who were instrumental in the westward exploration and expansion of Company trade (copies of originals courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

presented itself in the form of Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony. In 1811, Selkirk, a HBC shareholder, obtained a land grant on the Red River to establish an agricultural settlement. Miles Macdonell, appointed governor of the colony, set out immediately with seventy colonists. The new settlement lay in the midst of the NWC Lake Winnipeg, Red River and Assiniboine, and Fort Dauphin departments, and directly on the path to the western trade regions. Consequently, it posed a serious threat to NWC operations, and at subsequent summer gatherings of the partners at Fort William decisions were made as to what action should be taken against the colony.

Until 1814, the colony and the NWC carried on their respective businesses peacefully. In January of that year, however, Governor Macdonell issued a proclamation forbidding the export of food from the colony without a license and followed it up by confiscating the NWC's





12 Lord Selkirk (copy of original courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

pemmican supply, an absolutely essential staple to the trade. By these actions, he set in motion the active opposition of the entire NWC machine. That summer at Fort William plans were made to try to convince the Red River settlers to abandon the colony, to incite the Métis against the settlement and to arrest the Governor. In 1815, after the first two plans had failed, Macdonell was arrested and sent to Montreal and the Company stormed the settlement, seizing the colonists' guns. Left completely unprotected, the settlers soon abandoned their farms and made their way north to Norway House. Lord Selkirk immediately appointed a new governor, Robert Semple, who retrieved the colonists from Norway House and returned to Red River. With the help of soldiers despatched by Selkirk, Semple retaliated by attacking and destroying the NWC's Fort Gibraltar and re-appropriating the arms and goods taken from the colony.⁵ The battle reached fever pitch at this point, with both sides determined to emerge the victor. In June 1816, the showdown took place. At Seven Oaks, in a battle about which all the facts will probably never be known, 22 Red River settlers, including Governor Semple, were killed and the rest of the colonists sent east.

William McGillivray to Archibald McLellan, 23 July, 1816

Wherever you go take care of yourself, - firmness and Decision is essential in your situation - but let not your warm temper hurry you into unnecessary scraps - we profess to act on the defensive - and really do - but I consider the injuries last winter sustained have been amply repaid and that should we not do anything more without some fresh aggression - when no doubt retalia-

tion should form part of our system otherways we cannot be respected or do justice to our rights...⁶

Selkirk, en route to Red River at the time with over 120 men, heard the news when he reached Sault Ste Marie. Outraged, he had himself appointed a Justice of the Peace and headed instead for Fort William, where he arrested the partners and sent them east for trial. He then occupied the Fort and, by means of a questionable sale of all NWC property in it, claimed ownership. Selkirk remained at Fort William for the winter and effectively paralyzed NWC operations by preventing eastward shipment of furs and westward shipment of goods to several departments. The legal conflicts resulting from his and the NWC's actions during this period lasted beyond the union of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821.

While the NWC was pouring much of its energy into carrying on the feud with Selkirk and the HBC, it was active on other fronts as well. Events on the American scene demanded close attention, since, in 1808 John Jacob Astor had organized the American Fur Company, with the intention of extending the fur trade on American territory all the way to the Pacific Ocean. This potential threat to NWC ambitions required that an arrangement be made with the new company, and in 1811 the two concerns signed an agreement, whereby the NWC was not to trade on American territory and was to hand over to the American Fur Company all posts south of the border. The territorial limits of the agreement did not, however, extend to the west coast, where the NWC continued its operations freely.⁷

Another external force which intervened to disrupt the trade on British territory was the war between the United States and Britain which began in 1812. The Americans, whose shipping had been severely disrupted by the blockades imposed by Britain and France on each other and who were being harrassed by British searches of American vessels for deserters from the Royal Navy, finally declared war. Shipping on the Great Lakes was again interrupted and the supply system to and from Fort William threatened. The NWC, fully aware of the danger in which its trading territory lay, joined battle on Britain's side, supplying ships and men to the war effort. The war ended in 1814, with little gained on either side, and the NWC resumed its normal business.

This was the atmosphere in which the NWC carried on its trade from the time of its formation. A constant factor throughout the period was fierce competition with the HBC with which the NWC managed to cope, but at ever-increasing expense, as it was forced to extend its operations farther and farther west in order to obtain prime furs. The HBC, operating out of York Factory on Hudson Bay, had always held an

advantage over its rival company whose Montreal headquarters lay so distant from the fur-bearing lands which it exploited. As early as 1804, a few NWC partners, foreseeing the inevitable consequences of this competition, expressed interest in uniting the two concerns, but nothing came of the subsequent tentative negotiations.⁸ By 1821, both sides, worn out by the Selkirk dispute, and by fighting for furs at inland posts and for a place on the failing fur market in Europe, were driven to a union of their interests. The two companies merged under the name and general policies of the Hudson's Bay Company which was subsequently re-organized to incorporate NWC personnel and expertise.

After 1821

For Fort William the event was of great significance. As of that year, it ceased to be the great inland headquarters for which it was famous. Instead, York Factory assumed the function of receiving and shipping furs and goods via Hudson Bay, which had always been the cheapest route from the interior to Britain. The old NWC depot gradually evolved into a supply depot and a major fishing establishment for the HBC. Although the Post journals show little concern with events beyond the immediate sphere of daily Post routine, in its capacity as supply depot for travellers, Fort William witnessed the coming of a new age. Captain H. W. Bayfield and Major J. Delafield, members of the British and American teams surveying the boundary through Lake Superior to Lake of the Woods, stopped there in 1823-24. Captain John Franklin visited the Post on his return from his second Arctic Land Expedition in 1827. Governor George Simpson passed through several times on inspection tours of company posts. In 1843, Henry Lefroy had occasion to stop over for a few days while conducting his magnetic survey of British North America. Bishop G. J. Mountain, travelling to Red River in 1844, also visited Fort William, and Reverend John Ryerson passed through on his missionary tour of HBC territories in 1854.

Many of these visitors in Fort William's later years were aware that the Post had experienced more glamorous days. The NWC complex, with farm buildings, warehouses and stores, council house, Great Hall for the *rendezvous*, and dwellings had been an imposing one. The buildings alone covered 23 acres; the area around the Fort under cultivation brought the total area to 357 acres.⁹ Sixty years later, just before the HBC closed the post, Fort William's size had dwindled considerably. Buildings covered only 13 acres and the whole Fort just over 273 acres.¹⁰ Although most had never seen the NWC post, a mystique grew up around what had been and was no more. Thus Lefroy wrote, on seeing Fort William for the first time, that it was "but the shadow of its former self".¹¹ Regardless of the myths

surrounding its past, the numbers of individuals passing through and staying there indicate that Fort William still served an important function in the Canadian scheme. As Canada became aware of its western lands and sought to establish firmer ties with the settlements beyond Canada West, Fort William proved an essential link in the process, since all travel west, unless it went south of the border, had to pass through Fort William.

Some of this travel was directly associated with the Canadian government's acute awareness, from the 1840s onwards, of the American drive to the Pacific and the concomitant need to settle Canada's west as a preventive measure against American encroachment. Problems with American traders near Fort William were kept to a minimum by an agreement between the HBC and the American Fur Company, signed in 1833 and maintained until the mid-1840s, binding both parties not to trade on each other's territory and to restrain any independent trading.¹² Farther west, around Red River, the threat of American incursion upon British territory was more severe, so much so that in the summer of 1856 British troops were despatched to the settlement when news was received of the presence of American cavalry just south of the border.¹³ The United States at this point was well into the process of settling its territories which, in 1854, had reached their present limit except for Alaska and Hawaii. By 1869 a transcontinental railway stretched across the United States, while Canada was to wait another 16 years before the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed. There was, therefore, a great deal of soul-searching in Canada for the best way to tackle the problem of its western lands.

The British government, through the HBC charter, still controlled western Canada. The Canadian government on the other hand, was growing eager to claim the region for itself. As a result, in 1857, each government sent an exploring expedition into the area; both passed through Fort William on their way west. The British expedition, led by Captain John Palliser, had instructions to ascertain the possibilities of railway construction west of Lake Superior and of agriculture in the southern parts of Rupert's Land. This information was intended to assist in deciding whether the HBC monopoly in that region, to expire in 1859, should be renewed or whether the land should be turned over to the Canadian government for settlement. The Canadian expedition, led by H. Y. Hind, was to examine the route from Lake Superior to Red River in terms of transportation difficulties and to assess the resources and climate of the region bounded by the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. As a result of the information obtained by the two groups, the HBC territories were transferred to the Canadian government in 1869, and the way was clear for the emergence of the western provinces.

Events in the west were to provide one more occasion for Fort William's involvement beyond its capacity as a HBC post. In 1870, troops were

sent to quell the Métis uprising at Red River. Under the command of Colonel Garnet Wolseley, they camped a few miles north of Fort William on Thunder Bay at "The Landing", which Wolseley rechristened Prince Arthur's Landing and which eventually grew to become Port Arthur. John McIntyre, in charge of Fort William, advised Wolseley to take most of his boats up the Kaministiquia River instead of dragging them over the rugged 50 miles of the Dawson Road to Lake Shebandowan.



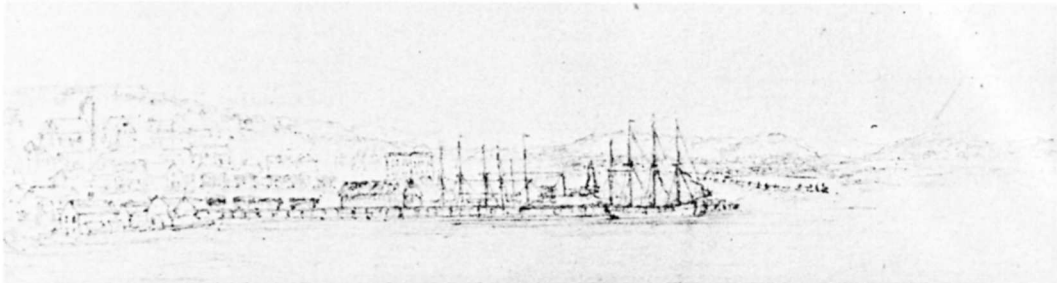
13 Red River Expedition, 1870. Commanded by Col. G. J. Wolseley, Frances Ann Hopkins (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

With the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway underway at Fort William in 1875, overland communication with the rest of Canada was assured and Fort William's days as an active HBC trading establishment were numbered. 'Civilization' had come to the area, and Fort William was developing into a community no longer centred around the HBC. Although the Post had always been depended on for supplies and assistance to travellers, it was no longer needed in that capacity. One community began to spring up just west of the Post and another in nearby Prince Arthur's Landing, a few miles north of Fort William, which could better accomodate large vessels:

28th July 1824

At 4 O'Clock this morning all the men at the Fort were employed with the Batteaux unloading the Schooners - After bringing three Boat Loads - Mr McCargo endeavoured

to bring the vessel over the (sand) Bar and come up the River - but the Wind being contrary they with great difficulty got her as far as half way up the River - when all hands were obliged to tow her up which not effected till too late to get any more Cargo taken out this day -¹⁴

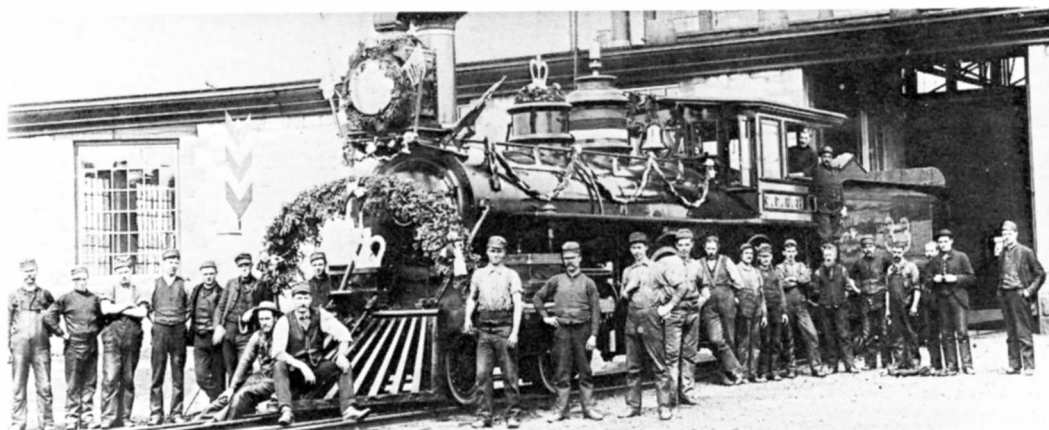


14 Prince Arthur's Landing 1883, Alexander Gaviller (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

With the arrival of mining interests and the railroad, retail businesses, hotels, drinking establishments and private residences reduced the small HBC settlement to insignificance. Finally Fort William was closed, and the site it had occupied for over 80 years was taken over by the CPR. Today the remains of the NWC and HBC buildings lie buried beneath a CPR cleaning yard and the homes of the residents of the "East End" in Thunder Bay.



15 Thunder Cape & Silver Islet, Lake Superior. 1877, M. Gaviller (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)



16 Engine #33 decorated to haul the First Continental C.P.R. Train through Fort William, June 30th, 1886 (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

17 The mouth of the Kaministiquia River, 1968

18 Hudson's Bay Company's Raw Fur Store, Simpson Street, Thunder Bay; a reminder of the past



PEOPLE AND THE FUR TRADE

In order to appreciate what it was like to live at Fort William, it is first necessary to look at *who* lived there and how they interacted with each other. The fur trade formed the basis of this interaction, and as its ground rules changed, so did life at Fort William.

Fort William's Role

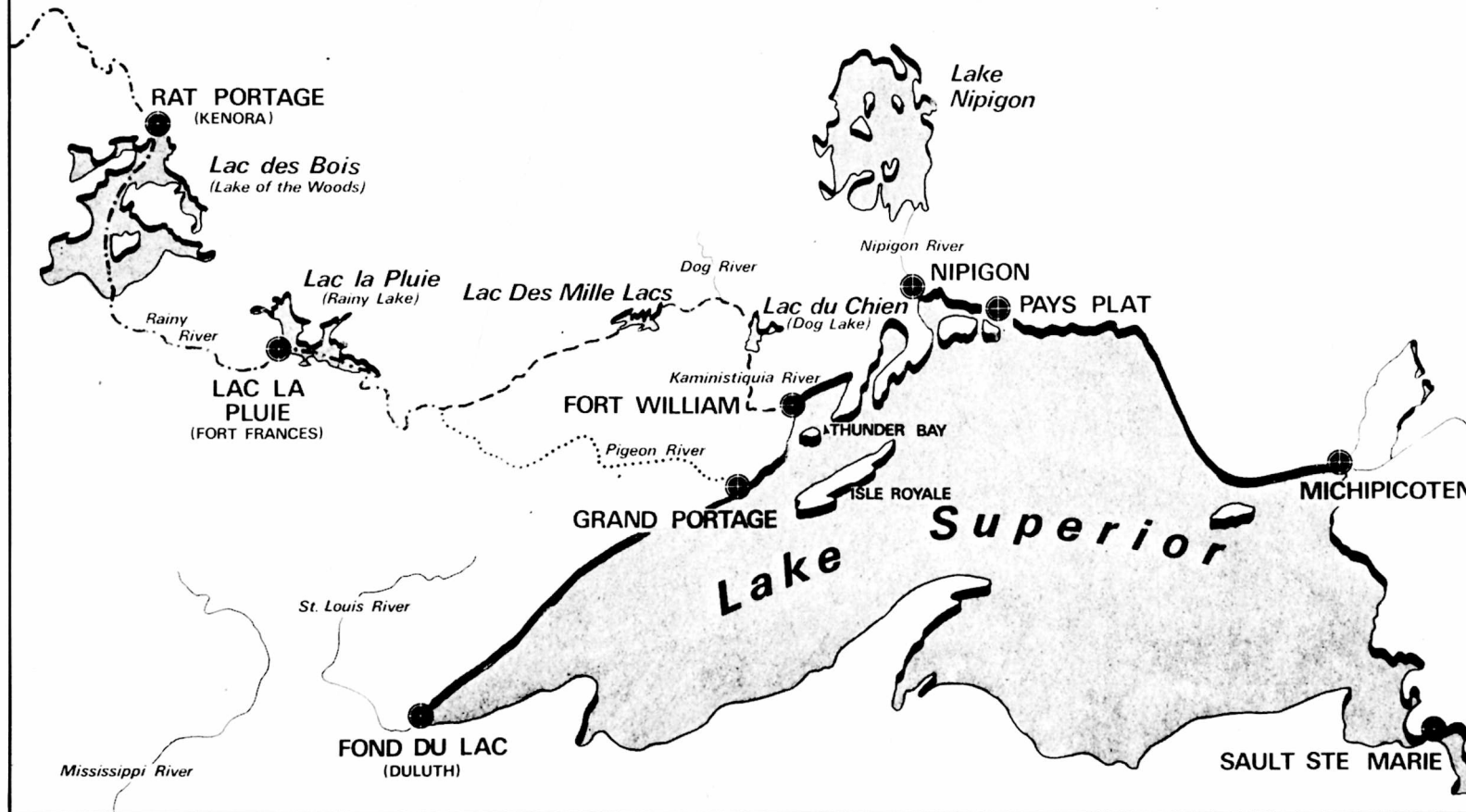
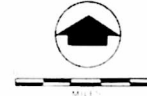
The NWC's huge complex at Fort William was built to accomodate the Company's goods and labour force at summer *rendezvous*: partners, clerks, tradesmen, guides, interpreters, canoemen and miscellaneous workers. It stood virtually empty the rest of the year, during which time it was maintained by a fairly small staff. In 1813, for example, a proprietor, a clerk and 22 men formed this skeleton staff. The following year the number dwindled to a proprietor, a clerk and 15 men!¹ By 1816 this group included a blacksmith, carpenter, canoemaker, cooper, armourer, painter, joiner and tinsmith. The carpenter and blacksmith may have doubled as the latter two. These tradesmen were needed full-time at the Fort in order to maintain the post as well as repair and make the various implements used in the trade.

As soon as the ice left the bay, the winter staff began to anticipate the moment when the first canoe brigades from Montreal and the interior would appear on the horizon. A steady flow of incoming traffic would,

LAKE SUPERIOR AND SURROUNDING AREA

MAJOR FUR TRADE SITES AND WESTWARD ROUTES

..... PIGEON RIVER ROUTE AND INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
 ——— KAMINISTQUIA RIVER ROUTE

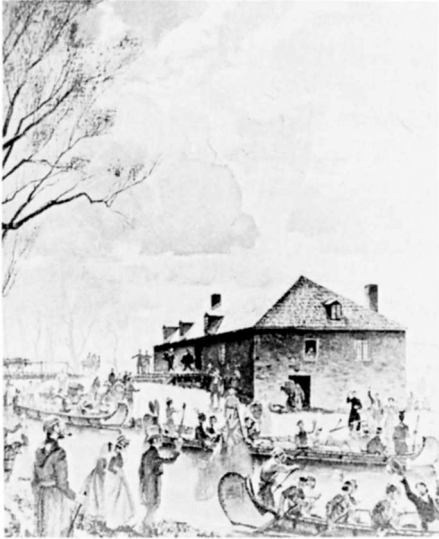


by mid-July, boost the Fort's population to at least 2,000 employees, freemen and Indians. This conglomeration of Scotsmen, French-Canadians, Métis and Indian people, thrown together for the *rendezvous*, represented the typical range of skills, languages and cultures at Fort William during the NWC period.

During the *rendezvous*, packs of furs and bales of goods were sorted and prepared to go to Montreal or inland, after which the brigades set off again, leaving the small staff at Fort William behind. As the winterers were settling down at their inland posts, the NWC partners back in Montreal ordered the outfits from suppliers in England. The orders were sent off before the St. Lawrence froze, so that the goods would be shipped from England the following spring. Because of the time lag involved in transatlantic sailing, this whole process had to be gone through well in advance of when goods would actually be required. For example, the order for the 1808 outfit would be sent from Montreal in the fall of 1805 and shipped from England in the spring of 1806, reaching Montreal after the brigades had left for Fort William. During the winter of 1806-07, the goods were repacked and readied for the 1807 *rendezvous*, when the 1808 outfit was distributed. In contrast, the fur returns of 1807, which ensured continuing credit for trade goods, made the trip from Fort William to England the same year.



20 First Sale of Furs at Garraway's Coffee House, London, 1671 (copy of original courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)



21 *The Spring Brigade leaves Lachine for the West, Franklin Arbuckle, RCA (courtesy Hudson's Bay Company)*

After 1821, the major supply routes of the fur trade changed. Fort William was replaced by York Factory and Moose Factory on Hudson Bay, which were the HBC's depots for exchange of goods between Europe and the fur country. Goods from Moose Factory went to Michipicoten, which became the main distribution centre for posts in the Lake Superior District, including Fort William. With Fort William's function as a depot removed, the major reason for its existence suddenly disappeared, as did the *rendezvous* and the need for vast warehouses and full-time specialized labour to manufacture goods for an extensive network of western posts.

The decrease in magnitude of Fort William's summer operation would have been the most noticeable change experienced by those who continued to live there. Only a slightly smaller year-round staff, however, was still required to keep Fort William and its local outposts operating: buildings still had to be maintained, firewood gathered, canoes built, barrels and casks made, the fisheries maintained as well as the many other activities necessary to life at a trading post. In addition, although the range and variety of crops and animals seem to have narrowed during HBC times, farming, which required a great deal of manpower, continued on almost the same scale. Where, when and how all these activities took place changed only gradually through the years, particularly since there was a carryover of NWC people into HBC times.

In the following pages, we will consider some of the groups and individuals associated with Fort William: Company personnel (both management and labour), freemen and Indians. These groups were always present at Fort William and, ideally, should be explored in detail. Practically speaking, the data available dictates a much more limited

treatment and only glimpses are presented here. Since one of the best indicators of social status at the Fort was the goods and provisions issued to different people, rations given out have been presented to illustrate the various ranks within the Fort hierarchy.

Management

The NWC was a union of individual traders and agents, each a full-fledged partner in the concern with first-hand experience in the fur trade. It was these men who came to Fort William annually to decide Company policy. The initial excitement of arriving at Fort William died down quickly. There was a great deal to be accomplished in the few weeks available before brigades had to load up and retrace their routes east or west in order to reach their respective destinations prior to freeze-up. A battery of "hieroglyphic clerks"² worked feverishly to supervise the weighing and packing of furs and fill the orders for the inland posts, ensuring that each would be adequately supplied with provisions and trade goods for winter. For two weeks the Company partners, some of whom wintered inland and others who handled the Montreal end of the trade, disappeared into the Council Room to organize the business for the following year. The fact that the NWC was a conglomeration of individuals interested primarily in their personal financial advancement was evident at each of these stormy annual meetings. The wintering partners accused the Montreal agents of mismanaging the trade, complained that profits were too low and, in troublesome times, threatened to resign. The Montreal agents countered with facts and figures on the situation on the European market to justify their course of action. A full slate of personal and business grievances surfaced, which had to be dealt with before the partners dispersed again for another year.

To read Simon McGillivray's account of the general meeting at Fort William in 1815, is to be transported back 160 years into the midst of one such fracas. Simon, younger brother of the head of the NWC, William McGillivray, represented the Montreal partners and bore the brunt of the winterers' hostility about the general state of the trade, a heated discussion of which took up an entire afternoon. After all the complaints had been aired and tempers had cooled somewhat, the meeting proceeded to the actual business of arranging departments for the next year. The decision as to where each wintering partner would spend the winter was, however, a sore point which brought on another round of furious debate. The most incredible example of the haggling and sulking that characterized this portion of the business was the case of Dr. John McLoughlin, who had spent most of his twelve years in the interior in the Lac La Pluie District.

Tuesday 18th July 1815

Dr McLoughlin had yesterday decidedly refused in the face of the concern to go to Athabasca tho' a vote was unanimously carried that he should go there which was considered extraordinary and in a younger Partner presumptuous conduct. The Doctor said he would throw up his share and go to Montreal if required to go to Athabasca. He was told of the consequences - but argued & was stubborn which seemed to excite indignation among old Partners.

On the score of expediency his nomination to Athabasca or to follow the opposition was rescinded, and as a punishment he was appointed to go to Lac des Isles & then to Lac la Pluie - Thus the Departments were considered to be settled - and the Columbia internal arrangements were discussed & decided before Dinner but in course of the evening Mr McBean signified that he would not go to Athabasca and would leave the Country if required - other Clerks began to cabal and to exact terms & promises -

... Dr McLoughlin refuses to go to Lac des Isles, and it seems wont go any where unless he may chuse his Department. This is not to be endured - and at length Mr McLeod reminds him of the penalty of the agreement, & threatens a prosecution for damages for the injury done the concern by his unprecedented conduct and dangerous example. ...

Wednesday 19th July

... Dr McLoughlin having previously after a conference with Kenneth consented to be at the disposal of the Concern I proposed to omit the minutes about his conduct also, which was done - and he was sent to Athabasca as at first proposed. ...

Saturday 22nd July

Dr McL. since his appointmt to go inland has entirely neglected the medecines which gives great dissatisfaction - The Winterers complain and as usual, blame the appointment, or in other words the agents. They are told to settle the thing as they please so they send McGillis back to A (Athabasca) River - McLellan on the Expedition and keep the Dr at Fort William...³

McGillivray, caught in the midst of this turmoil, reflected on the possible consequences to morale of all this wrangling and even began to wonder if the Company had been infiltrated by hostile forces. Discouraged by the whole situation he wrote:

The Secrets of Council are known all over the Fort before they are half an hour old - It is known that Partners

have relinquished Shares without any consideration - and that others value theirs so little as to throw them up in defiance of the Concern - It is therefore I suppose inferred that the Country is going to the Devil - and people are acting accordingly - It really appears to me that there are some secret but active enemies of the Concern at work in order to sow dissention and if possible destroy the Concern.⁴



22 and 23 Simon McGillivray (left) and Dr. John McLoughlin (courtesy Public Archives of Canada and copy of original courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society respectively)

In the end, however, the partners managed to settle matters to the satisfaction of most and set off for their respective destinations. McGillivray even went so far as to say that everyone parted "very good friends",⁵ indicating perhaps that the mood of the Council sessions did not dominate the whole *rendezvous* period.

We must remember that many of the partners were old friends, for whom the *rendezvous* was the only opportunity to meet again, catch up on old news and reminisce. After the long, gruelling days in the Council meetings, they would assemble for dinner in the impressive dining hall, along with the clerks, interpreters and guides. Here, their pride in the NWC and Great Britain was reflected in the paintings chosen to grace the walls.

The dining-hall is a noble apartment, and sufficiently capacious to entertain two hundred. A finely executed bust of the late Simon McTavish is placed in it, with portraits of various proprietors. A full-length likeness of Nelson, together with a splendid painting of the battle of the Nile, also decorate the walls, and were presented by the Hon. William McGillivray, to the Company. At the upper end of the hall there is a very large map of the Indian country, drawn with great accuracy by Mr. David Thompson, astronomer to the Company, and comprising all their trading-posts, from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Ocean, and from Lake Superior to Athabasca and Great Slave Lake.⁶

After feasting on delicacies such as fresh beef, ham, fish, vegetables, butter, milk, tea or coffee and liquor, much of which was shipped all the way from Montreal for their enjoyment, the partners settled down to an evening of socializing, which could extend beyond mere conversation.

William McGillivray to Archibald McLellan, 23rd July 1816
*... We have been Dancing last night and nothing farther was done...*⁷

William Morrison appears to have been a man of literary disposition. On the same date he wrote to Alexander Clark:

*P.S. ... I am under great obligations to you for fanny Hill the Plates are highly diverting to the sex of Fond du Lac...*⁸

Even while travelling, partners were not totally deprived of their usual diet. For example, on October 11, 1816, Daniel McKenzie, who had been detained at Fort William by Selkirk, and two clerks, Morrison and Grant, received what seem to be more than ample supplies for the eight-week journey to Montreal:

2 bottles spirits	30 lb. sugar
1 " shrub	100 " pork
2 gal. "	2 " salt
1 bottle port wine	12 loaves bread
2 gal. " "	150 lb. biscuit
2 bottles brandy	20 " butter
2 gal. "	2 " hyson tea ⁹
2 bottles white fine	

Even if they had run out of food, their stock of beverages would cer-

tainly have kept them warm! There were others in their party, but the sugar, bread, butter and fine assortment of liquor would have been intended for the three 'gentlemen'.

Issues of goods and provisions reflected not only rank in the Company, but also status in society. During his stay at Fort William, Lord Selkirk figured highest on the provisions scale. It is sometimes uncertain what he *ate*, since much of what he was issued for himself and for his table came in the form of liquid nourishment, for example:

24 Sept. 1816	2 bottles teneriffe wine
	1 " brandy
	8 lb. sugar
20 Oct. 1816	1 bottle teneriffe wine
	1 " port
	3 lb. maple sugar
29 Jan. 1817	6 lb. sugar
	6½ " coffee ⁹

This list is somewhat misleading, since the man obviously could not have survived on these provisions alone. Selkirk appears to have taken advantage of the livestock and garden at Fort William to supplement whatever supplies he had with him for Red River.

*Lord Selkirk's dinnertable to which we were invited was also very well appointed. From time to time an ox or sheep was butchered which was served with potatoes, vegetables, and excellent wines and liqueurs.*¹⁰

The HBC was organized along entirely different lines than the NWC. Control was in the hands of shareholders in England, most of whom, unlike Selkirk, had never visited, much less lived in, North America. Decisions were made in London and relayed to factors, traders and clerks who managed the posts. For many years, the HBC maintained posts only on Hudson and James Bays to which the Indians brought their furs. Competition with the traders to the south forced the HBC to establish inland posts towards the middle of the 18th century. The difference in the structures of the HBC and NWC became apparent as Father Provencher observed at Red River in 1818:

*... (the HBC) does not seem well organized; the ones at the head do not seem to understand the matter well... one does not see in the Hudson's Bay Company the energy noticeable in the North West Company; this comes about, without doubt, from the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company trades through hired clerks and the members do not participate. The North West Company, on the other hand, conducts the business itself, and the bourgeois are at the head, and are everywhere.*¹¹

After 1821, few high-ranking officials gathered at Fort William except for the Governor of the HBC, who merely stayed overnight on his almost annual tour of posts. The fluctuation in rank of those placed in charge of Fort William reflects its declining importance as a fur trade post even though it remained an important supply depot for the District. These Company servants are mere shadows in the data gathered and cannot be dealt with here.

YEAR APPOINTED	NAME	RANK
1821	A. STEWART ¹	CHIEF FACTOR
1823	R. McKENZIE	CHIEF TRADER
1830	D. McINTOSH ¹	CHIEF TRADER
1834	W. NOURSE	CLERK
1836	D. McINTOSH	CHIEF TRADER
1839	J. SWANSTON	CLERK
1843	H. McKENZIE	CLERK
1845	J. McKENZIE	CHIEF TRADER
1851	P. McKENZIE	CHIEF TRADER
1852	J. ERMATINGER	CHIEF TRADER
1854	F. BOUCHER	CHIEF TRADER
1855	J. McINTYRE	CLERK ²
1881	T. RICHARDS ³	CARETAKER

I MEN IN CHARGE AT FORT WILLIAM 1821-1883

1 FORMER NWC EMPLOYEES 2 PROMOTED TO FACTOR BY 1875
 3 CLERK 1857-1860, 1875-1878



24 John McIntyre, family and friends, Fort William (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

Labour

The vast labour force necessary for the NWC operation was drawn from French-Canadian, Métis and Indian peoples who were familiar with the ways of the land and its various groups of native people. Ross Cox described the men from these three cultural backgrounds as follows:

The first are the descendants of the original French settlers. . . I know of no people capable of enduring so much hard labour as the Canadians, or so submissive to superiors. In voyages of six months' duration, . . . they commence at day-break, and from thence to night-fall hard paddling and carrying goods occupy their time without intermission. . .

The (Métis) sons of the voyageurs, on attaining a proper age, are generally engaged in the Company's service. . . . They are good canoe-men, and excellent hunters, remarkably active either on horseback or on foot; . . .

The third description of men in the Company's service are the Iroquois, Nipisings, and others of the native tribes of Canada. . . . They engage for limited periods in the Company's service as canoe-men and hunters, but on lower terms than are usually allowed to the French Canadians. They are strong, able-bodied men, good hunters, and well acquainted with the management of canoes. . . . They are generally employed on the east side of the mountains, but we had a few of them on the Columbia.¹²

For men, on the other hand, often had no knowledge whatsoever of the country to which they came and were completely outclassed by their rivals.

In these rough struggles . . . Hudson's Bay men were generally vanquished. They were outnumbered by three or four to one. As products of London charity schools and of homes for poor children, they lacked the vigor and resourcefulness to withstand the hardy and experienced Scotch, French, and American traders who had grown up on the frontier. Many Hudson's Bay men feared the wilderness, feared the Indians, and, most of all, feared the Nor-Westers.¹³

In discussing labourers, a distinction must be made between an *engagé* and a freeman. The former were individuals employed by a contract which specified the length of time they would spend inland, the work they would do and the wages they would be paid. While they were in-



25 and 26 Canadian Farmer, M. M. Chaplin (left) and Canadian Habitant in Winter, Frances Ann Hopkins (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

The Canadians ... in the late short war with the United States (War of 1812) ... conducted themselves with eminent bravery. A local corps, composed of the officers and men of the North-West Company, was raised by the Honourable William McGillivray. His son Mr. Joseph McGillivray, was an officer in it; and he gave us some laughable details relative to the conduct of the privates When on duty in company with the regular forces or the militia they were guilty of much insubordination, and it was quite impossible to make them amenable to military law. They generally came on parade with a pipe in their mouths and their rations of pork and bread stuck on their bayonets. ... they talked incessantly, called each other 'pork eaters,' quarrelled about their rations, wished they were back in the Indian country again, &c., and when called to order by their officers and told to hold their tongues, one or more would reply, "Ah, dear captain, let us off as quick as you can; some of us have not yet breakfasted, and it's upwards of an hour since I had a smoke." ... In moments when danger ought to have produced a little steadiness, they completely set discipline at defiance, and the volatile volunteer broke out into all the unrestrained mirth and anti-military familiarity of the thoughtless *voyageur*. ... neither winks, threats or frowns could restrain the vivacious laugh, silence the noisy tongue, or compose the ever changing features into any thing like military seriousness. ... They could not be got to wear stocks; and such as did not use cravats came on parade with naked necks, and very often with rough beards. In this condition they presented a curious contrast to the unchangeable countenances and well-drilled movements of the British soldiery, with whom they occasionally did duty. Notwithstanding these peculiarities the *voyageurs* were excellent partisans, and, from their superior knowledge of the country, were able to render material service during the war. They had great confidence in their officers, particularly their colonel, Mr. McGillivray, whose influence frequently saved them from the punishment to which their repeated breaches of discipline subjected them.

(Ross Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia River*, ..., Vol. II, pp. 337-340)

land, the Company provided them with food, lodging and a certain amount of clothing.

Freemen were those who remained in the interior once their term of service had been completed. These men often married Indian women and lived near a post with their families, earning a living by trapping and working for the Company for short periods of time.

John Haldane, when he learned that some of the men in Bayfield's boundary survey team had been trading furs with the freemen at Fort William, explained why such activity could not be tolerated, and, in so doing, made the Company's distinction between *engagés* and freemen very clear:

1st December 1823

... although these freemen were not in the Company's permanent Employ; they derived the whole of their Support from the Company; and that in every Estimate made for the Supply of the Indians, the necessaries required by these people were always included in consequence of which, they were to be considered as on the same footing with the Indians; and any Clandestine Trade carried on with them, as an infringement of the Company's rights.¹⁴

The hierarchy of NWC contracted employees included:

... clerks, guides, interpreters and special employees such as Bouché who ran a store and canteen outside the palisade for the summer population that gathered at Fort William;

... blacksmiths, cooks, carpenters and other tradesmen including those such as James Taitt who also had supervisory and maintenance responsibilities beyond their particular trades;

... varying ranks of canoemen who manned the canoes, portaged the packs and performed other specified tasks; and

... general unskilled labourers who were necessary for the year-round maintenance of posts.

It is these last two groups of employees that we are concerned with here.

At the *rendezvous*, the canoemen occupied separate camps: the winterers to the west of the Fort and the *mangeurs de lard* (*pork-eaters*) to the east.

... One perceives an astonishing difference between

*these two camps, which are composed sometimes of three or four hundred men each; that of the porkeaters is always dirty and disorderly, while that of the winterers is clean and neat.*¹⁵

The latter held the former in disdain because of their shorter term engagement and lack of experience in the northwest.



27 Lake Superior, Frances Ann Hopkins (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

Despite their rivalry, these two groups shared the subsistence rations of one quart of "lyed" corn and one ounce of grease per man each day while at the rendezvous.¹⁶

*... The corn for this purpose is prepared before it leaves Detroit, by boiling it in a strong alkali, which takes off the outer husk; it is then well washed, and carefully dried upon stages, when it is fit for use. One quart of this is boiled for two hours, over a moderate fire, in a gallon of water; to which, when it has boiled a small time, are added two ounces of melted suet; this causes the corn to split, and in the time mentioned makes a pretty thick pudding. If to this is added a little salt, (but not before it is boiled, as it would interrupt the operation), it makes an wholesome, palatable food, and easy of digestion. This quantity is fully sufficient for a man's subsistence during twenty-four hours; though it is not sufficiently heartening to sustain the strength necessary for a state of active labour.*¹⁷

During Selkirk's disruption of Fort William's routine, other non-management groups received similar allotments of food, as the examples in Table II show.

GROUP	DATE	PROVISIONS	# OF RECIPIENTS
INDIANS	23 SEP 1816	3 Q.T. CORN	3
	29 NOV 1816	5 Q.T. CORN 1/2 LB. GREASE	20
	26 FEB 1817	16 Q.T. CORN 1 1/2 LB. GREASE	MORE THAN 40
CANADIANS	6 OCT 1816	21 Q.T. CORN GREASE	21
	6 OCT 1816	32 Q.T. CORN GREASE	29 CANADIANS, 2 WOMEN, 3 CHILDREN
	8 NOV 1816	5 1/2 Q.T. CORN GREASE	2 FISHERMEN, 2 WOMEN
FISHERMEN	4 NOV 1816	3 Q.T. CORN GREASE	3
SOLDIERS	20 SEP 1816	1 3/8 GAL. HIGH WINES 22 1/2 Q.T. FLOUR 45 LB. PORK	45 FOR 2 DAYS
	28 SEP 1816	168 Q.T. FLOUR 168 LB. PORK	45 AND 3 WOMEN FOR 7 DAYS

II. EXAMPLES OF RATIONS ISSUED VARIOUS GROUPS AT FORT WILLIAM 1816-1817¹⁸

NOTE: WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE ALLOWED 1/2 OF A
MAN'S RATIONS AND 3 Q.TS. OF CORN INSTEAD OF 5

The daily allotment seems to have been corn and a bit of grease, although flour and sometimes pork or fish were also distributed. Women and children received smaller rations than the men, which is especially surprising in the case of the former, who certainly worked around the post. Selkirk's soldiers fared slightly better than the labour force. Fish, pork or beef was a regular part of their diet, and liquor was also distributed on occasion. All of these people could have supplemented their rations from the Fort by fishing or hunting.

Between the time Lord Selkirk left Fort William in 1817 and the union of the NWC and HBC, Post records are very scanty. The first records available for Fort William during the HBC period suggest that rationing policy remained more or less the same over the years. During the

summer months, some of the men spent their days fishing to support the people at the Post.

3rd July 1824

... The men haul the Seine every morning - & from it as well as the nets attended by Michel Collin & Langomois we have hitherto procured sufficient to Ration the men at the Fort - Michel's fishery however begins to fail - and he will in future atten(d) nets near the Fort. -¹⁹

Company-issued rations from the stores began in late November. During 1823/24, the first weekly ration for each man consisted of 5 pounds of salt fish and 1 gallon of potatoes per day for the first 3½ days, 9 pounds of fresh fish per day for the next 2 days, and 1 quart of corn and 1½ ounces of grease for the final day and a half.²⁰

These same provisions remained the diet of the people at the Post through the years. Although the farm operation was continued, the meat and dairy products from Fort William were reserved to supply nearby posts and, occasionally, the people at the Post.

YEAR	DESTINATION	PRODUCE SUPPLIED
1824	NIPIGON	BULL CALF, COCK, 2 HENS
1825	LAKE SUPERIOR DISTRICT	BUTTER
1828	LAKE SUPERIOR DISTRICT	2 YOUNG HEIFERS
1830	NIPIGON (?)	1 COW
1831	NIPIGON	1 COW
	FORT WILLIAM COUNCIL MEETING	1 OX
1837	NIPIGON	2 PIGS, 1 KEG BUTTER
1838	SAULT STE. MARIE	1 COW

III EXAMPLES OF AGRICULTURAL STOCK AND PRODUCE SUPPLIED TO THE LAKE SUPERIOR DISTRICT BY FORT WILLIAM DURING THE HBC PERIOD²¹

The demands of work underway sometimes necessitated an increase in the usual rations.

23rd July 1829

... I have been under the necessity of serveing corn to all hands since the hay makeing begun as its impossible to attend to the nets without neglecting the Hay - indeed the men could not stand to work as they do with only fish....²²

Individuals from the NWC's labour force provided the continuity between the NWC and HBC periods at Fort William. There were several men, some hired in the NWC period, whose service was replaced by sons and even grandsons in the HBC years. When these boys reached working age, few alternatives to remaining at Fort William would have presented themselves. In addition, the HBC introduced a regulation in 1839 that sons should become apprentice labourers or tradesmen once they turned fifteen. If their parents refused to obey the regulation, the father was to be fired.²³ Antoine Collin, J. Baptiste Vesina and J. Baptiste Deschamp are only a few of the long-term residents, whom one must rank among the first settlers of this area. The first two, being freemen, would not have been subject to this Company rule and, therefore, must have chosen to remain at Fort William for reasons of their own.

Both Antoine and his son Michel Collin began their service at Fort William with the NWC. They were at the Fort in 1820 and remained there when the HBC took over.²⁴ Antoine, whom we shall meet again in the pages to follow, was at various times a fisherman, cooper and canoemaker whose antics bring to life the often dull pages of the Post journals. As late as 1837 he was still active as cooper and fisherman.²⁵ Michel was also a fisherman and later took over his father's position as canoemaker.²⁶ His daughter married John Shearer, another employee, in 1837, and his son Joseph signed a 3-year contract with the Company the same year.²⁷

The Vesina family may have the distinction of serving the HBC for the longest period of any employees at Fort William. In 1818, "young Vesinat", working at the HBC post at Pointe de Meuron, was arrested and detained at Fort William from January 22nd until March 9th, on the pretext of having stolen a chicken and killed a cow and her calf the previous summer.²⁸ When he returned to Pointe de Meuron, he was hired for a year as a fisherman, sugarmaker and procurer of bark.²⁹ In 1821, J. B. Vesina Senior and Junior are both listed as being at Fort William.³⁰ One of these may have been the Vesina referred to in the Pointe de Meuron journals. In ensuing years, references to only one Vesina are found. He was a freeman, whose main function was fishing, but who also worked about the Post. By 1833, he had a wife, one son and two daughters with him.³¹ In 1840 his daughter Jeannette married a Fort employee.³² There are references to a Vesina working at Fort William as late as 1850, but whether they refer to the now elderly Vesina or to his son is uncertain.³³

J. Bte Deschamps, a labourer at Fort William for many years, first appears in the journals in 1829. He remained there until 1834, by which time he had a wife, two sons and a daughter.³⁴ In December of that year, he fell ill with a sickness which had attacked many at

the Fort and on Christmas Day he died.³⁵ His family remained at Fort William – two years later his widow requested the balance due her husband by the Company at his death.³⁶

In 1840 she had another child, whose father she claimed was the cooper at the Post.³⁷ Apparently, she was not alone in her predicament, nor, it would seem, were such questions of paternity unusual, as the following notation suggests:

14th February 1839

*... About 10 1/2 PM. Michel Collins daughter Mary was delivered of a son, but it is not fully known who is the father, as she will not candidly acknowledge the circumstance.*³⁸

At any rate, the Deschamps family name was carried on, and by the late 1840s both young Deschamps were working as labourers at Fort William.³⁹

Indians

A group deserving special attention in our study of Fort William is the Indian people, on whose many skills the fur trade was predicated and whose lives it so drastically altered. The Ojibwa always played an



28 Fort William 1857, William H. E. Napier (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

important role in life at Fort William. Although detailed figures of their population are not available, Table III gives some idea of how many Indians lived in the vicinity of Fort William over the years. Although we have little information for the NWC period, it is likely that many visited the Post but rarely, staying at their traplines or fishing spots and coming in occasionally to trade and renew their supplies. Others spent a great deal of time at Fort William. There were many jobs to be done at the Fort itself, for which native skills were required. Throughout 1816-17, when Selkirk controlled Fort William, various individuals, several of whom were women, were paid for dressing skins, gathering berries, knitting and mending snowshoes, making mocassins and cutting shaganappy (*strips of hide*). Their way of life and knowledge of the local environment made them indispensable in the performance of these tasks.

YEAR	MEN WOMEN YOUTHS GIRLS CHILDREN					AREA
1805	70	84	—	—	178	KAMINISTIQUEUA, MILLE LACS, LAC DES CHIEUS
1808	150 ¹					FORT WILLIAM AND SURROUNDING AREA
1824	28 ²	—	—	—	—	FORT WILLIAM POST
1828	46	41	6	—	61	FORT WILLIAM DISTRICT
	208	212	34	—	317	LAKE SUPERIOR DISTRICT
1829	49 ³	51	—	—	96	FORT WILLIAM POST
1831	50	53	33	47	—	FORT WILLIAM POST
1834	195	197	36	27	308	LAKE SUPERIOR DISTRICT

IV RECORDED NUMBERS OF INDIAN PEOPLE IN THE GENERAL AREA OF FORT WILLIAM DURING THE FIRST PART OF THE 19TH CENTURY⁴⁰

1 "ALGONQUIN" 2 "MEN AND LADS" 3 "MEN AND BOYS"

A much clearer picture of the Ojibwas' involvement in post life emerges during the HBC period. Men, women, and probably children at times, participated in the full range of ongoing work. The men hunted and fished, helped with the farming, mended fences and buildings, collected canoe bark and gum and helped in the actual building of canoes, while the women were busy collecting maple sugar, knitting nets for the fisheries, sewing canoes, and knitting and lacing snowshoes.

The first hints about how trading was carried on at Fort William come late in its history. John Haldane, in 1824, submitted a scheme for dealing with Indians, based on his years of experience in the interior and put to the test while he was stationed at Fort William that year. Although the tone is somewhat that of a present-day bank manager explaining family finance to a struggling couple, Haldane was at least

presenting a relatively reasonable method for dealing with the local Indians.

It is recommended that when Indians who are indebted come in the fall to ask for Advances, that they be taken into a private apartment, their balance explained & then to ask them what they think they will require, which is to be noted down, and should the demand appear too much, the trader to reason with them and point out the impossibility of acceding to their demands - but that they shall have so much for the present to enable them to go a hunting and when they have a proper quantity of furs, to return to the establishment where they will receive a fresh supply, etc. It must be obvious to every trader that by taking an indebted Indian into his shop where the Goods are exposed there will be no end to his demands - for probably when he has received more debt than he ought to have had, by refusing him a single article causes discontent to follow & it is a chance if he ever comes near you to pay what he has had. . . .

When an indian brings his furs to the establishment, it is expected that the Officer in charge, whether Commissioned or otherwise, shall himself examine the furs - encourage the Indian when they are well prepared & if otherwise point out where he has erred in the dressing of them - and state at the same time that, when he brings furs which are of little value - although you take them - yet you had expected a part of more valuable furs, and that you hope he will be industrious in bringing you a part of each so that you on your part may be enabled to be more generous to him, etc. The latter part of this article is intended for the inexperienced. I shall again repeat, that this is my mode with the Indians & I have found it to answer well.⁴¹

The HBC adopted an official policy the following year which reflected the same humane, if somewhat paternalistic, attitude.⁴² Personnel at Company posts were urged to continue their "fair and kind treatment" toward the Indian people so that the latter would not only be encouraged to greater efforts in their hunting but would also come to consider the HBC men "not as Task Masters, but as their Friends-". Although a general policy of fair play may have been followed, occasionally simple persuasion was not enough to bring someone into line and more forceful means were put to use.

1st September 1828

The Indians drinking quitely with the exception of one who was a little troublesome, got a few cracks over the Ears which put him to rest. . .⁴³

Of those who visited Fort William again and again over the years, the Spaniard stands out as the most colourful. His intriguing name obviously aroused the curiosity of at least one Company manager who did some investigating and learned that the Spaniard was, in fact, "... descended on the Father's side from an individual of that nation."⁴⁴

His band hunted on American territory, near Grand Marais and Grand Portage, and for this reason had to be "more liberally treated than any other of our Indians-"⁴⁵ He arrived at Fort William in the summer of 1824 with about 100 skins, the returns of his spring hunt. The trader was reasonably satisfied that the chief had not traded with the Americans and gave him his usual clothing and a big keg of mixed rum, which he proceeded to enjoy with the other Indians at the post. Two days later the festivities were over and the Spaniard received his supplies for the summer: ammunition, corn, and "as usual" two kegs of mixed rum. He then departed, pleased with his royal treatment.⁴⁶

The Spaniard apparently understood Company hierarchy very well, and the wily fellow exploited his position to the fullest. When he visited the Fort in 1829, he paid a courtesy call on Governor Simpson, who was there on his tour of HBC establishments. The Governor, favourably impressed by the Spaniard, ordered gifts be given to him. When the Chief collected his presents a few days later, the trader's comment reflects his resentment at having to be gracious when he obviously disliked the Spaniard intensely.

24th July 1829

*The Spaniard took his departure - Gave him the presents Govrs. Simpson ordered for him viz: 1 large Keg reduced Rum, 2 lb Tobacco 10 lb flour 4 lb Butter 1 Chiefs Hat, & 8 quarts Hulled Corn - I am glad that he is gone he being the most troublesome Indian ever I met with...*⁴⁷

Although the Spaniard and his band frequented Fort William until the 1840s, his popularity never increased. He could not be trusted not to trade with the Americans and often sent for provisions, knowing that Fort William would comply in order to obtain his furs. His attitude seems to have been one of taking care of himself regardless of supposed loyalty to the HBC. In 1838 John Swanston at Fort William was dismayed to learn that the Chief had been fishing for the Americans at Grand Portage during the fall.

John Swanston to J. D. Cameron 16th December 1838

*I regret to say that for a Chief he is not an Indian whose word can be depended upon, as when he left this in Sept'r he promised faithfully that he would not remain about there Establishment, from what littel I know of him I do not form any favorable opinion of him...*⁴⁸

After dealing with the Spaniard for many years, the best Swanston could say of him was that he was "a lazy fellow and does nothing Tow know him. . . ."⁴⁹ The old chief must have laughed up his sleeve at the frustration of the Fort William traders, knowing full well that he could always find favour in higher places. Governor Simpson was still enchanted by him many years after their first meeting, when, in 1841, they saw each other again at Simpson's conference with the Indian people living in the Fort William area. The Governor described the Spaniard as

*. . . a tall and handsome man, somewhat advanced in years, was arrayed in a scarlet coat with gold epaulettes, the whole being apparently spick and span new, for the bright buttons were still enveloped in their original papers; and whether from the want of inexpressibles, or from a Highland taste, the tail of his shirt answered the purpose of a kilt.*⁵⁰

Petit Vieux, whose band hunted for Fort William for many years, was, unlike the Spaniard, well-liked and highly trusted. Petit Vieux and his family received a Christmas *régale* at Fort William in 1823, because he was "a good Indian and an excellent hunter".⁵¹ Over the next fourteen years, he maintained a good relationship with the Post. Almost every summer he arrived to help gather bark for building canoes.⁵² Occasionally he hunted big game and fished for the Post in addition to gathering pelts.⁵³ The degree to which he was trusted to fulfill his duties is amply illustrated in the following Journal entry:

1st January 1831

*. . . The Petit Veille son, with the widow Guiboche son arrived but brought no furs - The former says that he has 35 Skins at his Tent and his father 40. The latter has only 8 Skins. They intend to come to the Fort some time next Month and bring their skins themselves, as there is no danger of opposition where they are, and it being always the Petit Veilles custom to bring his furs himself to the Fort. We do not deem it necessary to send for them. . . .*⁵⁴

Even though his hunting grounds were not close to American territory, it is significant that no one had to be sent to collect Petit Vieux's furs, as was the case with so many of the Indian hunters.

The fact that the old man was brought to Fort William to die also suggests a close relationship between his band and the Post. In early January 1837, Petit Vieux's youngest son arrived at Fort William with the news that his father was very sick and left immediately with his older brother to bring their father back to the Post. They returned several days

later with Petit Vieux, who died almost two weeks later. The journal entry recording his passing is touching when considered against the usually dry, factual presentation of events.

He was the worthiest and honestest Indian that I have been acquainted with since I have been in the Indian country. every person at the place accompanied his remains to the Grave.⁵⁵

Strong links were formed between people at inland posts and the Indian people trading with them. Despite the fact that neither the NWC nor the HBC favoured marriages in the interior, they were powerless to prevent their men from living with Indian women and having families. The NWC partners issued a directive in 1806 that men were not to take wives in the interior and that Indian women and Métis children from relationships up to that date were to live outside the Fort. Partners failing to enforce the regulation were to be fined one hundred pounds.⁵⁶ It was, however, common for these same partners to have an Indian wife inland and a 'civilized' wife in Montreal. When they retired, they simply abandoned their family in the interior or, in the case of some, found the wife another husband, usually a worker at one of the posts.

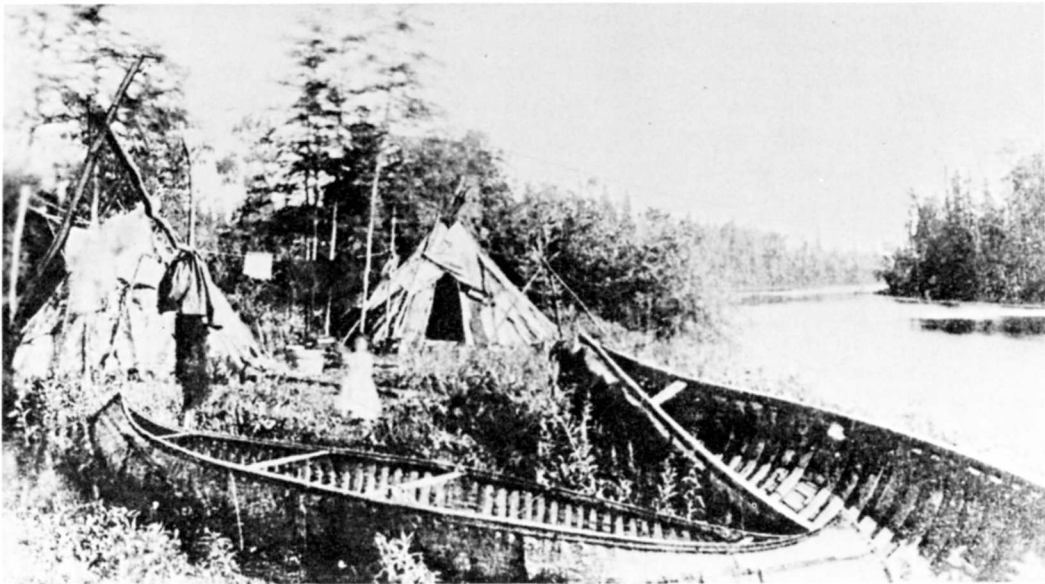
When a young trader becomes united to an Indian or halfbreed woman he seldom calculates on a family, and foolishly imagines he can easily dissolve a connexion which is unsanctioned by the ceremony of marriage. He is however much deceived. When the period which he had originally fixed for quitting the Indian country arrives, he finds that the woman who had been for many years a faithful partner cannot in a moment be "whistled off," and "let down the wind to prey at fortune." Children have grown up about him; the natural affection of the father despises the laws of civilised society, -the patriot sinks in the parent, -each succeeding year weakens the recollection of home, and of-

"The pleasant fields, travelled so oft

In life's morning march, when his bosom was young; "
and in most cases the temporary liaison ends in a permanent union. Those so circumstanced, on quitting the Company bring their families to Canada, where they purchase estates, on which they live in a kind of half Indian, half civilised manner, constantly smoking their calumet and railing at the fashionable frivolities of the great world.

When a trader wishes to separate from his Indian wife he generally allows her an annuity, or gets her comfortably married to one of the voyageurs, who, for a handsome sum, is happy to become the husband of la Dame d'un Bourgeois. A retired partner, thus disembarrassed,

*arrives in Canada determined to enjoy the pleasures of matrimony with an educated female.*⁵⁷



29 *Indian camps on the Kaministiquia River, c.1880 (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)*

Alexander Stewart, a former Nor'Wester in charge at Fort William from 1821 to 1823, followed this practise when he was transferred to Island Lake, leaving his wife and six children behind at the Fort.⁵⁸

As soon as the HBC gained control of the trade, it ruled that posts were not to maintain the families of any employees.⁵⁹ In 1824, the regulation was tightened further, and it was resolved that:

*... neither Clerks or Men be permitted to take Indian Women, on any account for Wives - nor, any Woman, unless permission is applied for, and granted for such by the Chief Factor in charge of the District.*⁶⁰

In subsequent years, a barrage of regulations issued from the Council meetings:

1827

*... all officers or servants of the company having women or children and wishing to leave the same in the Country on their retirement therefore be required to make such provision for their future maintenance, more particularly for that of the Children as circumstances may reasonably warrant and the means of the individual permit - ... all those desirous of withdrawing the same from the country be allowed every facility for that purpose and none be allowed hereafter to take a woman without binding himself down to Leave 1/10 of his annual wages in the hands of the Company as a provision for his family in event of Death or retirement from the country -*⁶¹

1843

*... in all cases where a Commissioned Gentleman's family is left in the Country while the head of the family is away on Furlough or leave of absence, the family in question shall be supplied according to their number with the ordinary ration of the Post at which they may be left without any charge being made for the same, but that any supplies they may receive beyond those rations shall be charged to the private account of the Head of the family - ... the practice of allowing retiring Servants from the Southern Department to proceed to Red River Settlement with a view of settling as agriculturalists be discontinued and that no such permission nor facility of any description for such emigration be hereafter afforded without special authority from the Governor or Council.*⁶²

1845

... throughout the country in the absence of Clergymen

*Chief Factors only solemnize marriage and that no person be permitted to take a wife at any Establishment without the sanction of the Gentleman superintending the District.*⁶³

Strict as these rules may appear, many (if not most) of the men in fact did have families. At Fort William the pattern was likely no different from other posts. In 1828, the following men are listed as having wives and children:

... Of Families maintained at the Establishment -
 Rod. McKenzie Senr C.F. 1 Woman 7 Children
 Bte Deschamps 1 " 4 "
 Michel Collin (Freeman) 1 " 5 "
 Antoine Collin 1 " 1 "
 J. Bte Visina 1 " 3 "
 J. Bte Langemois (freeman) upwards of 80 years of age -
 Mdamé Brisbois upwards of 70 years of age -
 Mdamé LaGacé 100 years of age and upwards
*all are maintained and clothed by the company.*⁶⁴

The Company, realizing the impossibility of preventing inland alliances, implemented policies to assimilate wives and children to 'civilized' ways.

Regulations for promoting Moral & Religious improvement. -
... That for the Moral & Religious improvement of the servants and more effectual civilization and instruction of the families attached to the different Establishments and the Indians, that every Sunday divine Service be publickly read with becoming solemnity either once or twice a day to be regulated by the number of People, at which every man woman & Child resident will be required to attend together with any Indians who may be at hand and whom it May be proper to invite and for which purpose appropriate religious books will be furnished by and on account of the Company,
... That in the course of the week due attention be bestowed to furnish the women & Children such regular & useful employment as is suited to their age and capacities and best calculated to promote virtuous & Suppress vicious habits.
*... As a preparative to education, That the mother and children be always addressed and Habituated to converse in the vernacular dialect of the Father and that he be encouraged to devote part of his Leisure hours to teach the children their ABC & Chatechism together with such further elementary instructions as time & other circumstances may permit.*⁶⁵

George Simpson, then just beginning his long service as Governor of the HBC, was among those who felt that marriages in the interior ran counter to Company interests. Ignoring all considerations of humanity and kindness, he wrote brutally on the subject of old traders to Andrew Colville in 1826:

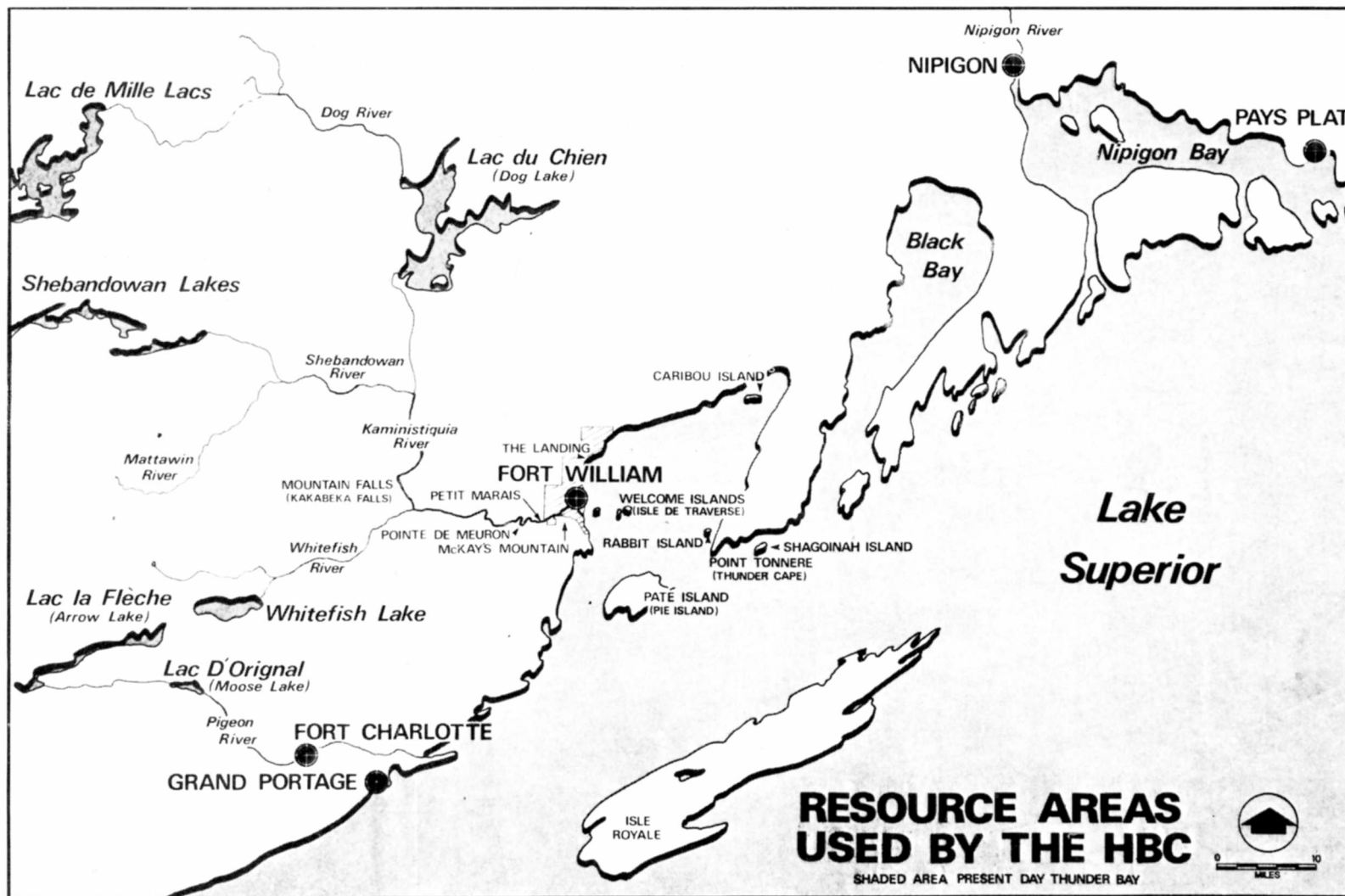
... Many of our principal Clerks are nearly worn out and I should not consider it good policy to allow them have commissions as the step from a Chief Tradership to a Chief Factorship I think ought to be gained by important active services which none except such as are in the prime and vigour of Life should be qualified or required to perform. -and I consider it highly injurious to the general interests to have old worn out men in our councils, they are timid indolent and helpless and would be of no manner of use in cases of difficulty danger or emergency. -Worn out Indian Traders are the most useless helpless class of men I ever knew and the sooner the Coy: can get rid of them after their Days of activity and labor are over the better; but that will always be a difficult matter as they become attached to the Country to the half savage Life they have been accustomed to lead and to their women and Families and will not move unless actually forced away.⁶⁶



30 and 31 Sir George Simpson (copy of original courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society); Simpson's home at Ile Dorval on the St. Lawrence River, Frances Ann Hopkins (courtesy Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto)

Simpson, it might be added, bore no responsibility for the several Indian women with whom he formed temporary alliances or for the children sired by him in the interior.⁶⁷ Some "old traders" were more human: they considered their alliances to be lifelong and some, like Roderick McKenzie, even preferred to remain inland when they retired.

These are some of the people who lived and worked at Fort William. Having briefly examined who they were and the framework within which they interacted, we now turn to their seasonal and daily routines, in an attempt to fit together a picture of what it was like to be part of the small community at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River.



SEASON TO SEASON

The basic pattern of life at Fort William was determined by the seasons. As they changed and flowed into one another, so did people's lives, since almost all working activities were directly associated with the season of the year. Time waited for no one. If crops were not planted as soon as weather permitted, they would not mature before the short growing season ended. If they were not harvested before the first frost, food would run short during the winter.

Because of the extremes of the seasons on the Canadian Shield, the primary activities of year-round employees at Fort William were those connected with food and shelter. This strong emphasis on basic survival is very clear in the HBC Fort William Journals, and it is this aspect of life at Fort William that will be examined in the following pages.

Spring

As temperatures rose and the smells of spring began to permeate the air, the men and women turned to sugar-making, which figured foremost among spring activities. Toward the end of March, several men were sent with provisions to McKay's Mountain to chop wood and prepare a campsite for the sugar-makers,¹ a few of whom went along to clear the snow from the spot where tents would be erected.²



33 Fort William. McKay's Mountain, Sydney P. Hall, (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

14th March 1832

... Sicard took a load of Tent Bark to the Sugar Bush with the Dogs. The people who was at the Sugar Bush say that the Maple Trees runs a little...³

The men then returned to Fort William, and all the women whose husbands worked at the Fort, as well as any other Indian or Métis women at the post at the time, went off to make sugar.⁴ Indian women sometimes made a special journey to Fort William for the sugar-making.⁵

Children accompanied the women, who would be gone perhaps until mid-May, tapping the trees, collecting the sap and boiling it down into sugar. Husbands occasionally visited their wives, although they had to obtain permission from the post manager beforehand.⁶

25th March 1839

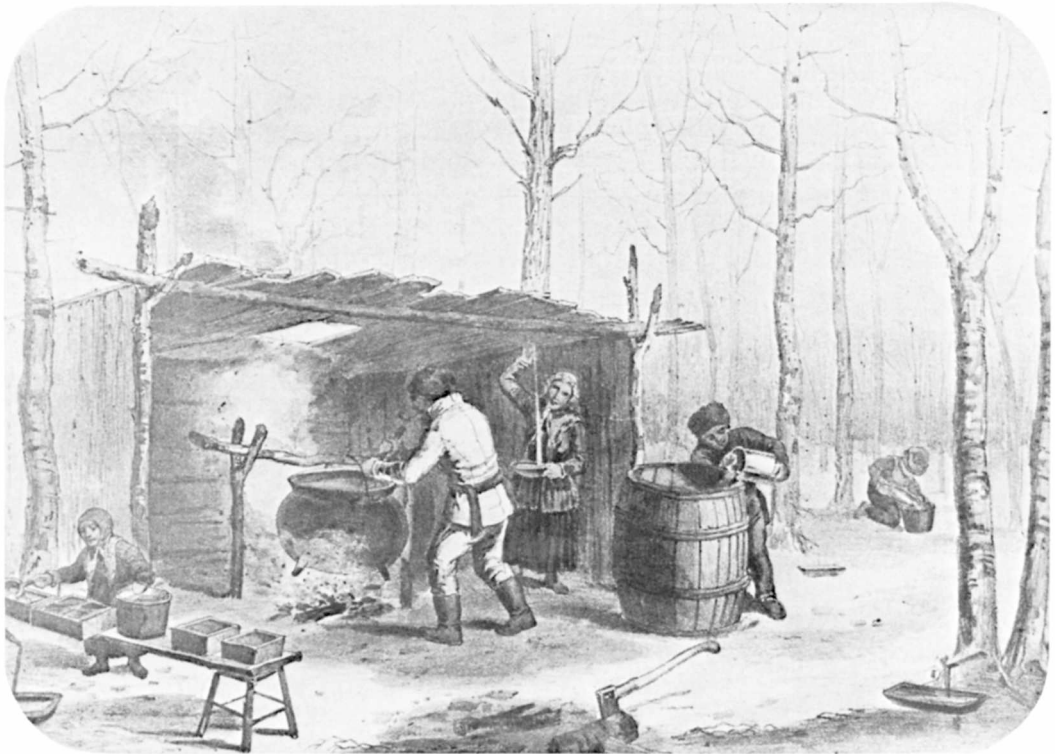
... sent off 6 men to cut hoops for the week to a place about 9 miles up the River from whence Boucher returned to take his wife to the Sugar bush. for which he got a severe reprimand...⁷

From 1827 on, Lake Huron District was supposed to supply Lake Superior District with maple sugar.⁸ Since Fort William was only one of several posts among whom the sugar was divided, it sometimes suffered from short supply.

J. Swanston to J. D. Cameron, 20th August 1838:

It is also to be regretted that you could not furnish this Post with a couple of Barrells of Maple Sugar. My motive in asking for it was to prevent the Collins from taking salt Troute in the winter to the Grande Portage to trade with Mr Cotté, however as you could not supply us with some. I am certain do as they did last winter, that is, to trade fish, at the GP for some, as the Collins (father & sons) stock of what they made last spring is nearly expended-...?

The people of the Fort, therefore, continued the annual pilgrimage, first recorded in 1824, to the sugar bush.



34 Sugar Making in Canada, C. Krieghoff (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

General clean-up was another part of spring routine. Cutters and drains were cleared to allow melting snow to flow off the land, the men carted snow away and the whole interior of the Fort was swept.¹⁰ Stovepipes and chimneys, which had been in constant use all winter, were also cleaned.¹¹

Batteaux and canoes were now prepared for use when the ice broke up in the Kaministiquia River and Lake Superior. Batteaux were caulked

and repaired.¹² After the building in which the canoemaker worked was readied and canoe wood prepared, the canoemaker began his annual quota of canoes.¹³

As soon as the snow was gone, most of the people at the Post directed their attention to the gardens. The men carted dung onto the hot-bed, garden and fields¹⁴ and mended fences to prevent the livestock from trampling the precious crops.¹⁵ Potatoes, always a staple at Fort William, were taken from the root cellars and cut to be ready for planting.¹⁶ The fields were ploughed¹⁷ and finally, in late spring or early summer, depending on weather conditions, the crops were planted.¹⁸ This usually took several days with all hands at the task. The women who had by now returned from the sugar-making formed an integral part of this work group.¹⁹

1828

*... - The advantages the district possesses are in farming and fishing - The ground under cultivation at present is from twenty to thirty acres, which produced last autumn 1800 Bushels Potatoes, 70 bushels barley and 15 bushels Pease - ... The barley is ground and mixed with indian corn and served out as provisions for Indians and freemen.*²⁰



35 Detail from painting by George Back (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

Barley was grown fairly regularly, as well as turnips and peas.²¹ Some experimental growing also seems to have been undertaken in later years, although the results are not known. Rev. R. Burnet, of Hamilton, wrote to John McIntyre at Fort William in May 1873:

*When I had the pleasure of seeing you two years ago, I promised to send you some varieties of hardy fruit trees. My friend Mr Holton of Hamilton, a nurseryman here, has shipped to your address a box of trees of some choice crabs, and apples. It will afford the F. G. Association of the Province of Ontario much gratification to hear at intervals how the different varieties stand the climate. If these should succeed Mr Holton with great generosity has said that he will gladly send more.*²²

Although the Journals mention it infrequently, undoubtedly the men hunted returning migratory birds and began fishing in order to relieve the monotony of their winter diet. Spring at Fort William would also see the arrival of the first Indians from their traplines with furs as well as fresh game and other items to trade.

Summer

For the person in charge of Fort William, the beginning of summer meant completion of the annual inventory of goods in store. For the rest of the people at the Post, summer involved a great deal of time weeding and hoeing the gardens.²³

10th July 1824

*Masta in the morning passed the plough between the Ridges in the potatoe field & Baron & Sancier Hoed the potatoes but the flies were so numerous that the horses could not work during the heat of the Day - ... Dauphin transplanting Cabbages & planting Ruta Bagas..*²⁴

Once the gardens had been attended to, they could be left until the hay was gotten in. Haycarts and hay rakes were made or repaired and then haymaking went into full swing.²⁵ The last week in July and most of August were spent gathering all the hay needed to feed the livestock the following winter. Virtually nothing else was done during this period. The mowers were the first on the scene, helped by the other men and women, who spread and turned the hay to ensure that it would be dry before putting it into the barns. Finally, it was carted to the various lofts to be stored until needed.²⁶

23rd July 1824

... All the others mowing & spreading the Hay assisted by Collins family & the Indian women....²⁷

22nd August 1827

The men finished mowing hay, in all 90 loads and a stack on the opposite side of the River supposed to contain about 350 Bundles -....²⁸



36 Detail from a view of Fort William by William Armstrong c.1850s (J. Ross Robertson Collection, Metropolitan Toronto Central Library)

Canoemaking continued during the summer. Fort William was responsible for maintaining a stock of canoes for the use of Company officials and travellers in need of transportation east or west. The number ranged from 12 in 1832, rising to 25 in 1849, and falling back to 12 in 1854.²⁹ In addition to building new canoes, the canoemaker was also responsible for mending canoes that stopped at Fort William en route east or west.³⁰

The demands of keeping up this stock made for an integrated work effort at the Fort which not only involved collecting and preparing the necessary wood, but also gathering canoe bark, gum and spruce roots with which the canoes were sewn. The latter items were primarily gathered by the freemen and Indians in the summer to exchange for Company goods.

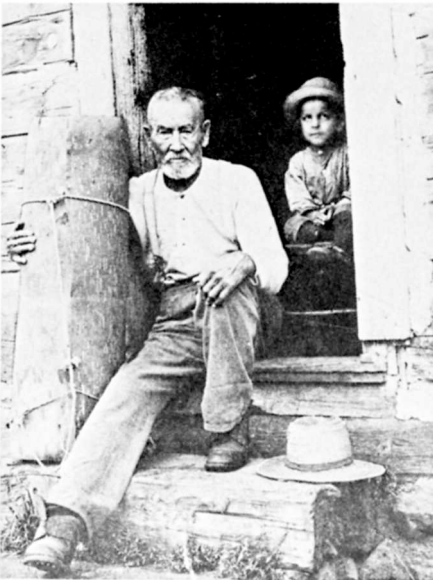
17th July 1828

... Petit Vieux, Netomap, Attineau and Cheobeting

arrived from the Petit Marrais, six miles above this Fort - They traded 24 side and bottom canoe bark, 48 lbs Gum and 24 bundles wattap, the canoe bark paid in strouds and Blankets, the wattap and gum paid with ammunition, liquor and tobacco -...³¹

23rd June 1830

... The women sewing canoes, three Indian women who I have sent off to make wattape 2 days ago arrived with 12 bundles each which I traded for tobacco & gartering...³²



37 Gathering canoe bark
(courtesy Geological Survey
of Canada)

38 Roll of bark for a hunting canoe
(courtesy Smithsonian Institution)



39 *Ojibwa Indian with wattape (spruce roots) for canoe building (courtesy Geological Survey of Canada)*



40 *Assembling a birch bark canoe (courtesy Geological Survey of Canada)*

The following 1827 Journal entries illustrate very well the number of people involved in the actual assembling of the canoes.

3rd May

Collin and Dompierre began a North Canoe-

4th May

... Collin and Dompierre at the Canoe... .

5th May

... The women of the Fort sewed at the Canoe-

7th May

... The women finished sewing the Canoe-

8th May

... Collin & Dompierre finished putting wood in the Canoe, it must remain so for a day or two to let the wood dry-

9th May

... Collin and Dompierre finished streching a North Canoe-

14th May

... Dompierre arranged seats in two Canoes-

15th May

Deschamps and Visina gummed at the Governor's Canoe - Dompierre finished arrangeing seats in the Canoes say three....

16th May

Deschamps and Visina finished gumming the Governor's canoe at breakfast time,

18th May

... Sheleing finished painting the Governor's Canoe-³³

During the summer and on into the fall, the cooper obtained wood and made barrels for salting fish.³⁴

22nd August 1831

Sent Old Collin and St. Cire to cut ash for hoops. ...³⁵

16th March 1836

... The men were employed cutting logs of Sapins to make Staves for Fish Casks. ...³⁶

The cooper's job also involved cleaning and repairing the old casks which was not always pleasant:

2nd August 1837

... Old Collin today began to collect the Old Fish Casks in order to repara them, they certainly harly worth that trouble, they stank so much that the smell is nearly enough to knock a man down, it is my humble opinion that it is spoiling good fish to put them in such Casks-³⁷

When Fort William became a fish curing station for the HBC, supplying fish for market, the cooper's job became a very important one.

1837
... If you could procure 200 Barrels to Salt Fish for the market they will be required for this Post next Fall; exclusive of the 400 which Antoine Collin expect(s) to make. It would be advisable that you would order a new Set of Coopers Tools for this Post also; there are only 3 Coopers Hollowing adzes & 4 Hollowing Knives in the Depot here at present; as the Drawing knives which are here are not of any use. We would require at least three. ...³⁸

In 1840, there was enough work to keep two coopers busy. The following table, showing their rate of production for part of the summer, indicates how hard they must have worked.

YEAR	DATE	MADE	REPAIRED
1838	JUL 28	24	
	AUG 4	25	
	AUG 18	21	
		16	
1840	JUL 11	41 *	
	JUL 20		39
	AUG 8	61 *	
	AUG 15	48	
	AUG 22	72	
	AUG 29	55	

V EXAMPLES OF WEEKLY PRODUCTION
AND REPAIR OF CASKS BY THE
COOPER AT FORT WILLIAM 1838 AND 1840³⁹
* 2 COOPERS



41 Bear, William Armstrong (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

In late summer or early fall, the Indians were given their "debt" or credit for the winter and prepared to go off to their hunting grounds, supposedly not to return before the spring.⁴⁰ They generally received a gift of a keg of liquor to speed them on their way, satisfied with their treatment and ready to return with as many furs as possible. Certain individuals arrived with furs in the late summer and rested only a few days before leaving again. Others, however, came out to Fort William to wait for the annual outfit, which usually arrived by early September. Their presence at the Fort was sometimes not appreciated:

John Swanston to J. D. Cameron, 20th August 1838

... We have several of our Indians here at present waiting the arrival of the Ot (Outfit) in order to receive their usual supplies - so many persons being about the place at present, is a heavy charge upon the Post, particularly as they have always been accustomed, to be supplied with Provisions while about the Fort, was fish as abundant as usual, the furnishing of them with food, would only be a matter of secondary moment, but unfortunately we have not been able during the whole summer, scarcely to get a meal of fish for ourselves, much less for so many....⁴¹



42 Fort William - 1866, William Armstrong (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

Swanston suggested that the Indians could be prevented from "loitering away the summer" at Fort William by employing them to fish for the HBC.

His reasoning was the Americans at Grand Portage paid them for every barrel of fish they salted and, since prices of goods were cheaper at Fort William, the HBC could get away with paying less per barrel and still attract not only those at the Post but perhaps even those fishing at Grand Portage.

The suggestion does not seem to have been accepted, since three years later Swanston was still complaining that the fur hunt had ceased to interest the Indians because most of them were at Grand Portage, waiting for the Roman Catholic mission which was to be established there. Although Swanston still hoped to regain their loyalty, he could suggest only the fisheries as a means.⁴² The increasing scarcity of furbearers in the immediate area of Lake Superior as well as the fact that the HBC had by this time curtailed the use of liquor in the trade were no doubt factors in this disinterest.

Donald McIntosh to Angus Bethune, 16th May 1836

*... There are severals of the Indians who have come in with their hunts, which is earlier than usual, as they were aware the most part of them, that they had no Liquor to expect, they did not exert themselves as usual, as I am lead to conclude from the circumstance of their coming out so early & making but a poor spring hunt.*⁴³

Apparently, the situation had not improved by 1844.

Swanston to Hector Mckenzie, 26th November

*In reference to the Indians of the Grand Portage I am rather at a loss how to advise you to act with regard to them, but if it could be correctly ascertained, that they have been afforded supplies, to the extent you mention, by the American Fur Company at Lapointe, in the absence of all opposition, I am strongly of opinion that it would, as you suggest, be advisable to discontinue altogether the indebting of them at Fort William, as by our furnishing of them with supplies, would only be affording them the means to hunt furs for our neighbours, ...*⁴⁴

For that winter, however, the usual method of issuing credit was to be continued and if returns were still poor, Governor Simpson should be informed of the situation. Swanston was confident that the Governor would authorize trade by barter, which involved less risk than issuing credit.



43 *Nipigon River, Verner* (courtesy The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa)



44 *Lac du Diable, George Back* (courtesy The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa)



45 *Corner of a Lake on the C.P.R., Sydney P. Hall (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)*

Autumn

During the autumn, fishing, harvesting crops and readying the buildings for winter were the most important tasks. Fishing was the domain of several freemen whose responsibility it was to supply fish not only to Fort William but also, after 1836,⁴⁵ to the HBC for commercial marketing.

21st August 1829

... Trembly finished a net of 60 fms - ...

4th September

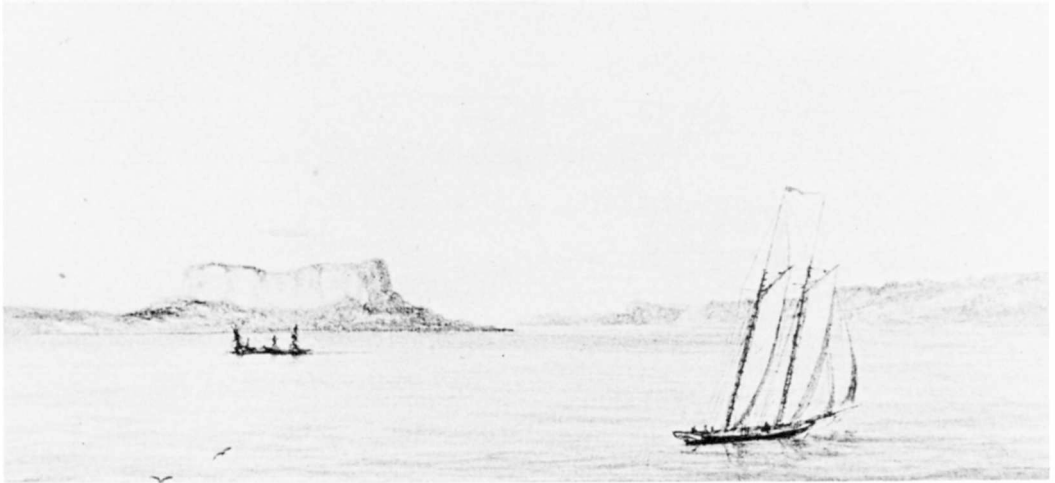
... The men at the Fort Knitting nets for the fall fishing.

19th September

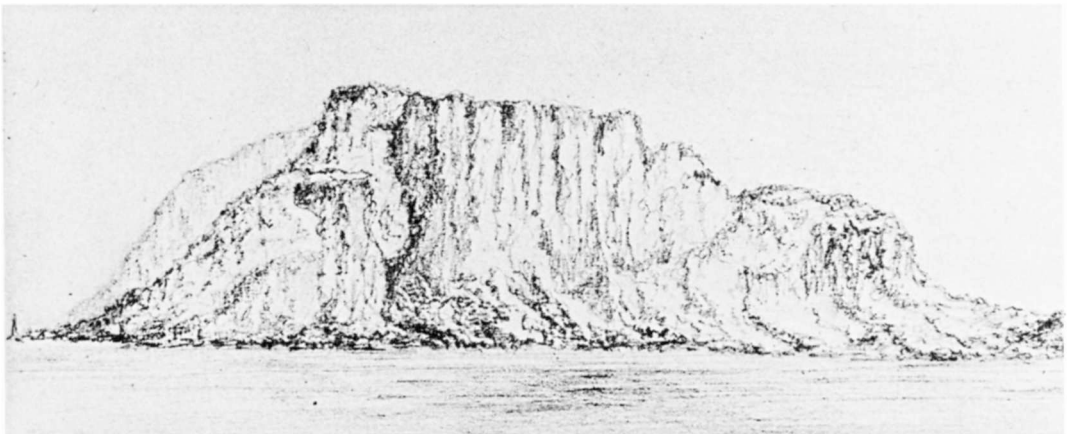
The men making floats and mounting their nets in order to be off to the fall fishery monday...⁴⁶

Before the fishermen left for their various fishing spots in September, several labourers made the rounds to each location, dropping off empty barrels and salt and chopping firewood, so that when the fishermen arrived they would find their campsite ready and could devote all their energy to catching and salting fish.

The main fisheries were located on various islands near the Fort: Pâté (*Pie*) Island, Point Tonnerre (*Thunder Cape*), Rabbit Island, Shagoinah Island and the Welcome Islands, as well as at the rapids upriver from the Post. Here the men settled in until the end of October or the beginning of November, when the batteaux were again despatched, this time to collect the barrels of salted trout and whitefish.



46 *Pie Island, near Fort William, William Armstrong (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)*



47 *Thunder Cape Lake Superior, Alexander Gaviller (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)*



48 *Squall on Lake Superior, May 1845, H. J. Warre (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)*

Storms on the Lake, the ferocity and suddenness of which have always earned Lake Superior a healthy respect among those who sail her waters, sometimes interfered with carrying on the fisheries. On October 19, 1826, three men set off for Rabbit Island to deliver barrels to Michel Collin and pick up the fish he had already salted. Five days later they returned

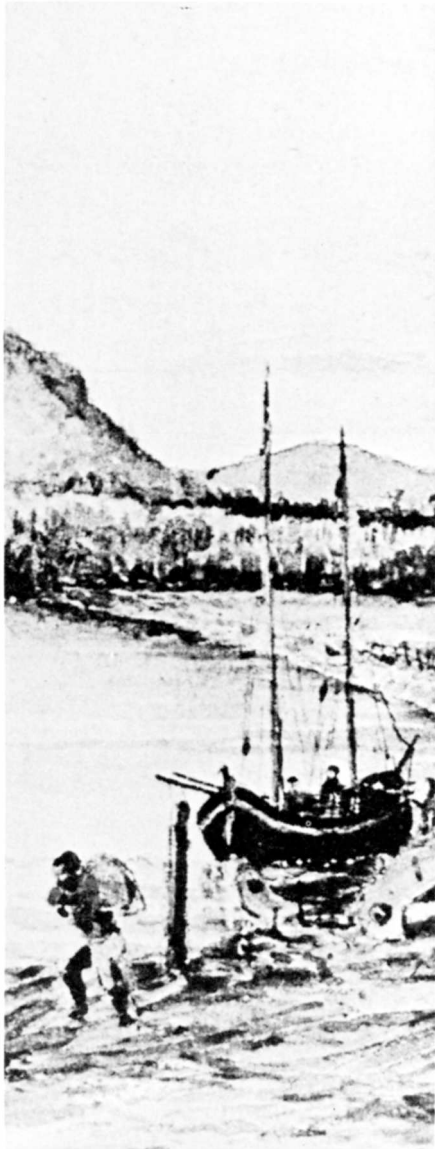
... in a Small Canoe from Rabbit Island, with the news that the Boat was broken upon the Island in the gale of monday last - so much so that she could not be repaired-⁴⁷

The next day, they set off again, this time completing the run successfully and returning on October 26 with sixteen barrels of fish.

Once the fall catch was safely stored in the Fort, the batteaux were hauled out of the water for the winter.⁴⁸ The barrels destined for the external market were picked up by the Company schooner and transported down Lake Superior.

In 1826/27, almost 20,000 pounds of salt fish and 7,500 fresh fish were consumed by the people at the Post - those in charge, labourers and their families, freemen, Indians and old people dependent for their livelihood on Fort William.⁴⁹ In 1837, Fort William exported at least 250 barrels to Sault Ste Marie. That same year, the people at Fort William

consumed almost 35,000 pounds of salt fish and 8,000 fresh fish.⁵⁰ In 1838, the Post exported 280 barrels of fish and cured 120 for its own use.⁵¹ Since a barrel held roughly 200 pounds of fish,⁵² the latter fish returns represent approximately 56,000 pounds exported and 24,000 consumed at Fort William.



49 Schooner docked at Fort William; detail of Fort William, Lake Superior. Mouth of Kamanistiquia River. July 1857 by William H. E. Napier (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

Travellers to the area commented on Fort William's extensive fishing operations. In 1844, R. M. Ballantyne wrote:

*... (Fort William) is still, however, a very important fishing station, and many hundreds of beautiful white-fish, with which Lake Superior swarms, are salted there annually for the Canada markets. These white-fish are indeed excellent, and it is difficult to say whether they, or the immense trout which are also caught in abundance, have the most delicate flavor. These trout, as well as white-fish, are caught in nets, and the former sometimes measure three feet long, and are proportionately broad. The one we had to breakfast on the morning of our arrival, must have been nearly this size.*⁵³

In addition to the external market, personal requests were sometimes received from high-ranking HBC officials. Donald Smith wrote to John McIntyre in 1876:

5th September

*If not putting you to any trouble might I ask you to be kind enough to send me by one of the last steamers two Half-barrels of lightly salted trout, which all my friends much prefer to the white fish - If to do this will put you to any inconvenience I beg you will not think of sending them.*⁵⁴

While the fishermen were away, everyone was occupied with the harvest, the most significant part of which was potatoes. Taking up the potatoes usually involved about ten days' labour, and all hands, including Indians at the Post, were put to work.

YEAR	HARVESTING		TOTAL HARVESTED
	BEGAN	FINISHED	
1826	SEP 22	OCT 2	1344 KEGS
1827	SEP 25	OCT 9	1805 "
1828	—	SEP 29	500 "
1830	—	SEP 28	1263 "
1831	SEP 26	OCT 5	659 "
1834	—	OCT 10	1054 BU.
1835	SEP 25	OCT 6	1260 "
1839	SEP 16	OCT 3	1058 KEGS
1840	SEP 15	OCT 26	1211 "
VI EXAMPLES OF POTATO HARVESTS AT FORT WILLIAM ⁵⁵			

Crop failures, such as that of 1831, generally resulted from torrential downpours:

5th October 1831

*... The men and women took up the last of the Potatoes, which amount collectively 659 Kegs. The produce of 200 Kegs seed that was planted last Spring. Miserable indeed. This failure was chiefly ... owing to the heavy raines in June, in consequence of which the fields were overflowed for a considerable time, which caused one third of the seed to rot in the ground. ...*⁵⁶

With fishing and harvesting out of the way, the men were free to undertake their preparations for the onslaught of cold weather. They went upriver for clay with which to plaster both their dwellings and places of work in order to keep the harsh winds out.⁵⁷ Stoves were put up, stove-pipes made and chimneys repaired or rebuilt.⁵⁸ If these jobs were finished in good time, the men began to cut firewood, a task which would extend through the winter.



50 *Silver Islet seen from the mainland 1869, William Armstrong (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)*

Winter

Cutting and transporting wood was by far the most important job to be done in the winter months when snow made possible the hauling of heavy loads over paths cleared through the bush. The men made sledges⁵⁹ and used horses and oxen to haul logs or cordwood and dog teams to bring back the lighter loads of canoe wood and fence rails.⁶⁰



51 *Breaking a Road, William Cruikshank (courtesy The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa)*

5th December 1827

*The men employed as yesterday, cutting and hawling logs, the roads are very bad and the distance six miles cannot bring more than four logs Pr day - ...*⁶¹

18th December 1837

*... The men of the Post were all excepting Davilleau employed Hauling home Canoe wood from the mountain back of the Fort with their Dogs; ...*⁶²

23rd January 1851

*Demoulin, Plante & John McLeod were sent to the Bush with 2 Oxen & the little Mare to bring home Pine Logs for sawying...*⁶³



52 Dog teams on the Kenogami River (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

If cutting continued for several weeks, a great deal of wood must have been consumed:

20th March 1824

*The men employed this Week as follows -- Rouleau, Dompierre, Latulip, & Melonie Cutting Cord Wood -- their task is 9 Cords per Week each man*⁶⁴

After the wood reached the Fort, it was cut into stove lengths for fire-wood or prepared for building. If all went well, there might even be time to start on the wood supply for the next year.

19th March 1840

... Ten men preparing themselves to start in the morning for the Blk Bay (Black Bay), in order to cut stove wood for the ensuing Year-⁶⁵

It is interesting to note the distance they went to obtain sufficient supplies of firewood and how severely that resource had been depleted by the relatively small population at Fort William. The Journals indicate that this was also true of cedar and ash – the wood required for canoes and barrels – as well as bark and wood for boats.

1825

... Bark for the bottoms of Canoes is now a scarce article, there is still much side bark at Fort William. The reason of the bottom bark being proportionably scarcer, arises from great quantities of it having been used for patching up old Canoes for the number of passengers who came out in swarms from the North.⁶⁶

19th January 1828

Deschamps and Michel went to the mountain in search of wood for boat building, found 3 good trees – ...⁶⁷

Although a good layer of snow was an absolute necessity for hauling activities,⁶⁸ it also had its disadvantages. As snow began to accumulate, it was removed from inside the palisade, to prevent an unbearably slushy spring thaw on ground that was low and swampy.⁶⁹

13th January 1824

... The continued heavy falls of Snow almost keeps two men in constant Employment.⁷⁰

One method adopted for this winter housecleaning is ... interesting.

22nd December 1837

... part of the men were hauling the Snow collected in the Square on Cow hides out of the Fort...⁷¹

Although the Blacksmith could be called on at any time to do immediate repairs on broken tools or equipment, he produced most of his wide range of products in the winter.

25th February 1829

... The Blacksmith finished forging his anchor which appears to be midling well done – he is now forging fish spears and fire steels –⁷²

15th December 1830

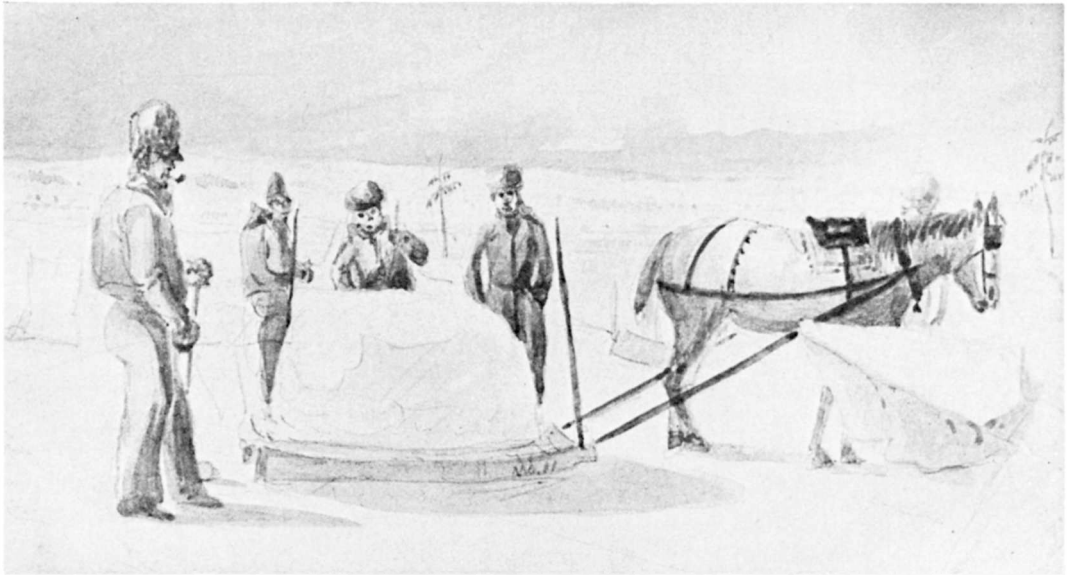
... Davilleau, Duchamp, & Sicard, were the greatest

part of the day employed Shoeing the Mare, which was a very difficult Job as she had never been shod before; They had to tie her four legs & throw her upon her back otherwise she would have crippled some of them -⁷³

Towards the end of winter, the men hauled ice from the lake to fill the ice house, where perishables were stored in the warm months. Using the horses to haul train loads of ice this job was done in a few days.⁷⁴

15th March 1824

Masta & Fanneant were sent off with two Horse Sleds to get Ice from the Lake for the purpose of filling the Ice House. -⁷⁵



53 Ice Cutters Quebec 1830; detail from a painting by Jas. Cockburn (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

As the Need Arose

The people at Fort William worked at many other tasks throughout the year which cannot be strictly classified as seasonal. Since there was always a blacksmith at the Fort, his supply of coals periodically had to be replenished.

22nd January 1829

... The Blacksmith, Fontaine & Johnston put up a Kiln of 6 cords of Birtch wood to make coals....

23rd January

The Blacksmith, Fontaine and Johnston covering the Kiln with Hay and earth-....

24th January

... - The blacksmith put fire to his Kiln...⁷⁶

Once the kiln had been fired it could take several weeks for the wood to burn into coals. It appears there was no guarantee it would do so.

13th December 1830

... in the afternoon, the (men) assisted Davilleau to extinguish the Coals that has been burning under ground since the 26th Ultimo, (November) a great part of the wood did not burn into Coals, therefore, there is not much...⁷⁷

The cycle of wear and tear on wooden buildings was such that a significant portion of working hours was spent repairing and constructing them. Chimneys and roofs were often mentioned as needing attention. Although buildings no longer in use were frequently left to disintegrate, most old NWC buildings were salvaged and the materials recycled as firewood or transformed into new structures. For example, the lumber from a canoe store dismantled in 1831 was sawed into lengths to be used for fence pickets. Two years later another old building was torn down, the lumber to be used for a new canoe store.⁷⁸

Depending on the size of the structure and the number of men available to work on it, they would spend anywhere from a few days to a month or more involved in this process of rebuilding. The following Journal entries chronicle the disappearance of one old building and its reappearance in a modified form.

24th March 1836

... The men were employed taking ... the weather board down that surrounds the old buildings that are to be pulled down this Spring.

28th March

... The men were employed pulling down the mens House in order to build the new house in the (same) place. on account of the Stone chimney.-

2nd April

... The men were employed removing the Wood & Rubbish

of the Old House which they have been pulling down this week.

4th April

... The men were employed about laying the Sols and Slippers (sills and sleepers) of the New House which is the only part of it that requires new Wood.

5th April

... The men were employed pulling down the Captain old House as the wood is sound in order to rebuild it upon new Sols for the mens House. upon the same foundation that the old House was.

7th April

... The men put up the Walls of the new Building.

8th April

... The men put the Rafters on the New House.

13th April

... The men were employed at the New House. Boucher & William Robertson layed the upper Floor yesterday & to day, as the boards was ready groved they had very little trouble.

16th April

... The men were employed at the new house - Beladeau has covered one side with Shingles-

22nd April

... The men were employed as before they have finished shingling the House.

26th April

... The men were employed as before. The(y) commenced the chimney to day.

29th April

... The men were employed Plaistering & Building the chimney at one end of the New House.

30th April

... The men finished the chimney and have put weather boards round the most part of the House- It will be ready for them to remove in it about the middle of next Week-⁷⁹

The HBC seems to have taken advantage of every opportunity to salvage materials:

16th July 1824

*... Mr McKenzie, Mr F Grant &ca went up to Pointe Meuron having heard that the building there had been burnt (whether accidentally or not is not known) and there was a quantity of Iron Work laying about - they returned in the afternoon with a good deal of Iron Work nails &ca*⁸⁰

Another task throughout the year was the frequent trips to nearby posts, usually to deliver provisions or messages, and to native camps to pick up furs or deliver supplies. The despatches sent between posts were the only opportunity for post managers to communicate with each other and, for the men who delivered them, one of the few chances they had to visit with workers at other posts. The mail packet, with official Company despatches to the various posts along its route, as well as personal mail to and from the interior, travelled in relay fashion, each post sending it the next section of the way. For example, the Red River Packet, on its way east, was brought from Fort Frances to Fort William on one leg of its journey. The Fort Frances men returned to their post and Fort William assumed responsibility for forwarding the packet to Nipigon. Men from Fort William delivered it and returned two weeks later, and Nipigon sent it on with men from its post. The reverse process sometimes occurred in the same year.⁸¹



54 Winter Travel between St. Pauls & Red River, William Armstrong (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

The men who worked at Fort William were also involved in maintaining an outpost near American territory. Over the years, this outpost moved closer and closer to the border, as greater efforts were required to maintain the Indians' loyalty to the HBC and Fort William. White Fish Lake, the location of the first such offshoot, was in operation in 1823/24. In December, men were sent with provisions for the outpost. By January, someone was sent back to the Fort for more provisions, and two men were despatched with them. Toward spring, another request was made, this time for the Indians hunting nearby. When the winter's fur returns were in, the men who manned the post returned to Fort William for the spring and summer.⁸²

A few years later, the outpost seems to have been moved beyond White Fish Lake to Lac La Flèche (*Arrow Lake*) partly because Americans had been spotted nearby. Lac La Flèche, only three days' march from Grand Marais, also furnished a better opportunity to protect Fort William's interests from the Americans. Several men were immediately sent off in mid-winter, to set up an outpost there, and more food was sent up in a few weeks. Later in the winter, six men went off with corn; two returned within a week, followed several days later by a second pair.⁸³

1828

... The only outpost now attached to this District is Lac La Fleche, about 67 miles from hence. This is a post of very little consequence to the concern where we only muster about three packs furs annually Still should it be relinquished, I fear many of the Indians would join the Americans whose trading establishment is only about a short days march from Lac La Fleche in winter. There are many inconveniences attending this trifling Post - the only navigable River to go in is at the old Grand Portage on American Territories, and strictly prohibited by the American Government. We have therefore to cross two long portages, one of twenty four miles and the other of six- These portages were made by the Late Earl of Selkirk in 1816 and begins at the Paresseux, about eighteen miles from hence- This Portage perhaps is the worst road in all the Indian country, and I may say impracticable for Christians to pass with loads on their backs- It takes sixteen days to six men to pass fourteen pieces and from the other end of this portage to the Post of Lac La Fleche three days, in all nineteen a distance of sixty seven miles -⁸⁴

By the mid-1840s, a further relocation seems to have been effected, this time to Lac D'Original (*Moose Lake*), which touched the boundary line itself. In the Company minutes for 1845, Michel Collin, was appointed to take charge at Lac D'Original. Since he was a long-term resident of Fort William and Lac D'Original appeared immediately after Fort William

in the list of posts, it seems likely that the Lac La Flèche outpost had been abandoned.⁸⁵



55 The hazards of snowshoeing by H. J. Warre (courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

These were the major activities that filled people's working hours throughout the year. To look at Post life during the HBC period from this angle only, however, would be to invite a wrong impression. The people at Fort William did not always labour and toil: there were times of carousing, and of hardship, none of which can be ignored when considering what life at the Post was like. It is this more personal level to which we now turn.

FROM DAY TO DAY

It is difficult, from the information at hand, to know just how hard or long the men had to work each day. There are indications that they rose early and worked before breakfast:

16th May 1827

Deschamps and Visina finished gumming the Governor's canoe at breakfast time, when I set them sweeping the Fort along with Dompierre-¹

21st January 1840

... Five men squared 5 logs for the Lower flooring (of the Dwelling House), before breakfast, the remainder of the day they were cutting of heading (for barrels)...²

The men, especially the contracted labourers, likely had little time to themselves. Only in the later years, when a Roman Catholic mission had been established near Fort William, are Sundays left blank in the Journals or is it recorded that some of the men went to Mass. Except for rare entries like the following, the Journals tell us even less about how leisure time was spent.

Friday 19th November 1847

... Last night the River set Fast and so Strong that the People was Sketing Early this morning...³

Like today's newspapers, the entries that do shed light on the happenings in individual's lives, tend to speak only of the gloomier aspects of exis-

tence omitting any mention of the joys and pleasures that surely must have existed.



56 Curling at the Little Fork, Kaministiquia River, 1890 (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

Conflicts

When jobs had to be finished quickly, two men or a whole group of men were assigned to complete them. Whereas this companionship likely alleviated the monotony of working alone, there was no guarantee that disagreements would not arise or old personal grievances be settled.

8th August 1837

... The Hay Cut(t)ers Fountain & Bonet Caree I believe had a sett too a fisty cuffs the latter I understand had the best of it.⁴

Marital tension was also settled by physical violence at times, as the following case indicates.

21st February 1840

... I am sorry that I have to record the brutal treatment of one of the Company's servants (Jos Boucher) towards his wife, the fellow arrived from a voyage to some Inds yesterday, when he had scarcely been two hours in the Fort,

before he begun beating his wife (in a manner that would disgrace a slave driver) with a whip the thong of which, was loaded with lead, after ill using her some time with this end, he next took the handle which was made of ash, and nearly an inch in diameter this he broke in two over her head and body, and finally ordered her out of the house, if she did not wish to have the same brutal treatment repeated in the Evening, the poor woman fearing that her life was in danger, ran off to the Lodge of an old Indn widow who is Encamped about a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from the Fort, where she passed the night - I was not aware of all this until late last Evening - but sent my wife early this morning to bring her in to the house, after her arrival, I asked the poor woman, if she would show me her naked shoulder, which after some hesitation she consented to, and I solemnly declare that I never saw any punishment inflicted on a human being so severe, for it was actually impossible to find a spot that was the size of a six pence, but what was discoloured, and she declared that the whole of her body was in the same state, her arms were perfectly black, from the blows that she had recd - and all this has been inflicted for no other cause than jealousy, which is entirely unfounded, as we have not a more decent and meek woman in this Establishment - I have advised the poor woman not to return to the arms of such a brute -⁵

This incident, however, seems to be more the exception than the rule. Most disagreements seem to have ended at the level of a squabble or a good cuffing, as opposed to this apparently irrational act.

Antoine Collin and his wife settled their differences by other means:

29th September 1836

... Old Collin Wife went off in consequence of a quarrel with the Old man. She left all her children even the one that was still on the breast. She is gone towards the Grand Portage to Join the Americans. She is a worthless loose character.⁶

The separation was short-lived, and reconciliation apparently came peacefully.

6th October

Old ... Collins Wife. went only to the Welcome Islands where Visina is Fishing. he (the Old man) went for her there & returnd from thence this morning. -⁷

Bousing

One of the few diversions from the hard work and isolation of an inland post was the occasional distribution of liquor. Alcohol had always been an important item in the trade, but it was not intended for post labourers, who were supposed to be diligent workers for most of the year. The one official time for drinking was at Christmas, when several days were set aside for celebrating (and recovering from) the season. On Christmas and New Year's day a *régale* of liquor and provisions such as beef, butter and flour, which were considered as luxuries by the people at the Fort, was given out. Custom dictated that the *régale* was a gift from the Company to its employees, who on January 1 at least, could drink as much as they chose.

1st January 1828

As usual on this day, the men and Indians paid me a visit early in the morning, they were treated with cakes and drams, and every civilities that are customary, on such a day - Our expenditure in liquor was considerable 10/2 Galls Whiskey & one Gallon french brandy -

3rd January

... The men did nothing again to day they being sick after their new years frolick -⁸

This show of liberality was not without risk, as the whole Fort settled into a bout of carousing unequaled at any other time of the year.

1st January 1827

... The men drinking and diverting themselves, they had a few quarrels, and fights amongst themselves, but I am happy to say no blood was shed - The Indians are likewise drinking -

2nd January

The men are still drinking⁹

1st January 1838

... All the Servants of the Company & Freemen paid us a visit this morning agreeably to the custom of the country. treated them with as much Brandy as they choose to drink & with Butter Cakes. The women also with cakes & Wine and lastly the Indians with a Couple of Glasses of Wine. There was some blows & squabble between the Cooper and Michel Collin the Freeman which was very near occasioning a general Fray between the half Breeds & Sailors.¹⁰

Since this was the one festive season at the Fort, the celebrating some-

times extended over several days.

3 January 1838

*... We allowed all hands to repose themselves after their Bousing in order that the Fumes of the liquids they swallowed might evaporate...!*¹¹

The only year in which this custom was not observed was 1835, when many of the Fort's inhabitants were immobilized by illness.

1st January

*... Owing to the malignant and contagious disease which at the present period prevails at this place, I did not deem it prudent that the people of the Post should collect to pay us the usual visit agreeable to the custom of the country that they generally pay their master this day, those who were in health came however, one by one & we treated them with wine & Brandy, as well as cakes etc....!*¹²

The Company had problems with liquor, especially with the freemen who, by virtue of their privileged positions as part-time skilled workers, had easier access to alcohol. Because they operated on their own, the manager could not exert control over them as he could the labourers at Fort William. Occasionally liquor was given to certain freemen who were temporarily unoccupied or who delivered a part of the fish they had been hired to catch.¹³ This gesture could have unexpected results, as our good friend Antoine Collin demonstrates:

15th July 1824

*Old Collin got drunk yesterday and this morning came over to inform Mr McKenzie that he means to go to the Red River--he returned the Net Thread he had purchased for making his Nets for the fall fishery--however this is not likely to last long being only a drunken freak!*¹⁴

There is no record of his actually leaving the Fort, and, since there is a gap in the records from September 1824 until June 1826, it is impossible to know for sure whether he did indeed pack up and go or whether he slept off his disgruntlement and went back to knitting his net. At any rate, he was at Fort William in 1826, when the journals resume, busy gathering bark for new canoes.¹⁵

As early as 1827, the Company made the momentous decision to gradually discontinue the use of liquor as a trade item. The following was one of the reasons for its reluctance to do so.

1824

It would be happy for them if Spirituous Liquor was

abolished altogether, but admitting the company adopted such a measure, such is their violent attachment to this beverage that they would flock to the American Traders about the frontiers, who as usual would indulge them to their hearts content - with the vilest and most adulterated kind of Spirits ¹⁶

By 1851 the problems of trading liquor far outweighed considerations like the above, and the Company decided to restrict the use of alcohol at its posts, ruling that no "spirituous Liquors" be issued to Company officers, servants or Indians. Tea, sugar, molasses, biscuit, tobacco or ammunition were to be substituted for the lost liquor.¹⁷

Accidents, Illness and Death

The men who worked at Fort William occasionally missed work because of accidents on the job. Cutting wood supplied the occasion for the most serious mishaps. In 1833, Davilleau cut off one of his fingers with his axe, apparently while hauling cedar to the Fort.¹⁸ In 1849, when all the men at the Fort were employed chopping cordwood, one of them cut his foot so badly that he was expected to be laid up for almost two weeks with the injury. Two days later, John McLeod cut his foot almost as badly. The manager wrote, however, that McLeod's services "will not be much missed as he is at best but a poor hand."¹⁹

Other accidents recorded include falling from a building being repaired, straining while lifting heavy burdens, and jamming a foot while sledging.²⁰ Occasionally, some very bizarre mishap occurred:

25th July 1839

*... A most melancholy accident happened to one of our men, just as the Govenor had pushed from the Shore, they were busily employed firing a salute from our Guns, when by some negligence one of them went off instantaneously, and a piece of the lighted waddin haven fallen upon an Extra cartridge which was in the kettle cover, which instantly ignited and blew up, ... our cooper was sadly burnt in the face and his right hand much lacirated, and which will prevent him from any ... duty for some time to come, in fact I am much afraid he will never be able to work properly.*²¹

During the NWC period, large supplies of medicines were kept on hand

at Fort William for treating the ill or injured during summer *rendezvous*. Dr. John McLoughlin acted as the physician at the Fort for many years, first coming inland in 1803 as Dr. Henry Munro's apprentice at Kaministiquia.²² He remained in the area until 1821, serving at posts from Lac La Pluie to Nipigon and at Fort William, tending to the sick there each summer. In August 1806, we find him writing to his uncle, Dr. Simon Fraser, in Lower Canada, requesting advice on how to treat scrofula, a disease characterised by swelling of the glands, particularly in the neck, and promising to reciprocate with news of the success of whatever suggestions his uncle could make.²³

After the union of the two companies, however, the post manager had to double as a physician, a task for which he was highly unqualified. In May 1836, Donald McIntosh sent all the surgical instruments still at Fort William to Michipicoten, so that even were a qualified physician to visit the Post, he had no means of performing any operations unless he had instruments with him.²⁴

On most occasions, the post manager was at a loss for remedies. At best, he could merely describe the symptoms as they occurred or apply whatever home remedy he could think of to help the sick person.

12th September 1833

... Joseph Fontain is seriously ill. he was blooded which gave him a little ease, but he suffers much still with a pain in his head....

13th September

*... Fontain is still very ill. applied a Blistering Plastering to his Temple which removed the pain in his head so that he feels rather better--*²⁵

Three days later, however, Fontain was much worse, and McIntosh feared that the man would not survive. He remained in very poor condition for several days but finally rallied, apparently without further treatment.

Sometimes illness in the family interfered with work routine around the Post:

28th February 1824

*... Masta did not Work this Week--his wife being dangerously ill.*²⁶

The winter of 1834/35 saw the worst outbreak of sickness at Fort William, and once again no one knew how to combat the unknown

disease, the symptoms for which were severe pain, sometimes "attended with a Stitch in the side & breast which remains fixed and immoveable on the part which is affected with old sores the effects of strong exertions. . . ." ²⁷ A sense, first of helplessness and then of panic, as more and more people fell victim, runs through the Journal entries for this period. Michel Collin, the first to fall ill, hovered between life and death for almost a week. The disease spread, attacking the men, their families and the Indians then at the Post. By December 23rd, all those still well enough to work had their hands full tending to the sick. The following references trace the progress of the illness in three men, two of whom had lived at Fort William for several years and had families at the Post.

21st December

. . . Baptist Dechamp was attacked last night with the prevailing disease. he has been siezed with a bad cough attend with a pain or rather stitch in his side which when he coughs occasions the most acute pain particularly when he respies.

22nd December

. . . Last night Baptist Morriseau and Joseph Fontain were suddenly attacked with the prevailing sickness. the former suffers only with a stitch on his side which occasions the most acute pain when he respies, he cannot lay down on his bed, the only posture he can remain for a moment is, sitting on a chair with his body inclined a little with his breast leaning on a pillow. But the latter is suffering both with a violent pain in his side and a severe head ache. . . .

24th December

. . . But Baptiste Deschamp, Baptist Morriseau, and Jos. Fontaine suffers the most excruciating pain. I apprehend it may prove fatal to the former his suffering are unspeakably fierce. . . .

25th December

. . . At one Clock P.M. Baptist Dechamp departed this life. I could not have imagined that he was so near his end, as he was still strong and walked about the room untill I may say the agonies of death came on, during that short period of his unspeakable sufferings he could not lay down a moment on his bed and the same as Morriseau could not remain for any time in any other position than sitting down on a chair with his body inclined a little & his breast leaning on a pillow. We apprehend that Bte Morriseau will soon follow him. Joseph Fontain altho afflicted with the same disease does not suffer so much as them. . . .

26th December

... Joseph Fontain is getting rather better. But Bte Morriseau fell victim to the virulence of the disease, he departed this life at 8 O'clock P.M. he like the deceased Dechamp walked about untill a few minutes before he was seized with the agonies of death....

At this point, the Indians began to fall ill. By early January they were all confined to their tents, and the Post was supporting 50 Indian men, women and children. Only by mid-January did the situation begin to improve.

14th January

... The Indians are still very ill with the existing malady, The people of the Fort who had been afflicted with the malady and are convalescent feel still tho near a month since they have been recovered from its effects, the pain in their side, altho not very severly, yet more or less at times especially if they exert themselves in the least. so that it is evident they will be a considerable time before they will recover their usual health and strenght to perform any kind of labour that requires the least exertions....²⁷

Some were still sick at the end of January, however, and a few more died before the ordeal ended. Almost two years later, Hyacinthe Davilleau's wife fell ill with the same disease and, after two days of severe pain, she died.²⁸ The disease had apparently spread through the whole area around Fort William, attacking mainly Indians and Metis.²⁹

Winter seems to have been the worst period for ill health, because the following year another sickness, though less severe than that of 1835, descended on the people at Fort William.

20th January 1836

... One of Mr Gladmans little boys is very serious ill of a disease which prevails here since the commencement of this month. it has all the symptoms of a dissentry. he (the Boy) was in convulsions a great part of the night -³⁰

This time, apparently, no one died and though people may have been unwell, work continued at the usual pace.

Accidental deaths at Fort William usually involved Indians who lived or were spending some time there. In the summer of 1824, a child was found dead at the edge of the River, having wandered down and fallen

in unnoticed.³¹ Death from exposure also claimed the lives of a few, one of whom likely did not even realize she was in danger.

20th December 1826

Early this morning an Indian Woman of the name of Julie was found dead upon the ice - By what accident she came by her untimely death is not rightly known - She was seen about daylight crossing the River and said she was going for Rum - It is said she was then in a perfect state of intoxication, and it is supposed by every one that she fell down upon the ice and smothered herself in a bank of Snow that happened to be near the spot where she fell - Dompierre and Granbois made a coffin -³²

The following year, Quashquashcan spent part of the summer at Fort William, helping at various jobs around the post. During this time his son died, and Quashquashcan, according to practice, was given two quarts of rum "to wear away his grief."³³ He had left Fort William by November, probably to hunt. On 8 November, an Indian from Lake Nipigon arrived with Quashquashcan's family - two women and three children - and the news that he had drowned on 29 October near the HBC post. The family had been sent to Fort William to be supported by the post to which it was attached, as was Company policy.

Several years later, Quitch e iance, a young Indian who had gone with his brother to visit their respective trout lines in Fort William Bay (*probably Thunder Bay*), froze to death on the ice. The brother, after checking his lines, returned to the Fort, assuming that Quitch e iance would follow. When he did not arrive, the brother set off to look for him and found him unconscious, his dog train loaded with trout, a mile from his lines. He was brought back to Fort William immediately, arriving at 9 P.M., and efforts were made to revive him.

22nd January 1839

... We tried to open a vein but did not succeed in drawing one drop of blood, had he been found two hours sooner in all likelihood, we might have saved him, as when found, his hands and feet were not stiff, but before reaching this they were like rocks. I cannot finish this melancholy account without expressing my sincere regrets for his loss as he was active and industrious Indian we had about the place, and who used to render us at all times much valuable assistance. He has left an aged mother and young wife to whom he was united last summer, to deplore his loss.³⁴

The only accidental death of a worker at the Fort, found in the documents

examined, occurred many years later, when Neil Whyte, the post clerk, drowned just upriver from Fort William. On 5 June, 1875 he had left the Fort "in a state of mind unusual to him" and failed to return. A party sent in search of him found his body "at the junction of the second river" - probably the point at which the McKellar River meets the Kaministiquia, in two feet of water. His coat, vest and watch and chain were found on the shore nearby. The circumstances strongly suggest that Whyte committed suicide. By that time, the settlement had acquired a doctor, who, after performing a post-mortem, gave the verdict of death from "drowning when in an unsound state of mind."³⁵

Famine

During the HBC period at Fort William, the Indian people were often forced to come out to the Fort for food, especially in winter. Company policy had always been to maintain these people in their time of need, which sometimes extended into spring.

20th December 1823

There are likewise some Indian old Women, who, either from innability to support themselves - or from their connection with some of the best hunters belonging to this quarter - look for some support from this establishment; which cannot be well refused to them without danger of discouraging the Indians to whom they are related. - In consequence of this Mr Haldane has been under the necessity of allowing them Rations of Fish and Potatoes - until the season becomes sufficiently advanced to admit the possibility of their procuring their livelihood by Hunting. -³⁶



57 An Early Nip; detail from an engraving by C. Graham (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

In 1831, heavy rains and sleet in November occasioned a thick crust of ice and snow in the woods. As a result, it became impossible to hunt rabbits, a major food source, and entire groups made their way to Fort William for help. The horrible circumstances in which some found themselves, and the length to which they went to save themselves from death, are chillingly apparent in the case of Scandagance and his family.³⁷ He arrived at Fort William late in February saying that he had left his wife and children behind too weak to travel. Men were immediately despatched with food to bring in the family, but the wife arrived on March 1st with quite a different tale from that of her husband.

1st March 1831

... We were very much surprised to see Scandagance wife arrive in a truly miserable plight, her monster of a husband it appears left her & their six children alive & still vigorous as is evident from the circumstance of their having reached the old Post of Lac la Fleche after he had abandoned them. When he parted with them he told his wife that he would go to Lac la Rose to get provisions & come back & meet them. but the unnatural wretch, as is manifest from his subsequent conduct, wanted to get clear of them altogether. He arrived at the above said Post where he found some fish that our people had left there purposely for him & his family - but the inhuman wretch remained there until he had eaten the fish. A young Gentleman a Mr Hay who was on his way from Red River to this place, found him in the house alone the first thing he told him was, that all his family had perished by famine, about two days march beyond that place, had he told him then the true state in which he had left them we would have sent people after Mr Hay's arrival here, to meet them with provisions in sufficient time to save their lives- The unnatural miscreant after having remained 8 or 10 days there, came hither and told us the same story that he told Mr Hay. The detail the poor woman gives of her own & childrens sufferings & miseries previous to her leaving those who were still alive (for two of them were dead then) is very affecting. What occasioned her to leave them was that she could not bear the sight of seeing those who survived feeding on the bodies of those who were dead. The sixth day from whence she left them, she arrived here; as she thinks it was possible from the circumstance of those who survived feeding on the bodies of those that died if some one went off immediately with provisions to where she left them, but they would find one or two of the oldest alive, unless they perished with cold for she left them without fire or the means of making any. In case it might be the case two men prepared to set out to morrow morning with provisions to go & see if there were any of them still alive-

2nd March

... Two men & and an Indian to Guide them started also with provisions to where the above mentioned woman sayed she left her children, they are directed if they find any of them alive to leave provisions with them & to proceed thence with a Bag of corn to the Spaniards, and on their return to take them (as it not very likely they will be able to walk) on their sledges to the Fort....

11th March

... Davilleau arrived from the Spaniards; ... He found two of the above mentioned children alive where the mother left them, and as she anticipated they supported life by feeding on the Bodies of their younger brother & sister which is evident they killed being the weakest, & horrid to say they devoured them raw, as they had no fire from the time their mother left them until the people found them there nine days after. As they could not walk they haul'd them with their Dogs on sledges till within a days march of this place. The reason he (Davilleau) assigns for leaving them so near was, that they could not resist on the Sledges in the Portages which I certainly consider a very lame excuse-

12th March

... The two Bouche set out before day, for the poor children that Davilleau & John Shearer left on the way....

13th March

... The Bouches arrived with the two children, the poor creatures had a Ghastly appearance, they were nothing but skin & bones....



58 Detail from a painting by an unknown artist (courtesy Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto)

The severity of winter was felt by all who were forced to 'live off the land'. Lieutenant Graffenreid, one of Selkirk's men, vividly describes the experience of running short of provisions between Fort William and the Lac La Pluie post in January, 1817:

In the morning of the 21st, I hunted through the forest hoping for some prey. Nothing could be found and we had to set out with empty stomachs. Exhausted, I chewed on a piece of root just to feel something between my teeth. We marched on silently; . . . Then we saw two men come towards us. Already we believed our sufferings to have come to an end but they identified themselves as messengers carrying letters to Fort William. They carried only the most essential provisions. In spite of that, they gave us enough folle avoine and bran to prepare one meal. Then they went on their way. We moved on in good spirit, not suspecting what was still in store for us. At night we camped at Rainy Lake. I shot a kind of weasel and we ate this usually unpalatable animal with the remaining oats and the bran which even the dogs had refused. At night, tortured by terrible hunger, we cut up the snow-shoe straps, which are made from uncured leather, boiled them together with pine-needle tea and ate them like macaronis. Another equally repulsive meal was made from the so-called "tripes de roche", a moss that we had collected along the way. . . . I offered my half-starved dog Meuron to the men, but he was the regimental dog and nobody had the heart to kill him. Already I had had to unharness him and the remaining dog, Basto, had pulled the sled alone. The latter, . . . had remained miraculously fit for service. When I went hunting with him, he flushed a partridge which I killed. I would have loved to devour it on the spot, could I have justified such an action. On the way back I shot a woodpecker. The men had heard the shots and with shiny eyes were expecting a rich booty. Instead, the emaciated birds, plucked but not eviscerated, were thrown into the pot. For supplement served the foot of a rabbit, which I had once killed in Montreal and since used as a touch-pan cleaner. These small morsels only aggravated our already unbearable hunger. In vain did we tighten our belts even further; only the resinous pine-needle tea brought us some relief. The men began to think of the last horrible solution; they examined one another and pointed out the fattest among them.³⁸

Lack of clothing compounded the hardship during the cold months.

1824

In winter few fish are taken anywhere - this the poor

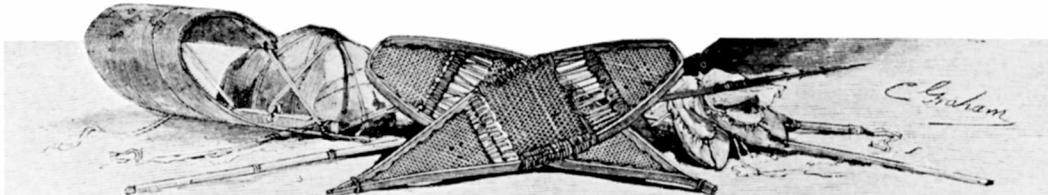
*indians feel severely - almost everything then becomes an article of food, - that is capable of being eaten - and they are at the same time pinched with cold from their scanty covering. Indeed were it not for the supply of European Woollens, which they receive from us in the fall, they would literally require to lie dormant the whole winter. In other parts of the country the natives can clothe themselves in Skins, but in these parts they must depend on the Company even for Leather & Parchment to make themselves Mockassins & Snow Shoes. Such is the case with all the indians in the Lake Superior District.*³⁹

Documentary records note with increasing frequency the disappearance of game and fur-bearing animals from the Lake Superior area. This was not only due to increasingly large numbers of people relying on the land for subsistence, but also, in the case of fur-bearing animals, to Company policies in border areas:

Minutes of Council, 1827

*... in frontier districts it is recommended that every encouragement be afforded the natives to hunt the country close as by extirpating the fur bearing race on the frontiers the home country will be effectually protected from the incursions of rival traders.*⁴⁰

Without food, clothing or snowshoes to enable them to fend for themselves, the Indian people had no choice but to place themselves in the care of Fort William. The Post managers generally received these extra dependents with relative calm, knowing as they did the severity of the situation.



59 Detail from an engraving by C. Graham (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

The number of Indian people at the Fort in winter rose as high as 50, a large group to support at the best of times.⁴¹ Only if the manager felt that these families had taken advantage of his hospitality, leaving their lands before they really had to, did he express resentment at the burden he was forced to assume.



60 *Fishing Through the Ice; detail from an engraving by C. Graham (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)*

13th December 1834

... The Indians about the Fort are upon short allowance of course they are begging for Provisions. They deserve to suffer from hunger a little for having come out from inland so early as they could have managed to live until the severe cold sets in, which is seldom before the commencement of the new year -⁴²

Having arrived, they certainly had no leisurely days before them.

21st January 1831

... Our means cannot afford to support all the Indians that are now about the Fort for any time therefore we warned them that they must exert themselves with their spears. They have been always accustomed to be maintained at the Establishment during this month and next.⁴³

In order to preserve the Fort's supply of salted fish as long as possible, the Indians were sent to the lake to set nets or lines and to spear fish. The nets were set under the ice at locations as distant as the Welcome Islands and produced mainly suckers. Lines and spearing were never as fruitful as the nets. Only after they at least made an effort to provide for themselves would they be fed from carefully rationed Post provisions.

Natural Calamities

Whereas winter hardships were predictable, other natural phenomena were not. From time to time, wind and fire interrupted normal routines and caused varying degrees of inconvenience. As we have seen with reference to harvesting crops, heavy rains could upset the tenuous farming operation. Rain interfered with other food-related activities and, judging from the following references, must have occasionally brought outdoor work to a complete halt.

25th August 1826

... It is an extraordinary thing that we cannot catch any white fish at this late season, when in former years there used to be an abundance about the middle of this month, it is perhaps on account of the height of the water -⁴⁴

12th May 1832

The rain poured down in torrents throughout the night in consequence of which the River has risen within these few days upwards of three feet perpendicular - and the fields are so much overflowed that it has the appearance of small Lakes....⁴⁵

10th June 1834

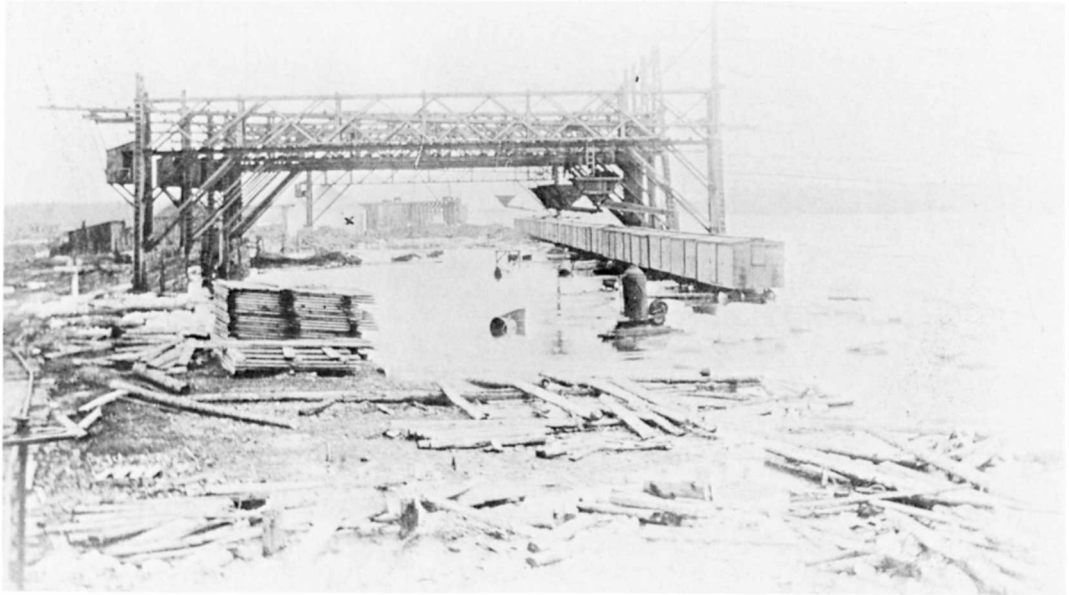
The rain poured down in Torrents for the most part of the day. The inside of the Fort is so overflowed that a Canoe might swim through the Square....⁴⁶

30th July 1834

... We had a dreadful Storm which was attended with rain & hail alternately which poured down in torrents the latter was driven with such violence by the wind that it broke several panes of glass in the Windows. Several ladders were blown off the Roof of the Buildings. the Storm lastd about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an hour.⁴⁷

In later years, Peter McKellar wrote of the 1860 flood at Fort William:

... the winter was cold, with deep snow and thick ice. The spring opened out warm with heavy rains. The Kaministiquia River broke up, while the ice was firm on the Bay. ... the water and broken ice backed up and flooded over the low land. It covered the dwelling house floors of the Company to the depth of two to three feet of water, and the people had to go upstairs for a few hours. The jam soon gave way, and the water subsided to its normal level in about one hour. Some of the small boats were carried back to the bush, but little or no damage was done.



61 Ice Jam on the Kaministiquia River 1893; "X" marks NWC/HBC Stone Store (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

... the Hudson's Bay Company had ... occupied these buildings for over fifty years, and had not experienced any inconvenience from high water until the occasion of the ice jam referred to.⁴⁸

Lack of rainfall posed just as many problems:

10th July 1830

... Owing to the heat of the weather this some time back, our Hay fields are completely burnt up, so much so that I am beginning to dread we will be obliged to go & make part of our Hay along the Lake our potatoes at the same time look bad.⁴⁹

17th May 1831

Michel Collin the freeman & John Robertson went off this morning for Bark that the former had left inland last summer on account of the waters being too shallow in the small Rivers to bring it out from inland hither...⁵⁰

Fairly early in the HBC period, wind demonstrated to the people at Fort William the deterioration of NWC structures:

26th October 1829

The men putting up the Garden Fence which was blown down by the Wind last night - ...⁵¹

19th April 1831

... The men were employed about the stockades, which were blown down yesterday by a gust of wind...⁵²

Fire posed a more serious threat:

25th November 1850

... This Evening we had a narrow escape from fire, the Chimney of the sitting Room took fire about 6 P.M. which blazed for about half hour & the sparks were carried over the roof by the wind, fortunately we succeeded in putting it out.⁵³

In the Journals examined there is only one reference to a building being destroyed by fire: the priest's house up the river in 1850. The following sequence of entries illustrate the way the community at Fort William came to the aid of an individual in an emergency in spite of the frustration that the men must have felt.

November 1849

16 - The Men were sent to the Bush to cut round Logs to build a new Coopers Shop... .

19 - ... John McLeod & the two Deschamps employed cutting Logs for a Coopers Shop... .

20 - ... taking home the Logs cut for a Coopers shop... .

22 - ... taking home Logs cut for the Coopers shop... .

December 1849

17 - All the people with the exception of McLeod & McIntyre ... were employed putting up a Coopers Shop.

19 - All the Men employed at the Coopers shop... .

20 - All the people employed as yesterday

21 - A part of the Men were employed at the Coopers Shop...

28 - 4 Men employed at the Coopers Shop... .

29 - 3 Men were employed at the Coopers shop... .

31 - ... 2 men employed at the Coopers Shop,

January 1850

4 - ... Boucher Plante & Finlayson were employed at the Coopers shop... .

5 - Boucher Plante & Finlayson employed at the Coopers Shop... .

8 - Boucher, Plante Finlayson & Shewatick employed at the Coopers shop... .

9 - Men all employed as yesterday. -

11 - ... the others at the Coopers shop. -

12 - All the Men at the post employed as yesterday.

14 - ... the others at the Coopers shop. -

15 - The Men employed as yesterday

16 - ... The others - as for the last two days. -

17 - Plante, Boucher & Finlayson employed at the Coopers Shop... .

18 - Men employed as yesterday. -

21 - ... the others boarding the Coopers Shop.

22 - ... Boucher, Finlayson & Plante Plaistering the Coopers shop....

29 - Boucher, Lambert & Vezina employed Shingling the Coopers Shop....

February 1850

4 - ... The Revd Mr. Chone RC: Missionarys House was burnt to the ground in the afternoon, the fire was accidental having originated from the Stove Pipe in his own room.

5 - ... the others pulling down the Coopers shop, the Logs to be given Mr Chone to build a new House for him.

*6 - All the people employed pulling down the Coopers Shop
& carting up the Logs to the Priests residence.*

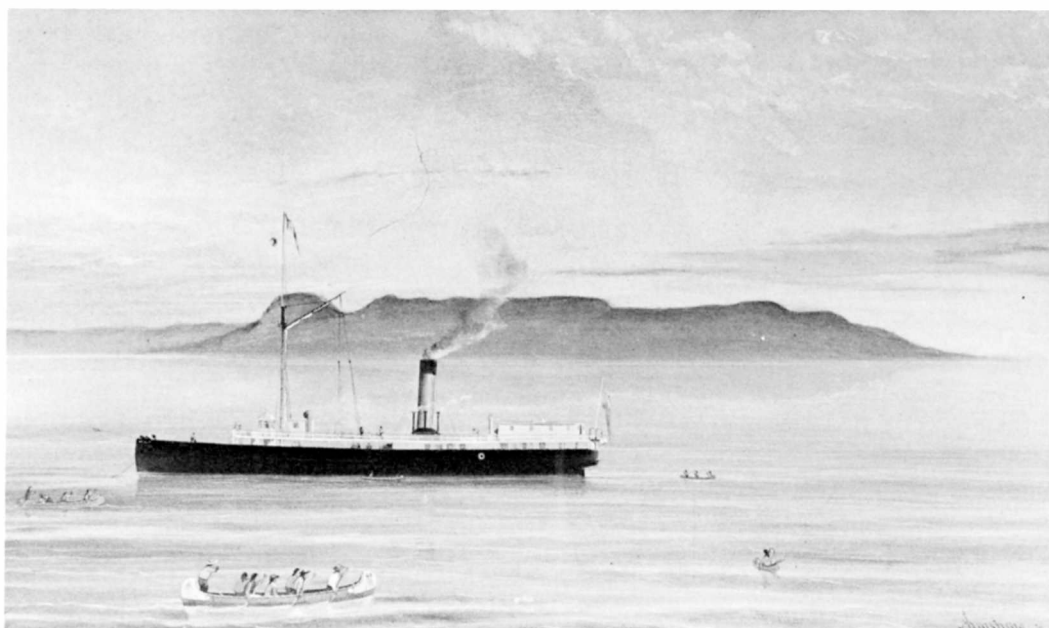
*7 - All the Men at the post with the exception of McIntyre
& McLeod employed putting up a House for the Priest.⁵⁴*

(same entry for the next 5 days)

Although the preceding pages paint a somewhat gloomy picture, they do enable us to see those at Fort William not just as workers, but as people – husbands, wives, fathers, mothers and children – who played, argued and were subject, as a group, to hardships such as illness or starvation. Such were the exigencies of living at an outpost, far from help and additional supplies. Our awareness of this adds another dimension to our understanding of the small community at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River.

SOME THOUGHTS

Living in Thunder Bay in 1975 with its increasing industrialization and pollution makes it difficult to imagine the time when canoe brigades could be sighted crossing the Bay. Today Great Lakes freighters lie at anchor in the harbour awaiting their turn at the grain elevators,



62 *Rescue Steamer off Fort William, 1859, William Armstrong (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)*

paper mills and ore docks. At the centre of the country and the head of Lake Superior, the city serves essentially the same function today as in 1803, shipping and receiving cargo from east and west alike.

Fort William the HBC community is situated about halfway along the time continuum beginning with the arrival of the French traders and ending with the present. As we have seen, it was indeed a community, with several families living there year-round and some remaining at the Post for several generations. These people were very closely tied to the environment which surrounded them and determined their pattern of activities: there was a time for all essential food- and shelter-oriented tasks, some of which conformed to a seasonal, and others a daily, routine. The land and water encompassing Fort William were familiar to these people in terms of what they yielded: the pelts which were the reason for the post's existence, fish, canoe bark, maple sugar, lumber and the many other things necessary for survival. Their days seem to have been filled with work, relieved only occasionally by inclement weather, illness or injury.

This link between man and the natural environment, once so direct, has now changed considerably. When Fort William existed as a fur trade post, most work was directly related to survival. Today we are much farther removed from, and often unaware of, Nature. Most of us lead a life cushioned by numerous 'helpful' gadgets, forgetting that without them we would find it difficult to survive for even a week just outside the city limits. Farming, fishing and hunting were once essential parts of life at the Fort. Although a minority is trying to return to the land and savour a self-supportive life and although home gardens still flourish, few today engage in farming full-time and for most people a garden now means roses, tulips and pansies. Fishing and hunting, while they provide many people with game, have become mainly sporting activities.

In order to appreciate what Fort William used to be, the reader must remember that it existed for many years in the context of the fur trade, which was carried on in the yet broader context of national and international affairs. As a fur trading post, Fort William resembled in many ways, and was closely related to, other posts on Lake Superior and throughout the northwest. The people living there felt these ties much more strongly than any links with the more settled eastern parts of Canada.

Particularly in the early 19th century, where one lived determined the pattern of existence. At Fort William this pattern entailed daily efforts to obtain the basics for survival. The situation in the east was somewhat different: newspapers had been publishing for years, books were available, the Church was well established and various levels of govern-

ment were in operation. Such would not be the case at Fort William until the latter part of the century. The people in each place were living virtually worlds apart.

The different sets of living conditions experienced at the trading post and in the larger urban centres like Montreal resulted in divergent interests, which were compounded by slow communication. News of events occurring in Lower Canada could take months to reach Fort William, and when it did, the people there might not even be interested in what seemed of great consequence to Lower Canadians. There is no mention in the Post documents of the 1837 Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada, a subject hotly debated for months in those Provinces. Although pure conjecture at this point, it is also very likely that those living in the provinces knew little, and cared not at all, what transpired at Fort William.

This does not seem so surprising when we realize that the same holds true today: the lines of communication between southern and northern Ontario are still very thin at times and, even though the barrier of physical distance no longer makes communication a lengthy process, Thunder Bay continues to exist in a state of isolation.

In addition to the very real distance separating Fort William and other parts of Canada in the 19th century, there is yet another equally important distance for those attempting to unravel the past: the enormous gap between *past* and *present*. Many books dealing with the fur trade focus on the political and economic aspects – the overall workings of the trade and men like Simon McTavish, Benjamin and Joseph Frobisher, William McGillivray, Alexander Mackenzie, John Jacob Astor and George Simpson. Even though they were individuals of outstanding personal ambition and energy, what of the others in the trade on whose labour and lives the fur empires were built? The Indian people, for example, without whom the traders could not have survived, and whose lives have been so drastically affected by long-term association with the 'white man's' culture, deserve much more attention than they have yet received. Who they were, what work they did at inland posts, what their status was relative to other people at the posts, and the specific effects of the fur trade on their way of life are all aspects of our past, which require full-scale investigation. Similarly, we know relatively little of the men who staffed the posts: who they were, where they came from, if they had families, how long they remained inland and where they went when their days of service to the Company had ended.

It is about these people that more needs to be known, if we are ever to understand how the trade functioned as a whole. Many will appear as shadows, nameless and disappearing suddenly from our view, but they

lived, worked and contributed to the development of this country. Until we have gleaned every last detail from the sources, until we have exhausted every possible avenue, our study of the past will not be complete. This publication was intended as a move in that direction. If it has shed even a glimmering of light on our predecessors at Fort William, another step will have been taken, and we will be farther along our path of appreciating not only a few individuals and moments in Canadian history, but also the toil, the humour, and the sorrow, of the *many* who were, and still are, Canada's major resource.



63 Ojibwa Indians at the turn of the century (courtesy Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society)

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ABBREVIATIONS

FWJ	Fort William Journal
HBCA	Hudson's Bay Company Archives
PAM	Provincial Archives of Manitoba: FUR TRADE, Fort William Collection
OPA	Ontario Provincial Archives
PAC	Public Archives of Canada
TBHMS	Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society

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PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 17 June 1828
- 53 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 4 March, 11-12, 16-17 June, 1, 6-7 July 1824
- 54 PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 1 January 1831
- 55 TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 23 January 1837
- 56 Morton, A. S.: *A History of the Canadian West, to 1870-71*; Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., London, n.d., p. 469
- 57 Cox, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 346-7
- 58 Diary of Major Joseph Delafield, 9 July 1823, cited in Arthur, *op. cit.*, p. 59
- 59 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 135 K 1, Minutes of Council for 1822, Resolution #18
- 60 *Ibid.*, Minutes of Council for 1824, Resolution #30
- 61 *Ibid.*, Minutes of Council for 1827, Resolution #75
- 62 *Ibid.*, Minutes of Council for 1843, Resolutions #75, 76
- 63 *Ibid.*, Minutes of Council for 1845, Resolution #53
- 64 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 3 5
- 65 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 135 K 1, Minutes of Council for 1827, Resolutions #79-81
- 66 PAC, Selkirk Papers, MG 19, E 1, vol. 22, pp. 8445-6
- 67 Van Kirk, Sylvia: "Women and the Fur Trade", in *The Beaver*; Outfit 303 (Winter, 1974), Winnipeg, pp. 10-13

SEASON TO SEASON

- 1 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 29, 30 March, 1 April 1824
PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 2 April 1827
PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 31 March 1828
PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 9, 8 March 1829
TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 13, 14 March 1837
- 2 Ibid., 22 March 1837
- 3 PAM, Item No. 4, FWJ 1831/32, 14 March 1832
- 4 PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 26 March 1830
PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 10, 27 March 1831
PAM, Item No. 4, 23 March 1832
TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 31 March 1837
- 5 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 10, 17 March 1831
- 6 TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 28 March, 6, 12 May 1837
PAM, Item No. 10, FWJ 1854, 20 April 1854
- 7 PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 25 March 1839
- 8 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 135 K 1, Minutes of Council for 1827, Resolution #27
- 9 PAM, Item No. 24, John Swanston to J. D. Cameron, 20 August 1838
- 10 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 4 March, 19, 22, 26 April, 5, 18, 31 May 1824
PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 21 March, 25, 30 April, 13, 16, 17 May 1827
PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 12, 17 April 1833
PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 13, 7 May 1834
TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 19 March 1836, 29 April 1837

- PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 1 May 1839
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 18, 4 May 1840
- 11 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 3 April 1824
- 12 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 29 April 1828
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 24 April 1829
- PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 22, 27 April 1830
- 13 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 24 April, 6, 14, 17, 21 May 1824
- PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 18 April, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16 May 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 10, 17 May 1828
- PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 4 April 1831
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 12, 15 April 1833
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 13, 13 April 1834
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 1 March 1836, 20-26 April, 1-10 May 1837
- PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 16 April 1838
- PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 1-16 April 1839
- 14 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 3 May 1824
- PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 8-10 March, 16, 19 April 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 6 March 1828
- PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 17-30 April 1830
- PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 26 March 1831
- PAM, Item No. 4, FWJ 1831/32, 28 March, 19 April 1832
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 13, 24 March 1834
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 1, 13 March 1837
- PAM, Item No. 10, FWJ 1854, 4-8 May 1854
- 15 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 5, 17 May 1824

- PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 26 May 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 9, 14-17 April, 18 May 1830
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 14, 11 May 1835
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 24 May 1836, 22 May 1837
- PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 9 May 1839
- 16 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 14 April, 6, 10 May 1824
- PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 27 April, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14 March 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 10 May 1828
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 7 May 1829
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 9, 3, 4 May 1830
- PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 10-12 May 1831
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 25 May 1836
- PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 20 May 1839
- 17 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 19, 21 May 1824
- PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 23, 26, 30 April, 1, 4, 5, 7, 18 May 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 14 May 1829
- PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 4 May 1831
- PAM, Item No. 4, FWJ 1831/32, 30 April 1832
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 14, 11 May 1835
- PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 9 May 1839
- PAM, Item No. 10, FWJ 1854, 4 May 1854
- 18 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 24-29 May 1824
- PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 23-25 May 1826
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 24-28 May 1828
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 16-21 May 1829

- PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 24 May – 1 June 1830
- 19 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 15, 16 May 1827
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 25, 31 May 1836, 25, 29 May 1837
- 20 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I 3 5
- 21 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 21 September 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 17 October 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 8, 16 September 1828
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I c 5
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 129 c 6
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 9, 3 September 1829
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 12, 18 September 1832
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 14, 17 June 1835
(could be 7 June)
- 22 PAC, McIntyre Papers, MG 29 D 10, Burnet to McIntyre,
 17 May 1873
- 23 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 16 July 1824
- PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 3, 4 July 1826
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 27 June, 21 July 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 8, 17 July 1828
- PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 16, 18 July 1829
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 10, 10 July 1830
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 30 June, 3, 5, 6, 14–16 July 1836
- PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 7–13, 31 July 1838
- 24 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 10 July 1824
- 25 Ibid., 5, 10, 16 July 1824
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 22, 29 June, 17, 28
 July 1827

- PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 20 July 1829
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 10, 26 June 1830
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 11, 11 July 1831
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 11 July 1836
- 26 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 22 July - 27 August 1824
- PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 25 July - 18 August 1826
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 30 July - 25 August 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 25 July - 26 August 1828
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 9, and PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 21 July - 15 August 1829
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 10, 14 July - 14 August 1830
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 21 July - 24 August 1836
- PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 1-25 August 1838
- PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 6-31 August 1840
- 27 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 23 July 1824
- 28 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 22 August 1827
- 29 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 135 K 1, Minutes of Council for 1832, Resolution #17; Minutes of Council for 1849, Resolution #14; Minutes of Council for 1854, Resolution #13
- 30 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 8 July 1826
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 19, 20 July 1836
- 31 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 17 July 1828
- 32 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 10, 23 June 1830
- 33 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 3-18 May 1827
- 34 Ibid., 28 August 1826

- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 8, 27 August 1828
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 9, and PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 17, 18, 24 August 1829
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 12, 15 August 1832
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 31 August 1836
- PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 4-8, 26 June 1838
- 35 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 11, 22 August 1831
- 36 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 15, 16 March 1836
- 37 PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 2 August 1837
- 38 PAM, Item No. 24, Donald McIntosh to J. D. Cameron (*Michipicoten?*), Fort William 2 January 1837
- 39 PAM, Item No. 7, FWJ 1839/40
- 40 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 23 October 1823, 2, 30 August, 3 September 1824
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 11 September 1827
- 41 PAM, Item No. 24, John Swanston to J. D. Cameron, 20 August 1838
- 42 PAM, Item No. 15, John Swanston "List of Indians...", 1841
- 43 PAM, Item No. 24, Donald McIntosh to Angus Bethune, 16 May 1836
- 44 PAM, Item No. 25, Letter to Hector Mckenzie at Fort William, dated 26 November 1844 from Michipicoten
- 45 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 135 K 1, Minutes of Council for 1836, Resolution #14
- 46 PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 21 August, 4, 19 September 1829
- 47 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 24 October 1826
- 48 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 17 November 1823
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 7 November 1827
- PAM, Item No. 9, FWJ 1847/48, 16 November 1847

- 49 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27
- 50 PAM, Item No. 24, Donald McIntosh to J. D. Cameron, 28 December 1837

PAM, Item No. 14, "Expenditure of Provisions at Fort William On 1837/38"
- 51 PAM, Item No. 24, John Swanston to J. D. Cameron, 16 December 1838
- 52 PAM, John Swanston to J. D. Cameron, 30 June 1838
- 53 Ballantyne, R. M.: *Hudson's Bay; Or Every-Day Life in the Wilds of North America....*; Phillips, Sampson, and Co., Boston, 1859, pp. 229-30
- 54 PAC, McIntyre Papers, MG 29, D 10, Donald Smith to John McIntyre, 5 September 1876
- 55 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, B 231 a 8, B 231 a 10, B 231 a 11, B 231 a 14

TBHMS, FWJ 1834/35

PAM, Items No. 6, 7, FWJ 1838/40, 1839/40
- 56 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 11, 5 October 1831
- 57 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 9-17 October 1826

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 7 November 1827

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 18, 24, 25 November 1828

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 9, 1 November 1829

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 10, 2, 25 November 1830

TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 9 November 1835

PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 6 November 1837
- 58 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 6, 7 November 1826

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 18 November 1828

- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 11, 2, 17 November 1831
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 7 November 1827
- 59 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 25 January 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 9, 29 December 1829
- PAM, Item No. 9, FWJ 1847/48, 29, 31 December 1847
- 60 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 18 December 1826, 16 February 1827
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 4 December 1827, 16-31 January, 8 February 1828
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 9, 4 December 1829
- PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 18-20 January 1830
- PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 13, 19 January 1831
- PAM, Item No. 4, FWJ 1831/32, 7, 9, 25 January 1832
- TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 5, 14, 17-22 December 1835, 26, 29 February 1836
- PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 10 January 1838
- PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 24, 27 December 1838
- PAM, Item No. 7, FWJ 1839/40, 26, 27 February 1840
- PAM, Item No. 9, FWJ 1847/48, 11 December 1847
- PAM, Item No. 10, FWJ 1854, 25 January 1854
- 61 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 5 December 1827
- 62 PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 18 December 1837
- 63 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 20, 23 January 1851
- 64 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 20 March 1824
- 65 PAM, Item No. 7, FWJ 1839/40, 19 March 1840
- 66 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I e 3
- 67 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 19 January 1828

- 68 PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 8 January 1840
- 69 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 6, 19, 26, 30, 31 December 1823, 3, 10, 12 January, 12 February 1824

PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 19 December 1826, 17 January, 26 February 1827

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 7 December 1827

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 13, 31 March 1834

PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 22 December 1837

PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 8 February 1839
- 70 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 13 January 1824
- 71 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 17, 22 December 1837
- 72 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 8, 25 February 1829
- 73 PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 15 December 1830
- 74 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 23, 24 February 1827

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 7, 29 February - 3 March 1828

PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 3 February 1831

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 11, 2 February 1832

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 12, 22 January 1833

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 17, 5 March 1838
- 75 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 15 March 1824
- 76 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 8, 22, 23, 24 January 1829
- 77 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 10, 13 December 1830
- 78 Ibid., 31 January 1831

PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 13, 31 August 1833
- 79 TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 24 March - 30 April 1836

- 80 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 16 July 1824
- 81 TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 2, 18 January, 4, 5, 31 March 1836
- 82 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 22, 25 January, 24 April 1824
- 83 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 1 December 1826, 4 January, 15, 21, 30 March 1827
- 84 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 e 5
- 85 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 135 K 1, Minutes of Council for 1845, Resolution #13

FROM DAY TO DAY

- 1 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 16 May 1827
- 2 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 18, 21 January 1840
- 3 PAM, Item No. 9, FWJ 1847/48, 19 November 1847
- 4 PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 8 August 1837
- 5 PAM, Item No. 7, FWJ 1839/40, 21 February 1840
- 6 TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 29 September 1836
- 7 Ibid., 6 October 1836
- 8 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 1 January 1828
- 9 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 1 January 1827
- 10 PAM, Item No. 5, FWJ 1837/38, 1 January 1838
- 11 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 17, 3 January 1838
- 12 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 14, 1 January 1835
- 13 PAM, Item No. 2, FWJ 1829/30, 18 July 1829
- PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 8, 15 October 1828
- 14 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 15 July 1824
- 15 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 30 June 1826
- 16 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 129 e 6

- 17 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 135 K 1, Minutes of Council for 1845, Resolution #55; Minutes of Council for 1851, Resolution #42
- 18 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 13, 20 December 1833
- 19 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 20, 22, 24 February 1849
- 20 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 12, 17 August 1832; B 231 a 17, 10 April 1838; B 231 a 18, 31 January 1840
- 21 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 18, 25 July 1839
- 22 Rich, E. E. (ed.): *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1822*; Champlain Society, Toronto, 1939, p. 234
- 23 Barker, B. B. (ed.): *The McLoughlin Empire and its Rulers: Dr. John McLoughlin....*; Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale California, 1959, pp. 145-6
- 24 PAM, Item No. 24, Donald McIntosh to Angus Bethune, 16 May 1836
- 25 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 13, 12, 13 September 1833
- 26 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 28 February 1824
- 27 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 14, 18 December 1834. Quotations: 21-26 December 1834, 14 January 1835
- 28 TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 29 July 1836
- 29 PAC, Duncan Clark Papers MG 19, A 39, Correspondence Folder 1821-42, Donald McIntosh at Fort William to Duncan Clark at Edwardsburgh Upper Canada, 20 July 1836
- 30 TBHMS, FWJ 1835/36, 20 January 1836
- 31 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 9 July 1824
- 32 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 20 December 1826
- 33 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 231 a 7, 30 June, 8 July, 8 November 1827
- 34 PAM, Item No. 6, FWJ 1838/40, 22 January 1839
- 35 OPA, Thomas Richards Diary 1875-76, 2 June 1875
- 36 TBHMS, FWJ 1823/24, 20 December 1823

- 37 PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 25 February – 13 March 1831
- 38 von Graffenried, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–66
- 39 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I e 1
- 40 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 135 K 1, Minutes of Council for 1827, Resolution #43
- 41 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I e 3
PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 17 March 1831
PAM, Item No. 4, FWJ 1831/32, 23 December 1831
- 42 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 14, 13 December 1834
- 43 PAM, Item No. 3, FWJ 1830/31, 21 January 1831
- 44 PAM, Item No. 1, FWJ 1826/27, 25 August 1826
- 45 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 11, 12 May 1832
- 46 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 14, 10 June 1834
- 47 *Ibid.*, 30 July 1834
- 48 McKellar, P.: "The Fort William Ice Jam and Port Arthur Ice Shove" in *The Thunder Bay Historical Society, Papers of 1908–1909*, p. 19
- 49 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 10, 10 July 1830
- 50 PAM, Item No. 10, FWJ 1830/31, 17 May 1831
- 51 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 9, 26 October 1829
- 52 PAM, Item No. 3, 19 April 1831
- 53 PAC, HBCA (microfilm), MG 20, B 23I a 20, 25 November 1850
- 54 *Ibid.*, 16 November 1849 – 7 February 1850, *passim*

